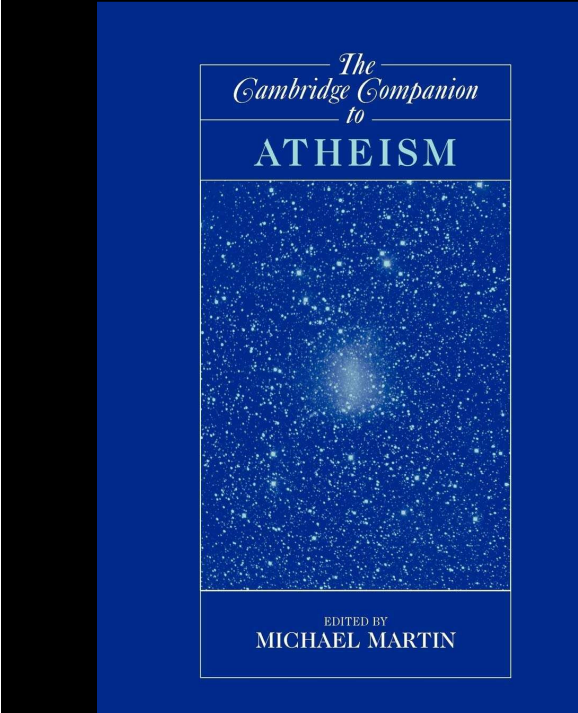


Responding to the
Arguments of
*The Cambridge
Companion to
Atheism,* Pt. 1:*
Glossary

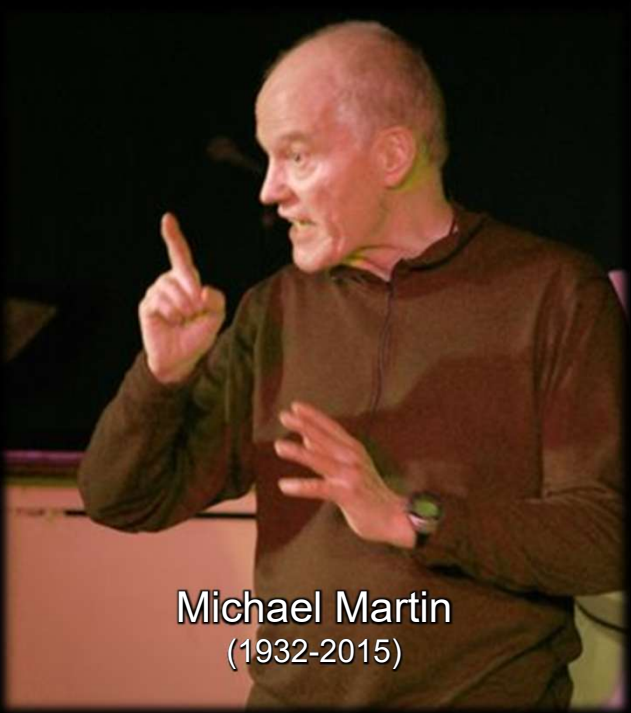
Richard G. Howe, Ph.D.
Provost
Norman L. Geisler Chair of Christian Apologetics
Professor of Philosophy and Apologetics
Southern Evangelical Seminary

**and select other academic atheist sources*

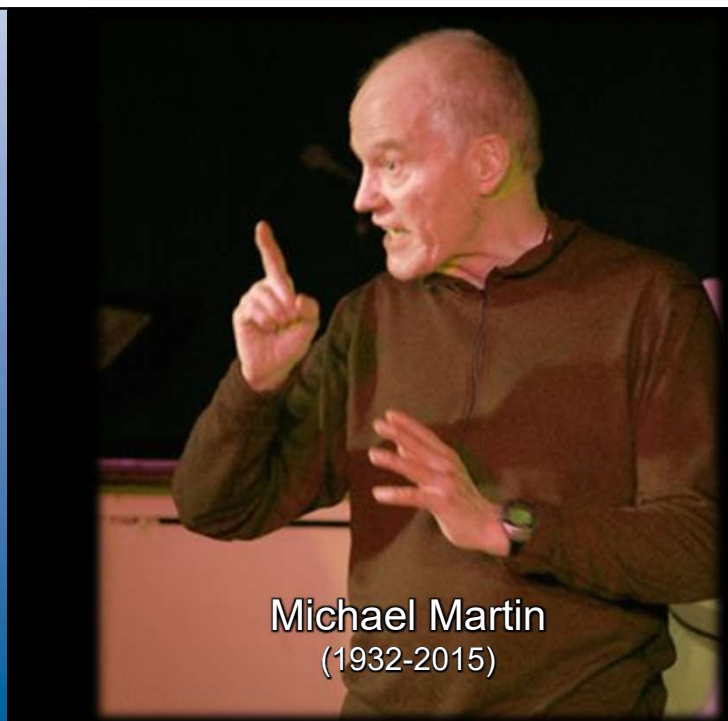
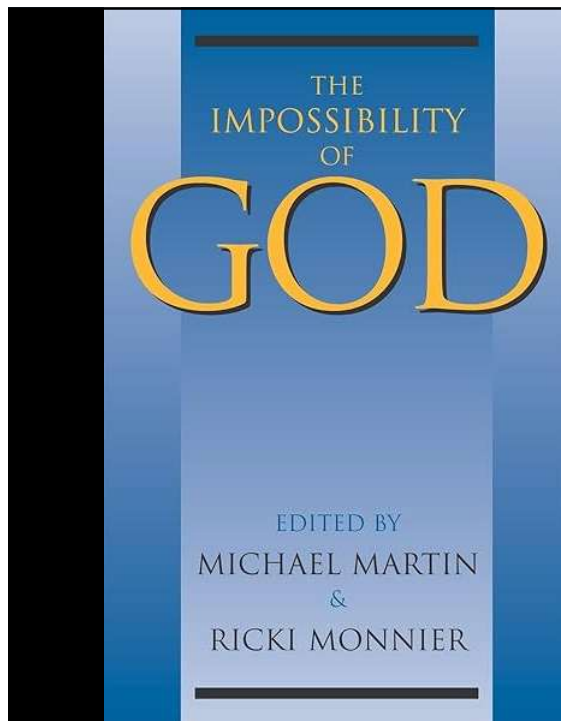
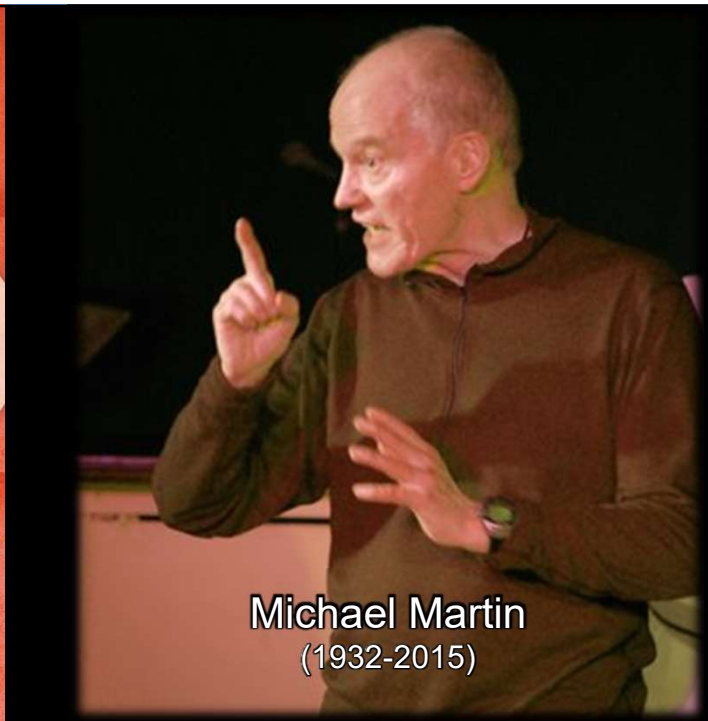
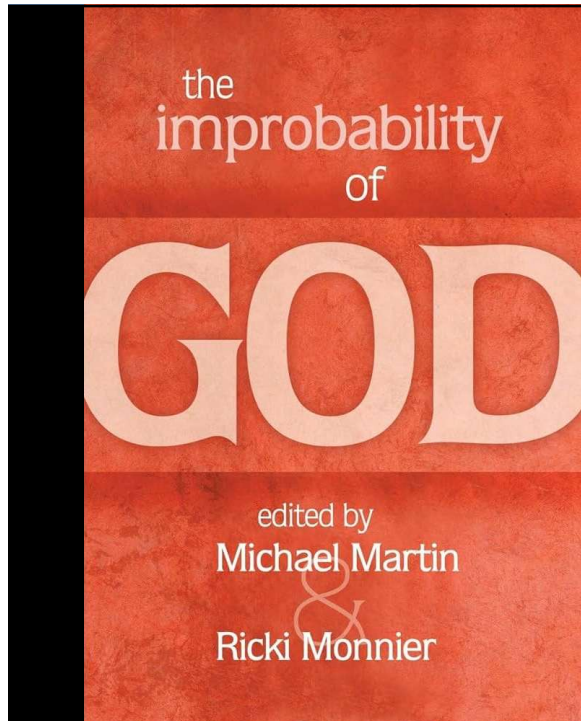


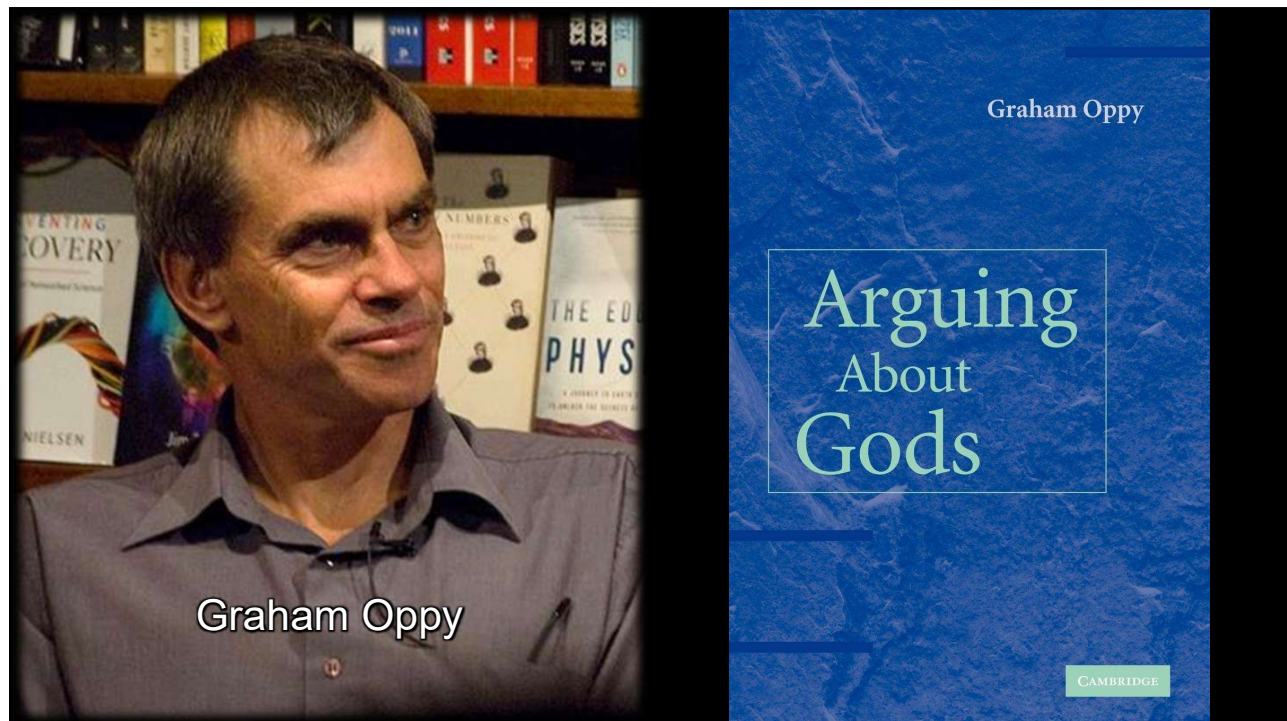
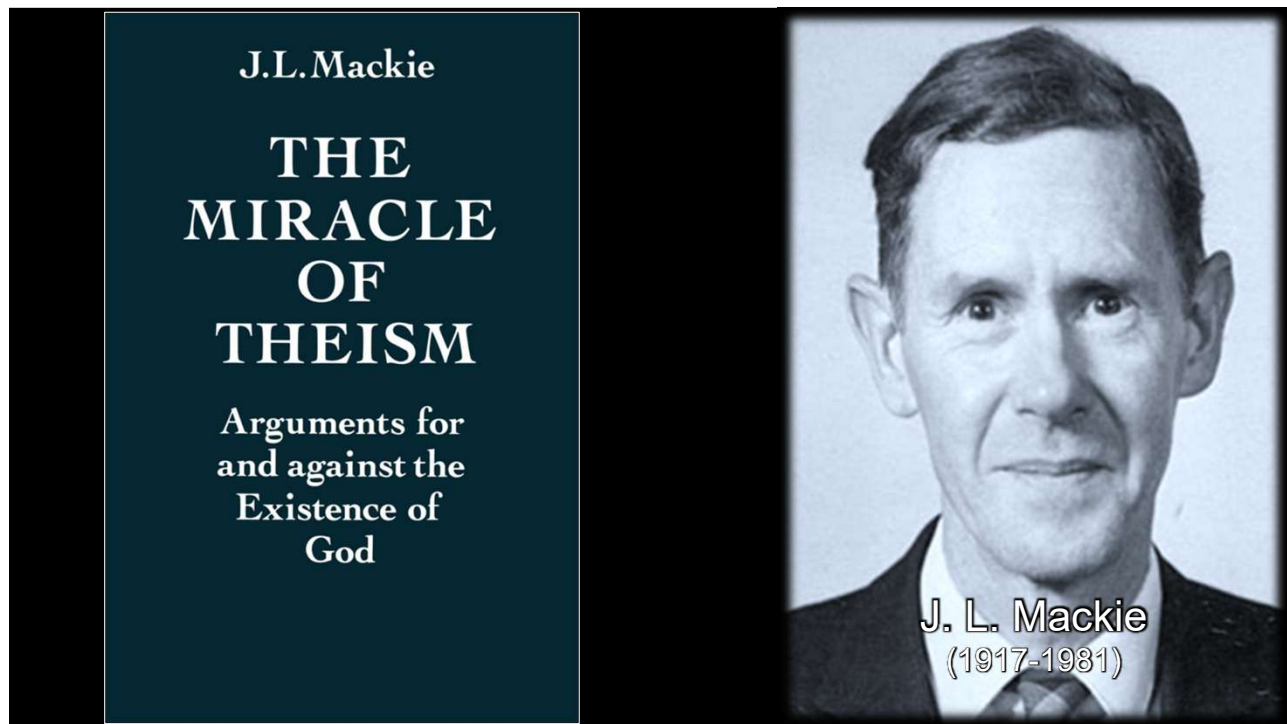
*The
Cambridge Companion
to*
ATHEISM

EDITED BY
MICHAEL MARTIN



Michael Martin
(1932-2015)







In my experience, many if not most contemporary Christian apologetic arguments for God's existence utilize scientific evidence.

As such, these arguments generally take the form of an abductive argument, commonly known as argument to the best explanation or best hypothesis.

Undoubtedly these arguments carry greater weight not only because of the status that science has achieved in our day, but also because the categories of the natural sciences are more or less familiar with the general population.

In contrast, the arguments utilizing the relatively unfamiliar categories of philosophy in general and Classical Philosophy in particular very nearly render such arguments inaccessible to a general audience.

IS THERE A GOD WHO SPEAKS?

