Comparative Study of Aquinas and Kant's Narration of Ethics and Theology*

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Abstract
Since Kant is a son of his time, his thought is originally rooted in the Enlightenment. The distinction between theoretical and practical reason, formal and material conscientiousness, authentic and doctrinal theodicy, sincerity and falsehood, and finally, historical and moral faith religion, are implications of the court held by Kant for metaphysics. Meanwhile, Kantian distinction between deism and theism in one hand, and inclination toward Job and Christ as the symbols of moral faith of religion in the other hand, can be explained by the German Protestantism of the age of Fredrick the Great and his successor. The theology based on practical reason criticizes rationalism in faith and suggests perception of religion through morality. But, Aquinas as a Christian catholic emphasizes on historical religion, revealed religion, Divine legislation, faith in Divine worship and ecclesiastical faith. Aquinas is the most distinguished supporter of rational theology. However, he believed to other kind of theology named theologia sacrae scripturae or sacred theology which its main subject is Divine beings. The main bases of Aquinas's ethics are revelation and foundations of church. Kant, in the contrary, tries to make room for faith inside the realm of morality and speak of practical reason theology through denial of theoretical reason.

Introduction

Kant is the philosopher of Enlightenment and it is unfair to limit his wide worldview to specific theories and to concentrate just on his first critique. Therefore, rethinking the cultural and historical background of Kant's system of thought, which is obvious in his works, is of great importance to us. One of the significant factors in forming the very essence of Kantian thought was the late-17-century movement in Lutheran church of Prussia. His Pietistic background is clearly notable in his later works. In order to attain faith, Pietism considered reason as not enough but insisted on the pure heart and mind, and piety. It may be his primitive background, which made Kant claim the reason as not sufficient for inception of truths as God, and as he says, made him put aside reason to make room for faith. Protestantism had a great influence on Kant's worldview, though he interpreted Protestantism differently and the philosophical theology of Catholicism was criticized by him as well. Luther also affected Kant. Luther believed that man's moral consciousness is the Supreme Court and highest criterion to identify right and wrong. He also noted that rightfulness is a personal and individual matter, which cannot be gained through reason, but just through faith.

Hume's thought and the position of mathematics and physics were other factors in forming the very essence of Kantian thought. By the increased authenticity of mathematics and physics and because of the better understanding of Hume's doubts, Kant stated more doubts on the knowledge by acquired metaphysics. He extended Hume's doubts from causality to the entire metaphysics, trying to reject metaphysics claims on attaining the objective knowledge.

Here Kant felt the risk of demolishing religious elements and tries morality so set religion free from theoretical reason and science from doubts. He picks up the self-criticism method asserts that the only valuable and adorable subject for the reason is its surrounding to free and public research. Kant's critiques were the fruit of such an approach, and his two-dimension man came up from his criticism of experimental and theoretical reason, and his effort to prove the possibility of Newtonian Physics and possibility of Moral duty. Kant believed that religion should be interpreted in the realm of morality; the idea which was illustrated in Onthe miscarriage of all philosophical trials in Theodicy and Religion within the boundaries of mere reason .

Thus, he eliminated the theoretical reason from metaphysics and took new position toward the former ones, so that he may save metaphysics from destruction and fall. The former concerns of metaphysics are now principal belongings of morality, which should be handled by the experimental reason. Morality sits as the root of faith and gives meaning to the concept of God. Kant tried to found faith on morality, for in his system of thought the theoretical reason has nothing to do with the original and principle religion. The original religion, in Kant's idea, is the moral religion, which can be imagined just through the dimensions of man's reason. He calls the moral religion "religion of good life conduct".

