

"For thinkers in the Judeo-Christian tradition, the Anselmian conception of God as the greatest conceivable being or most perfect being has guided philosophical speculation on the raw data of scripture, so that God's biblical attributes are to be conceived in ways that would serve to exalt God's greatness. Since the concept of God is underdetermined by the biblical data and since what constitutes a 'great-making' property is to some degree debatable, philosophers working within the Judeo-Christian tradition enjoy considerable latitude in formulating a philosophically coherent and biblically faithful doctrine of God."

"Perfect Being Theology"

ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY APPROACH

By the use of the tools, methods, and categories of analytic philosophy:

1. Carefully define the term 'perfect'.
2. On the basis of this definition, identify what "perfect making properties" must constitute a "perfect being."
3. Since God by definition is a "perfect being," then conclude that God must possess these "perfect making properties."
4. Any property that does not "clearly" appear in the Bible and/or is clearly not "perfect making" must be denied of God.

CLASSICAL PHILOSOPHY APPROACH

By the use of the tools, methods and categories of classical philosophy:

1. Carefully discover what the nature of God must be like as the First Cause.
2. On the basis of this discovery identify what attributes must be true of God.
3. Identify those attributes as the definition of what it means to be ultimately and infinitely perfect.

"For thinkers in the Judeo-Christian tradition, the Anselmian conception of God as the greatest conceivable being or most perfect being has guided philosophical speculation on the raw data of scripture, so that God's biblical attributes are to be conceived in ways that would serve to exalt God's greatness. Since the concept of God is underdetermined by the biblical data and since what constitutes a 'great-making' property is to some degree debatable, philosophers working within the Judeo-Christian tradition enjoy considerable latitude in formulating a philosophically coherent and biblically faithful doctrine of God."

Understandably, Craig is using his prior notions of "greatest conceivable being" and "most perfect being" to set boundaries on what the text of Scripture can mean.

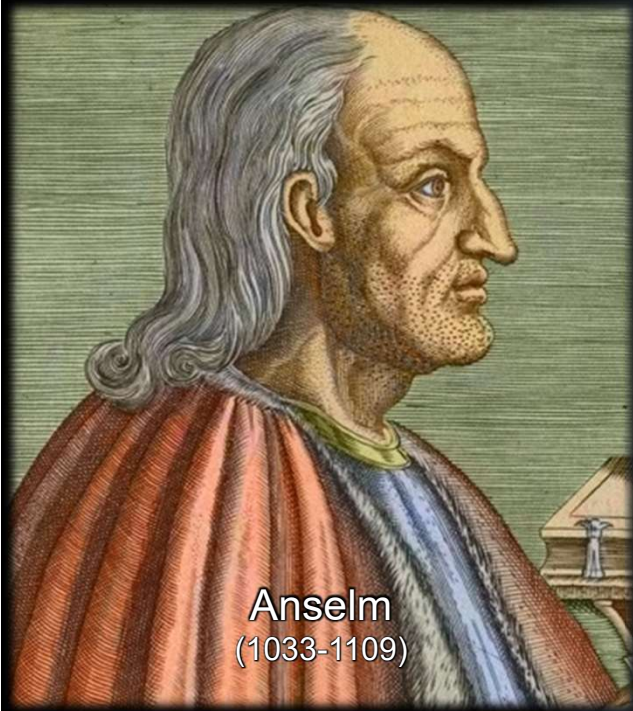
Further, Craig (correctly, in my view) acknowledges that the text of Scripture "underdetermines" (i.e., says less than) what God is like.

"For thinkers in the Judeo-Christian tradition, the Anselmian conception of God as the greatest conceivable being or most perfect being has guided philosophical speculation on the raw data of scripture, so that God's biblical attributes are to be conceived in ways that would serve to exalt God's greatness. Since the concept of God is underdetermined by the biblical data and since what constitutes a 'great-making' property is to some degree debatable, philosophers working within the Judeo-Christian tradition enjoy considerable latitude in formulating a philosophically coherent and biblically faithful doctrine of God."

To be sure, Craig is certainly free to incorporate the philosophical methods and ideas from any philosopher / theologian he desires.

In many respects, I have no issues with Craig naming Anselm as a representative of the "Judeo-Christian tradition."

It should be noted, however, that the same Anselm who gave him the method of "perfect being theology" also himself affirmed the doctrine of Divine simplicity!




Anselm
(1033-1109)

"There are no parts in thee, Lord, nor art thou more than one. But thou are so truly a unitary being, and so identical with thyself, that in no respect are thou unlike thyself; rather thou are unity itself, indivisible by any conception. Therefore, life and wisdom and the rest are not parts of thee, but all are one; and each of these is the whole, which thou art, and which all the rest are."

[*Proslogium*, 18, trans. S. N. Deane (La Salle: Open Court, 1962), 25]

"Theists thus find that antitheistic critiques of certain conceptions of God can actually be quite helpful in formulating a more adequate conception. For example, most Christian philosophers today deny that God is simple or impassible or immutable in any unrestricted sense, even though medieval theologians affirmed such divine attributes, since these attributes are not ascribed to God in the Bible and are not clearly great making."

[William Lane Craig, "Theistic Critiques of Atheism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Atheism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 72]



William Lane Craig

*"Theists thus find that antitheistic critiques of certain conceptions of God can actually be quite helpful in formulating a more adequate conception. For example, most Christian philosophers **today** deny that God is simple or impassible or immutable in any unrestricted sense, even though **medieval** theologians affirmed such divine attributes, since these attributes are not ascribed to God in the Bible and are not clearly great making."*

[William Lane Craig, "Theistic Critiques of Atheism, *Cambridge Companion*, 72]

Note Craig's first juxtaposition.

Simplicity, impassibility, and immutability are denied today though they were affirmed in the middle ages.

*"Theists thus find that antitheistic critiques of certain conceptions of God can actually be quite helpful in formulating a more adequate conception. For example, most Christian **philosophers** today deny that God is simple or impassible or immutable in any unrestricted sense, even though **medieval** theologians affirmed such divine attributes, since these attributes are not ascribed to God in the Bible and are not clearly great making."*

[William Lane Craig, "Theistic Critiques of Atheism, *Cambridge Companion*, 72]

Notice Craig's second juxtaposition.

It is philosophers who deny simplicity, impassibility, and immutability while it is theologians who affirmed them.

*"Theists thus find that antitheistic critiques of certain conceptions of God can actually be quite helpful in formulating a more adequate conception. For example, **most Christian philosophers today** deny that God is simple or impassible or immutable in any unrestricted sense, even though medieval theologians affirmed such divine attributes, since these attributes are not ascribed to God in the Bible and are not clearly great making."*

[William Lane Craig, "Theistic Critiques of Atheism, *Cambridge Companion*, 72]

Consider Craig's comment that most Christian philosophers today deny simplicity, impassibility, and immutability.

I wonder how many Catholic Christian philosophers there are today in comparison to the number of non-Catholic Christian philosophers.

Catholics are required by Canon 1 of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) to hold to simplicity.

"We firmly believe and openly confess that there is only one true God, eternal and immense, omnipotent, unchangeable, incomprehensible, and ineffable, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; three Persons indeed but one essence, substance, or nature absolutely simple; ..."

Canon 1

*"Theists thus find that antitheistic critiques of certain conceptions of God can actually be quite helpful in formulating a more adequate conception. For example, **most Christian philosophers today** deny that God is simple or impassible or immutable in any unrestricted sense, even though medieval theologians affirmed such divine attributes, since these attributes are not ascribed to God in the Bible and are not clearly great making."*

[William Lane Craig, "Theistic Critiques of Atheism, *Cambridge Companion*, 72]

Consider Craig's comment that most Christian philosophers today deny simplicity, impassibility, and immutability.

I wonder how many Catholic Christian philosophers there are today in comparison to the number of non-Catholic Christian philosophers.

Catholics are required by Canon 1 of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) to hold to simplicity.

Is it true, therefore that "most Christian philosophers today deny that God is simple"?

*"Theists thus find that antitheistic critiques of certain conceptions of God can actually be quite helpful in formulating a more adequate conception. For example, **most Christian philosophers today** deny that God is simple or impassible or immutable in any unrestricted sense, even though medieval theologians affirmed such divine attributes, since these attributes are not ascribed to God in the Bible and are not clearly great making."*

[William Lane Craig, "Theistic Critiques of Atheism, *Cambridge Companion*, 72]

Granting, for the sake of argument, that most Christian philosophers today deny God is simple, is this an argument that the doctrine of simplicity is false?

Or could it be that having so many contemporary Christian philosophers denying simplicity is a commentary on the regrettable state of contemporary Christian philosophy?

"Theists thus find that antitheistic critiques of certain conceptions of God can actually be quite helpful in formulating a more adequate conception. For example, most Christian philosophers today deny that God is simple or impassible or immutable in any unrestricted sense, even though medieval theologians affirmed such divine attributes, since these attributes are not ascribed to God in the Bible and are not clearly great making."

[William Lane Craig, "Theistic Critiques of Atheism, *Cambridge Companion*, 72]

Last, note the two "arguments" Craig offers as to why today's Christian philosophers today deny simplicity, impassibility, and immutability.

1. These attributes are not ascribed to God in the Bible.
2. These attributes are not clearly great making.

"Theists thus find that antitheistic critiques of certain conceptions of God can actually be quite helpful in formulating a more adequate conception. For example, most Christian philosophers today deny that God is simple or impassible or immutable in any unrestricted sense, even though medieval theologians affirmed such divine attributes, since these attributes are not ascribed to God in the Bible and are not clearly great making."

[William Lane Craig, "Theistic Critiques of Atheism, *Cambridge Companion*, 72]

Regarding the first argument, did not Craig earlier acknowledge that "the concept of God is underdetermined by the biblical data"?

Why, then, should we necessarily conclude anything about simplicity if indeed the Bible does not ascribe simplicity to God?

Could it not be (granting for the sake of argument) that this is one of those instances where the biblical data "underdetermine" the concept of God?

1. These attributes are not ascribed to God in the Bible.

"Theists thus find that antitheistic critiques of certain conceptions of God can actually be quite helpful in formulating a more adequate conception. For example, most Christian philosophers today deny that God is simple or impassible or immutable in any unrestricted sense, even though medieval theologians affirmed such divine attributes, since these attributes are not ascribed to God in the Bible and are not clearly great making."

[William Lane Craig, "Theistic Critiques of Atheism, Cambridge Companion, 72]

Regarding the second argument, the truth of simplicity does not rise or fall on the basis of philosophically discovering what "great making properties are" on the basis of a prior determination of what "perfect" means.

Rather, one should discover what God must be like as the First Cause, and then ascribe the characterization of 'perfect' to that.

God determines what 'perfect' means rather than the meaning of 'perfect' disclosing what God must be like.

2. These attributes are not clearly great making.

**God Fading Away:
Contending for the
Classical Attributes of God**

Richard G. Howe, Ph.D.
Provost
Norman L. Geisler Professor of Christian Apologetics
Southern Evangelical Seminary • Charlotte, NC
Past President, International Society of Christian Apologetics

"What-ness"

with respect to its matter:

Form

with respect to its operations:

Nature

with respect to its accidents:

Substance

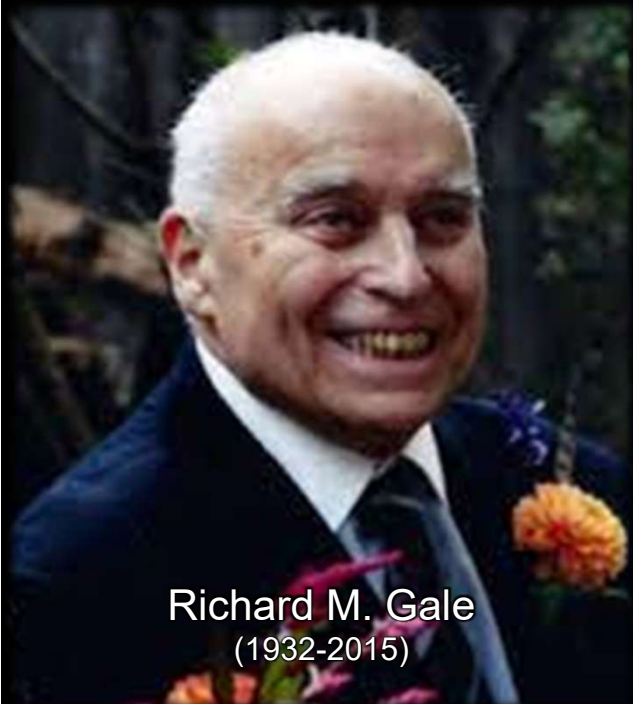
with respect to an intellect:

Quiddity

with respect to its existence:

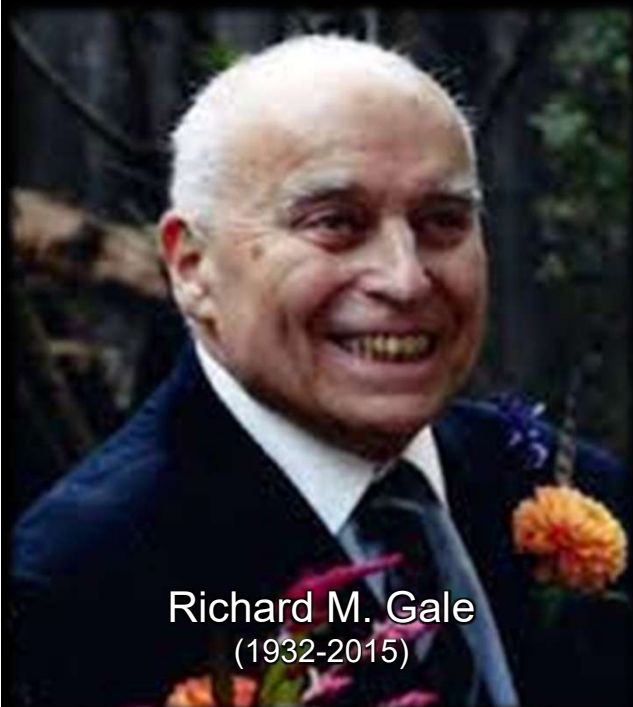
Essence





Richard M. Gale
(1932-2015)

- ❖ Is the Ontological Argument Sound?
- ❖ Is an infinite regress impossible?
- ❖ Does the argument commit the Quantifier Shift Fallacy?
- ❖ Is there a primacy of epistemology to ontology?
- ❖ Is Hume's Teleological argument the "Classical" Teleological argument?
- ❖ Is being a genus?
- ❖ Is the Principle of Sufficient Reason true?
- ❖ Does the First Cause have the essential divine attributes?
- ❖ Is the First Cause good?