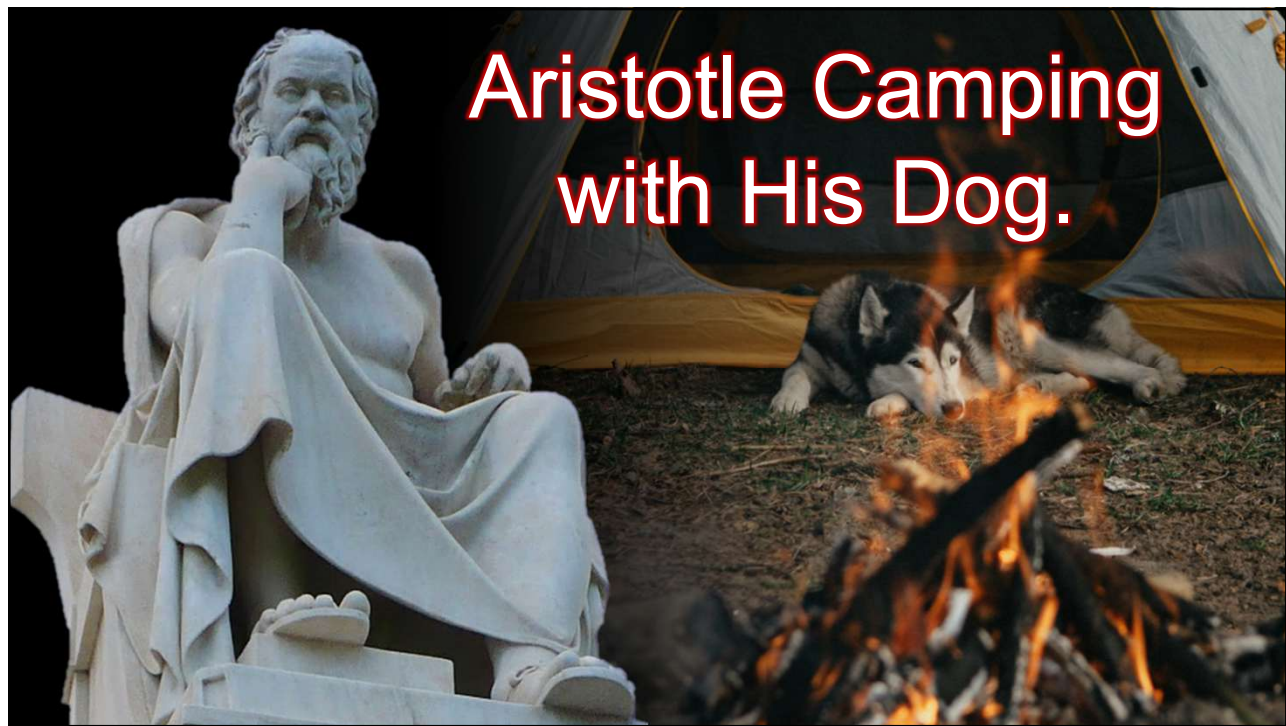
DAN BARKER V DR. RICHARD G. HOWE

Sponsored by
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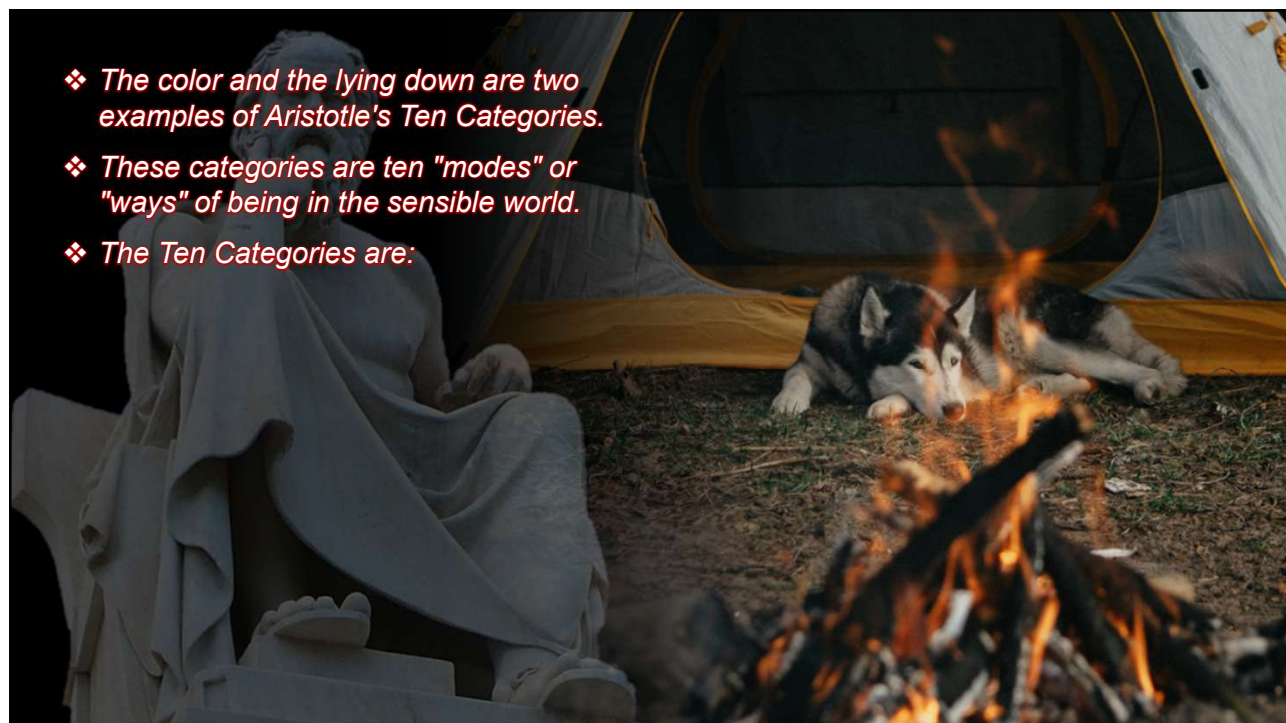
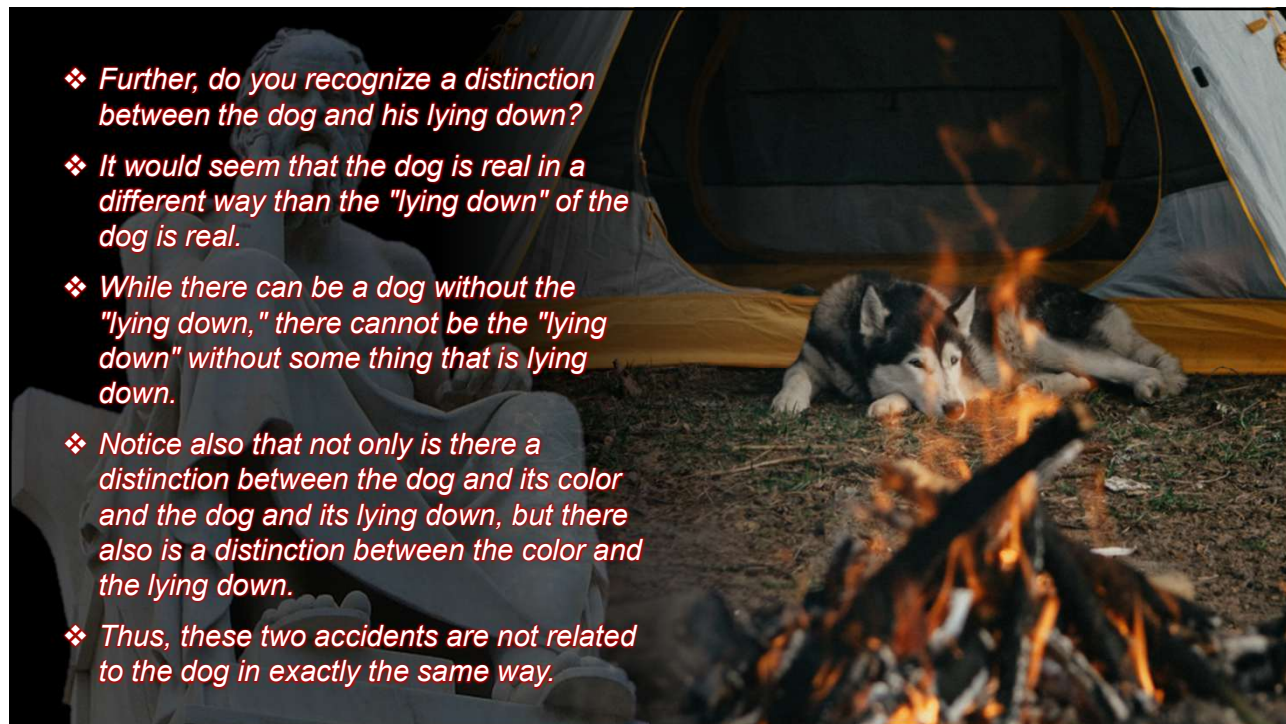


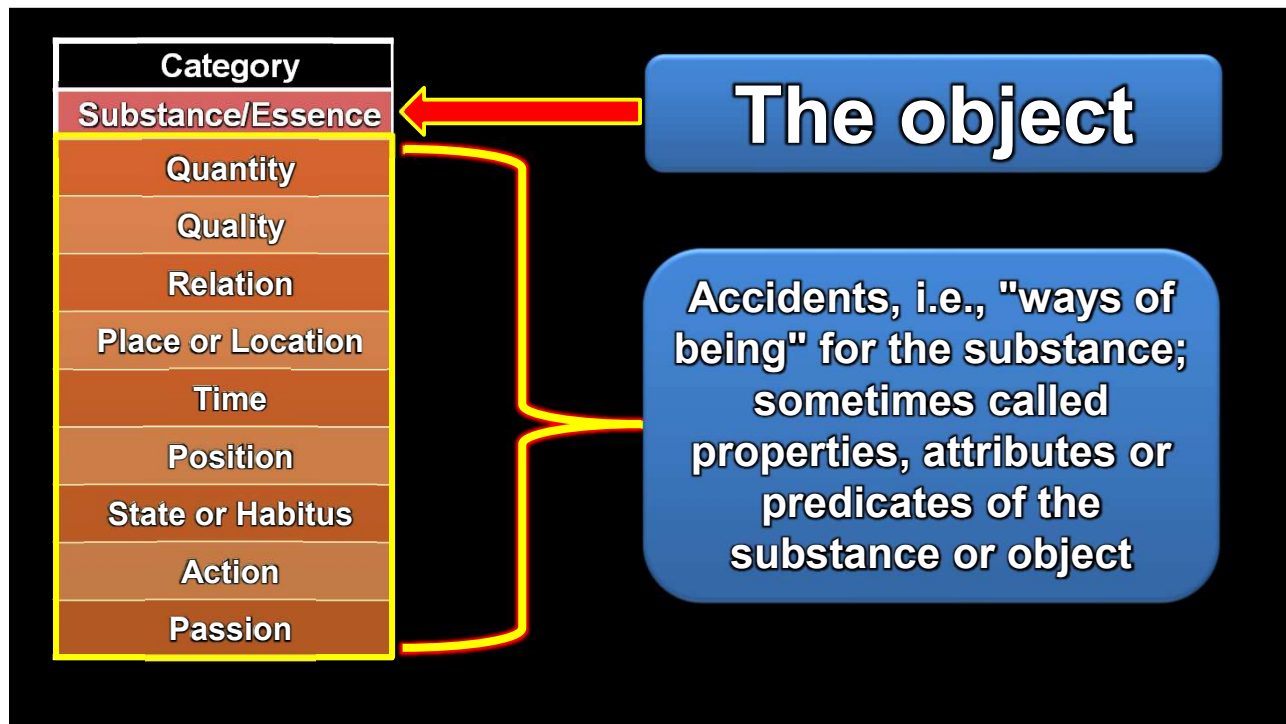
Their value remains, however, in as much as such arguments show how the existence of God (together with the classical attributes of God) follow inescapably from the basic tenets of classical metaphysics.

What is more, the classical understanding of knowledge arises from the metaphysics in as much as knowing has to do with the nature of the knower, the nature of the known, and the metaphysical interplay between the two.



- ❖ *Do you recognize a distinction between the dog and the black/white color of the dog?*
- ❖ *It would seem that the dog is real in a different way than how the colors of the dog are real.*
- ❖ *While there can be a dog without the black/white color, there cannot be the black/white color without some thing that is colored.*
- ❖ *This distinction is what Aristotle called the substance/accident distinction.*
- ❖ *The term 'accident' here is similar to our contemporary terms 'property' or 'characteristic' or 'attribute'.*





Category	Meaning	Greek	Example
Substance	What	ousia	dog, tree
Quantity	How much	poson	small, tall
Quality	What sort	poion	Great Dane, oak
Relation	in relation to something	pros ti	smaller, taller
Place or Location	Where	pou	in my yard
Time	When	pote	right now, last year
Position	Being situated	keisthai	lying, standing
State or Habitus	Having, possession	echein	is leashed, is covered
Action	Doing	poiein	bites, shades
Passion	Undergoing	paschein	is fed, is pruned

A three-foot^{Quantity} husky^{Quality}
 dog^{Substance}, much taller than^{Relation} her
 puppy, was lying^{Position} in my yard^{Place}
 yesterday^{Time} on a leash^{State (Habitus)},
 biting her paw^{Action}, completely
 unaware that she was being
 fed^{Passion} by me.





A group of approximately ten dogs of various breeds and sizes are posed together against a plain white background. The dogs include a Boston Terrier, a Golden Retriever, a German Shepherd, a Labrador Retriever, a Pit Bull, a Beagle, and several smaller breeds like Chihuahuas and a dachshund.	<p>From individual dogs, one can derive the concept of dog.</p>
A photograph of a two-lane asphalt road with yellow double lines, curving through a dense forest. The trees are in full autumn foliage, displaying a mix of bright yellow, orange, and some red leaves. The road is bordered by a metal guardrail on the right. In the background, a hill rises, also covered in colorful trees under a clear blue sky.	<p>From individual trees, one can derive the concept of tree.</p>



- ❖ *The relationship of the concept of 'dog' or 'tree' to the individual dogs or trees is the relationship of universals to particulars.*
- ❖ *One debate that has endured throughout the history of philosophy has been over what exactly is the nature of a universal.*



- ❖ *Are universals merely names we give to them (Nominalism / Hume)?*
- ❖ *Or are universals more than names but nothing more than concepts in our minds (Conceptualism / Ockham)?*
- ❖ *Or are universals "real" in some sense of the term 'real'? (Realism)*



❖ *If universals are real in some sense of the term 'real', exactly what is the nature of their reality?*

- *Are universals the fully real whereas individuals objects (dogs, trees) "participate in" or "imitate" the universals? (Extreme Realism / Platonism)*
- *Do the universals "exist" as particular in the individual objects and only "exist" as universal in the human intellect? (Moderate Realism / Aristotelianism)*
- *Do universals "exist" as particular in the individual objects, "exist" as universal in the human intellect, and are "ideas" in the mind of God as their Creator which are made real as particular in objects by creation? (Scholastic Realism / Thomism)*



❖ *Notice also that the universal is free of any specifying characteristics of the individual.*

- ❖ *The concept 'dog' does not specify German Shepherd or Chihuahua; young or old; brown or black; sitting or lying; eating or being washed ...*
- ❖ *The concept 'tree' is free of such individuating characteristics such as tall or short; deciduous or evergreen; fruit-bearing, flower-bearing or neither; in my backyard or in my neighbor's backyard ...*





❖ Notice that, despite the changes in all the characteristics (accidents), you can know that it is the same dog throughout.



❖ Likewise with the tree. From acorn to flourishing oak, despite all the changes, you can know that it is the same tree throughout.



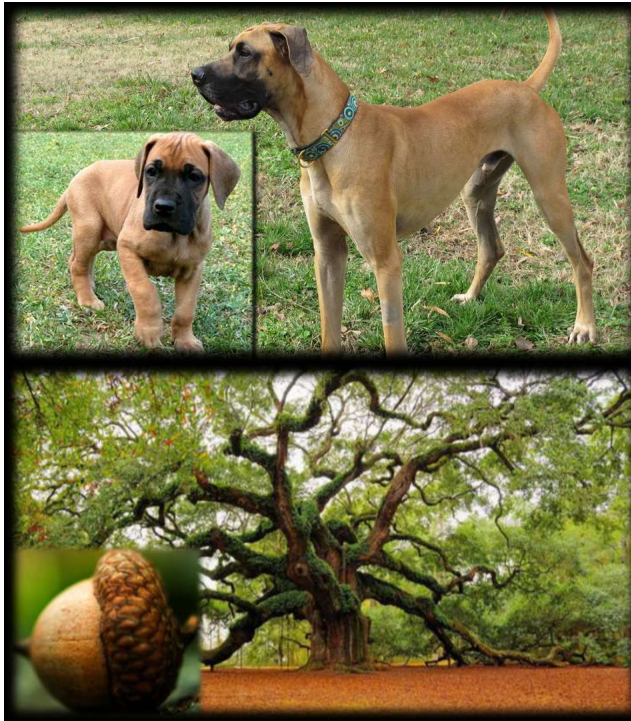
❖ That aspect of the thing that constitutes its "sameness" is its *Form*.

❖ That aspect of the thing that constitutes its "changing" is its *Matter*.

❖ 'Form' and 'Matter' are metaphysical aspects of any sensible thing.

❖ Neither exists apart from the sensible thing itself.

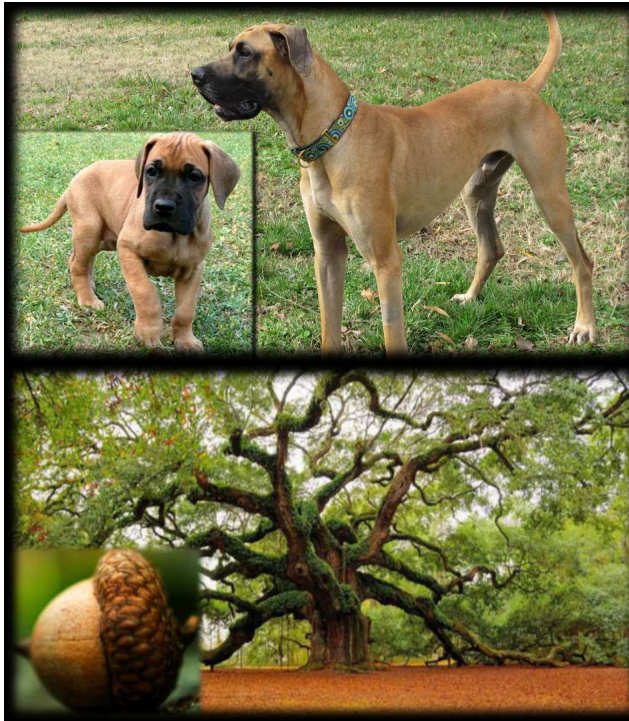




- ❖ *The Form and Matter constitution of a sensible thing is known as hylomorphic dualism.*
- ❖ *This term comes from the Greek hule (ὕλη) which means 'matter' and morphe (μορφή) which means 'form'.*
- ❖ *They are metaphysical aspects of a single thing.*



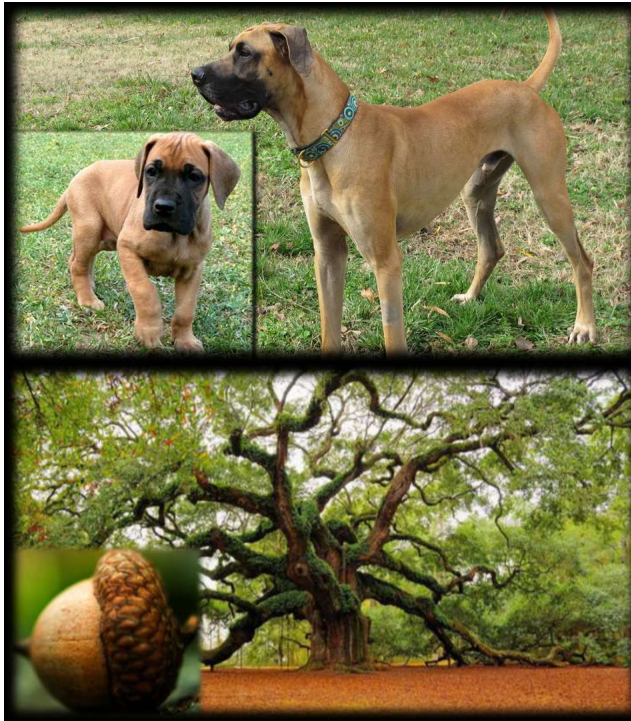
- ❖ *Hylomorphic Dualism is to be distinguished from Substance Dualism.*
- ❖ *Substance Dualism was championed by René Descartes (1596-1650).*
- ❖ *Descartes regarded the material and immaterial components of a human to be two separate substances.*



❖ *Note also that, unless something interferes (like injury, malnourishment, or disease), the Great Dane puppy will inevitably grow into an adult Great Dane and the acorn will inevitably grow into a mature oak tree .*



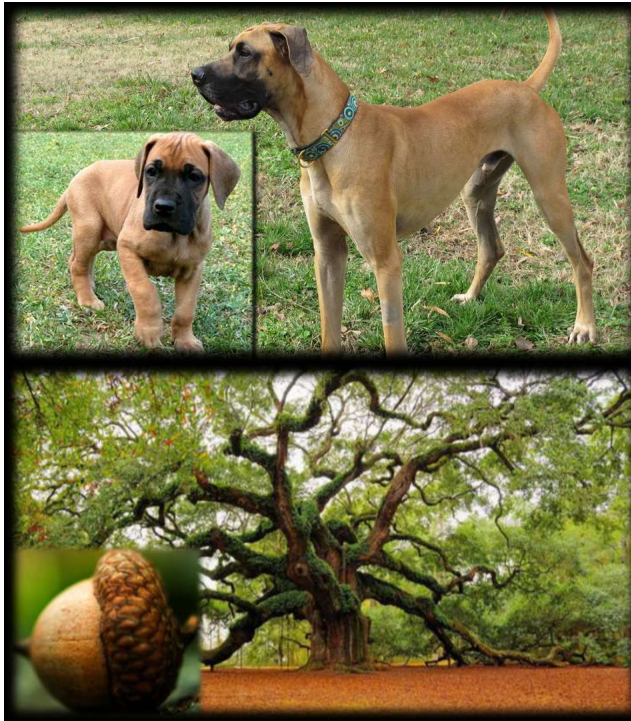
- ❖ *The trajectory of each of these things is its teleology.*
- ❖ *The term comes for the Greek word 'telos' (τέλος), meaning 'end' or 'goal'.*
- ❖ *A thing's teleology is determined by its Form.*
- ❖ *A thing's Form is that which constitutes "what" it is.*
- ❖ *An acorn will never become a Great Dane.*



- ❖ *These accidents of the thing that are not yet realized eventually will be realized if nothing interferes.*
- ❖ *These accidents that are yet to become real are known as potencies (or potentialities or capacities) that "exist" in the thing.*



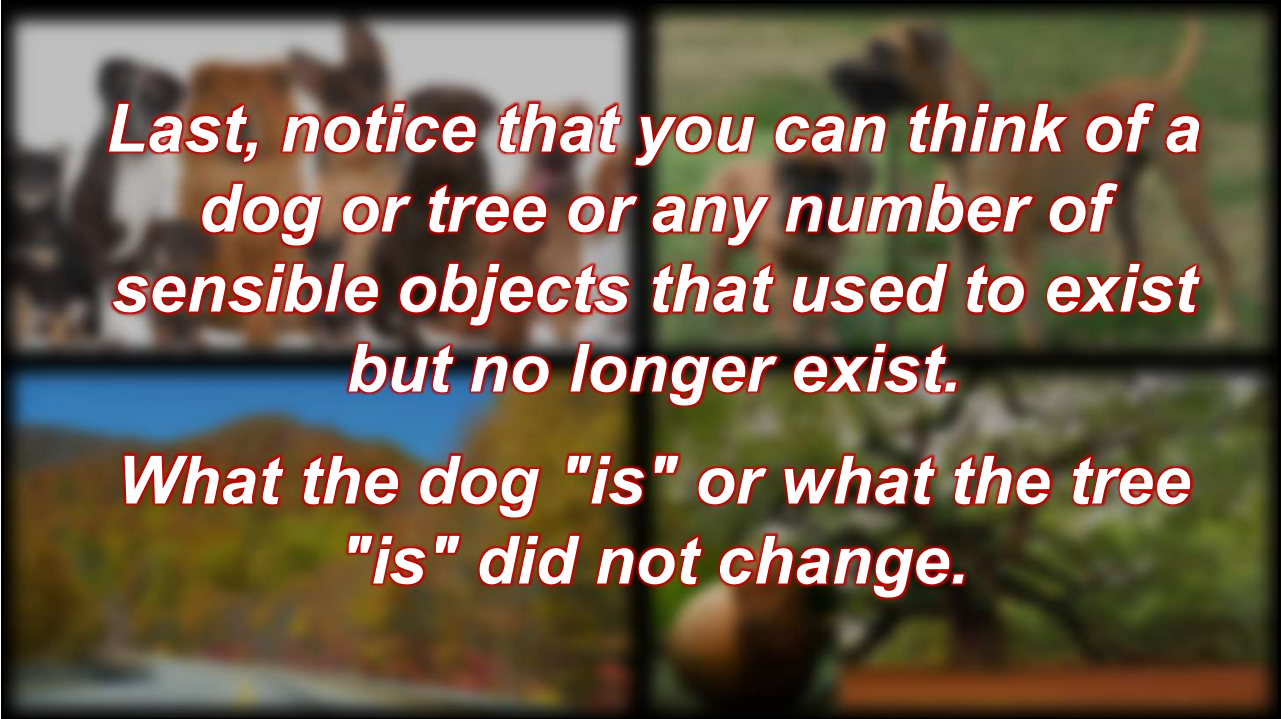
- ❖ *Once they become real, they are actual (or actualities).*
- ❖ *Aristotle identifies this as the act and potency distinction.*



- ❖ Aristotle called that which brings a potentiality into actuality the *Efficient Cause*.
- ❖ Aristotle identified three additional causes.