But, Aquinas is the most distinguished supporter of rational theology. "Summa Theologica" is the famous work of Saint Thomas Aquinas in natural theology. In western philosophy, the natural theology has combined the Christian faith with philosophical attitudes of Greek, Roman, Jewish and Muslim philosophers. Thus, Aquinas' approach toward the relation between religion and philosophy or the faith and reason can be just identified with the manifestation of these worldviews altogether. He uses the Greek rationalism to confirm the Catholic fundamentals, and presenting philosophy as to serve religion, he can be considered as the founder of Christian theology. "Those who call philosophy dependent to religion have tried to use it to form religious concepts, and to explain them to others who are not their coreligionists or to defend their faith. During the Medieval Ages and the sovereignty of religion, the church had made all efforts to defend and develop Christianity and utilized philosophy to serve this aim. Philosophy served religion and theological schools had been made (Ilkhani 2002: 89-91). The five demonstrations that Aquinas mentioned in his book was an effort by theoretical reason to prove God's existence and confirm the Catholic Fundamentals. This paper intend to pursue these questions in Aquinas and Kant s thought on the ba si of ethics and theology.

Theology and ethics in Aquinas's thought

Summa theologiae is the main Aquinas s work in theology. In first section of this work, he discussed about unmoved mover, the arguments of God s demonstration with the five proofs, Trinity, creation and human nature. Aquinas had been affected by Aristotle and explains the relation between some important terms, for instance, ethics, happiness, virtue and negative property. Aquinas s theocentric ethics emphasizes that perfect ethical life is based on divine presence; the comparison of his approach with Kant s thought is very important and will be explained in this paper. Although, God in Kant s ethics is only a necessary supposition, but Divine Revelation is an important element in Aquinas s thought. Virtue and happiness are two main principles in Aristotelian ethics which are tied to teleology. Aquinas as an original Christian, who believes in divine command, is affected by Aristotle but finally philosophizes in a different way. Unlike Aristotle, he does not concentrate on terrestrial happiness and attempts to achieve ultimate happiness in God that is absolute good; this is possible in ultimate life and through vision of God which is desire and natural inclination. According to Aquinas, the realm of ethics included voluntary actions. He explains the concept of virtue and divides it to moral and intellectual virtue and emphasizes on freedom of the will like Aristotle. Unlike Aristotle and Kant, his presuppositions in describing virtue and happiness are theological. Furthermore, as the vision of God is spiritual happiness and the end of way which leads to perfect happiness which all are only possible through Divine grace (Kretzmann and stump 1993: 246). So, Aquinas, according to Aristotelian approach, believed that moral virtue is temperance which must correspond to reason. His moral principles are based

on revelation and foundations of church. Finally, perfect human being is sacredly human.

Accordingly, he believes that among all knowledges that their aims is human s perfection and happiness, metaphysics, solely have merit to be named *sapientia*. He said that it is the divine wisdom (Velde 2006: 127). Aquinas, in one of his definitions of metaphysics, defined it as related to beings which are separated from matter in its *Esse* and *Ratio* like God and separate beings that are the most intellectual separate beings. Then, theology has a higher position than mathematics or physics. He believed that, God is the most important being discussed in metaphysics. So, Scientia Divina and Theologica are other names for metaphysics, namely, knowledge to divine beings. These are different names of unitary knowledge in Aquinas s thought whose subject is universal beings. He maintained that the existence of God is not evident and demonstrated in the same knowledge. Metaphysics explain separate beings through *naturalis rationis* and effects. Accordingly, this knowledge is called theology. Aquinas argued that metaphysics or *theologica philosophia* are related to separate beings that, on the basis of their nature, are not material but occasionally appear in matter and movement. However, the roots and basic principles of *theologica philosophia* are separate beings that essentially are immaterial and unmoved.