Richard M. Gale
(1932-2015)

Is the Ontological Argument sound?

☞ Reading Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae* ☞

Question (e.g., The Existence of God)

First Article of the Question (e.g., Whether the Existence of God is Self-Evident)

Objections

first objection

second objection

...

"On the contrary" (usually a quote from an authority; not always included)

"I answer that" (unpacking of his own arguments pertaining to the article)

Replies to each of the objections

Next Article of the Question

...

[repeat until all the articles for this question are exhausted]

Next Question

...

[repeat until all 614 questions consisting of 3,125 articles questions are exhausted]



Question 2. The existence of God

Article 1. Whether the existence of God is self-evident?

"Objection 2. Further, those things are said to be self-evident which are known as soon as the terms are known, which the Philosopher (1 Poster. iii) says is true of the first principles of demonstration. ... But as soon as the signification of the word "God" is understood, it is at once seen that God exists. For by this word is signified that thing than which nothing greater can be conceived.

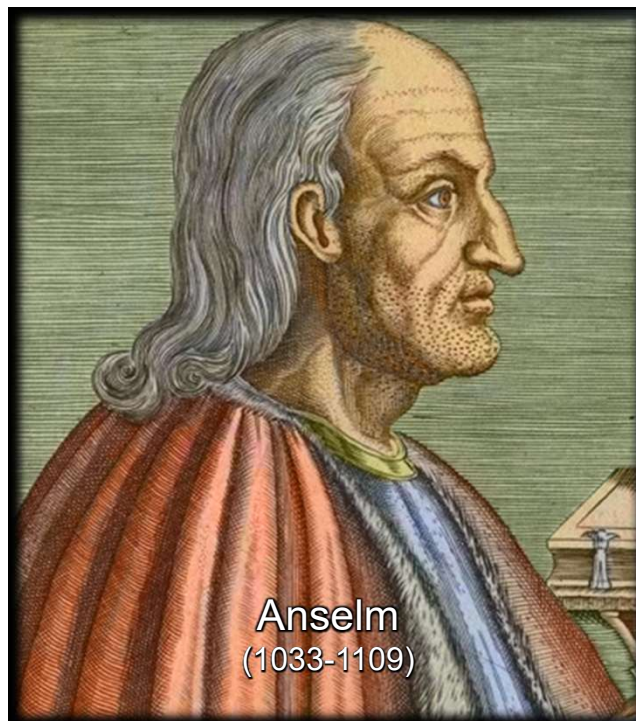


Question 2. The existence of God

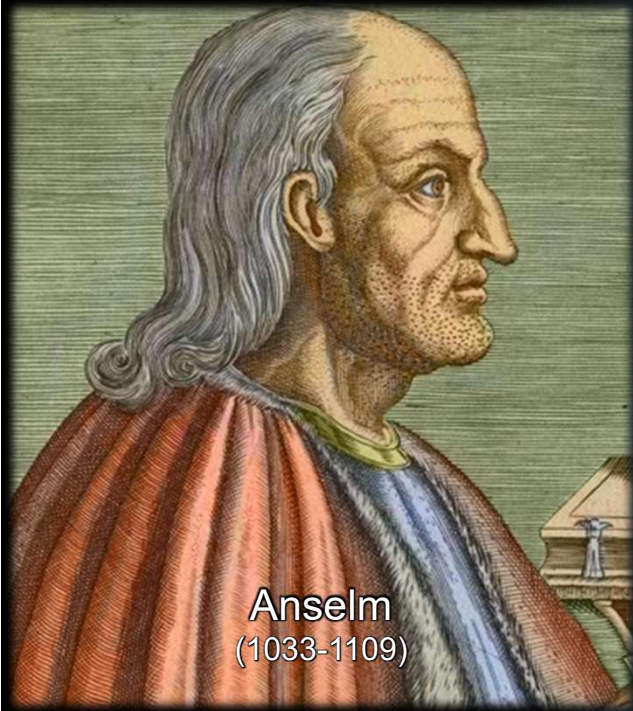
Article 1. Whether the existence of God is self-evident?

"But that which exists actually and mentally is greater than that which exists only mentally. Therefore, since as soon as the word "God" is understood it exists mentally, it also follows that it exists actually. Therefore the proposition "God exists" is self-evident."

[Summa Theologiae I, Q. 2, arg. 2, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, (Westminster: Christian Classics, 1981), 12]



"Even the fool is convinced that something exists in the understanding, at least, than which nothing greater can be conceived. For, when he hears of this, he understands it. And whatever is understood, exists in the understanding. And assuredly that, than which nothing greater can be conceived, cannot exist in the understanding alone. For, suppose it exists in the understanding alone: then it can be conceived to exist in reality; which is greater."



Anselm
(1033-1109)

"Therefore, if that, than which nothing greater can be conceived, exists in the understanding alone, the very being, than which nothing greater can be conceived, is one, than which a greater can be conceived. But obviously this is impossible.

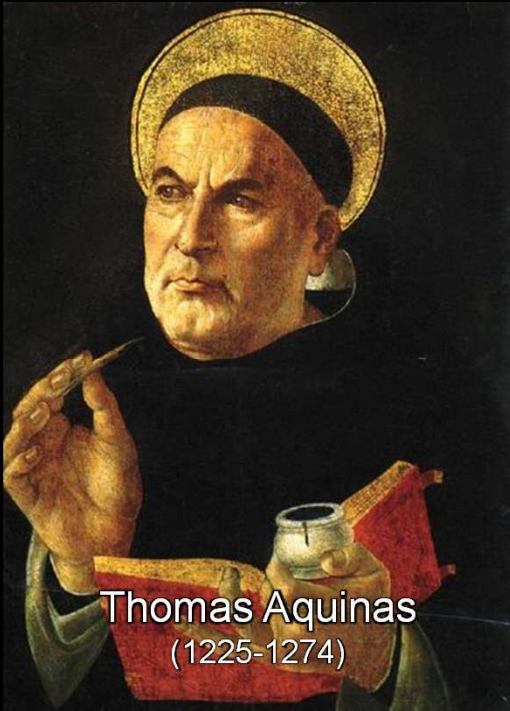
Hence, there is no doubt that there exists a being, than which nothing greater can be conceived, and it exists both in the understanding and in reality."

[Anselm of Canterbury, *Proslogium*, II, *St. Anselm: Basic Writings*, trans. S. N. Deane (La Salle: Open Court, 1962), 8]

Question 2. The existence of God

Article 1. Whether the existence of God is self-evident?

"Reply to Objection 2. Perhaps not everyone who hears this word "God" understands it to signify something than which nothing greater can be thought, seeing that some have believed God to be a body.

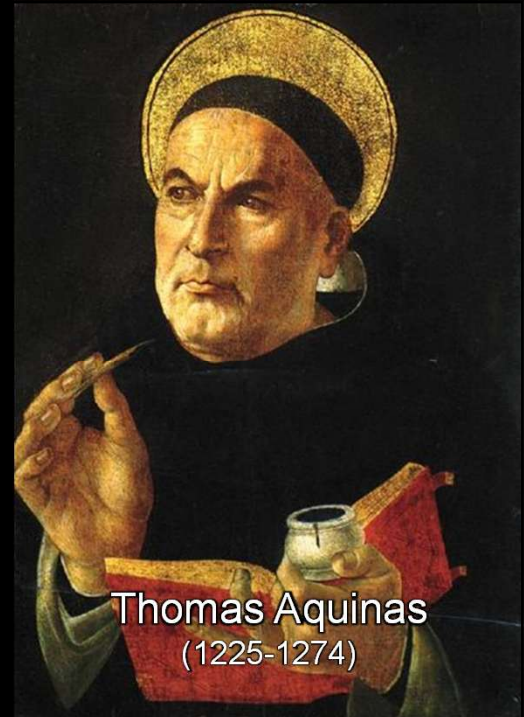


Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

Question 2. The existence of God

Article 1. Whether the existence of God is self-evident?

"Yet, granted that everyone understands that by this word "God" is signified something than which nothing greater can be thought, nevertheless, it does not therefore follow that he understands that what the word signifies exists actually, but only that it exists mentally.

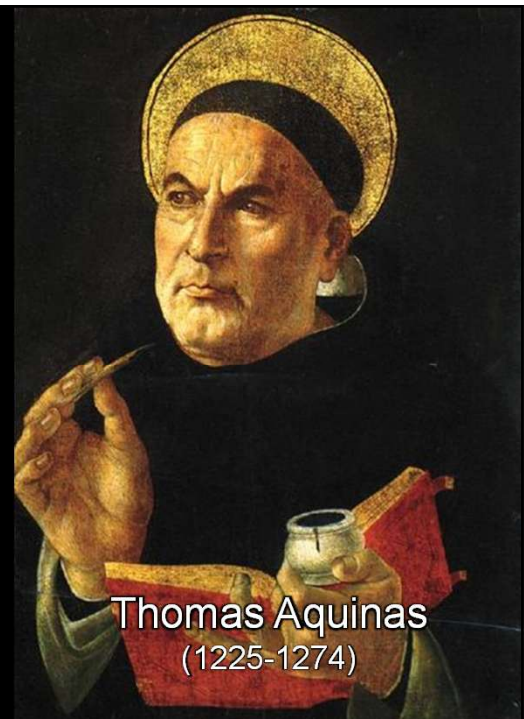


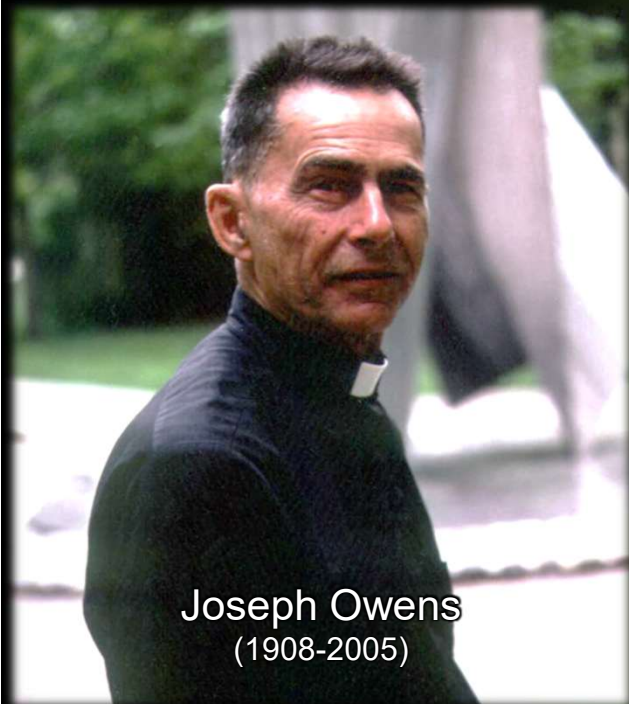
Question 2. The existence of God

Article 1. Whether the existence of God is self-evident?

"Nor can it be argued that it actually exists, unless it be admitted that there actually exists something than which nothing greater can be thought; and this precisely is not admitted by those who hold that God does not exist."