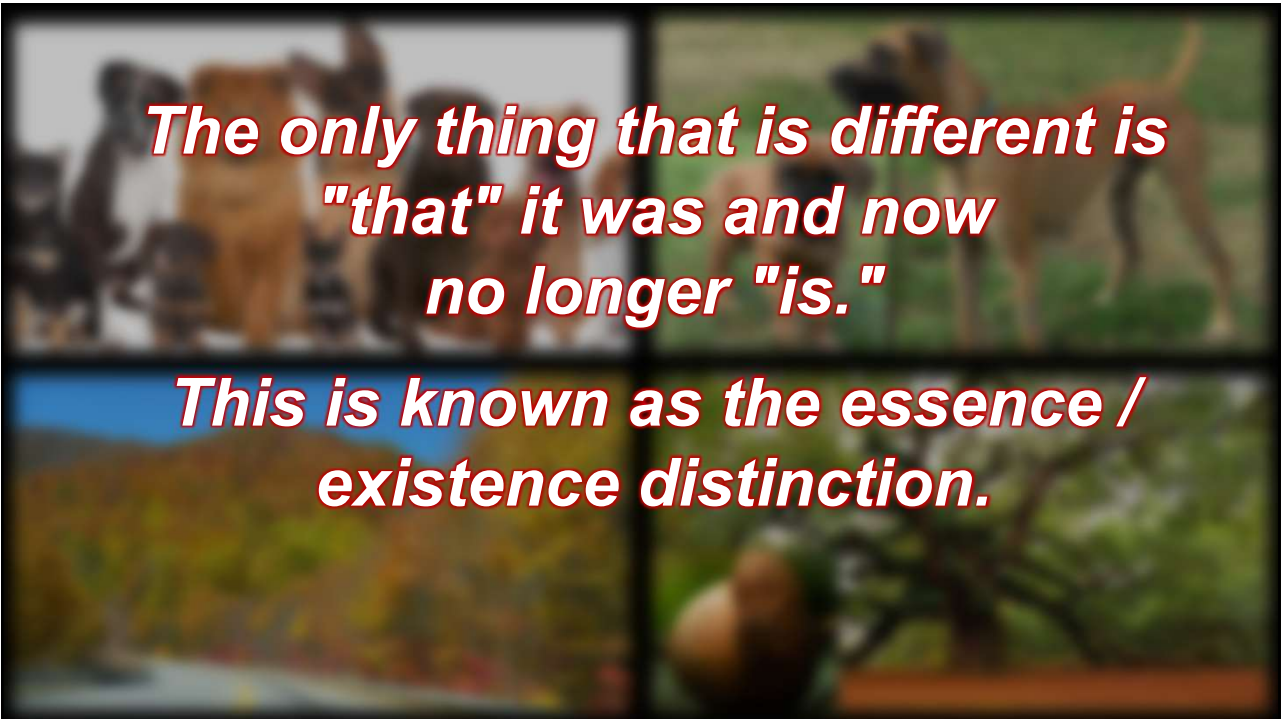


- ❖ The *Efficient Cause* is that **by which** a thing is.
- ❖ The *Material Cause* is that **out of which** a thing is.
- ❖ The *Formal Cause* is that **which** a thing is.
- ❖ The *Final Cause* is that **for which** a thing is.



Last, notice that you can think of a dog or tree or any number of sensible objects that used to exist but no longer exist.

What the dog "is" or what the tree "is" did not change.



The only thing that is different is "that" it was and now no longer "is."

This is known as the essence / existence distinction.

**The essence is *what* something is.
The existence is *that* something is.**

**The essence / existence
distinction is a philosophical
augmentation of Aristotle's
metaphysics by Thomas Aquinas.**

 <p>Aristotle (384-322 BC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ substance and accidents ✓ ten categories ✓ universals and particulars ✓ form and matter ✓ teleology ✓ act and potency ✓ four causes ✓ essence/existence 	 <p>Aquinas (1225-1274)</p>
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Aristotle
(384-322 BC)

- ✓ *substance and accidents*
- ✓ *ten categories*
- ✓ *universals and particulars*
- ✓ *form and matter*
- ✓ *teleology*
- ✓ *act and potency*
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Aquinas
(1225-1274)



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Aquinas
(1225-1274)

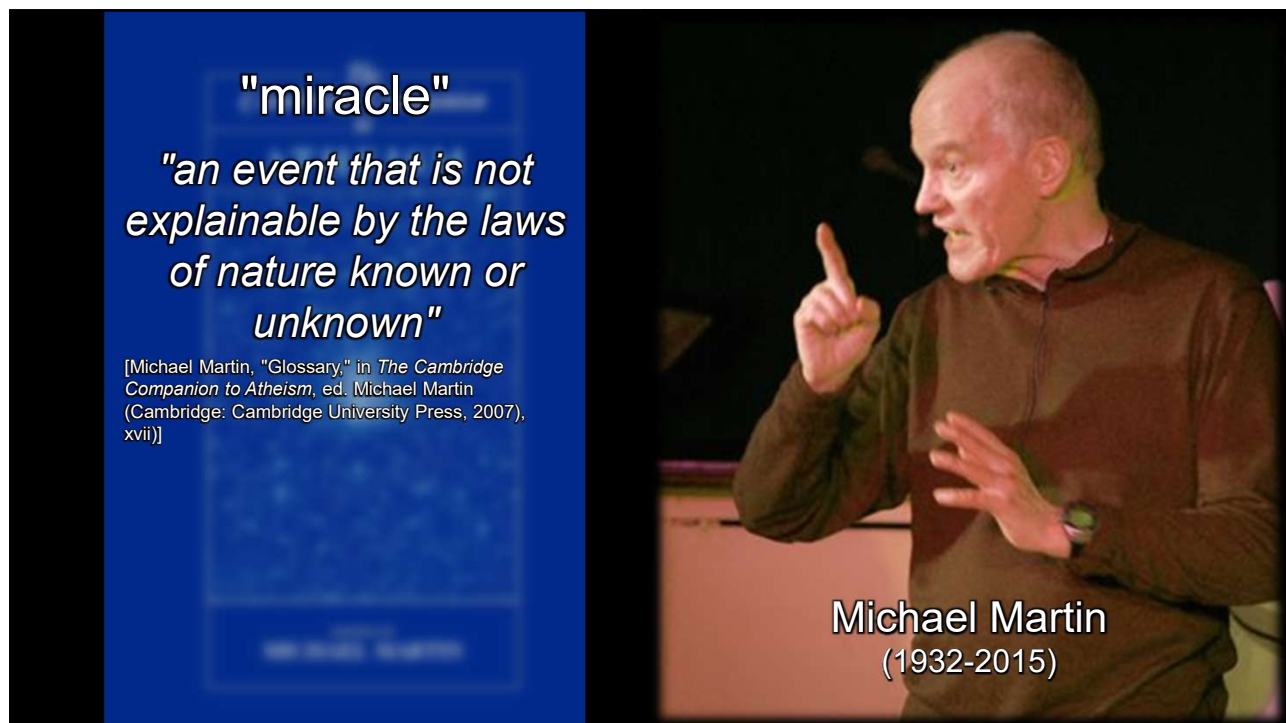
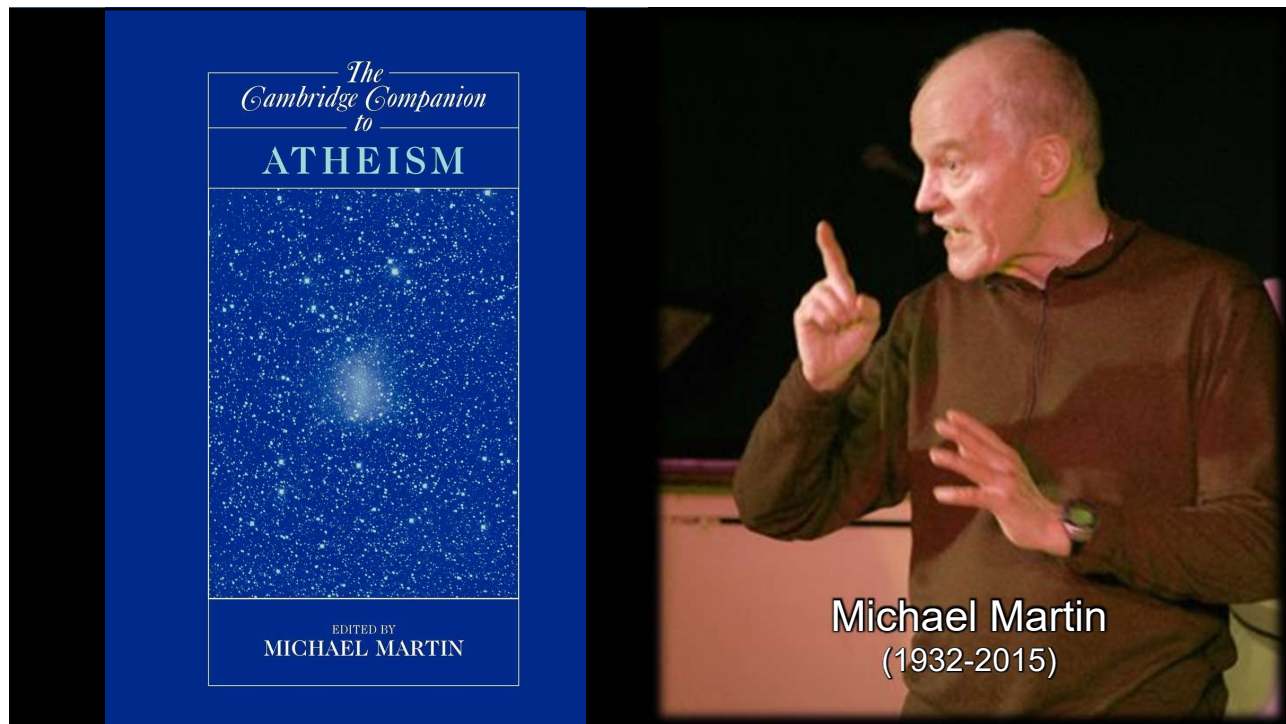
With these philosophical truths, the classical philosopher can demonstrate the existence and attributes of the God of Classical Theism.

It remains to be seen the degree to which contemporary atheist philosophers engage any of the classical philosophical arguments for God's existence and attributes.



Michael Martin
"Glossary"

∞ Miracle ∞



"miracle"

"an event that is not explainable by the laws of nature known or unknown"

[Michael Martin, "Glossary," in *The Cambridge Companion to Atheism*, ed. Michael Martin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), xvii]]

Classical Apologetics defines a miracle as:

"an intervention of God into the natural world that interrupts the natural course of events for the purpose of vindicating His messenger and confirming the message."

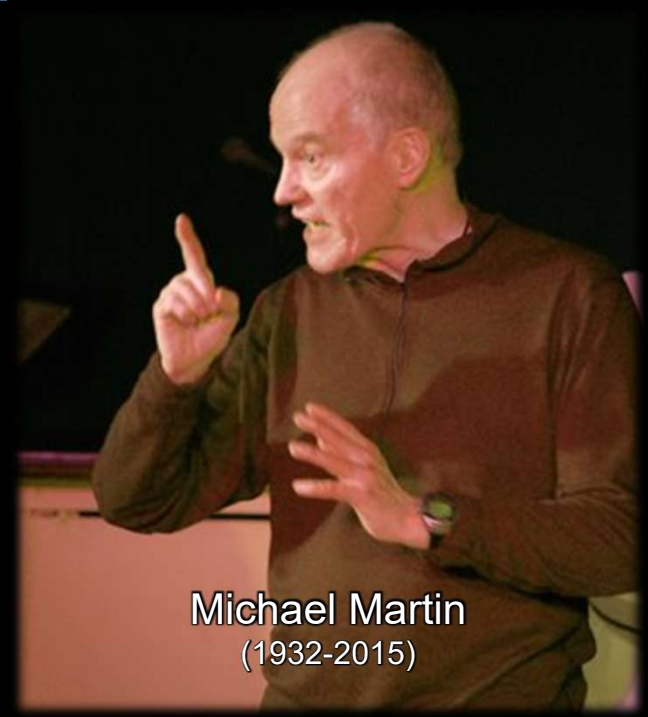
Michael Martin "Glossary"

✧ Argument from Miracles ✧

"argument from miracles"

"an argument that purports to show that the existence of God is the most plausible explanation of miracles."

[Martin, "Glossary," in *Cambridge Companion*, xv]



Michael Martin
(1932-2015)

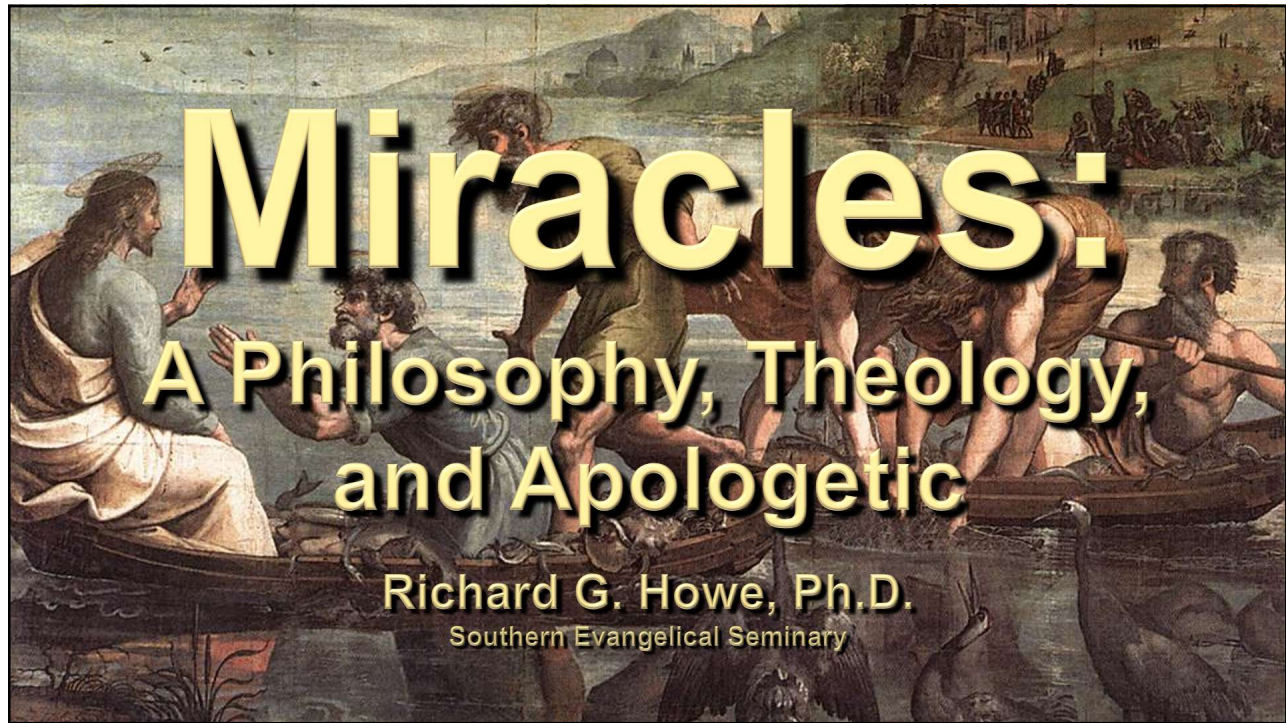
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[Martin, "Glossary," in *Cambridge Companion*, xv]

In the Classical Apologetics tradition of SES co-founder Norman L. Geisler, there is no "argument from miracles."

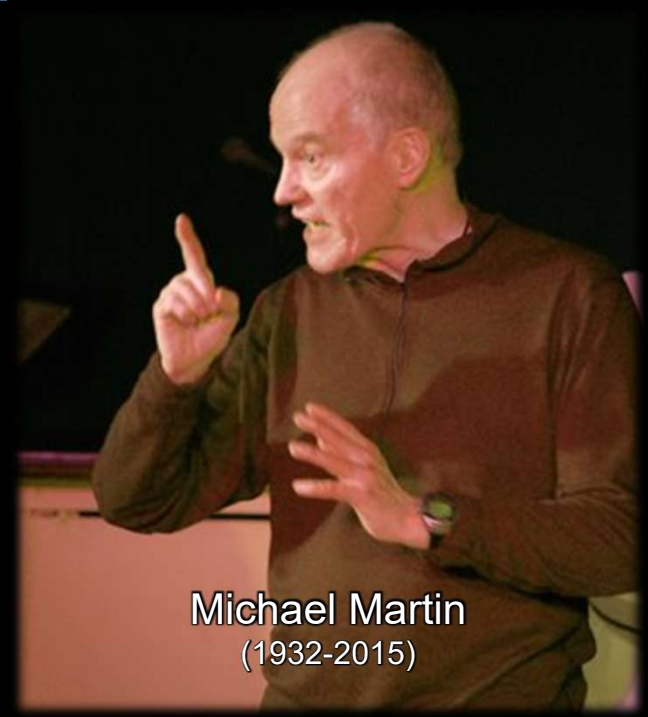
- ❖ Miracles by definition presuppose the existence of God.
- ❖ As such, they themselves cannot be evidence for God.



"empiricism"

"the theory that all knowledge is based on experience."

[Martin, "Glossary," in *Cambridge Companion*, xv]



Michael Martin
(1932-2015)

"empiricism"

"the theory that all knowledge is based on experience."

[Martin, "Glossary," in *Cambridge Companion*, xv]

As we shall see, often terms and concepts differ in important ways between how they are used in contemporary analytic philosophy and the classical tradition of Aristotle and Aquinas.

"empiricism"

"the theory that all knowledge is based on experience."

[Martin, "Glossary," in *Cambridge Companion*, xv]

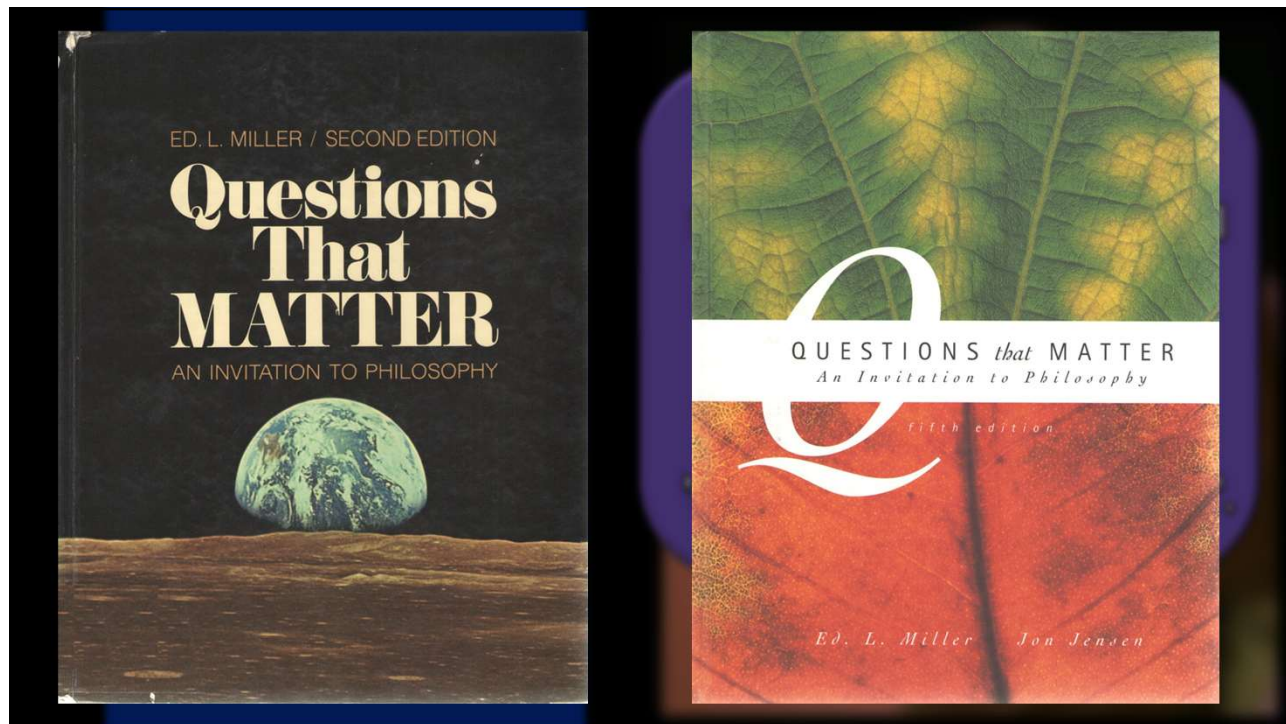
Before one seeks to argue that one usage over the other is better or correct, it is critical at least that the differences are recognized.

"empiricism"

"the theory that all knowledge is based on experience."

[Martin, "Glossary," in *Cambridge Companion*, xv]

Borrowing from the text *Questions that Matter* by the philosopher Ed Miller, I use the terms 'Classical Empiricism' (Aristotle / Aquinas) vs. 'Modern Empiricism' and 'Contemporary Empiricism'.