He talked about other kind of theology named *theologia sacrae scripturae or sacred theology* whose subject is divine beings. Hence, Aquinas believed that theology is sacred doctrine. Generally, knowledge of God is the final end of rational activity. But especially, metaphysician attain to knowledge of supreme cause through knowledge to effects and light of intellect. Hence, the subject of *theologica philosophia* is, insofar as it is, being. However, the subject of *sacred theology,* based on Holy Bible, is God. Furthermore, *theologica philosophia* and *sacred theology* employed light of intellect and light of Divine Revelation. I have explained other facts related to Aquinas which will be more prominent in comparative section to Kant. In Aquinas s thought, human s reason in its relation to a truth about God has two statuses: a truth, for instance, God s existence is reasonable but the issues like Trinity are out of intellectual perception (Shields and Pasnau 2016: 102). The first truth received by the light of intellect but the other is impossible. Indeed, Aquinas believed that God s existence is demonstrated with the five proofs and by the light of intellect, but knowledge to essence of God is impossible. Therefore, the imperfection of reason emphasizes on the necessity of *sacred theology.* In Aquinas s thought, in beings, the degrees of intellectual perfection are different. So, everything that is incognizable cannot simply be rejected and these truths are discussed in *theologia sacrae scripturae or sacred theology.* Indeed, no one can reject the truths as Divine Revelation with this claim that those are out of intellectual perception.

Therefore, it is very important that, in Aquinas s thought, *theologia sacrae scripturae* or *sacred theology* has a higher position than theoretical and practical knowledge. However, intellectual realities do not conflict with realities related to faith. So, he applied philosophical principles in *sacred*

theology, which means the necessity of intellectual justification of realities related to faith. But finally, philosophical realities are only a section of realities related to faith not all of them and an introduction to *sacred theology*. This is related to Holy Bible. For instance, On the basis of Holy Bible s contents, natural inclination to vision of God is in all humans is regarded as perfect happiness in Aquinas s thought (Milbank and Pickstock 2001: 56); since the reason has many limitations, this is possible only by revelation and Christian faith. Nevertheless, Aquinas emphasizes on principle of gratitude to God as the consequence of faith. The difference between Aquinas and Kant s approach on this point is simply revealed.

Kant; religion and ethics

Kant looks for   Religion within the boundaries of mere reason ", as the title of his most important thesis on religion reveals, and tries to establish a morality based religion. True religious concerns have nothing to do with theoretical reason, and Kant prepares the basis of denying the reason in his "Critiques of Pure Reason" so that room can be made for faith in the realm of practical reason.   Religion within the boundaries of mere reason   presents this approach (Howing 2016: 201). He defines religion as "the recognition of all our duties as divine commands"(Kant 2001: 177) and believes that based on such a definition the possibility of Assertorial knowledge on God will be ruled out, and since our perception of super-sensual phenomena is not authentic, theoretical reason is not permitted to enter the realm of religion (Kant 1998: 227). Thus, all kinds of theoretical considerations in religion which manifest in the form of recognition of God would be false and would end up in hypocrisy. Kant elaborates this idea in his thesis "On the miscarriage of all philosophical trials in Theodicy ", considering Job et (Kant 1996: 33).

Accordingly, he believed that all religions are either "Endeavors to win favor" or "Religion of good life conduct"; the former is the religion of worship and prayer, the latter the religion of morality. The historical religion, manifested in the faith of Church, belongs to the first category; i.e. being the subject to God's grace is no matter of specific deeds by man. On the contrary, the religion of morality finds its meaning in the context of actions and deeds; that is, to take action for being good and living honorably. "It is not essential, and hence not necessary ,that every human being know what God does ,or has done ,for his salvation ,but it is essential to know *what a human being has to do himself* in order to become worthy of his assistance" he says (Kant 2001: 96).

Kant says the good can rule over man's life if he practically tries to fulfill his religious practices, which shall finally bring in moral perfection. According to Kant's attitude, the good roots in the moral legislative reason and a model of the good cannot be seen in experimental examples, for this model is a priori and has been placed in our reason beforehand. "And the required prototype always resides only in reason, since outer experience yields no example adequate to the idea". (Ibid: 105) This is a change of heart which must itself be possible because it is a duty" (Ibid: 108) On the other hand, the

principle of goodness does not stand limitation; i.e. the primary elements of goodness have been placed in man's nature since the very beginning of his creation. To him, Jesus is a sample of the whole mankind and the true teacher of morality.