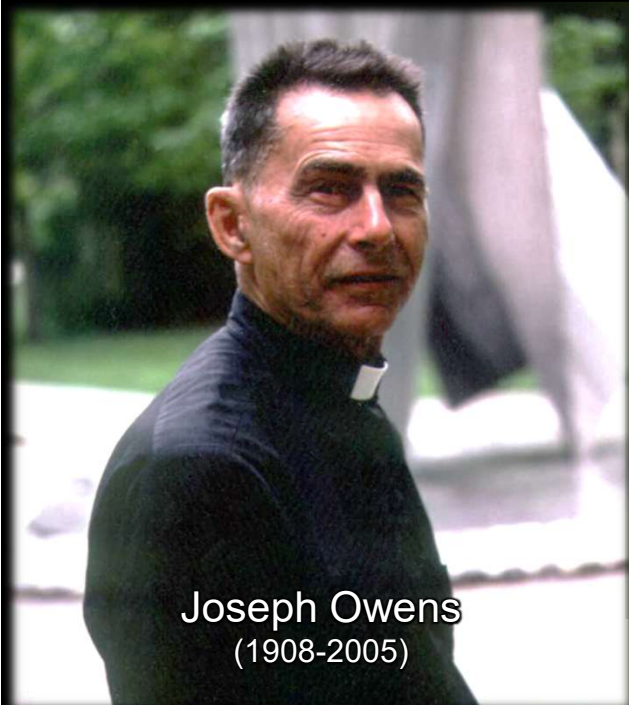
[*Summa Theologiae* I, Q. 2, ad. 2, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, (Westminster: Christian Classics, 1981), 12]





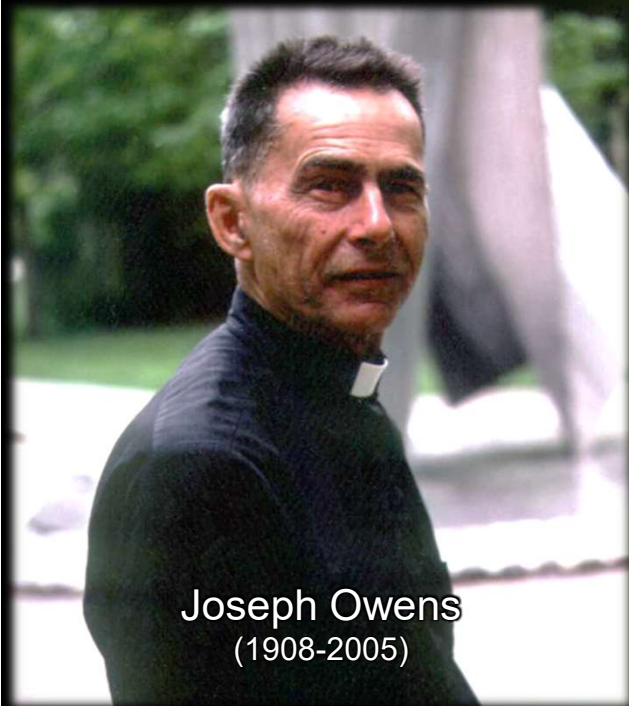
Joseph Owens
(1908-2005)

“You can think of a really existent dodo or crane, without being given to know whether the one or the other really exists. In knowing that both are birds, you know that both share that type of animal nature. But as regards existence, you still have to look and see [whether they exist]. You cannot represent dodoes or phoenixes without implying ornithic [i.e., birdness], vital [i.e., living] and corporeal [i.e., bodily] natures. But you can represent them as really existent without thereby implying that they do exist or ever did or will exist.”



Joseph Owens
(1908-2005)

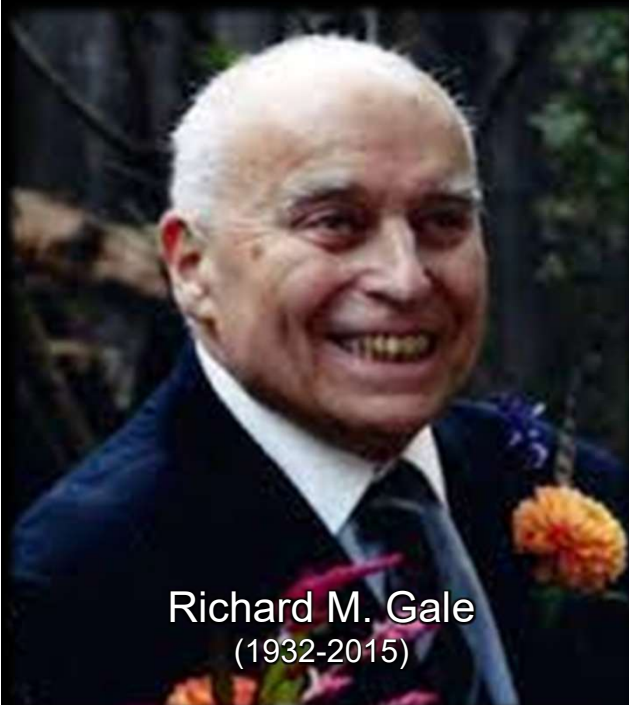
“The most notorious instance is the case of the ontological argument for the existence of God. The argument is based on what has been called the logic of perfection. God is by his nature the most perfect being. But the most perfect being must have real existence, or else be lacking existential perfection and no longer be most perfect. The fallacy there is that the two types of perfection are known by two different types of intellection.”



Joseph Owens
(1908-2005)

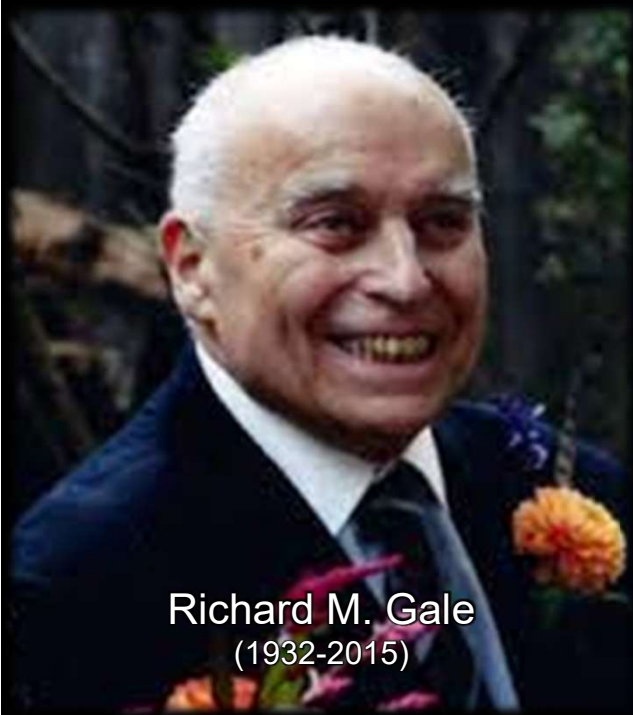
“As far as human cognition is concerned, perfection in the order of nature is known through abstraction, while existential perfection is known through judgment. Perfection based on a nature, even if expanded to the infinite, will never include the least existential actuality.”

[Joseph Owens, *Cognition: An Epistemological Inquiry* (Houston: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1992), 175-176, emphasis added]



Richard M. Gale
(1932-2015)

Is an infinite regress impossible?



Richard M. Gale
(1932-2015)

*"The Kalam cosmological argument of the medieval Islamic philosophers, which has been defended in recent times by William Lane Craig ..., also invokes the impossibility of infinite regress **but in a different way than Aquinas did in his first two ways.**"*

[Richard M. Gale, "The Failure of Classical Theistic Arguments," in *Cambridge Companion*, 92]

Gale rightfully notes that there is a difference between the Kalam type of infinite and what Aquinas is arguing in his first two "Ways" when he brings up the infinite regress.

Gail is mistaken, however, in assuming that the difference lies in the way the "impossibility of infinite regress"—Aquinas puts it as "this cannot go to infinity"—is defended.

Strictly speaking, Aquinas is not defending the "impossibility of infinite regress" but is instead demonstrating the existence of the First Cause, i.e., God.

*"The Kalam cosmological argument of the medieval Islamic philosophers, which has been defended in recent times by William Lane Craig ..., also invokes the impossibility of infinite regress **but in a different way than Aquinas did in his first two ways.**"*

[Richard M. Gale, "The Failure of Classical Theistic Arguments," in *Cambridge Companion*, 92]

To that end, Aquinas points out that if (*per impossibile*) it could go to infinity, then there would be no First Cause which would entail that there would be no intermediate causes and, thus, no current causes (which is impossible).

In the absence of interpreting Aquinas's arguments in their philosophical (i.e., metaphysical) context, such a statement should seem like Aquinas is making a circular argument.

*"The Kalam cosmological argument of the medieval Islamic philosophers, which has been defended in recent times by William Lane Craig ..., also invokes the impossibility of infinite regress **but in a different way than Aquinas did in his first two ways.**"*

[Richard M. Gale, "The Failure of Classical Theistic Arguments," in *Cambridge Companion*, 92]

Note carefully the logic of the argument. Aquinas is not arguing:

"Since there cannot be a infinite regress, there must be a first cause."

Rather, he is arguing:

Since there must be first cause, there cannot be an infinite regress."

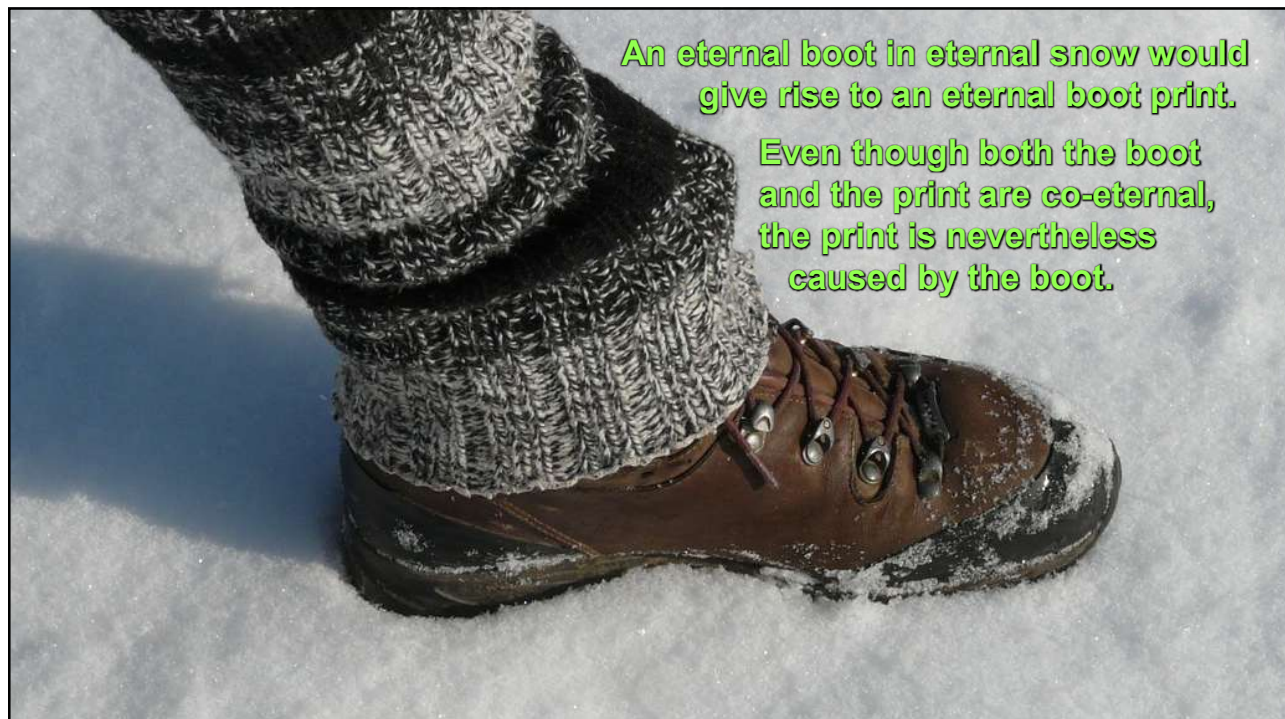
Note carefully the logic of the argument. Aquinas is not arguing:

"Since there cannot be a infinite regress, there must be a **first cause**."

Rather, he is arguing:

Since there must be **first cause**, there cannot be an infinite regress."

It is important to realize that the notion of 'first' here is not temporal but metaphysical.



Not: If (since) there cannot be an infinite regress, there must be a first cause.

There cannot be an infinite regress.

Therefore, there is a first cause.

1. $\sim IR \supset F$

2. $\sim IR / \therefore F$

Rather: If (since) there is a first cause, there cannot be an infinite regress.

There is a first cause.

Therefore, there cannot be an infinite regress.

1. $IR \supset \sim F$

2. $F / \therefore \sim IR$

Second, the difference between the two infinite regresses lies in the nature of the infinite itself.

Technically speaking, the difference is between an accidentally ordered causal series (*per accidens*) and a *per se* ordered causal series.

Remember the earlier illustrations of the father siring a child who sires a child, etc. vs. the hand pushing the stick that pushes the rock.