"empiricism"

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John Locke
(1623-1704)

George Berkeley
(1685-1753)

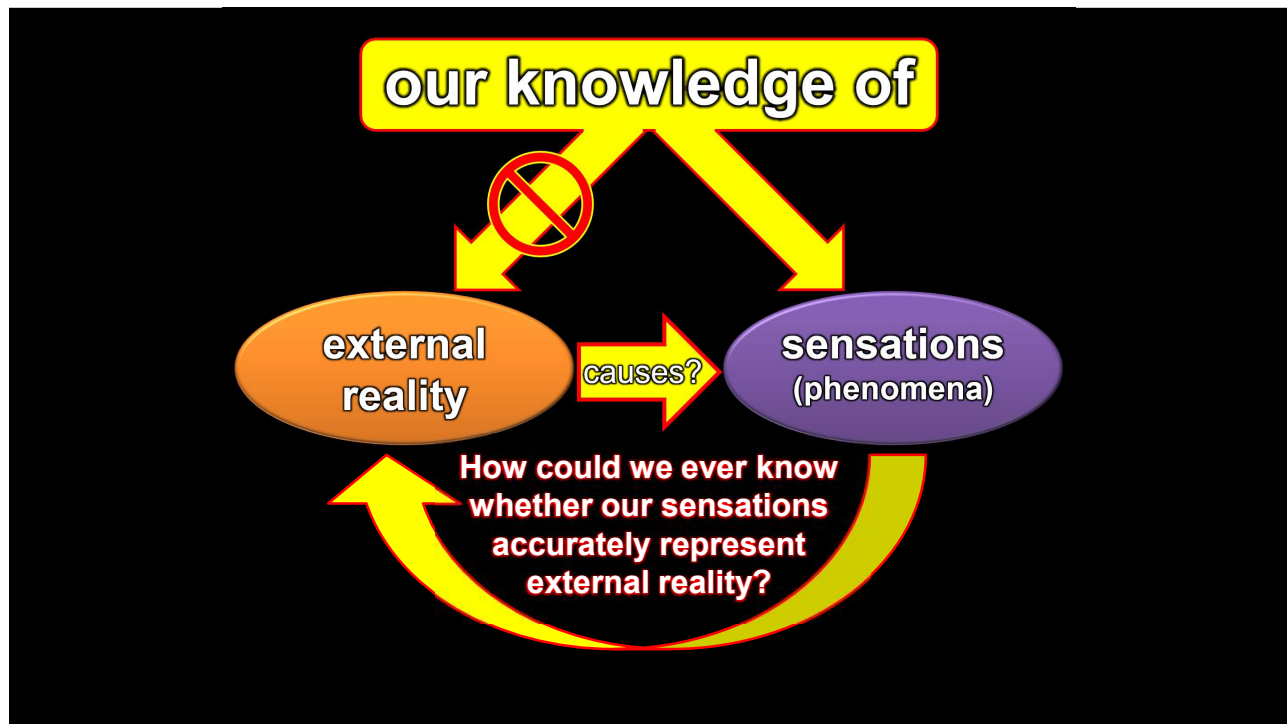
David Hume
(1711-1776)

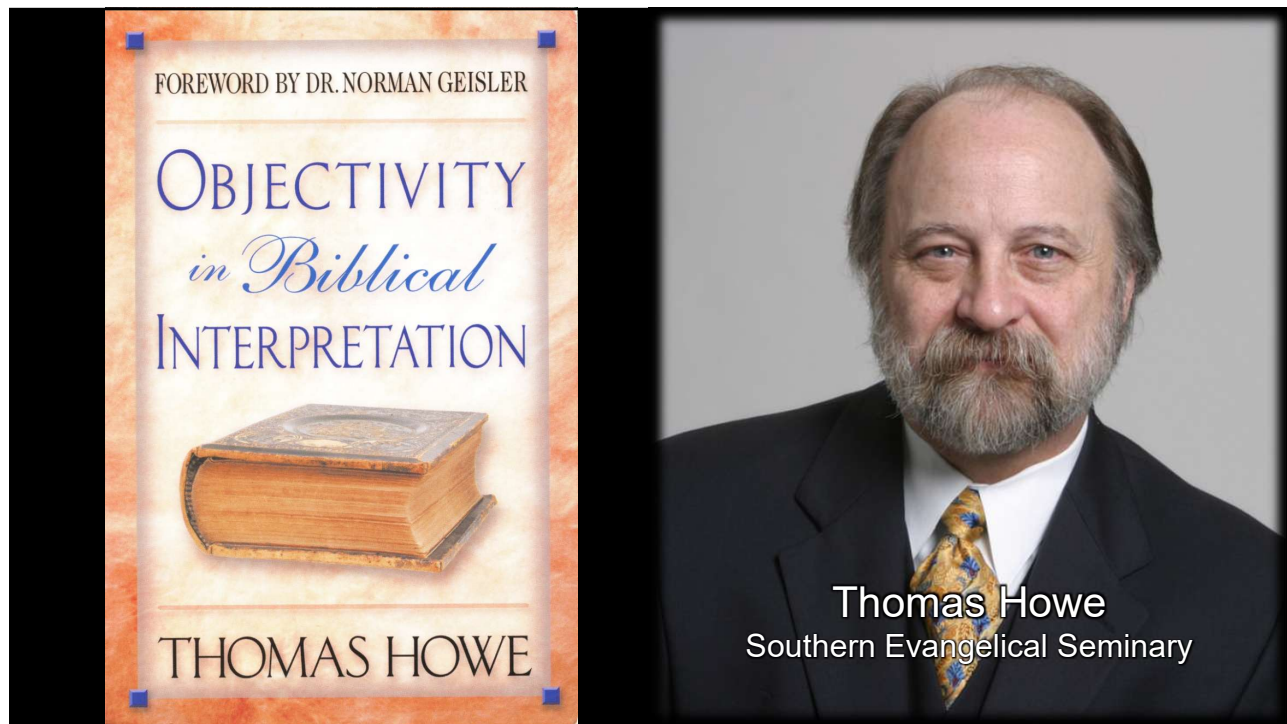
Modern empiricism concerned itself largely with the knowing of:

- ***"qualities" or "properties" (Locke), or***
- ***"ideas" and "perceiving" (Berkeley), or***
- ***"sensations" or "phenomena" (Hume).***

Early on, modern empiricism was committed to the notion that such sensations were "caused" by external objects or by "substances," though such objects or substances were themselves ultimately inexplicable or unaccounted for by the wider philosophy of these Modern Empiricists.

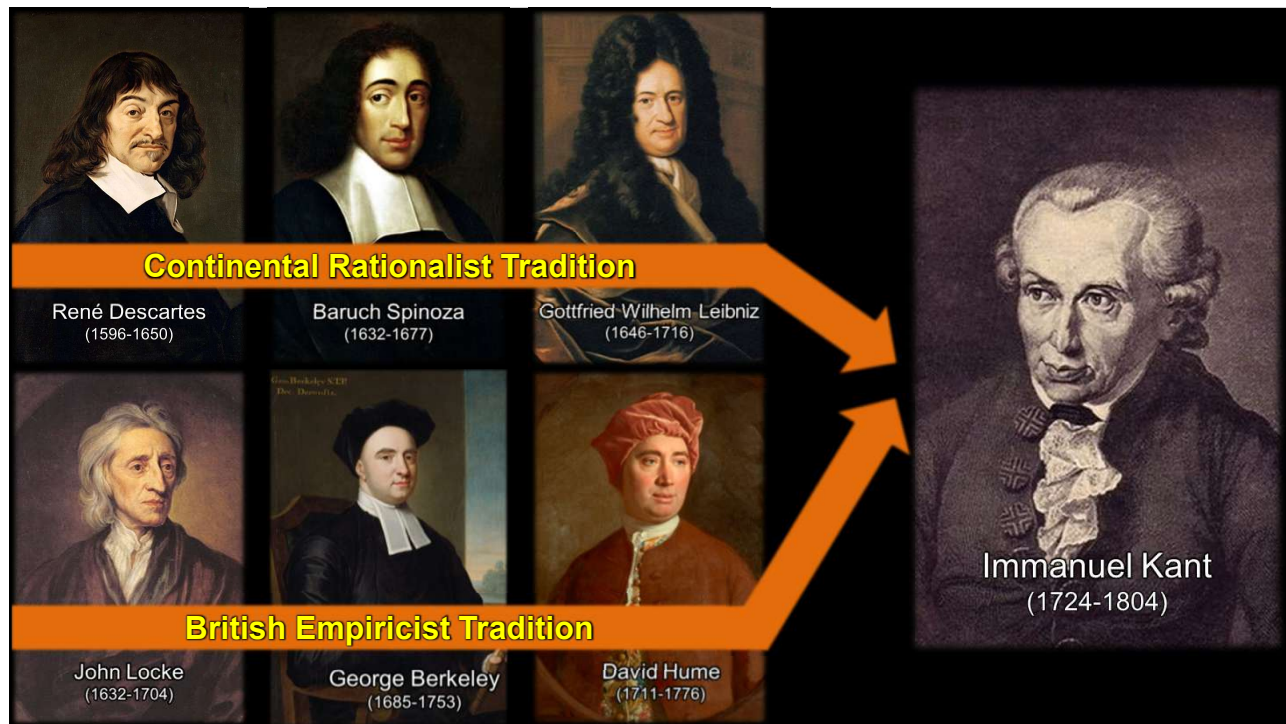
Later, Modern Empiricists such as Hume began to realize the implications of such a divorce between knowing sensations (also called "phenomena") on the one hand and knowing reality antecedent to (and supposedly the "cause of") these sensations on the other.

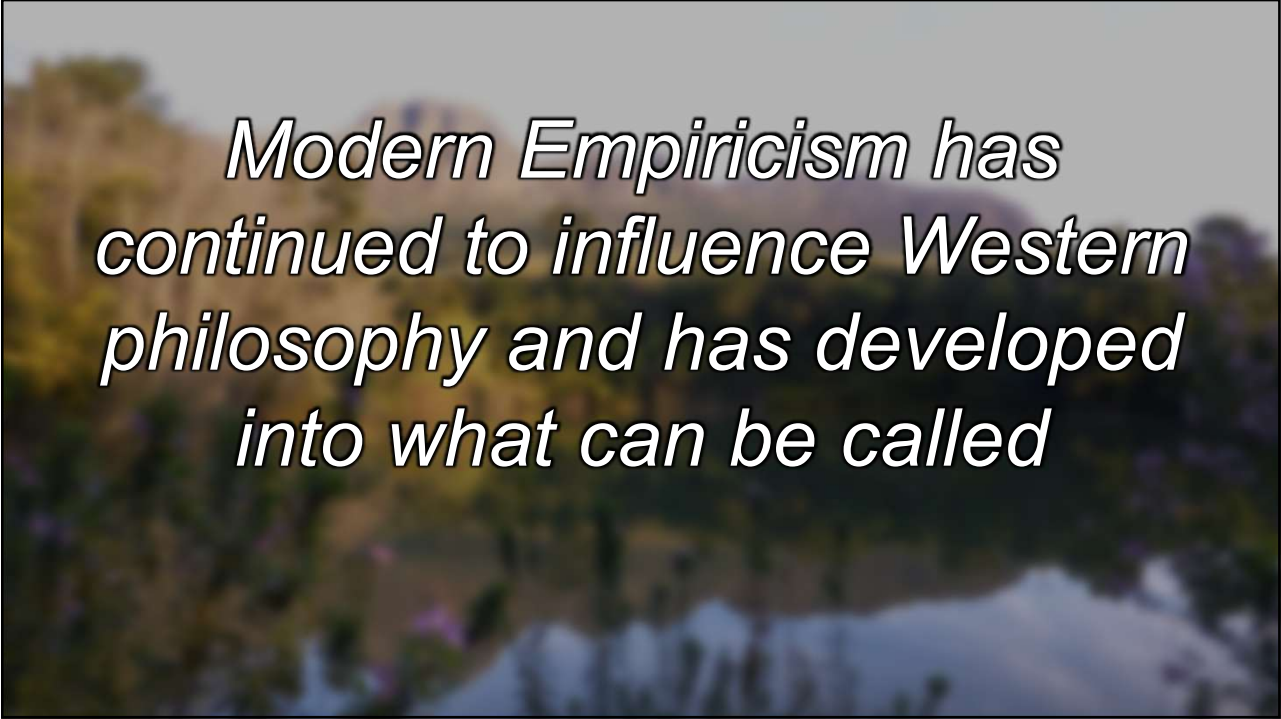




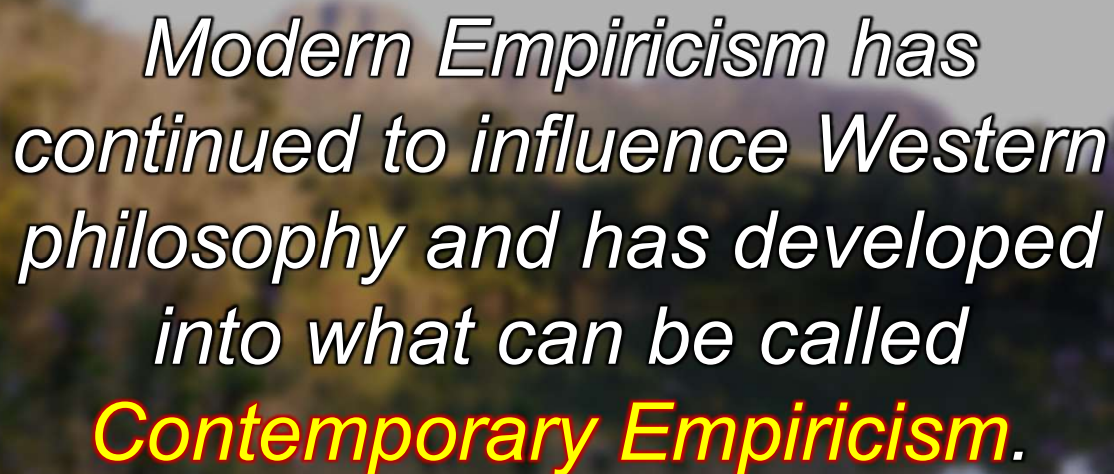
Hume's challenge gave rise to his formidable skepticism about making philosophical conclusions about this external reality that supposedly causes our sensations.

This in turn led to a profound but failed attempt by Immanuel Kant to rebuild the bridge between empirical experience and certainty.





Modern Empiricism has continued to influence Western philosophy and has developed into what can be called

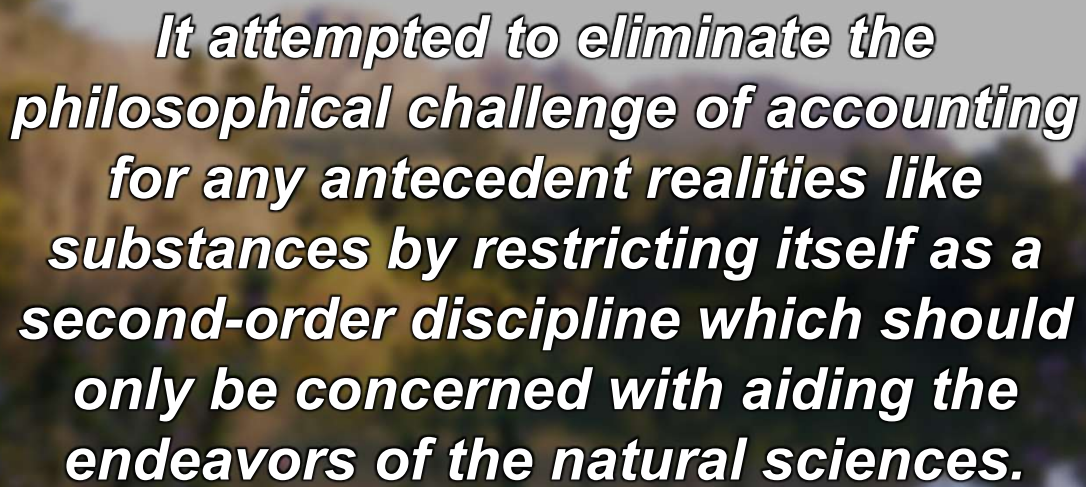


Modern Empiricism has continued to influence Western philosophy and has developed into what can be called
Contemporary Empiricism.

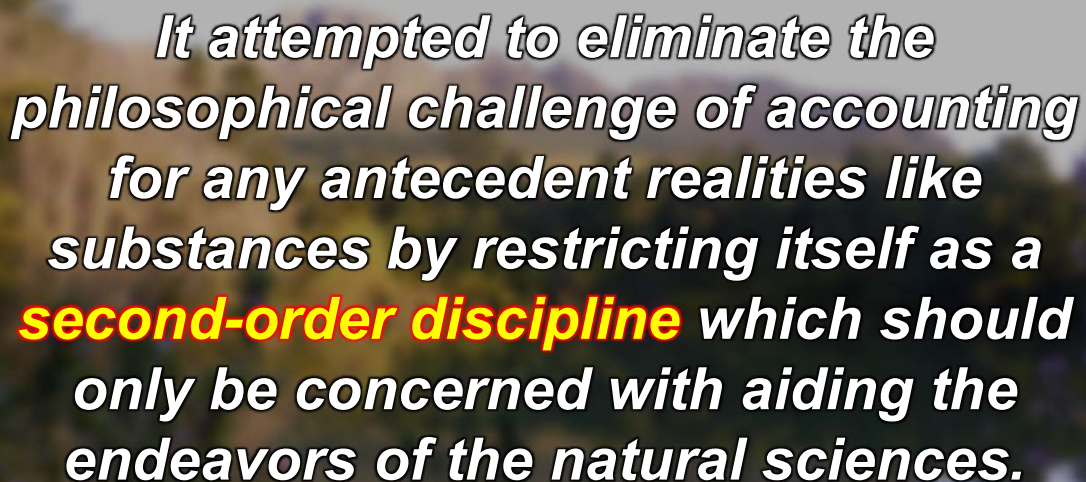
With the transition from Modern Empiricism to Contemporary Empiricism, philosophers have less and less sought to understand human knowing along the categories of Classical metaphysics.

Contemporary empiricism became absorbed into epistemology more broadly considered.

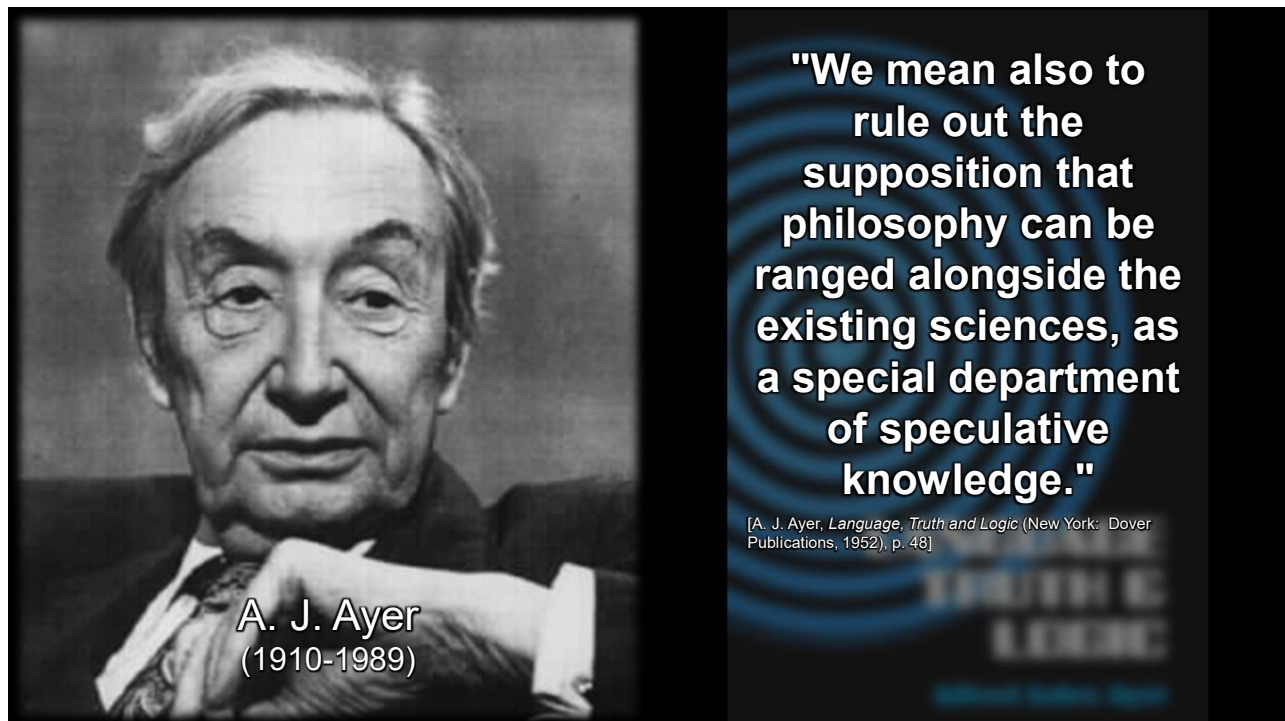
It concerned itself with issues related to the strict definition of terms and the rigors of formal logic (Analytic philosophy).