Accordingly, the true religion for Kant is the moral religion, or the Religion of Good life conduct. However, "We should not ascribe to this good any other distinguishing trait except that of a well-ordered conduct of life, [the reason] ↵ There is absolutely no salvation for human beings except in the innermost adoption of genuine moral principles in their disposition"(Ibid: 121-22) he says. Thus, moral duties, or divine orders, are the essence of religion. Nevertheless, Kant believes the ideas mentioned in the historical religion, which is on the opposite side to moral religion, cannot be perceived by man's theoretical reason but rather are superior to that. "Nor, in general, can anything supernatural, because all use of reason ceases precisely whit it.- for it is impossible to make these effects *theoretically* cognizable↵ because our use of the concept of cause and effect cannot be extended beyond the objects of experience."(Ibid: 96)

Kant considers the historical religion limited to the conditions of time and place, and thus subject to frequent changes. However, the moral religion is firm and stable, and roots in the a priori principles of practical reason. Thus, the historical or experimental conditions do not intrude it whatsoever. "For it is a plain rational faith which can be convincingly communicated to everyone, whereas a historical faith, merely based on facts, can extend its influence no further than the tidings relevant to a judgment on its credibility can reach."(Ibid: 136-7)

Kant thus concludes that we should pass over the faith of Church and describe the real kingdom of God, or somehow the real church, in the light of rational religion or moral religion. In fact, the Ethical Commonwealth would be a church in which people try to live the right way and receive Divine Grace through living the right way and fulfilling the duties. According to his own epistemological basis mentioned in "Criticism of Pure Reason", Kant sums up the necessities and characteristics of true church in the following four elements. 1) The wholeness: the unanimity of church in following one specific aim; 2) the nature (or quality): the purity of its quality; 3) the descent: the relation which confirms Republic; and 4) the direction: the way which shows the unchangeable structure of the church. He differentiates between religion and faith and in the meanwhile believes that there is just one true religion, the moral religion, and the Christians, Jews, and followers of other religions have tended toward a faith, not a religion.

Beside faith and religion, Kant also distinguishes the natural juridical state and the natural moral state. He interprets" A *Juridico-civil* (political) *state* is the relation of human beings to each other inasmuch as they stand jointly under *public juridical laws* (which are all coercive laws).An ethico-civil state is one in which they are united under laws without being coerced, i.e. under *laws of virtue* alone"(Ibid: 130) In this way, we shall have four states: 1) the natural juridical state, 2) the natural moral state, 3) the juridical

civil state, and 4) the ethical civil state. Kant concludes that man has always been pursuing a historical procedure from the natural juridical state to the ethical civil state, i.e. he has always tried to fulfill the principle of goodness trough establishment of an ethical commonwealth society which was needed to considering an ethical legislator named God. In such a society, the visible church is in charge of executing the rational laws authorized by the ethical legislator who is ethically sacred, benevolent and just. Hence, "The threefold quality of the moral head of the human race, which in a juridico-civil state must of necessity be distributed among three different subjects, can be thought as united in one and the same being"(Ibid: 166) The legislative force incarnating Divine Sacredness, the executive force showing Divine Justice, and the executive force visualizing Divine Benevolence.

Finally, According to Kant, the historical faith and Ecclesiastical faith are totally inefficient and futile. They are means of fulfilling the pure religious faith, the real goal of religion, and if we consider historical faith as the goal not the means, fulfillment of moral religion or pure rational religion would be postponed. In other words, the only fruit of holding to the ecclesiastical faith is the postponement of good behavior or moral lifestyle. Therefore, we need to make all effort for gradual move from the ecclesiastical faith to the absolute authority of pure religious belief. This would be achieved just through fulfillment of our duties and moral lifestyle. We can feel hopeful to meet the Divine State or the Moral State of God on earth. Hence, "The true (visible) church is one that displays the (moral) Kingdom of God on earth inasmuch as the latter can be realized through human beings."(Ibid: 135) Kant, following that, states that fulfillment of such an ideal is the first step to establish a permanent peace in the world. "Such is therefore the work of the good principle ˚ unnoticed to human eye yet constantly advancing ˚ in erecting a power and a kingdom for itself within the human race, in the form of a community according to the laws of virtue that proclaims the victory over evil and, under its domain, assures the world of an eternal peace"(Ibid: 153). Finally, as we have seen, Kant holds a paradoxical attitude toward the historical faith. He sometimes calls it inefficient and futile, somewhere else, calls it a means of fulfilling the pure religious faith.