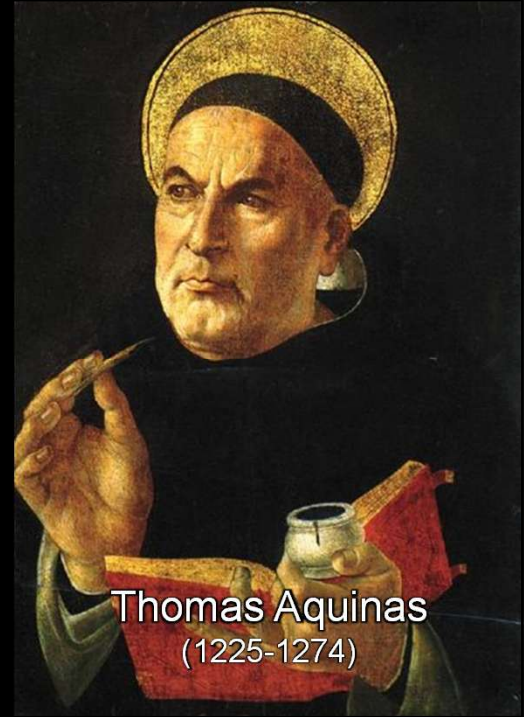
While Aquinas did hold that the universe was not eternal, he denied that it could be philosophically demonstrated based upon any notion of the impossibility of an infinite regress, taking 'infinite' here to be the accidentally ordered causal series.

*"The Kalam cosmological argument of the medieval Islamic philosophers, which has been defended in recent times by William Lane Craig ..., also invokes the impossibility of infinite regress **but in a different way than Aquinas did in his first two ways.**"*

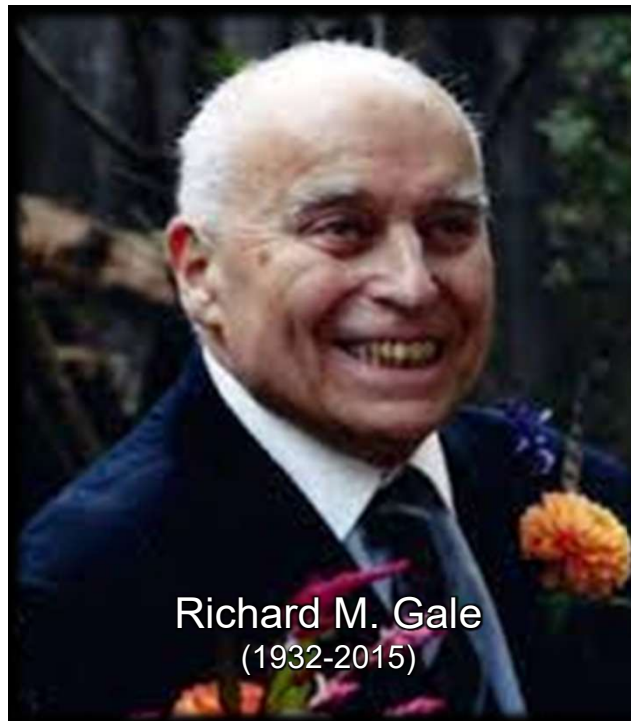
[Richard M. Gale, "The Failure of Classical Theistic Arguments," in *Cambridge Companion*, 92]

"By faith alone do we hold, and by no demonstration can it be proved, that the world did not always exist. ... And it is useful to consider this, lest anyone, presuming to demonstrate what is of faith, should bring forward reasons that are not cogent, so as to give occasion to unbelievers to laugh, thinking that on such grounds we believe things that are of faith."

[*Summa Theologiae* I, Q. 46, art. 2, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, (Westminster: Christian Classics, 1981), 242]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)



Richard M. Gale
(1932-2015)

"One reason that might be given for the impossibility of an actual infinite regress of simultaneous causes or movers is that if there were such a regress, there would be no member of the regress that could be held morally responsible ... for the initial event or object in the regress."

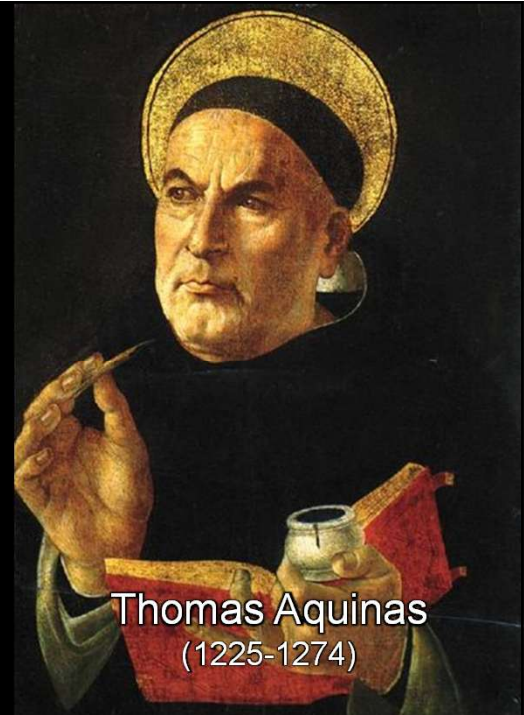
[Richard M. Gale, "The Failure of Classical Theistic Arguments," in *Cambridge Companion*, 90]

While Gale does not cite any source that gives this reason, my guess is that he has in mind an argument by Galen Strawson in "The Impossibility of Moral Responsibility" (*Philosophical Studies* 75: 5-24).

"One reason that might be given for the impossibility of an actual infinite regress of simultaneous causes or movers is that if there were such a regress, there would be no member of the regress that could be held morally responsible ... for the initial event or object in the regress."

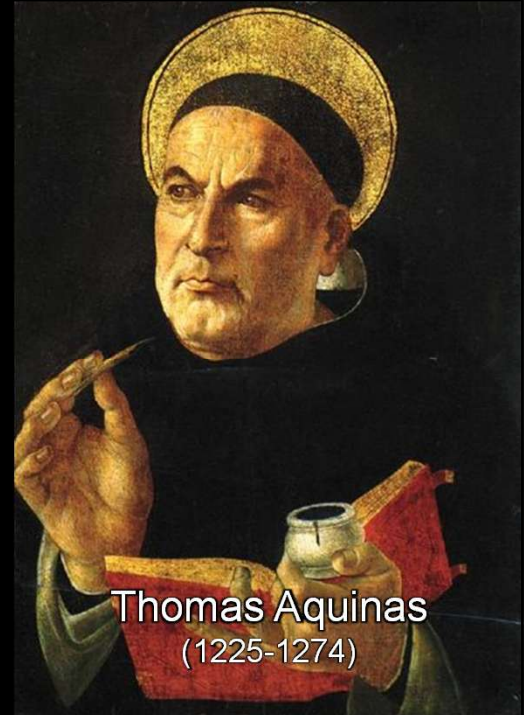
[Richard M. Gale, "The Failure of Classical Theistic Arguments," in *Cambridge Companion*, 90]

In Thomism, human morality and moral responsibility require rationality and free will in relation to the teleology of human nature.



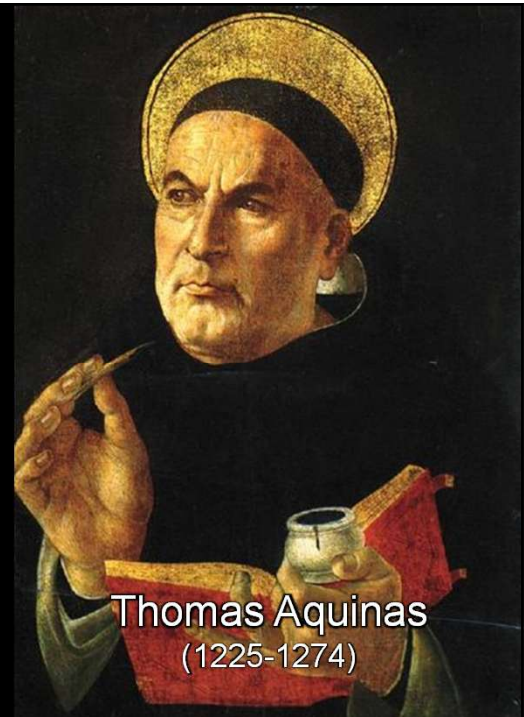
Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

**As far as I can tell,
neither Gale nor
Strawson addresses the
notion of teleology in
their discussion of
human morality and
moral responsibility.**



**Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)**

**What is more, Gale
seemingly never
entertains Aquinas's
metaphysics of esse
(lit., "to be") regarding
God's existence and
goodness, the latter in
light of the convertibility
of 'being' and 'good'.**



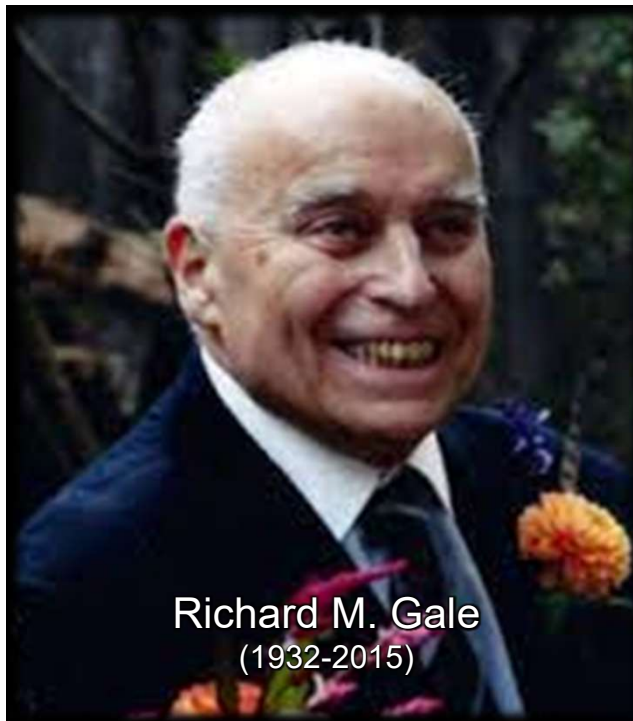
**Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)**

Gale goes on to respond to several arguments in favor of the Kalam Cosmological Argument.

While I affirm the soundness of the Kalam Cosmological Argument, for the sake of time, I will forego defending the argument against Gale's and others' responses in favor of defending Aquinas's version of the cosmological argument.

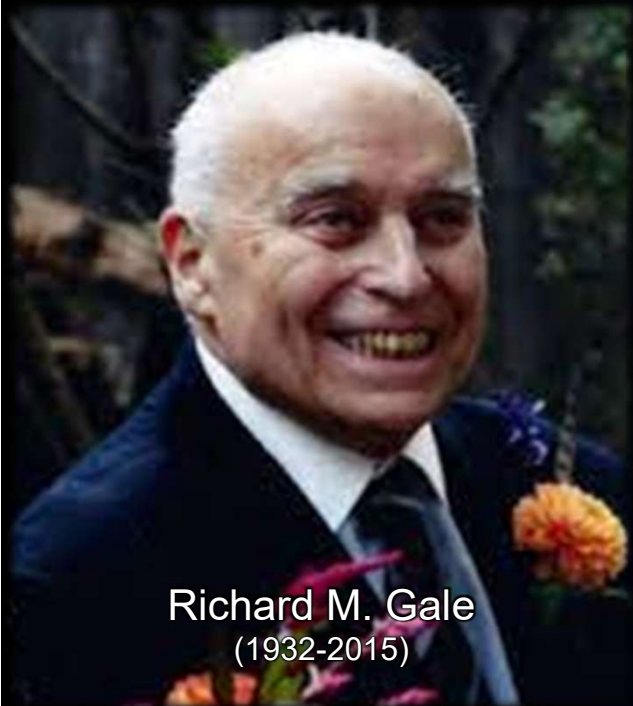
"One reason that might be given for the impossibility of an actual infinite regress of simultaneous causes or movers is that if there were such a regress, there would be no member of the regress that could be held morally responsible ... for the initial event or object in the regress."

[Richard M. Gale, "The Failure of Classical Theistic Arguments," in *Cambridge Companion*, 90]



Richard M. Gale
(1932-2015)

Does the argument commit the Quantifier Shift Fallacy?



"The argument seems to commit the same howler as is committed by inferring from the fact that for every woman there is a man that there is a man who is for every woman ... In logical terms that fallacy is $(x)(\exists y)xRy \supset (\exists y)(x)xRy$."

[Richard M. Gale, "The Failure of Classical Theistic Arguments," in *Cambridge Companion*, 92]

Richard M. Gale
(1932-2015)

if / then symbol

$$(x)(\exists y)xRy \supset (\exists y)(x)xRy$$

universal quantifier
meaning "For every
or all X ..."