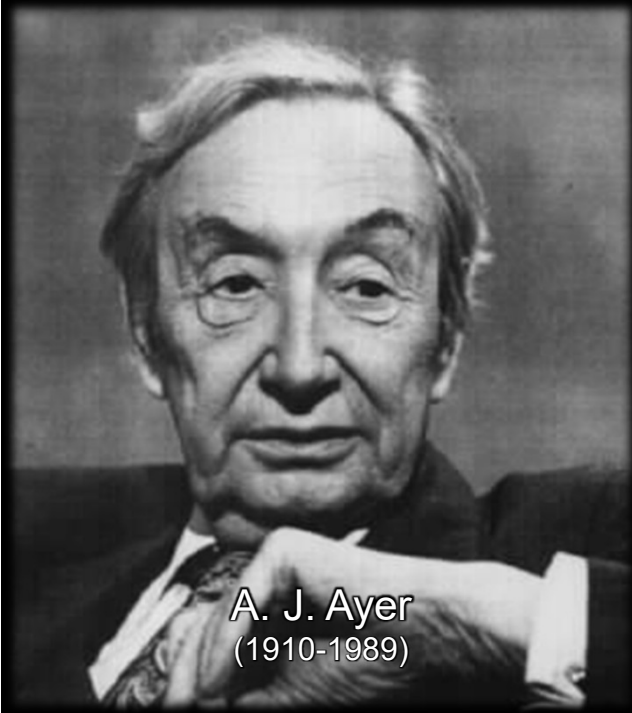


It attempted to eliminate the philosophical challenge of accounting for any antecedent realities like substances by restricting itself as a second-order discipline which should only be concerned with aiding the endeavors of the natural sciences.



*It attempted to eliminate the philosophical challenge of accounting for any antecedent realities like substances by restricting itself as a **second-order discipline** which should only be concerned with aiding the endeavors of the natural sciences.*

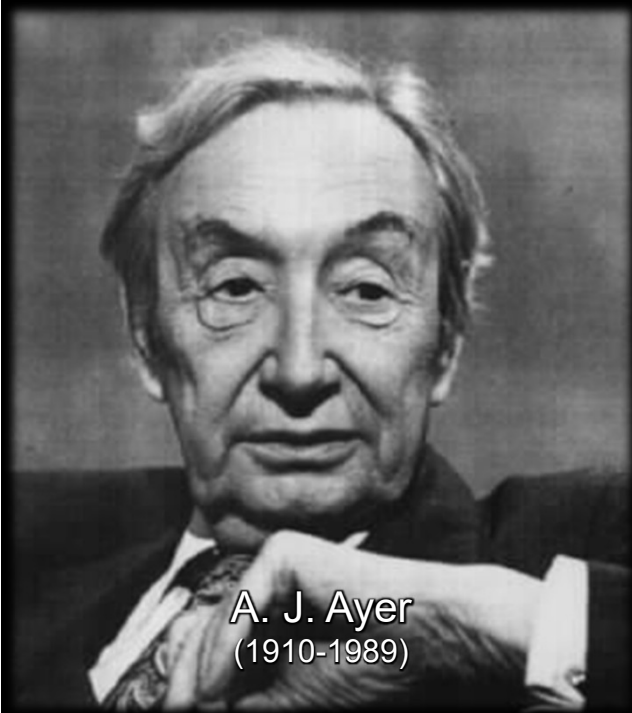




A. J. Ayer
(1910-1989)

"There is no field of experience which cannot, in principle, be brought under some form of scientific law, and no type of speculative knowledge about the world which it is, in principle, beyond the power of science to give."

[Ayer, *Language*, p. 48]



A. J. Ayer
(1910-1989)

"But, actually, the validity of the analytic method is not dependent on any empirical, much less any metaphysical, presupposition about the nature of things. For the philosopher, as an analyst, is not directly concerned with the physical properties of things. **He is concerned only with the way in which we speak about them.** In other words, the propositions of philosophy are not factual, but linguistic in character."

[Ayer, *Language*, p. 57]

According to Ayer

PHILOSOPHY

*Categories of ...
logic of ...
glossary of ...
scope of ...
relation to other disciplines*

SECOND-ORDER DISCIPLINE

NATURAL SCIENCES

PHYSICS
CHEMISTRY
BIOLOGY

FIRST-ORDER DISCIPLINES

LOGICAL POSITIVISM ON THE ROLE OF PHILOSOPHY

PHILOSOPHY

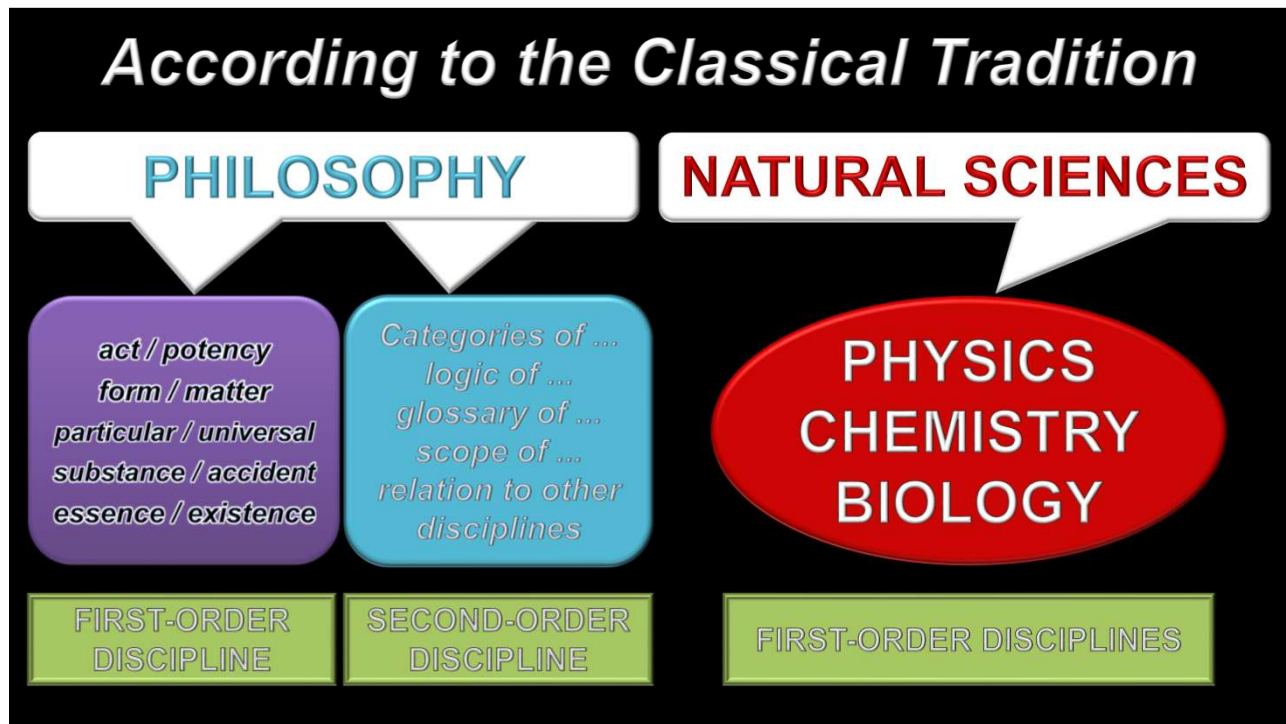
*categories of ...
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SECOND-ORDER DISCIPLINE

NATURAL SCIENCES

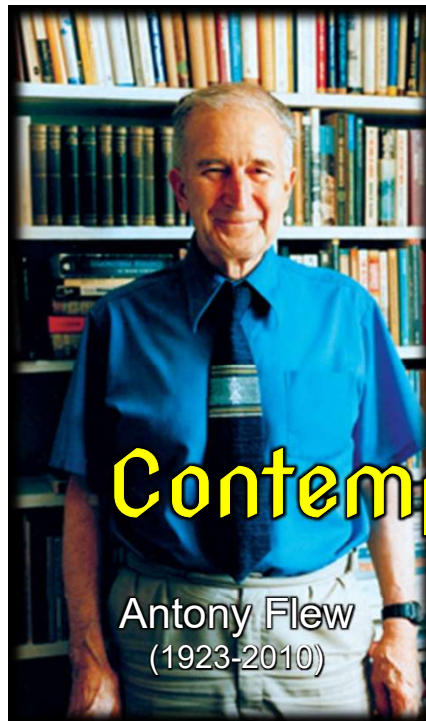
PHYSICS
CHEMISTRY
BIOLOGY

FIRST-ORDER DISCIPLINES



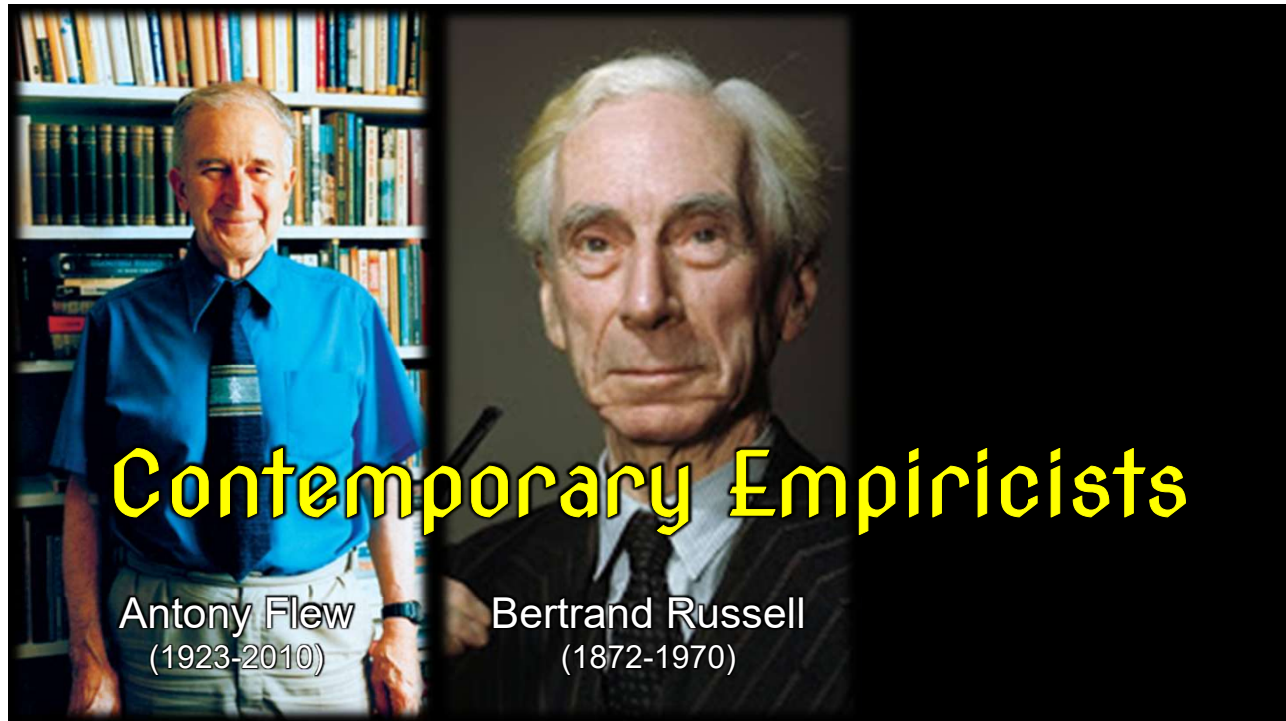
Most recently, certain aspects of contemporary epistemology have challenged the assumptions of the justification discussion and have sought instead to talk in terms of "warrant." (Alvin Plantinga)

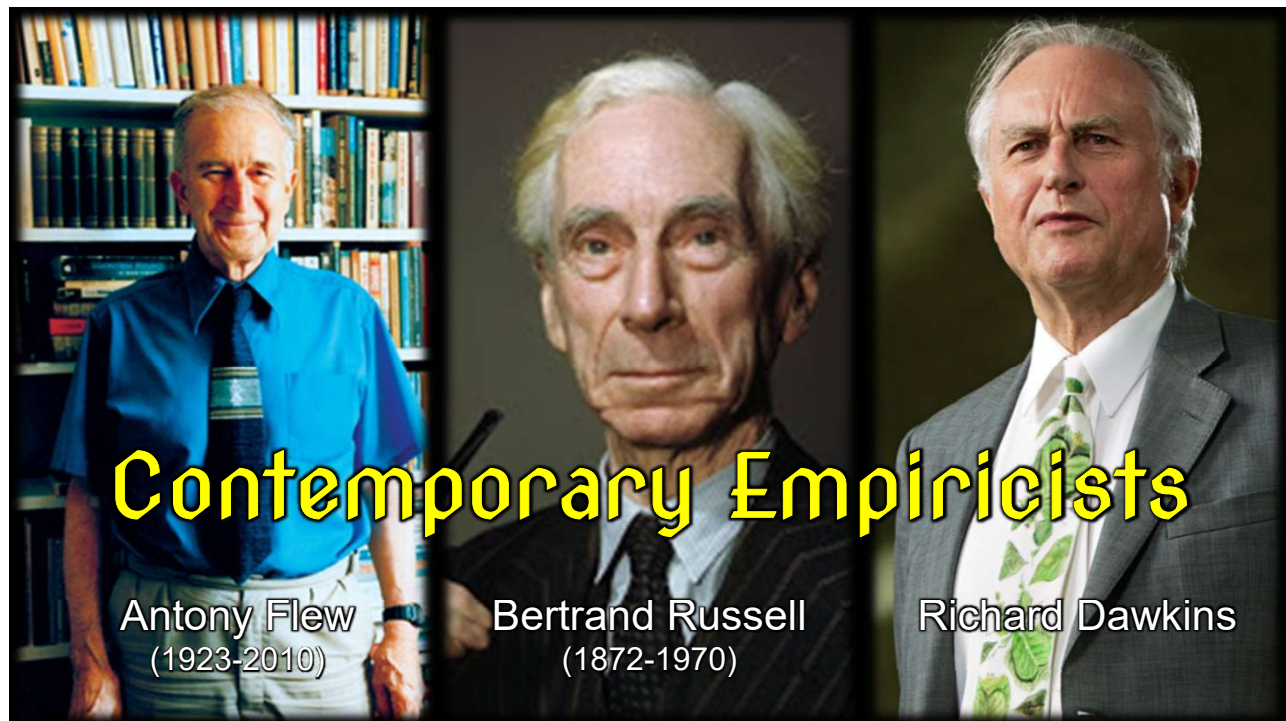
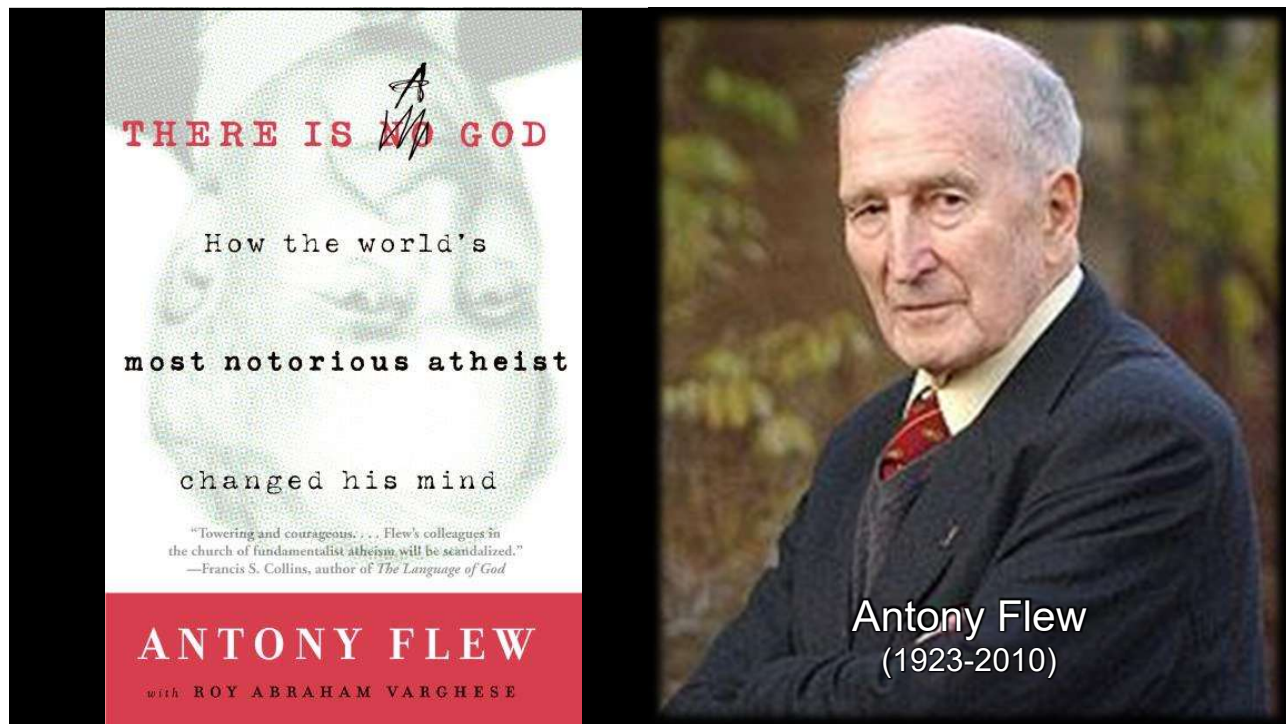
Contemporary Empiricists



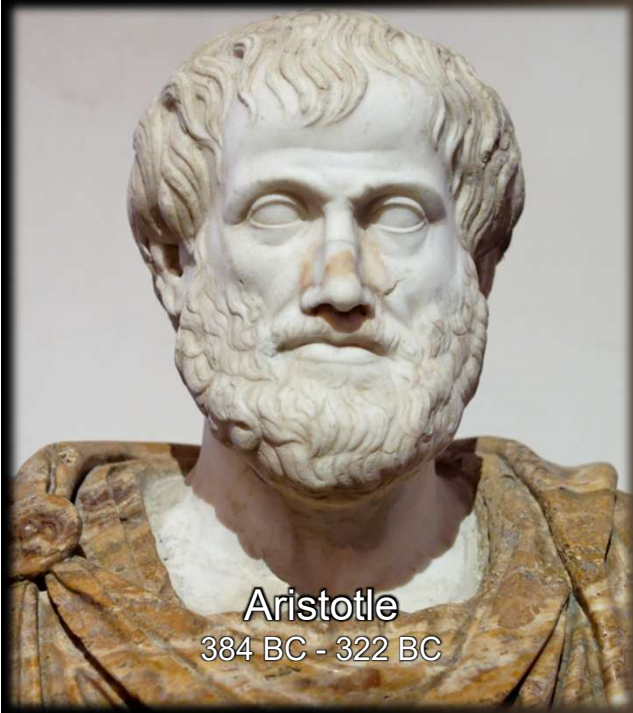
Contemporary Empiricists

Antony Flew
(1923-2010)









Aristotle
384 BC - 322 BC

"From experience again . . . originate the skill of the craftsman and the knowledge of the man of science, skill in the sphere of coming to be and science in the sphere of beings. We conclude that these states of knowledge are neither innate in a determinate form, nor developed from other higher states of knowledge, but from sense-perception."

[Posterior Analytics II, 19, 100a7-11, trans. G. R. G. Mure in Richard McKeon, ed. *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York: Random House, 1941), 185]

"Sensible things [are that] from which human reason takes the origin of its knowledge."

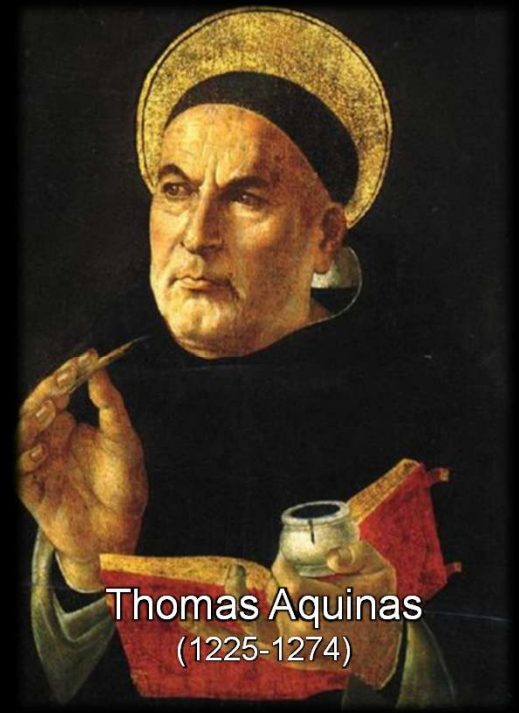
[Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, I, 9, §2. Trans. Anton C. Pegis. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), I, 77]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

"According to its manner of knowing in the present life, the intellect depends on the sense for the origin of knowledge; and so those things that do not fall under the senses cannot be grasp by the human intellect except in so far as the knowledge of them is gathered from sensible things."