Aquinas and Kant; theology and ethics
Considering elaboration and support of pure religious considerations as the major approach of theology, we can define two types of theology based on theoretical and practical reasons. One theology utilizes the theoretical reason to serve confirming the major principles of religion, on the other hand, while the other tries to find those principles in the realm of practical reason. In other words, the rational theology strengthens religion through theoretical reason. Yet, the theology based on practical reason criticizes rationalism in faith and suggests perception of religion through morality. Although Kant holds a position fundamentally different from Aquinas' philosophical theology and ethics, he shares some common points with him, "Aquinas and Kant agree that morality centrally involves law and obedience to law"(schneewind 2002: 84)

Kant criticized the rational theology of Aquinas as well but in his own special interpretations and attitudes. Kant did not accept demonstrations based on theoretical reason to prove God's existence, and as he said, he put aside reason to make room for faith. However, Kant's idea of rejecting theoretical reason based theology and any kind of rationalism in religious affairs is not ever a sign of Fideism, for his attitude is just an epistemological way of criticizing man's power for saving metaphysics. Thus, we can present reasons to prove that he is not a Fideist as Kierkegaard. We previously mentioned that God and Divine matter has been the main philosophical topic considered by theoretical reason. Kant categorizes the proofs of God's existence into three groups: natural and theological, cosmological, and existential. He criticizes them and finally accepts moral theology based on practical reason in order to refrain from Aquinas and his theoretical reason based theology.

Therefore, another point which related to Aquinas is that, Kant rejects the possibility of the three demonstrations based on his first critique principles and the significant distinction between his Noumenon and Phenomenon, and his well-known epistemology theory, limiting it to the world of phenomena. Thus, one cannot prove God's existence with the aid of experimental and causative world.

Accordingly, the Kantian rational theology roots in practical reason and his basis of faith is morality. He says that God's existence finds its meaning through morality, for it is an essential presumption for morality. Accordingly, Kant's critique on Aquinas' rational theology and rational demonstrations for God's existence does not indicate his denial of Divine entity. The rational Kantian theology, which is based on practical reason, replaces the Aquinas' theoretical reason based theology. In summary, Aquinas tried to prove God's existence through theoretical reason and the experimental and causative world, while Kant represents God as an idea of practical reason. Aquinas reaches God from the world of existence, Kant finds Him in Morality.

Kant believes that God is an essential assumption for morality, while Aquinas calls Him an essential entity. In other words, According to Catholic fundamentals and the spirit of Medieval Ages, Aquinas utilizes theoretical reason to present demonstrations for God's existence and God is the most central subject in philosophy. Nevertheless, Kant believed that man does not need to a Transcendental Being to fulfill his duties applied by morality. He appreciates free will so highly that even tries to find the root of moral system and God's existence in free will. Namely, the morality-supporter Kant, who tries to find religion in morality, just considers God as an essential presumption. In Kant's idea, the greatest mistake of former philosophers was to establish morality based on the divine order, or better to say, Heteronomy (Kant 1999: 166).

Against him, Aquinas widely acknowledged revelation and always considered it as a bridge to the unknown world." In general, he divides theology into two types. The reveled word or theology, which is directly derived from the Holy Bible and based on Christian faith, and the natural or philosophical theology, which is created by man's natural reason. In

Philosophical theology, he considers reason as the organizer and elaborator of religious concepts"(Ilkhani 2003: 403). In the meanwhile, Kant calls reason inefficient in elaboration of religious concepts and improper to be the center of theology.