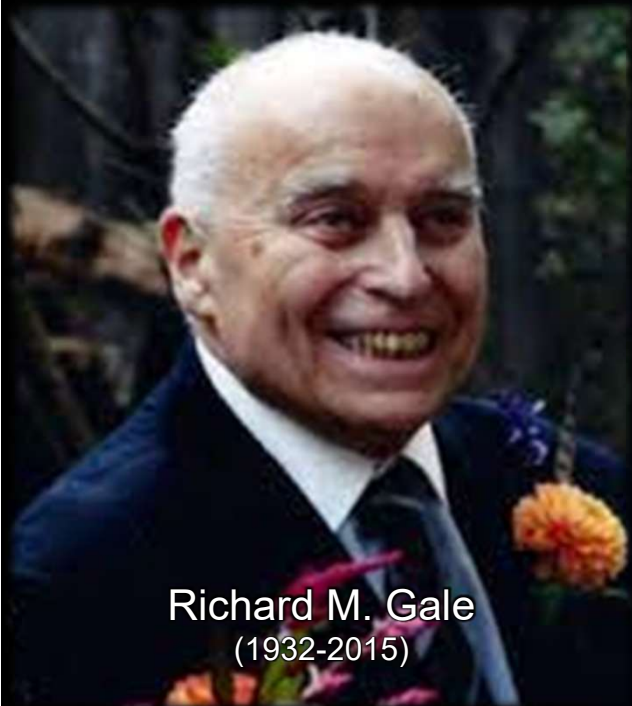
existential quantifier
meaning "There
exists an X ..."

$$(\forall x)(\exists y)xRy \supset (\exists y)(\forall x)xRy$$

If for every x there exists a y such that x is R to y
then there exists a y for every x such that x is R to y .

$$(\forall x)(\exists y)xRy \supset (\exists y)(\forall x)xRy$$

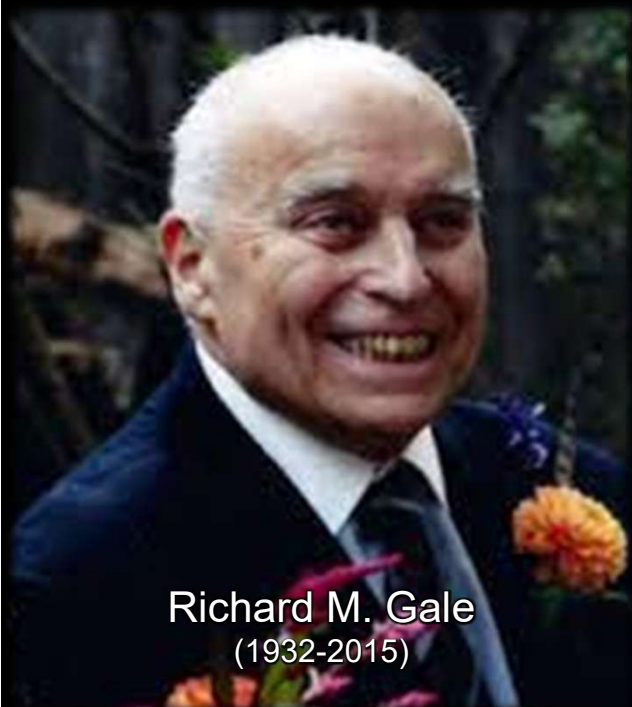
If for every x there exists a y such that x is R to y
then there exists a y for every x such that x is R to y .



Richard M. Gale
(1932-2015)

"The argument seems to commit the same howler as is committed by inferring from the fact that for every woman there is a man that there is a man who is for every woman ... In logical terms that fallacy is $(x)(\exists y)xRy \supset (\exists y)(x)xRy$."

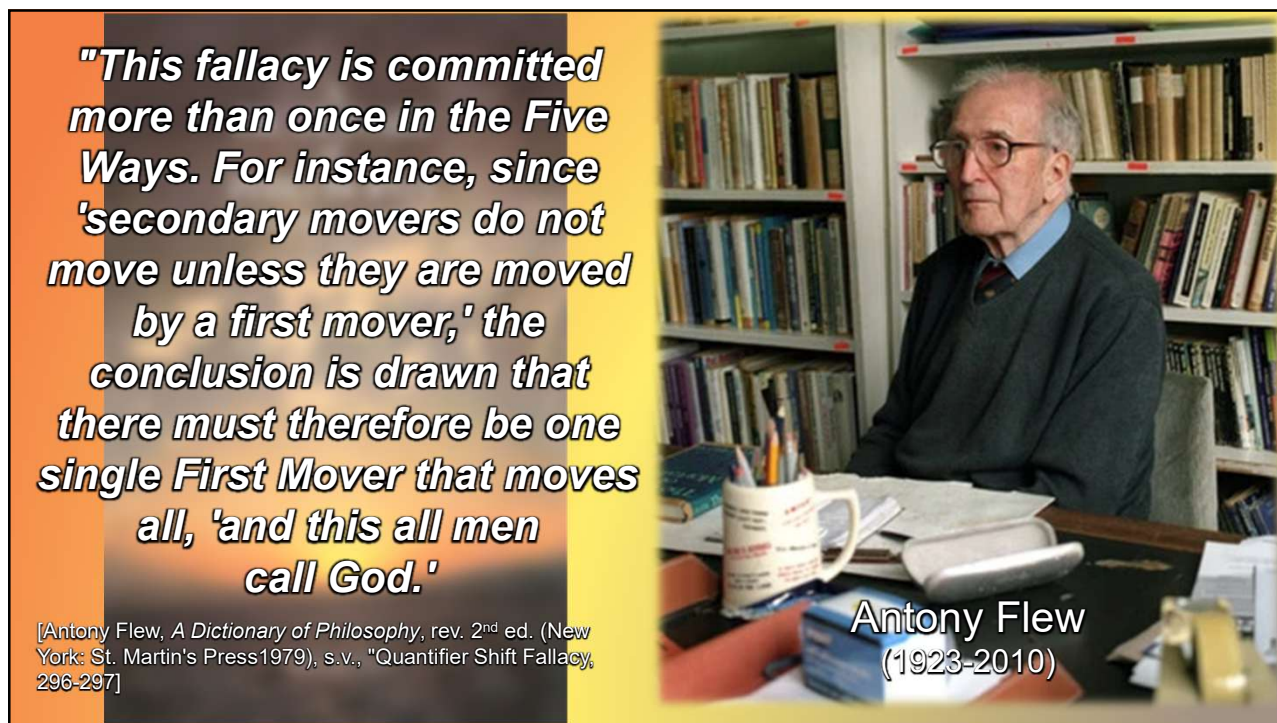
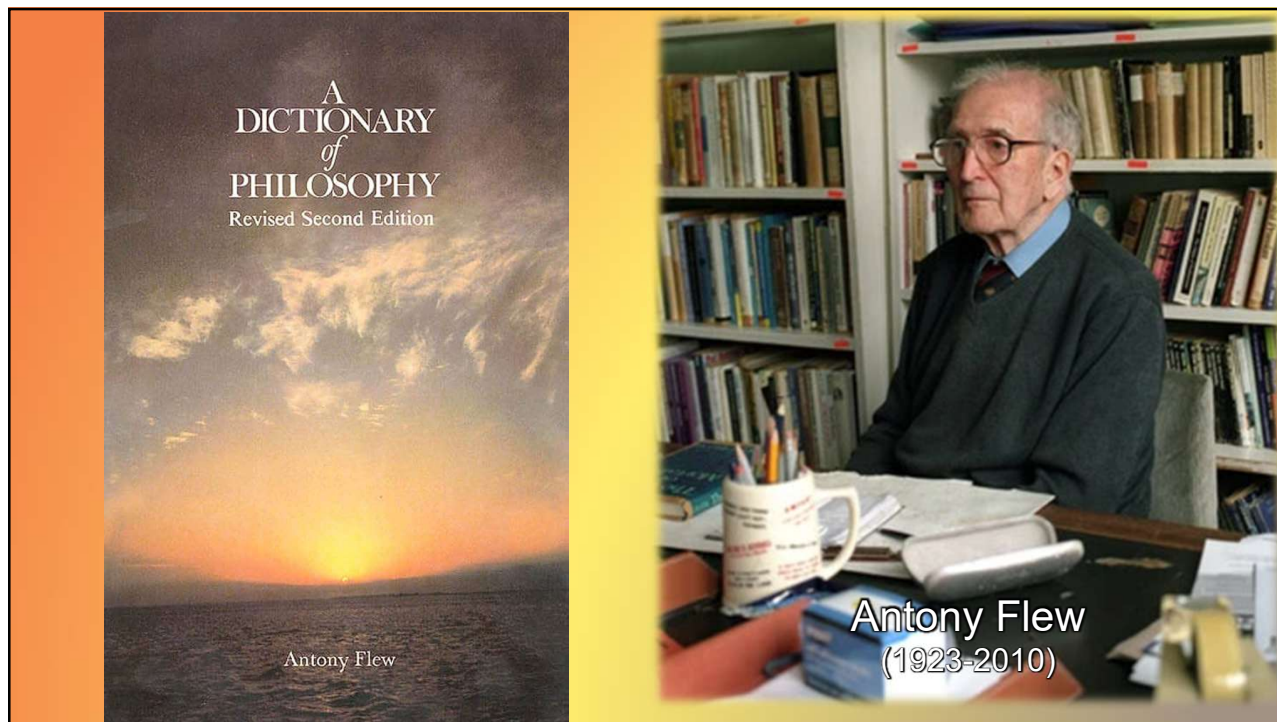
[Richard M. Gale, "The Failure of Classical Theistic Arguments," in *Cambridge Companion*, 92]

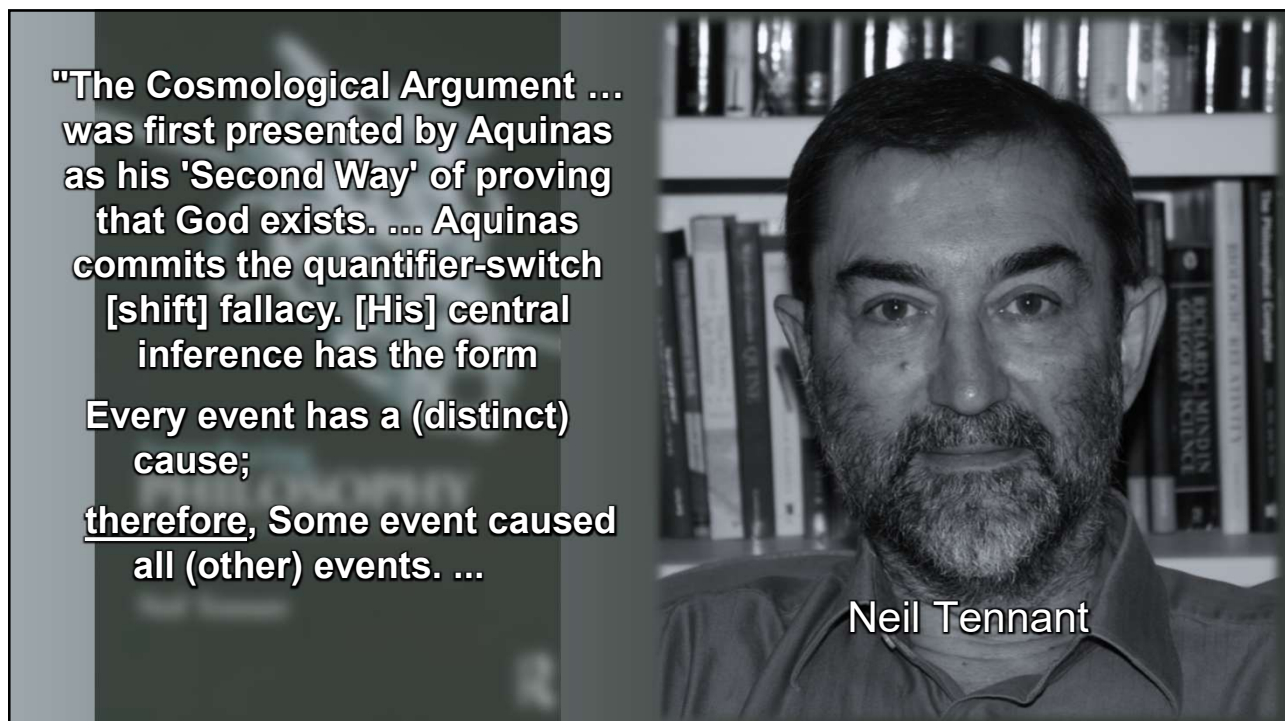
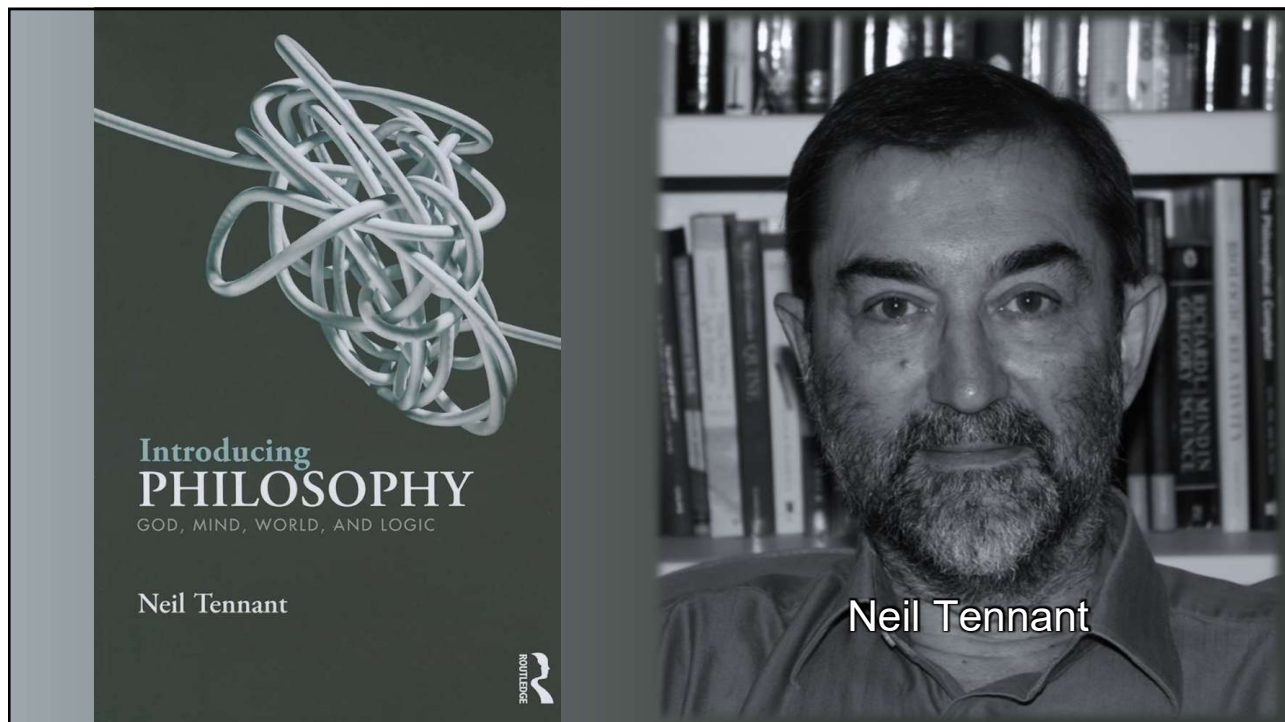


Richard M. Gale
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"The argument seems to commit the same howler as is committed by inferring from the fact that for every woman there is a man that there is a man who is for every woman ... In logical terms that fallacy is $(x)(\exists y)Rxy \supset (\exists y)(x)Rxy$."