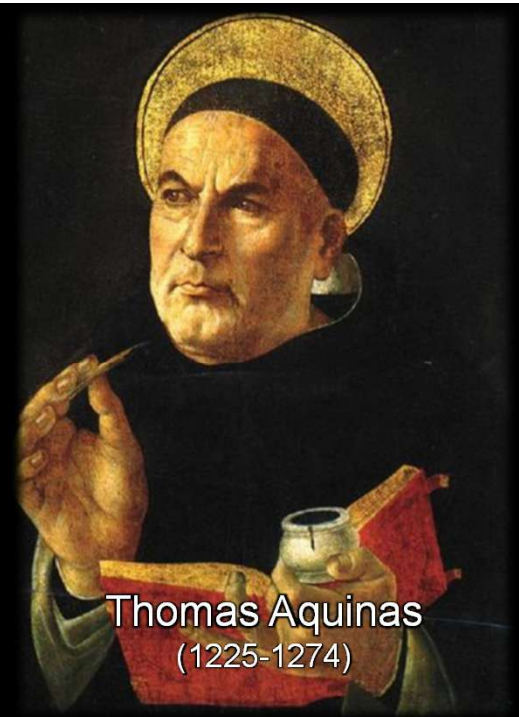
[Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, I, 3, §3. Trans. Anton C. Pegis. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), I, 64]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

"Our senses give rise to memories, and from these we obtain experiential knowledge of things, which in turn is the means through which we come to an understanding of the universal principles of sciences and art."

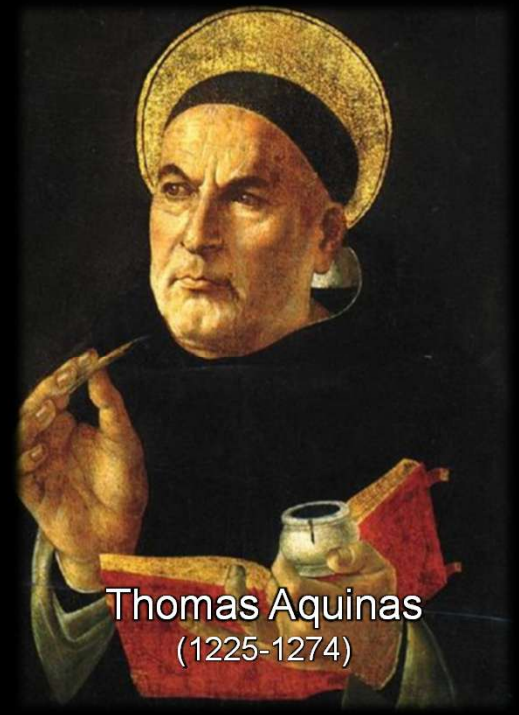
[Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, II, 83, §26. Trans. James F. Anderson (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975): II, p. 279]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

"Our soul, as long as we live in this life, has its being in corporeal matter; hence naturally it knows only what has a form in matter, or what can be known by such a form."

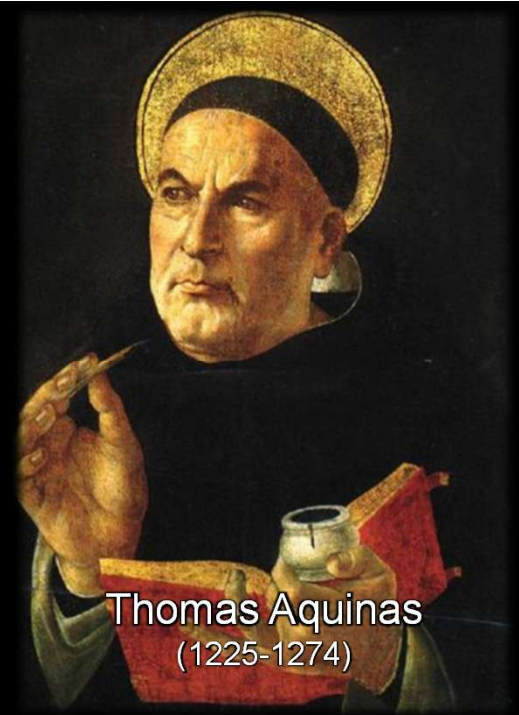
[Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q. 12, art. 11, trans. Father of the English Dominican Province (Westminster: Christian Classics), p. 57]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

"Our natural knowledge begins from sense. Hence our natural knowledge can go as far as it can be led by sensible things."

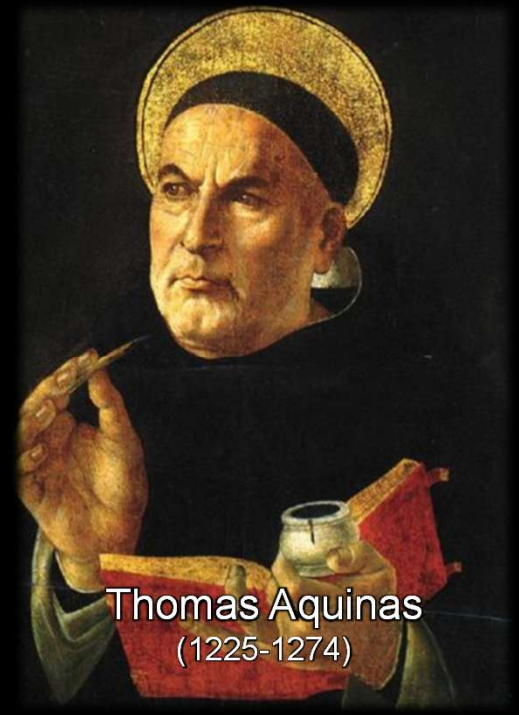
[Thomas Aquinas, *ST*, I, Q. 12, art. 12, p. 58]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

"The knowledge which we have by natural reason contains two things: images derived from the sensible object; and the natural intelligible light, enabling us to abstract from them intelligible conceptions."

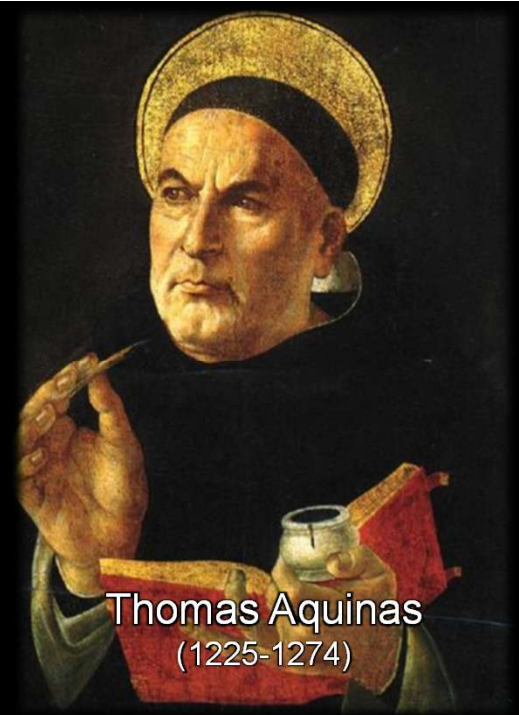
[Thomas Aquinas, ST, I, Q. 12, art. 13, p. 59]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

"Truth is defined by the conformity of intellect and thing; and hence to know this conformity is to know truth."

Summa Theologiae I, Q. 16, art. 2.

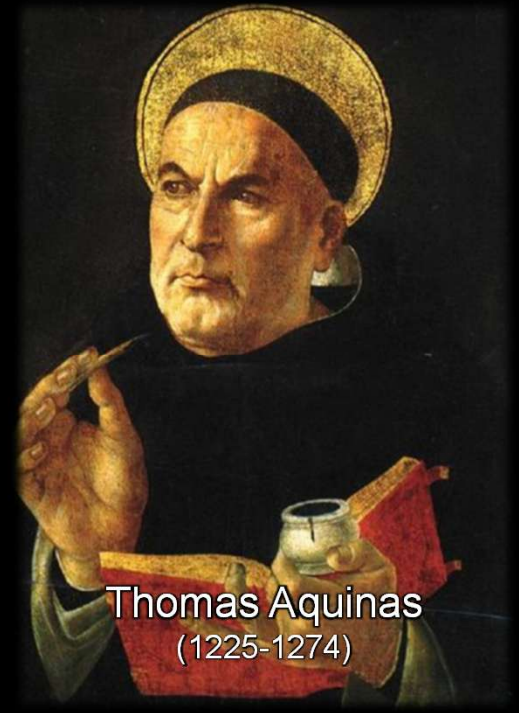


Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

"Our knowledge, taking its start from things, proceeds in this order.

First, it **begins in sense**; second, it is completed in the intellect."

[Thomas Aquinas, *Truth*, I, 11, trans. Mulligan, 48, in *Truth* (3 vols), vol. 1 trans. Robert W. Mulligan (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1952); vol. 2 trans. James V. McGlynn (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1953); vol. 3, trans. Robert W. Schmidt (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1954). The three volumes were reprinted as *Truth* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994)]



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One should also note that Classical Empiricism sees knowledge arising from our encounter with sensible things (i.e., things evident to the senses).

"Our knowledge, taking its start from things, proceeds in this order. First, it **begins in sense**; second, it is **completed in the intellect**."

[Thomas Aquinas, *Truth*, I, 11, trans. Mulligan, 48, in *Truth* (3 vols), vol. 1 trans. Robert W. Mulligan (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1952); vol. 2 trans. James V. McGlynn (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1953); vol. 3, trans. Robert W. Schmidt (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1954). The three volumes were reprinted as *Truth* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994)]

But, for Aquinas, knowledge does not end in the senses (as it might with some contemporary scientists and atheists).

"Our knowledge, taking its start from things, proceeds in this order. First, it **begins in sense**; second, it is **completed in the intellect**."

[Thomas Aquinas, *Truth*, I, 11, trans. Mulligan, 48, in *Truth* (3 vols), vol. 1 trans. Robert W. Mulligan (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1952); vol. 2 trans. James V. McGlynn (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1953); vol. 3, trans. Robert W. Schmidt (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1954). The three volumes were reprinted as *Truth* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994)]

Rather, the intellect of the knower completes the knowledge with what the intellect can gather from the data that senses bring to it.

"Our knowledge, taking its start from things, proceeds in this order. First, it **begins in sense**; second, it is **completed in the intellect**."

[Thomas Aquinas, *Truth*, I, 11, trans. Mulligan, 48, in *Truth* (3 vols), vol. 1 trans. Robert W. Mulligan (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1952); vol. 2 trans. James V. McGlynn (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1953); vol. 3, trans. Robert W. Schmidt (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1954). The three volumes were reprinted as *Truth* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994)]

Further, a proper account of knowledge will be a function of the metaphysics of what it is to be a knower and what it is to be a known.

"Our knowledge, taking its start from things, proceeds in this order. First, it **begins in sense**; second, it is **completed in the intellect**."

[Thomas Aquinas, *Truth*, I, 11, trans. Mulligan, 48, in *Truth* (3 vols), vol. 1 trans. Robert W. Mulligan (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1952); vol. 2 trans. James V. McGlynn (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1953); vol. 3, trans. Robert W. Schmidt (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1954). The three volumes were reprinted as *Truth* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994)]

All this stands in contrast to Modern Empiricism's concern with knowledge of:

- "qualities" or "properties" (Locke), or
- "ideas" and "perceiving" (Berkeley), or
- "sensations" or "phenomena" (Hume).

"Our knowledge, taking its start from things, proceeds in this order. First, it **begins in sense**; second, it is **completed in the intellect**."

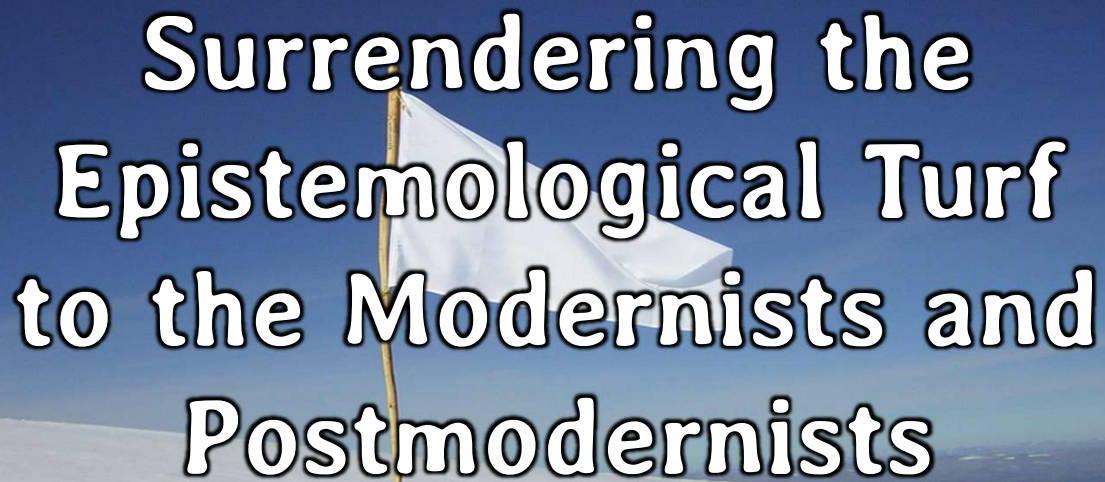
[Thomas Aquinas, *Truth*, I, 11, trans. Mulligan, 48, in *Truth* (3 vols), vol. 1 trans. Robert W. Mulligan (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1952); vol. 2 trans. James V. McGlynn (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1953); vol. 3, trans. Robert W. Schmidt (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1954). The three volumes were reprinted as *Truth* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994)]

Having moved on from the modern empiricism of Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, contemporary philosophers (empiricist or not) often seek to account for human knowledge as fundamentally a function of "beliefs" and their "justification."

"Our knowledge, taking its start from things, proceeds in this order. First, it **begins in sense**; second, it is **completed in the intellect**."

[Thomas Aquinas, *Truth*, I, 11, trans. Mulligan, 48, in *Truth* (3 vols), vol. 1 trans. Robert W. Mulligan (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1952); vol. 2 trans. James V. McGlynn (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1953); vol. 3, trans. Robert W. Schmidt (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1954). The three volumes were reprinted as *Truth* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994)]

While certain contemporary philosophers are not shy about engaging the metaphysics regarding knowledge questions, such metaphysics will be far removed from the classical metaphysics of Thomas Aquinas.



Surrendering the Epistemological Turf to the Modernists and Postmodernists

Too many Christians have more or less surrendered the territory of empirical knowledge to the Logical Positivists and to "scientism" (e.g., Richard Dawkins).

They have erroneously let contemporary scientists set the agenda when these scientists claim that all knowledge is constrained to the boundaries of the physical world.

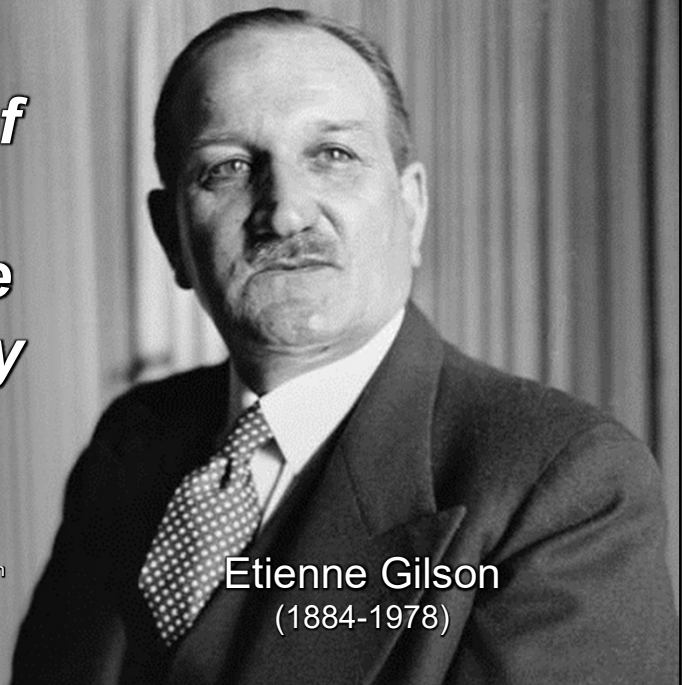
*These Christians have lost sight of the fact that, while all knowledge **begins** in experience, that is not the end of the matter.*

*According to classical empiricism,
all knowledge **begins in experience**
and is **completed in the intellect**.*

***"The senses are
only the bearers of
a message which
they are incapable
of reading, for only
the intellect can
decipher it."***

[Etienne Gilson, *Thomist Realism and the Critique of Knowledge* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1983), 199. While in context Gilson was referring to the act of existing, I believe this point can be extended to other metaphysical aspects of things.]

Etienne Gilson
(1884-1978)



The Methodology of Classical Realism

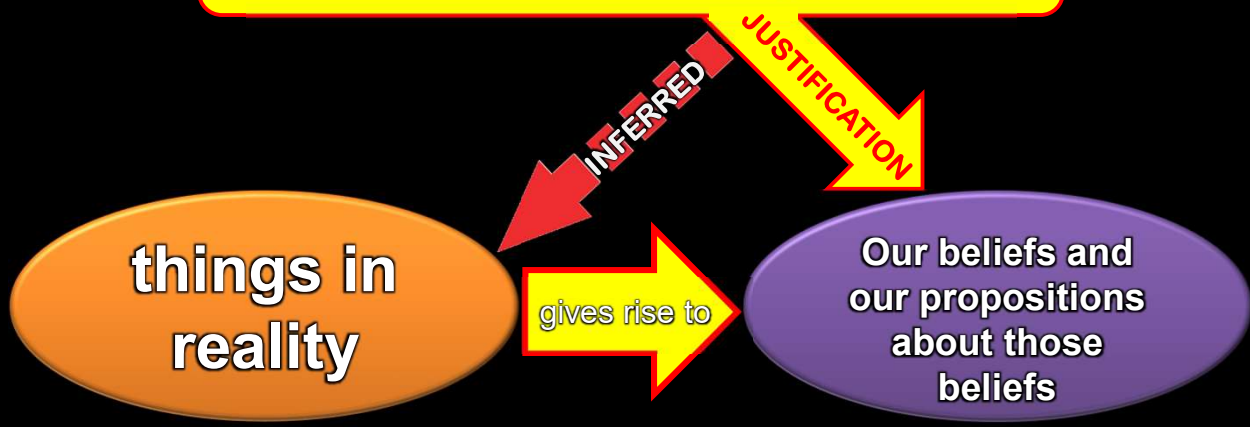
Our knowledge of external, sensible objects is the first apprehension of the intellect.

The existence of the external, sensible world is the starting point for a realist methodology.

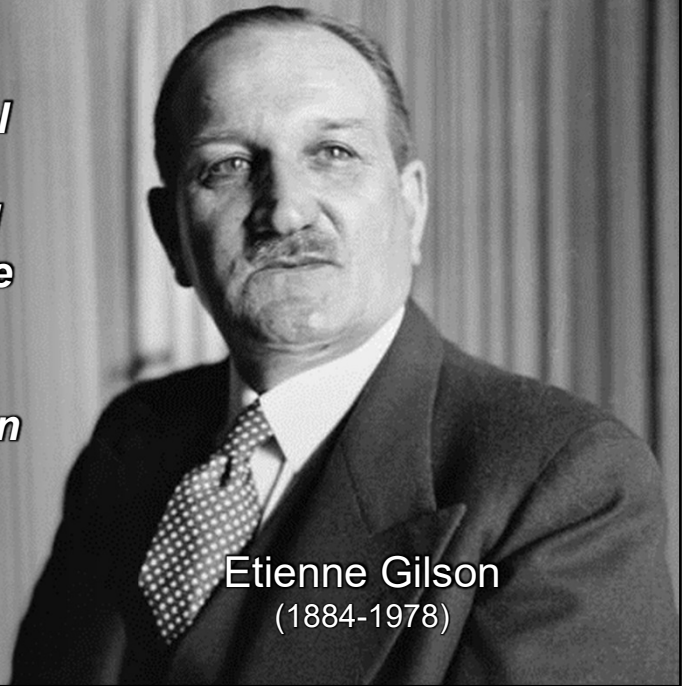
Notice, therefore, that in the Classical Realism of Thomas Aquinas, our knowledge is of things and not merely of propositions or beliefs.

MODERN EMPIRICISM

our knowledge of

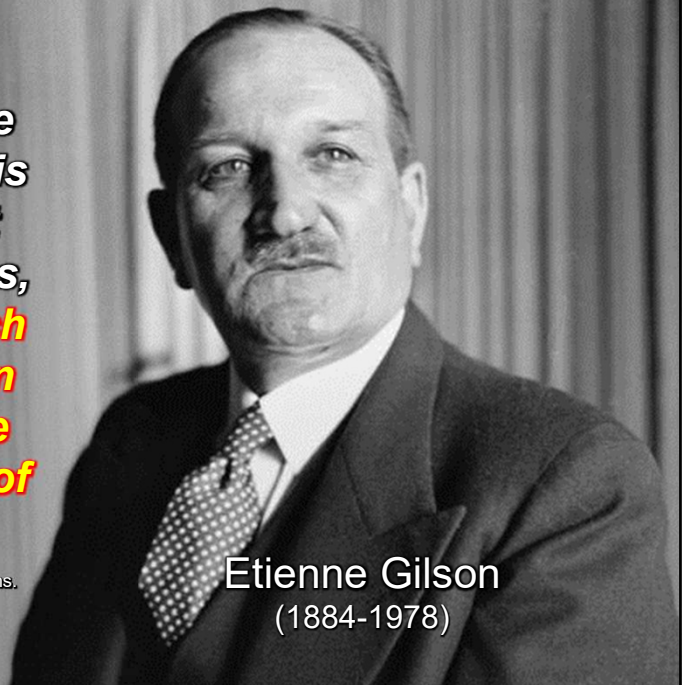


"After passing twenty centuries of the very model of those self-evident facts that only a madman would ever dream of doubting, the existence of the external world finally received its metaphysical demonstration from Descartes.