Furthermore, Kant considers just the moral teachings of the Holy Bible, i.e. teachings which support moral religion. He believes that the motive for good deeds which is based on Bible is a divine rule, just for being a result of moral law. However, Aquinas believes the entire teachings of the Holy Bible are worth reading and practicing, for the bible comprises principles of Christianity. He had been trying to prove and elaborate Catholic teachings through reason. We should be remembering that Kant was a moral Protestant who was raised in a pietistic family and impressed by the enlightened age, while, on the other hand, Aquinas was a medieval thinker who took an approach toward rational theology in order to strengthen Catholic faith

Another point which related to difference between Kant and Aquinas is that Kant was not a legitimist which is evident through his personal lifestyle and his works, especially Religion within the boundaries of mere reason ". This may go back to his Protestant background. On the contrary, ecclesiastical rites and rituals are of great importance to Aquinas, for they are evident principles of Catholicism. Another point is that, Kant explicitly rejects the historical religion and religious basis of morality. Aquinas refers to the essence of existing world to prove God's existence. On the other side, Kant considers God in the realm of morality. Therefore, Kant and Aquinas are both Foundationalist with regard to God's existence and searching for a foundation for God. As a Pre-modern Foundationalist, Aquinas founded Christian theology based on reason and demonstrations of proving God's existence, facing the Evidentialist objectors.

Accordingly, Kant, as a modern Foundationalist, criticizes such demonstrations and refers to practical reason in order to strengthen the religion. He believes that God rules over the world through moral laws, and thus He has a share in the eternal happiness of those who fulfill their duties. According to Kant, morality tells us about God, an entity who is morally perfect, and denial of God is rejection of the moral nature of human being.

On the contrary, Aquinas says that goodness is a divine attribute and He is the origin to all moral perfections. Goodness exists for God is the first and original reason of goodness. In short, Kant talks about a God who is proved through morality, while Aquinas calls the goodness of morality as the result of God's existence, for He is the origin of all goodness. Namely, he believes that since God exists, goodness that is of his effects also exists and thus morality is dependent of God, not God an essential presumption of morality.

Based on this view, Kant distinguishes moral theology from theological morality. As he rejects theological morality, for morality should not be based on theology but it needs principles that establish the basis of goodness for us. In other words, the tendency to believing in God's existence comes from our belief and attachment to morality. While in the pre-modern era and prior to

deism, all affairs including morality were based on the concept of God and such a feature was drastically changed in Kantian attitude.

As it was mentioned before, Kant considered four types of relation between historical and moral faith, and theoretical and practical reason. The fourth type insisted on denial of any rationalism in the realm of faith. This attitude does not make him a Fideist, for he agrees with Fideism in separating faith from theoretical reason. He went further and based faith on practical reason. In fact, Kant opposes theoretical rationalism in the realm of faith on the one hand, and defends practical rationalism in the realm of moral faith on the other.

Conclusion

As a conclusion, we can restate the whole essay from religious, ethical and theological attitudes. In the realm of religion, Kant differentiates moral and historical religion. Unlike Aquinas, He says the historical religion includes mysteries that cannot be solved or perceived by man's practical reason. In defining moral theology, he distinguishes theoretical and practical reasons. He calls theoretical reason incapable of perceiving religious truths, leaving them to practical reason. The philosophical theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas is the result of his perception of philosophy as a concept to serve religion. However, Kant defines moral religion as recognition of all duties as divine rules, and thus, the true religion is the moral religion. The essence of religion should be found in the a priori principles of practical reason rather than in mysteries that form the basis of historical religion.

The domination of revelation and foundations of church in Aquinas s philosophical manner in *Summa theologiae* which is revealed in the conceptions of *theologica philosophia* and *theologia sacrae scripturae or sacred theology* on one hand, and Catholicism and the foundations of Aristotelian thought on the other hand, challenges Kant s pietistic approach and his attention towards ethics-oriented concepts. Happiness in Aquinas s thought is vision of God. Unlike Aquinas, Kant believed that happiness belong to those who fulfill their duties. Then, historical and moral faith religion and the distinction between theism and deism cause to separate Aquinas and Kant. Kant did not stand theoretical reason in the realm of religion and tried to establish his own theology based on practical reason. Therefore, the Kantian rational theology indicates his effort to criticize theoretical reason and confirms the moral religion.

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