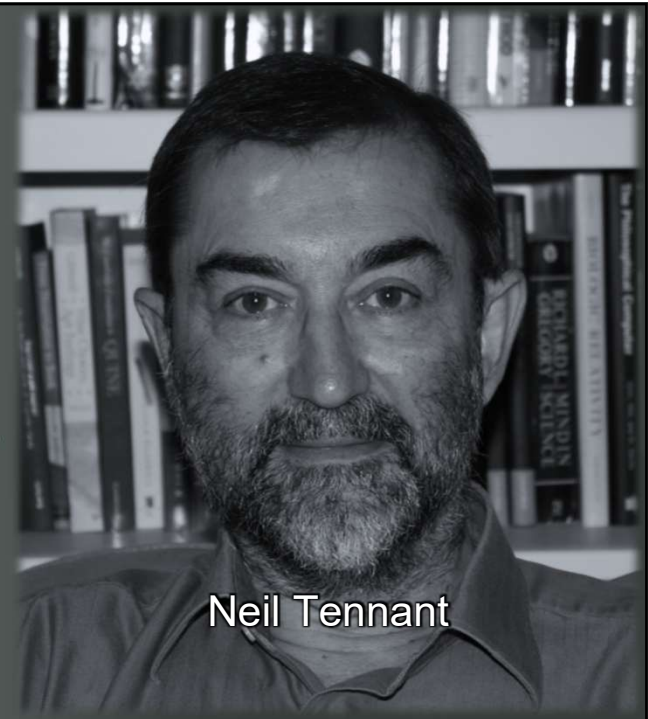
[Richard M. Gale, "The Failure of Classical Theistic Arguments," in *Cambridge Companion*, 92]





"Aquinas can be squarely criticized for not having said more to secure the conclusion that there is first cause. ... Every event could be caused by a strictly earlier event, while yet no event is initial within the temporal ordering. "

[Neil Tennant. *Introducing Philosophy: God, Mind, World, and Logic* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 228-229, emphasis in original]



Neil Tennant

Everyone has a mother.

For every person, there is a woman who is the mother of that person.

$$\forall x \exists y (Px \supset (Wy \cdot Myx))$$

There is a mother that everyone has.

There is a woman who is the mother of every person.

$$\exists y \forall x (Px \supset (Wy \cdot Myx))$$

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There is a woman who is the mother of every person.

$$\exists y \forall x (Px \supset (Wy \cdot Myx))$$

Every physical thing in the universe has a cause.

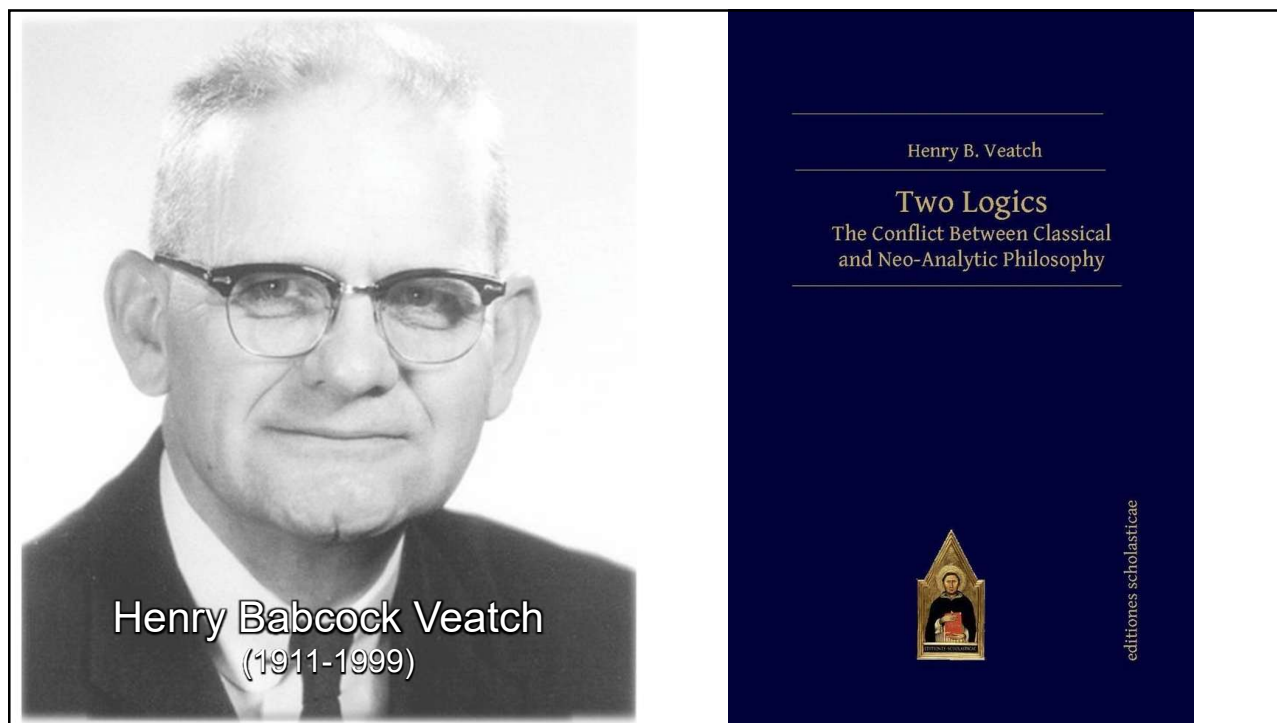
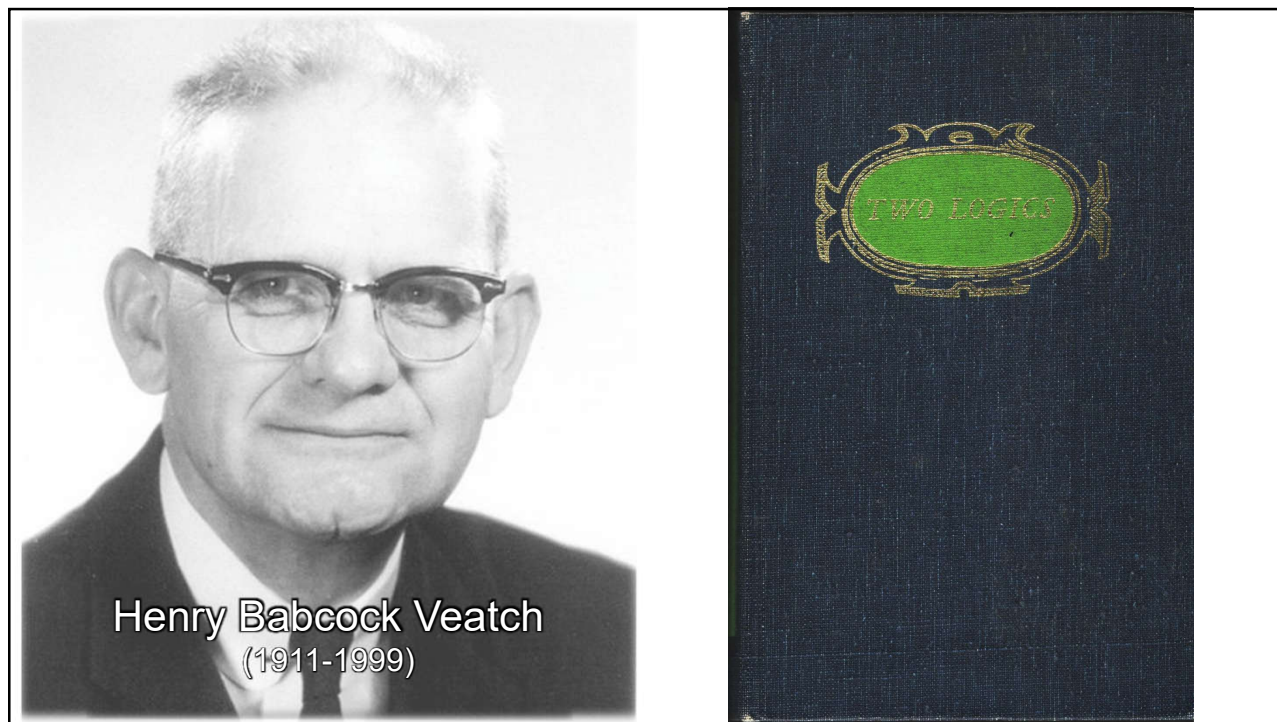
For every physical thing in the universe, there is an object that is the cause of that physical thing.

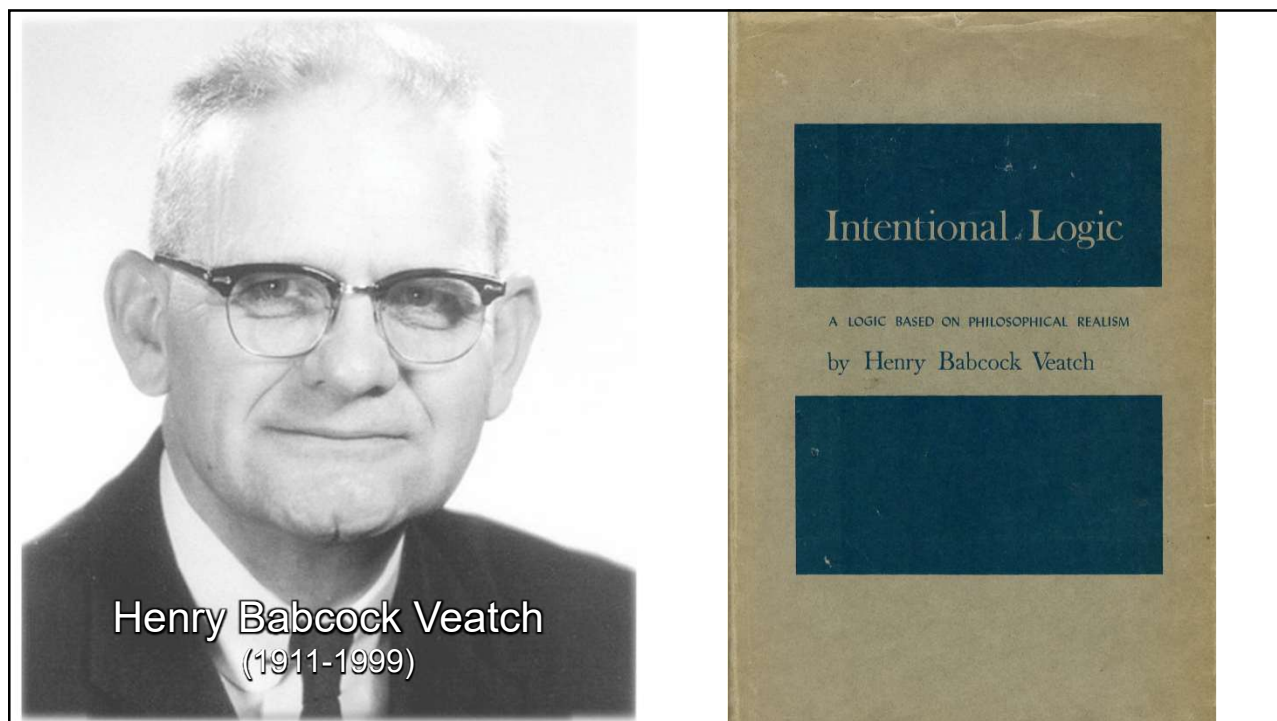
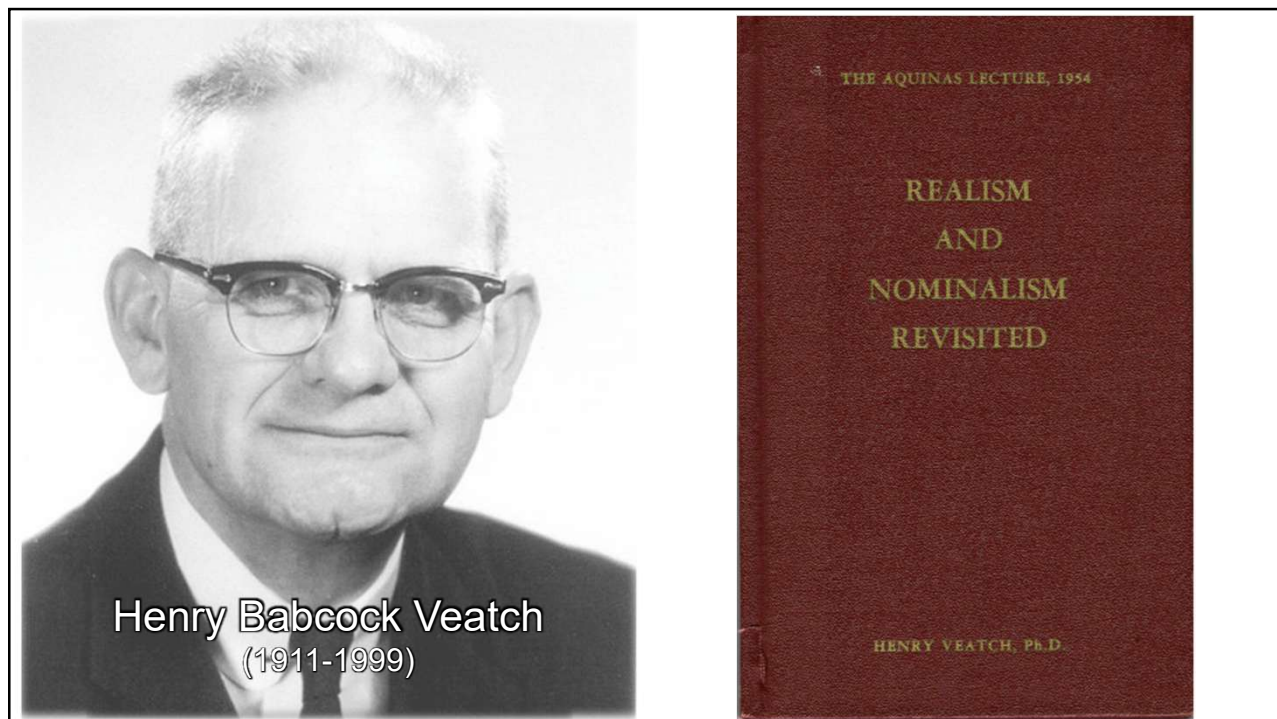
$$\forall x \exists y (Px \supset (Oy \cdot Cyx))$$