Etienne Gilson
(1884-1978)

"Yet no sooner had he demonstrated the existence of the external world than his disciples realized that, not only was his proof worthless, but the very principles which made such a demonstration necessary at the same time rendered the attempted proof impossible."

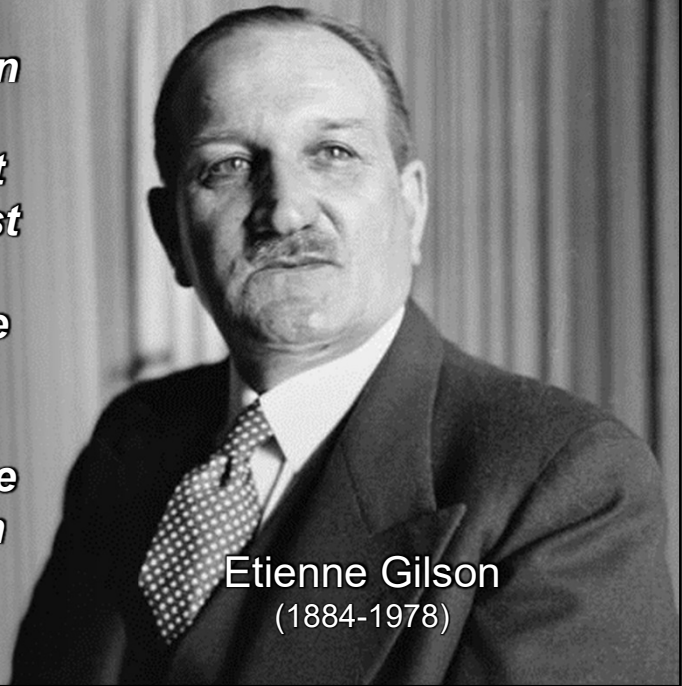


[Etienne Gilson, *Thomist Realism and the Critique of Knowledge*, trans. by Mark A. Wauck, San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 1986, p. 27]

Etienne Gilson
(1884-1978)

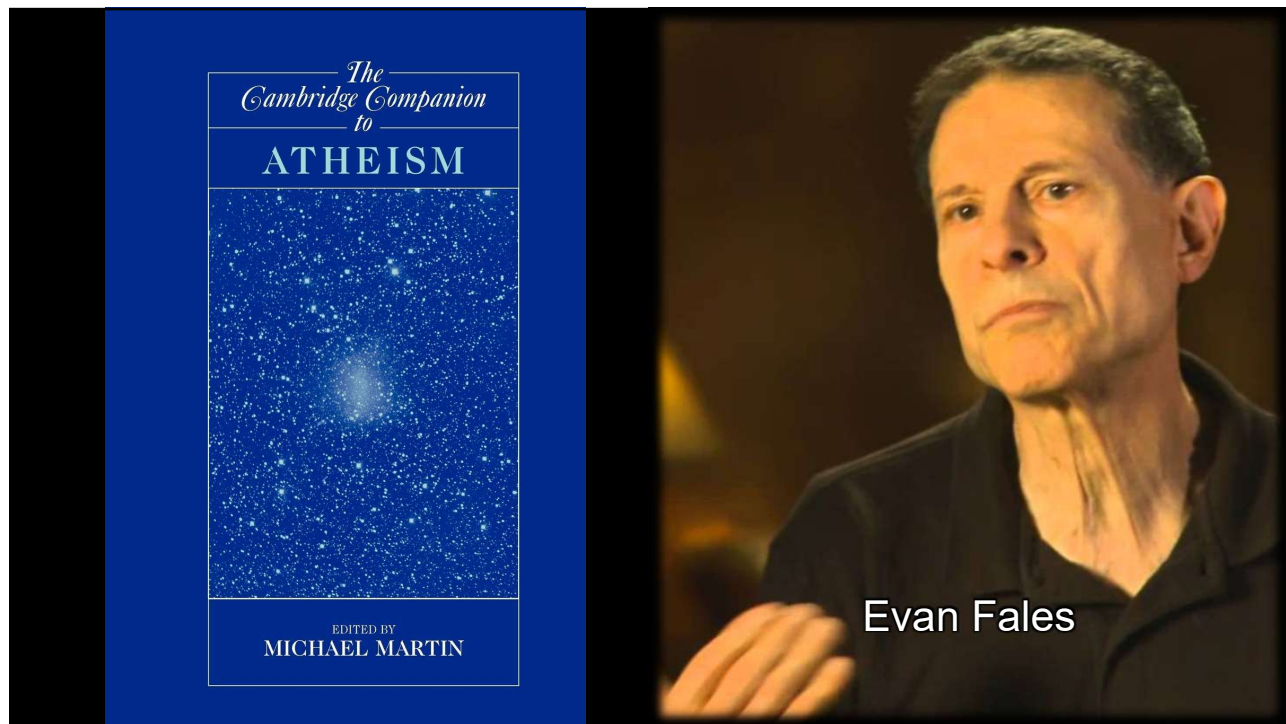
"The realist, therefore, when invited to take part in discussions on what is not his own ground, should first of all accustom himself to saying No, and not imagine himself in difficulties because he is unable to answer questions which are in fact insoluble, but which for him do not arise."

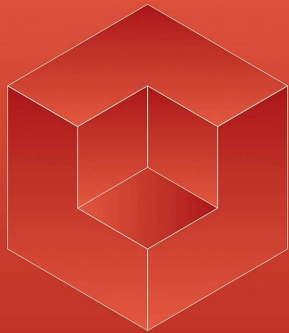
[Etienne Gilson, *Methodical Realism*, p. 128]



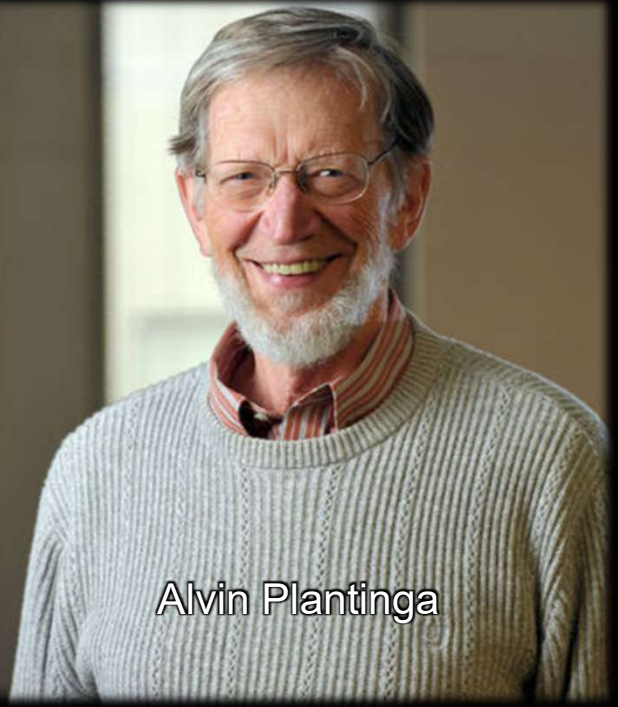
Etienne Gilson
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Classical Empiricism vs. Classical Foundationalism





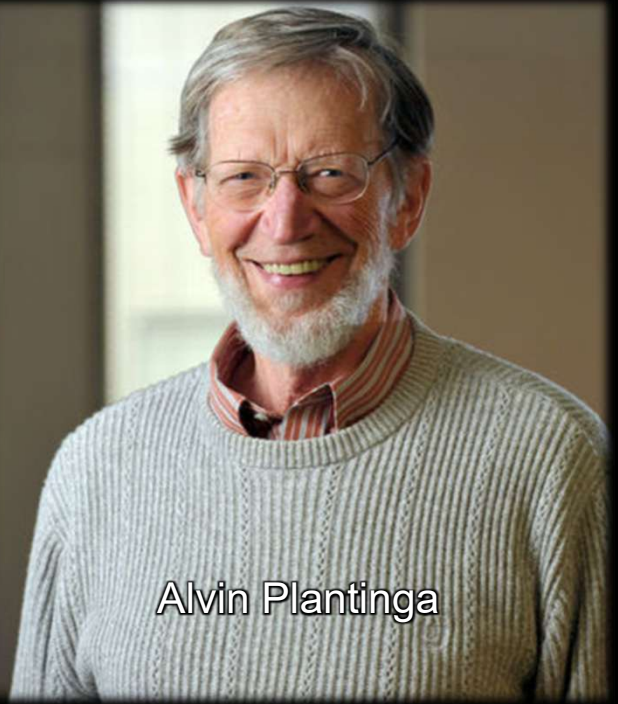
KNOWLEDGE AND
CHRISTIAN BELIEF
ALVIN PLANTINGA



Alvin Plantinga

***"According to classical
foundationalism
(hereafter CF), you are
within your epistemic
rights in believing a
proposition only if you
believe it on the
evidential basis of
propositions that are
self-evident or
incorrigible."***

[Alvin Plantinga, *Knowledge and Christian Belief*
(Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2015), 15]



Alvin Plantinga

"According to classical foundationalism (hereafter CF), you are within your epistemic rights in believing a proposition only if you believe it on the evidential basis of propositions that are self-evident or incorrigible."

[Alvin Plantinga, *Knowledge and Christian Belief* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2015), 15]

Self-evident propositions are those that are seen to be true by virtue of understanding the meanings of the terms in the proposition.

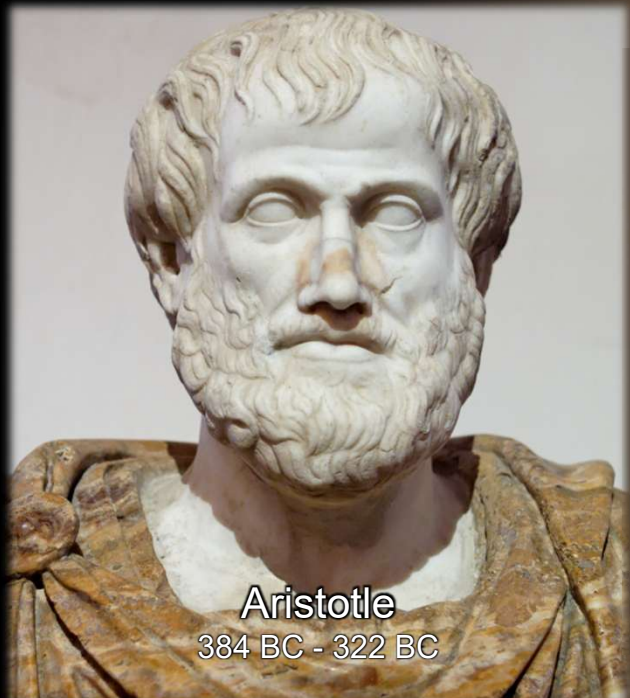
For example, it is self-evident to anyone who knows what 'whole' means that the whole is greater than its parts.

"Those things which are self-evident ... are known as soon as the terms are known, as is said in the Posterior Analytics."

[Thomas Aquinas, *Truth*, 10, art. 12, trans. James V. McGlynn, vol. II, p. 67, in *Truth* (3 vols), vol. 1 trans. Robert W. Mulligan (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1952); vol. 2 trans. James V. McGlynn (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1953); vol. 3, trans. Robert W. Schmidt (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1954). The three volumes were reprinted as *Truth* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994)]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

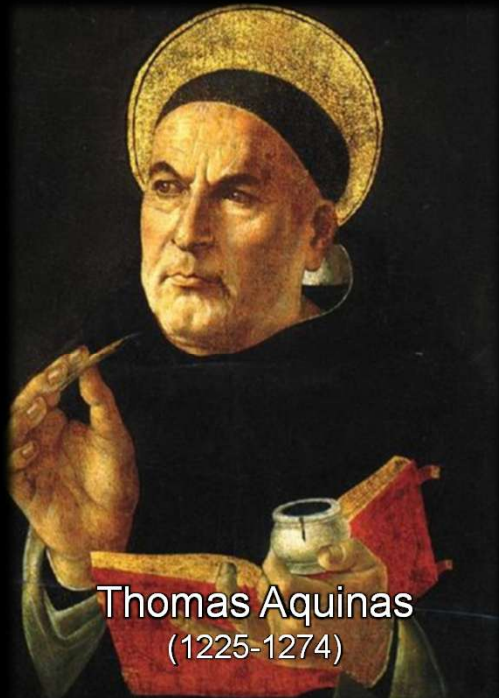


Aristotle
384 BC - 322 BC

"Our own doctrine is that not all knowledge is demonstrative: on the contrary, knowledge of the immediate premisses [sic] is independent of demonstration. ... for since we must know the prior premisses [sic] from which the demonstration is drawn, and since the regress must end in immediate truths, those truths must be indemonstrable."

[Posterior Analytics I, 3, 72^b19-22, trans. G. R. G. Mure in Richard McKeon, ed. *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York: Random House, 1941), 114]

"Our knowledge of principles themselves is derived from sensible things; if, for instance, we had not perceived some whole by our senses, we would be unable to understand the principle that the whole is greater than its parts.."



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

[Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, II, 83, §32. Trans. James F. Anderson (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), II, 282]

"According to classical foundationalism (hereafter CF), you are within your epistemic rights in believing a proposition only if you believe it on the evidential basis of propositions that are self-evident or incorrigible."

[Alvin Plantinga, *Knowledge and Christian Belief* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2015), 15]

Incorrigible literally means "incapable of being corrected" (as, for example, an incorrigible child).

In logic, an incorrigible belief or proposition is one about which you cannot be wrong, as, for example, that belief that you have a headache.

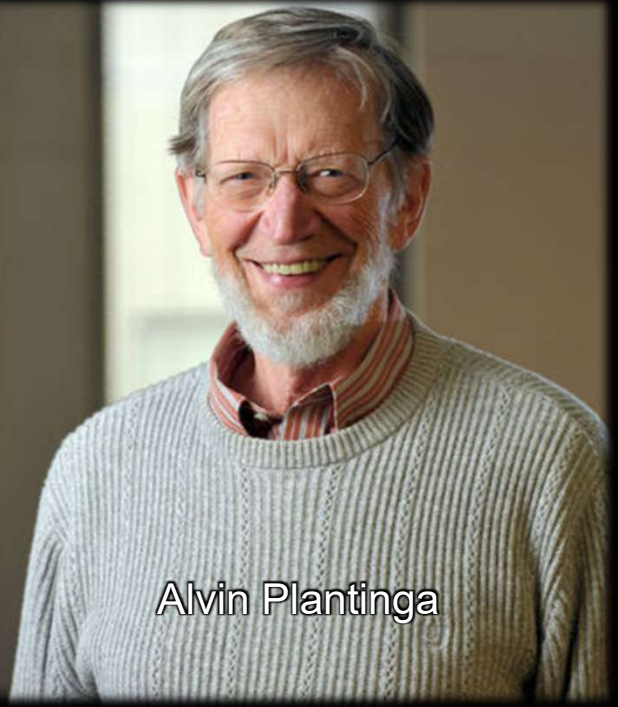
"If you believe a proposition for which there isn't any evidence from self-evident or incorrigible propositions, then you are unjustified and violating your epistemic duties."



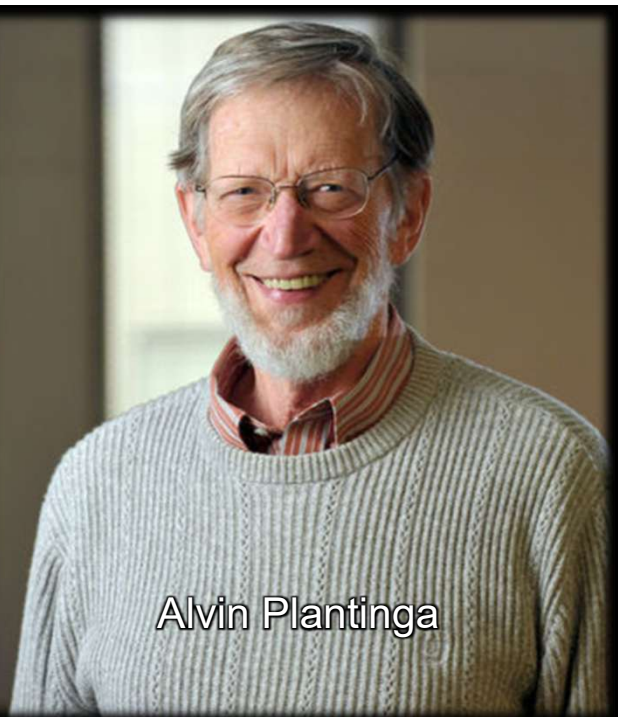
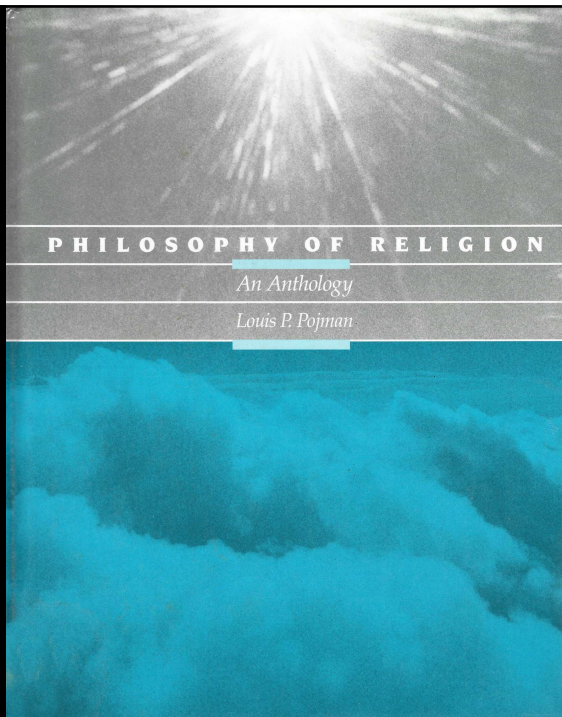
Alvin Plantinga

"But here's the problem: there don't seem to be any incorrigible or self-evident propositions that support CF itself."

[Alvin Plantinga, *Knowledge and Christian Belief* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2015), 15]



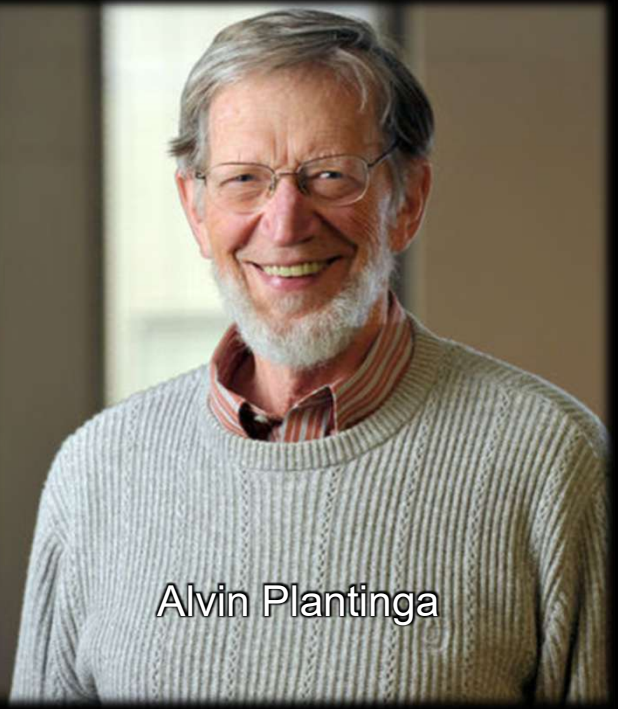
Alvin Plantinga



Alvin Plantinga

"[Both] Aquinas and the evidentialist objector [to theism] concur in holding that belief in God is rationally acceptable only if there is evidence for it. ...

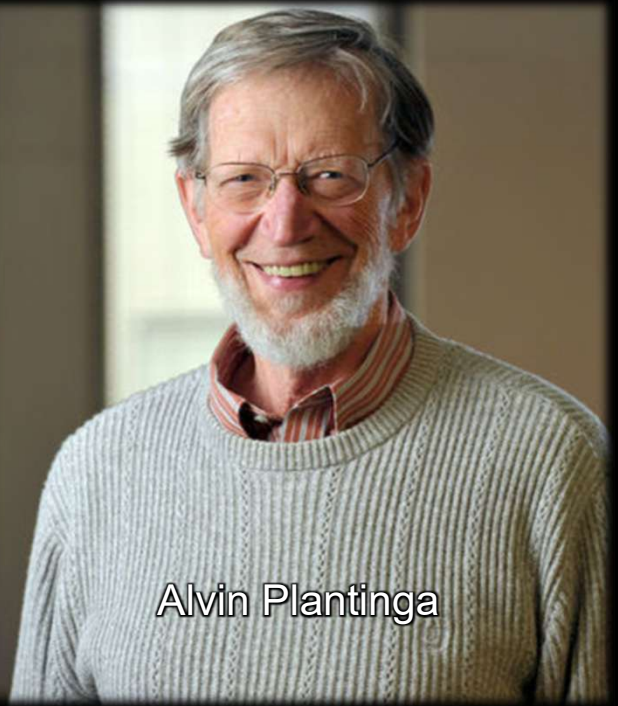
We get a better understanding ... if we see them as accepting some version of *classical foundationalism*. ...



Alvin Plantinga

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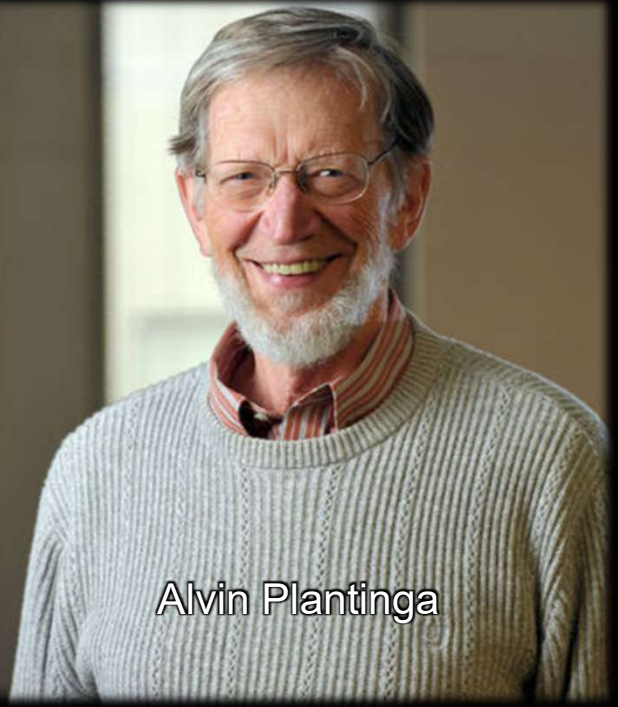
We get a better understanding ... if we see them as accepting some version of **classical foundationalism**. ...



Alvin Plantinga

"According to the foundationalist some propositions are properly basic and some are not; those that are not are rationally accepted only on the basis of *evidence*, where the evidence must trace back, *ultimately*, to what *is* properly basic."

[Alvin Plantinga, "Religious Belief without Evidence," in Louis P. Pojman *Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology* (Belmont: Wadsworth, 1987), 457]



Alvin Plantinga

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[Alvin Plantinga, "Religious Belief without Evidence," in Louis P. Pojman *Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology* (Belmont: Wadsworth, 1987), 457]

For the most part, Plantinga will opt out of what he calls "classical foundationalism" for a more nuanced epistemology which he calls "warrant."

"According to the foundationalist some propositions are properly basic and some are not; those that are not are rationally accepted only on the basis of *evidence*, where the evidence must trace back, *ultimately*, to what *is* properly basic."

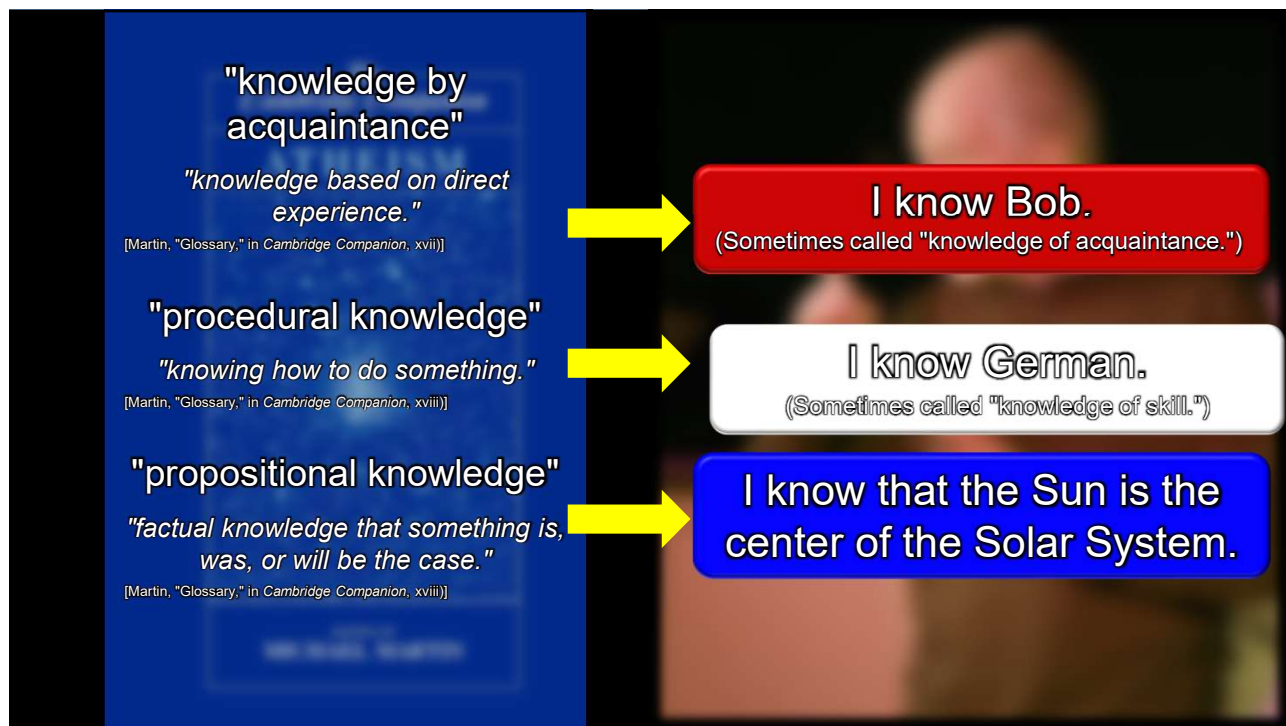
[Alvin Plantinga, "Religious Belief without Evidence," in Louis P. Pojman *Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology* (Belmont: Wadsworth, 1987), 457]

Setting aside any critique of "warrant," one should notice the difference between the "classical foundationalism" Plantinga ascribes to Aquinas and Aquinas's own accounting of knowledge.

Michael Martin

"Glossary"

- ↻ Knowledge by Acquaintance ↻
- ↻ Procedural Knowledge ↻
- ↻ Propositional Knowledge ↻



This diagram explains the three standard ways that the term 'knowledge' is defined by contemporary analytic philosophers. It features a blue vertical panel on the left with definitions and a large purple rounded rectangle on the right with a summary explanation.

Definitions (from the blue panel):

- "knowledge by acquaintance"**: "knowledge based on direct experience."
[Martin, "Glossary," in *Cambridge Companion*, xvii]
- "procedural knowledge"**: "knowing how to do something."
[Martin, "Glossary," in *Cambridge Companion*, xviii]
- "propositional knowledge"**: "factual knowledge that something is, was, or will be the case."
[Martin, "Glossary," in *Cambridge Companion*, xviii]

Summary (from the purple box):

Here Martin is giving the three standard ways that the term 'knowledge' is defined by contemporary analytic philosophers (though they may go by different labels in different sources).

For the most part, I do not quarrel with these as far as they go.

"knowledge by acquaintance"

"knowledge based on direct experience."

[Martin, "Glossary," in *Cambridge Companion*, xvii]]

"procedural knowledge"

"knowing how to do something."

[Martin, "Glossary," in *Cambridge Companion*, xviii]]

"propositional knowledge"

"factual knowledge that something is, was, or will be the case."

[Martin, "Glossary," in *Cambridge Companion*, xviii]]

The problem lies in the fact that these are regarded as exhausting the options of how the term 'knowledge' is used.

Further, "propositional knowledge" is regarded as the sole concern of the philosopher.

"knowledge by acquaintance"

"knowledge based on direct experience."

[Martin, "Glossary," in *Cambridge Companion*, xvii]]

"procedural knowledge"

"knowing how to do something."

[Martin, "Glossary," in *Cambridge Companion*, xviii]]

"propositional knowledge"

"factual knowledge that something is, was, or will be the case."

[Martin, "Glossary," in *Cambridge Companion*, xviii]]

Thus, the understanding of what knowledge is in the classical tradition of Aristotle and Aquinas is excluded by definition at the outset.

"knowledge by acquaintance"

"knowledge based on direct experience."

[Martin, "Glossary," in *Cambridge Companion*, xvii]]

"procedural knowledge"

"knowing how to do something."

[Martin, "Glossary," in *Cambridge Companion*, xviii]]

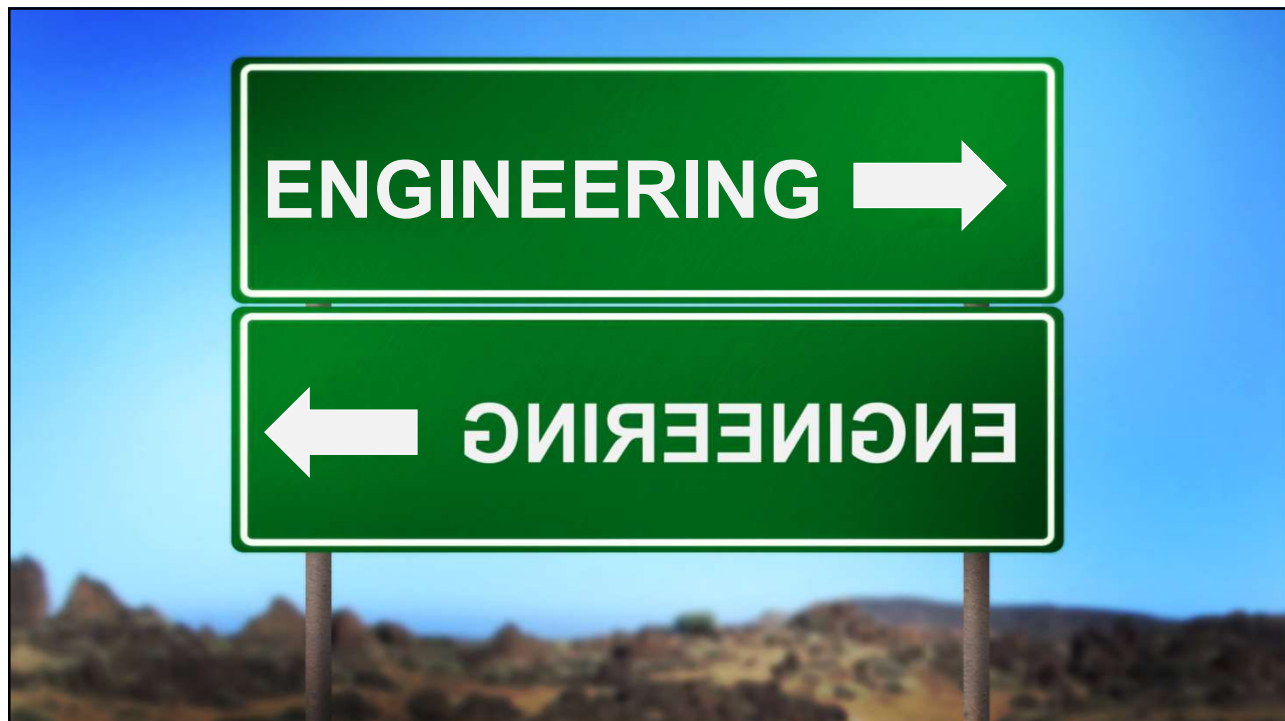
"propositional knowledge"

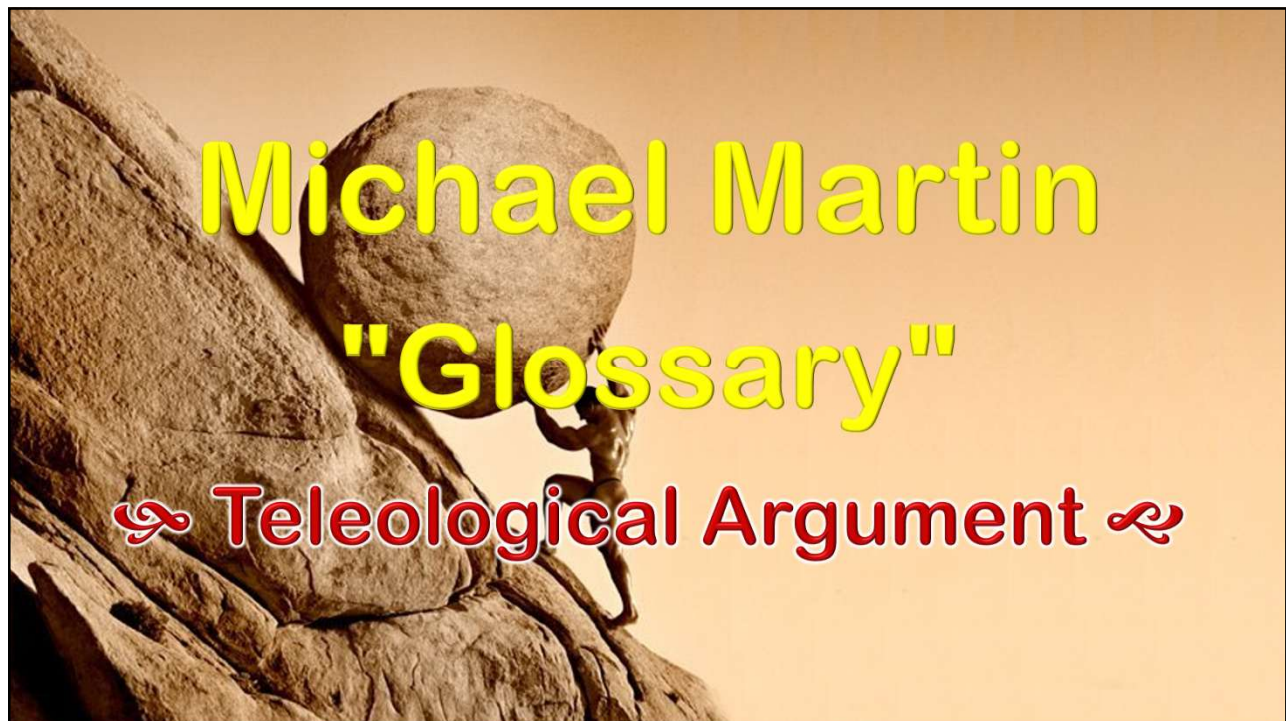
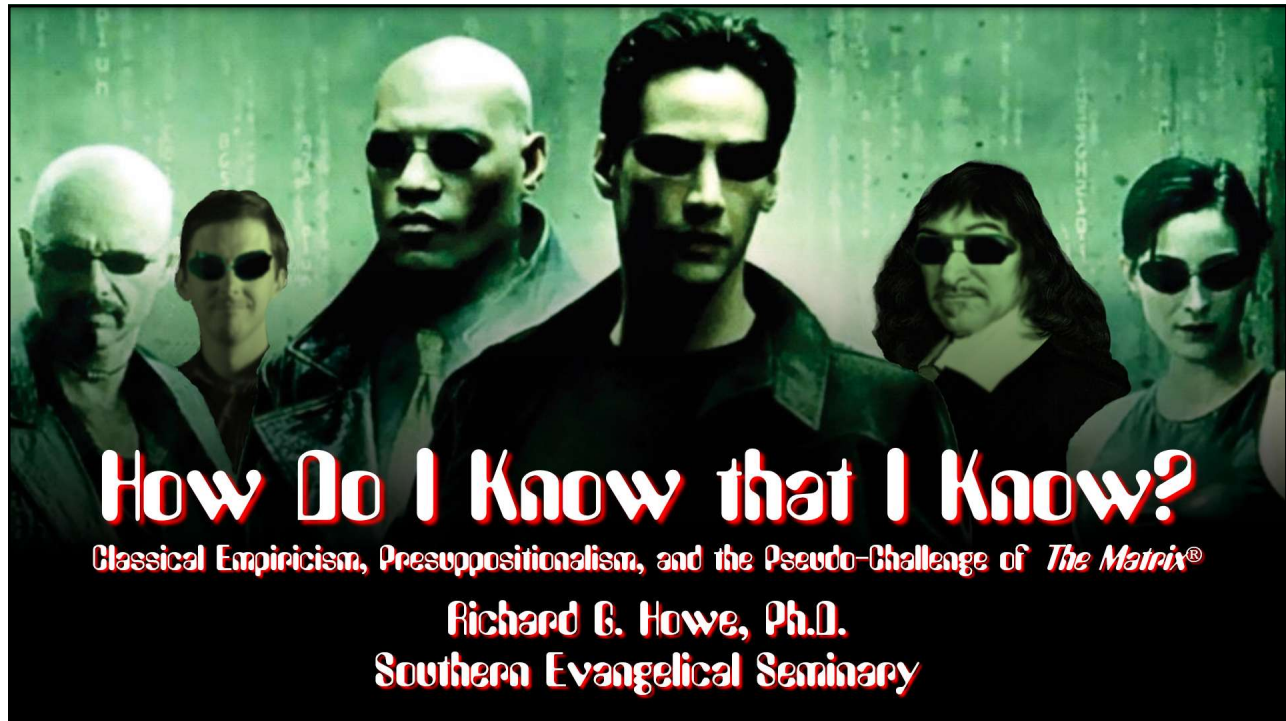
"factual knowledge that something is, was, or will be the case."

[Martin, "Glossary," in *Cambridge Companion*, xviii]]

Taking knowledge to be "of propositions" rather than "of sensible objects" (at least at the start), gives rise to analytic philosophy's placing the priority on "justification" or "warrant."

It is very common today to say that one does not have knowledge until certain other criteria are met.

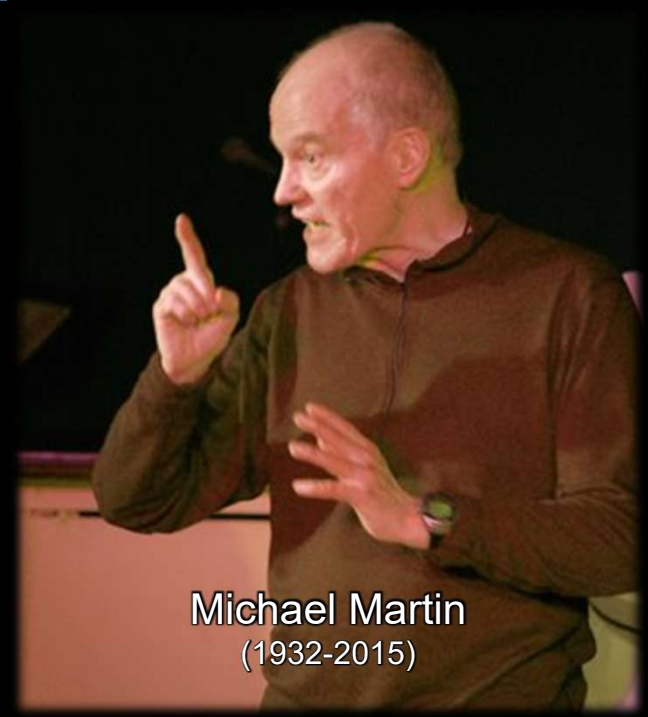




"teleological argument"

"an argument for the existence of God based on the apparent design and order in the universe. Also called the argument from design."

[Martin, "Glossary," in *Cambridge Companion*, xviii]



Michael Martin
(1932-2015)

"teleological argument"

"an argument for the existence of God based on the apparent design and order in the universe. Also called the argument from design."

[Martin, "Glossary," in *Cambridge Companion*, xviii]

The terms 'teleological argument' and 'design argument' are often used interchangeably (as in Martin's definition here; cf. s.v. "fine-tuning argument").

"fine-tuning argument"

"a teleological argument based on the alleged improbability that the fundamental physical constants in the universe are compatible with life."

[Martin, "Glossary," in *Cambridge Companion*, xvi]]

The terms 'teleological argument' and 'design argument' are often used interchangeably (as in Martin's definition here; cf. s.v. "fine-tuning argument").

"teleological argument"

"an argument for the existence of God based on the apparent design and order in the universe. Also called the argument from design."

[Martin, "Glossary," in *Cambridge Companion*, xviii]]

However, keeping the terms separate provides the opportunity to carefully distinguish the classical teleological argument from contemporary design arguments.

"teleological argument"

"an argument for the existence of God based on the apparent design and order in the universe. Also called the argument from design."

[Martin, "Glossary," in *Cambridge Companion*, xviii]

The classical teleological argument employs the metaphysical categories of act/potency and teleology whereas the contemporary design arguments do not.

THE DESIGN ARGUMENT: AQUINAS VS. PALEY

Richard G. Howe, Ph.D.

Provost

Norman L. Geisler Chair of Christian Apologetics
Professor of Philosophy and Apologetics, Southern Evangelical Seminary