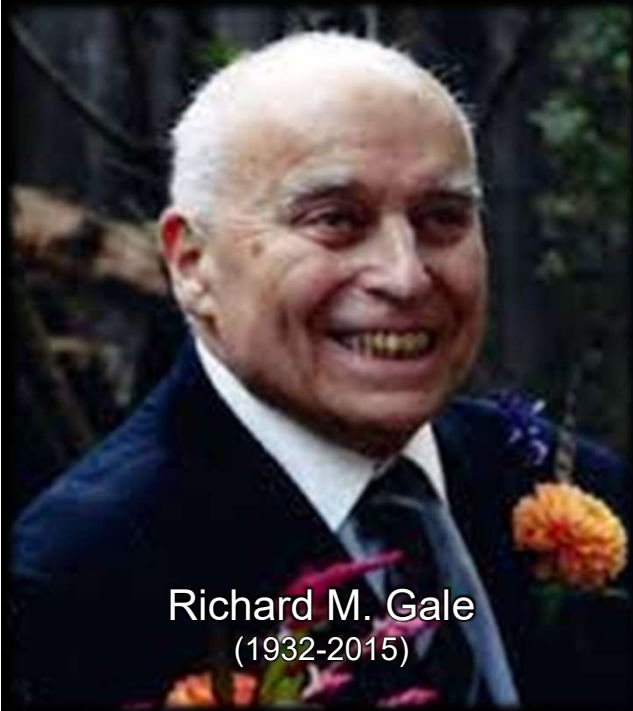
There is a cause for every physical thing in the universe.

There is an object that is the cause of every physical thing in the universe.

$$\exists y \forall x (Px \supset (Oy \cdot Cyx))$$







Richard M. Gale
(1932-2015)

*"David Hume ... claimed that for any aggregate, whether finite or infinite, if there is for each of its constituents an explanation, then there thereby is an explanation for the entire aggregate. Thus, if there were to be an infinite past succession of contingent beings, **each of which causally explains the existence of its immediate successor**, there would be an explanation for the entire infinite aggregate, and thus no need to go outside it and invoke a necessary being as its cause."*

[Richard M. Gale, "The Failure of Classical Theistic Arguments," in *Cambridge Companion*, 94]

In Aquinas's metaphysics, it is precisely by being contingent that makes it impossible for any contingent being to causally explain the existence of anything else in the primary sense of the expression 'causally explain'.

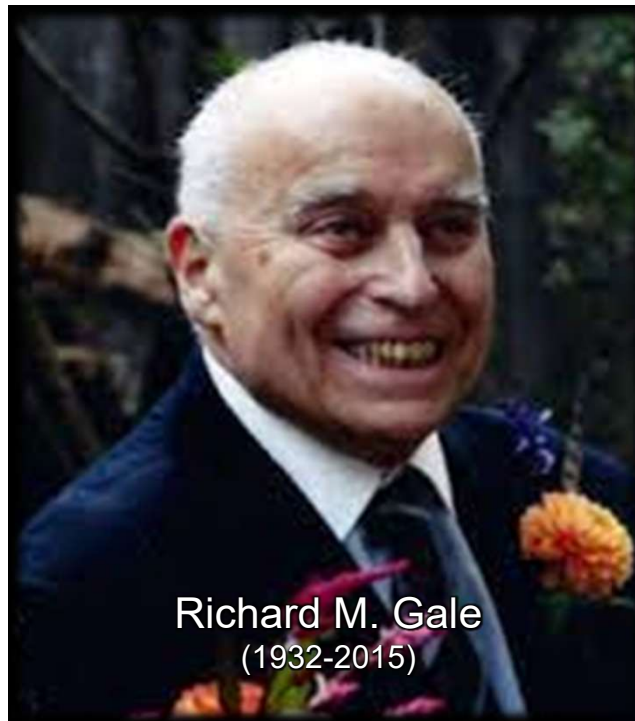
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[Richard M. Gale, "The Failure of Classical Theistic Arguments," in *Cambridge Companion*, 94]

What is more, Hume's "explanation" does not at all explain anything in any way similar to how most people today (including Richard M. Gale) understand the notions of 'explain' or 'explanations'.

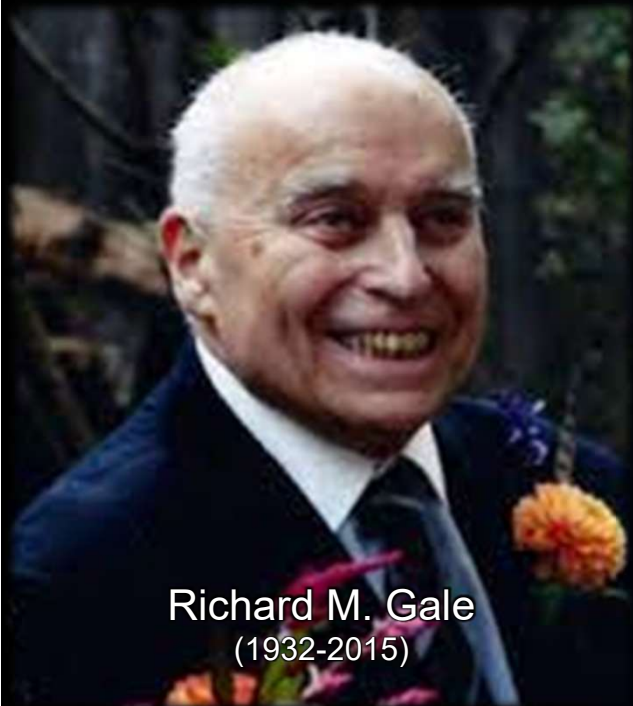
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Richard M. Gale
(1932-2015)

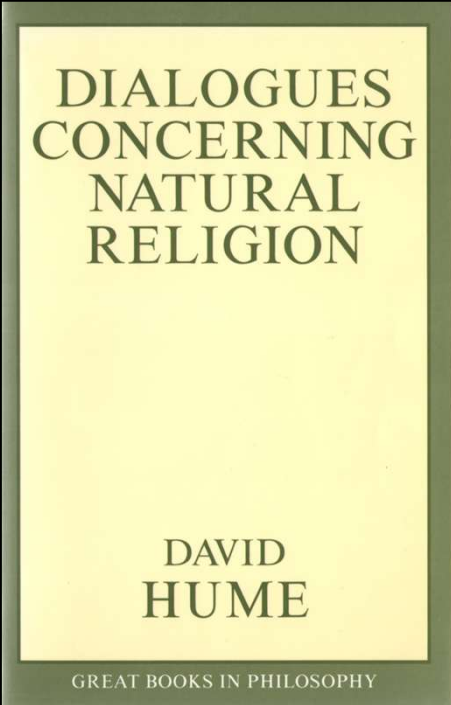
**Is Hume's
Teleological
Argument the
"Classical"
Teleological
argument?**



Richard M. Gale
(1932-2015)

*"In one version of the **classical teleological argument**, which is given by Hume's Cleanthes, an analogy is drawn between a machine and the universe as a whole."*


[Richard M. Gale, "The Failure of Classical Theistic Arguments," in *Cambridge Companion*, 97]



DIALOGUES
CONCERNING
NATURAL
RELIGION

DAVID
HUME

GREAT BOOKS IN PHILOSOPHY



David Hume
(1711-1776)

"Not to lose any time in circumlocutions,' said Cleanthes, ... 'I shall briefly explain how I conceive this matter. Look round the world: contemplate the whole and every part of it: You will find it to be nothing but one great machine, subdivided into an infinite number of lesser machines, which again admit of subdivisions to a degree beyond what human senses and faculties can trace and explain.



David Hume
(1711-1776)

"All these various machines, and even their most minute parts, are adjusted to each other with an accuracy which ravishes into admiration all men who have ever contemplated them. The curious adapting of means to ends, throughout all nature, resembles exactly, though it much exceeds, the productions of human contrivance; of human design, thought, wisdom, and intelligence.



David Hume
(1711-1776)

"Since therefore the effects resemble each other, we are led to infer, by all the rules of analogy, that the causes also resemble; and that the Author of Nature is somewhat similar to the mind of man, though possessed of much larger faculties, proportioned to the grandeur of the work which he has executed.



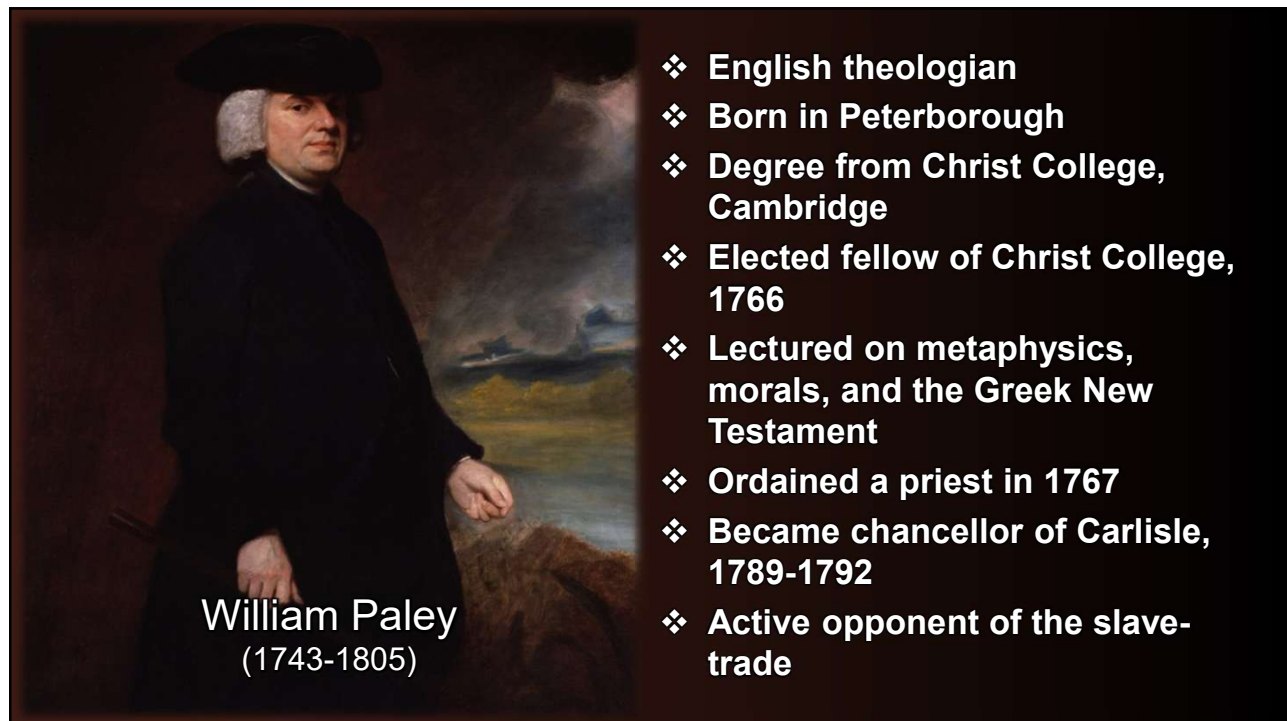
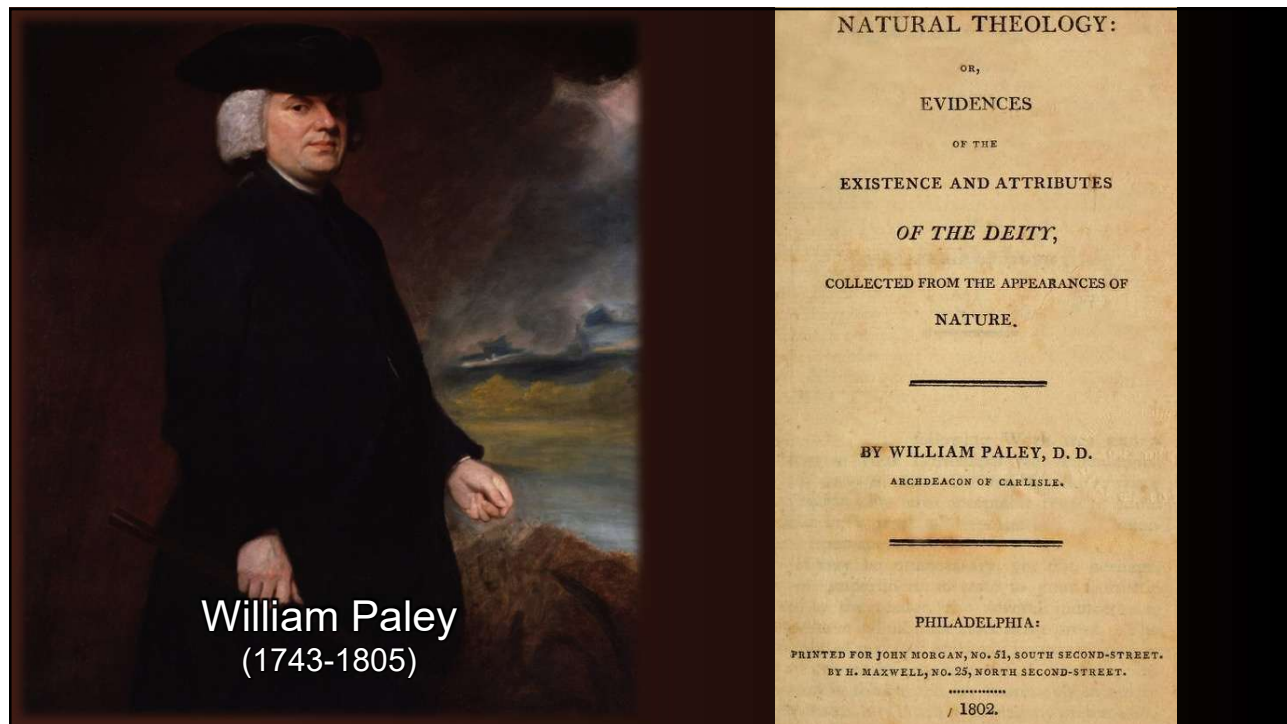
David Hume
(1711-1776)

"By this argument *a posteriori*, and by this argument alone, do we prove at once the existence of a Deity, and his similarity to human mind and intelligence."

[David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (Amherst: Prometheus, 1989), 27]



David Hume
(1711-1776)



Paley bequeathed to subsequent generations of both protagonists and antagonists his now famous "watchmaker" example.

In crossing a heath, suppose I pitched my foot against a stone, and were asked how the stone came to be there; I might possibly answer, that, for any thing I knew to the contrary, it had lain there for ever: nor would it perhaps be very easy to show the absurdity of this answer.



But suppose I had found a watch upon the ground, and it should be inquired how the watch happened to be in that place; I should hardly think of the answer which I had before given, that, for any thing I knew, the watch might have always been there.



Yet why should not this answer serve for the watch as well as for the stone? Why is it not as admissible in the second case, as in the first?



For this reason, and for no other, viz. that, when we come to inspect the watch, we perceive (what we could not discover in the stone) that its several parts are framed and put together for a purpose,



e. g. that they are so formed and adjusted as to produce motion, and that motion so regulated as to point out the hour of the day; ...



The argument Cleanthes gives is not at all the classical teleological argument.

Instead, Cleanthes's argument is closer to William Paley's "watchmaker" argument.

*"In one version of the **classical teleological argument**, which is given by Hume's Cleanthes, an analogy is drawn between a machine and the universe as a whole."*

[Richard M. Gale, "The Failure of Classical Theistic Arguments," in *Cambridge Companion*, 97]

Some might argue that even these two arguments differ in that, whereas Cleanthes' (Hume's) argument is an argument from analogy, Paley's argument is more of an argument to the best explanation akin to the contemporary Intelligent Design argument.

*"In one version of the **classical teleological argument**, which is given by Hume's Cleanthes, an analogy is drawn between a machine and the universe as a whole."*

[Richard M. Gale, "The Failure of Classical Theistic Arguments," in *Cambridge Companion*, 97]

In any event, I contend that these two arguments are closer to each other than either is to the classical teleological argument.

*"In one version of the **classical teleological argument**, which is given by Hume's Cleanthes, an analogy is drawn between a machine and the universe as a whole."*

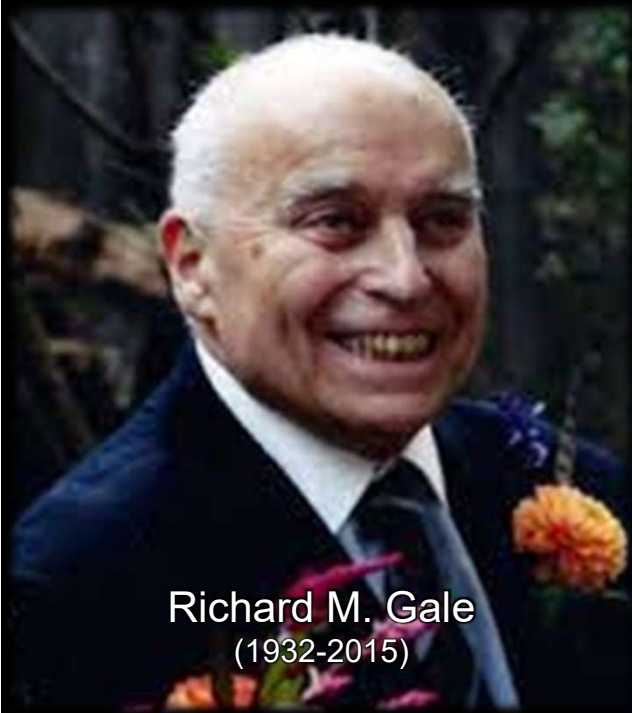
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THE DESIGN ARGUMENT: AQUINAS VS. PALEY

Richard G. Howe, Ph.D.

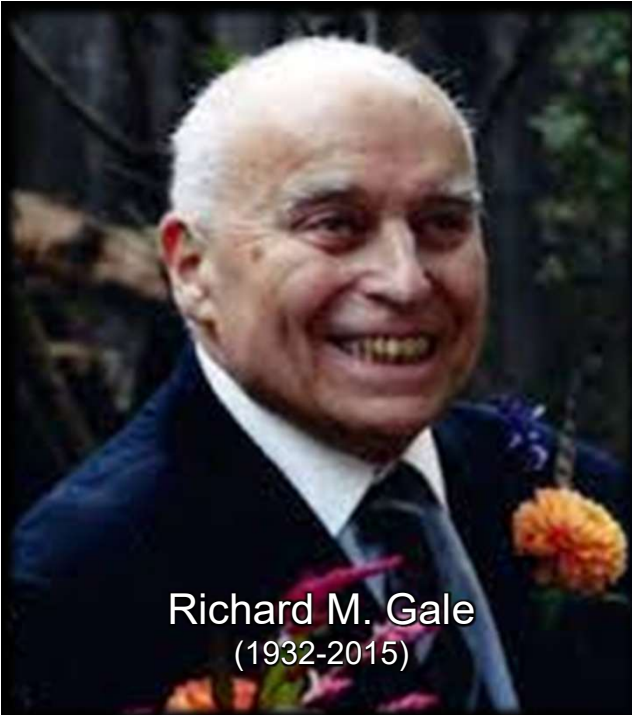
Provost

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

A portrait of Richard M. Gale, an elderly man with white hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and dark tie. He is smiling and holding a bouquet of flowers, including orange and pink blooms. The background is dark and out of focus.

Is being a genus?

Richard M. Gale
(1932-2015)

A portrait of Richard M. Gale, an elderly man with white hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and dark tie. He is smiling and holding a bouquet of flowers, including orange and pink blooms. The background is dark and out of focus.

*"A cosmological argument typically has three components: a contingent, value-neutral existential fact, a suitably tailored version of the principle of sufficient reason (PSR) that requires that every fact of this kind have an explanation, and an explanatory argument to show that the only possible explanation for this fact is in terms of the causal efficacy of a necessarily existence **God-like being.**"*

Richard M. Gale
(1932-2015)

[Richard M. Gale, "The Failure of Classical Theistic Arguments," in *Cambridge Companion*, 90]

While it seems innocent enough in everyday discourse to talk in terms such as a 'God-like being,' the classical theist in the Thomistic tradition will take great exception to such a characterization when it comes to philosophical discourse.

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[Richard M. Gale, "The Failure of Classical Theistic Arguments," in *Cambridge Companion*, 90]

Such language betrays a mistaken notion that the God of Classical Theism is a member of the genus (i.e., the kind) "God-like" which might include other (albeit non-existing) members like Zeus, Thor, Horus, or Brahma.

*"A cosmological argument typically has three components: a contingent, value-neutral existential fact, a suitably tailored version of the principle of sufficient reason (PSR) that requires that every fact of this kind have an explanation, and an explanatory argument to show that the only possible explanation for this fact is in terms of the causal efficacy of a necessarily existence **God-like being.**"*

[Richard M. Gale, "The Failure of Classical Theistic Arguments," in *Cambridge Companion*, 90]

Granted, one will no doubt see Yahweh or Elohim show up in a list of "gods" of the world's religions, indicating that people understand that there is a class of things that contain a number of members who, in their minds and to a greater or lesser degree, fit the characteristics of the class or the category or the genus "god."

*"A cosmological argument typically has three components: a contingent, value-neutral existential fact, a suitably tailored version of the principle of sufficient reason (PSR) that requires that every fact of this kind have an explanation, and an explanatory argument to show that the only possible explanation for this fact is in terms of the causal efficacy of a necessarily existence **God-like being.**"*

[Richard M. Gale, "The Failure of Classical Theistic Arguments," in *Cambridge Companion*, 90]

However, when it come to the metaphysics, Aquinas will insist that the true, Creator God cannot be a member (even if the only member) of a genus.

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[Richard M. Gale, "The Failure of Classical Theistic Arguments," in *Cambridge Companion*, 90]

The reason is that Aquinas regards God as ipsum esse subsistens: subsistent existence itself.

This means that God is pure actuality, pure being, pure existence. All the other "gods" are characters who may or may not "have" existence whereas the God of Classical Christian theism IS existence itself.

"A cosmological argument typically has three components: a contingent, value-neutral existential fact, a suitably tailored version of the principle of sufficient reason (PSR) that requires that every fact of this kind have an explanation, and an explanatory argument to show that the only possible explanation for this fact is in terms of the causal efficacy of a necessarily existence **God-like being."**

[Richard M. Gale, "The Failure of Classical Theistic Arguments," in *Cambridge Companion*, 90]

But being (or existence) cannot be a genus for the following reason.

Using the taxonomy Aquinas inherited from Aristotle, things can be understood along the logical categories of genus, specific difference, species, proper accident, and accident.

"A cosmological argument typically has three components: a contingent, value-neutral existential fact, a suitably tailored version of the principle of sufficient reason (PSR) that requires that every fact of this kind have an explanation, and an explanatory argument to show that the only possible explanation for this fact is in terms of the causal efficacy of a necessarily existence **God-like being."**

[Richard M. Gale, "The Failure of Classical Theistic Arguments," in *Cambridge Companion*, 90]

♪ **Genus** ♪
kind

♪ **Specific difference** ♪
characteristic making a thing distinct from other members of the genus

♪ **Species** ♪
unique sub-set of genus

♪ **Proper accident** ♪
property the species almost always has and when missing, is a defect

♪ **Accident** ♪
property the species may or may not have



Aristotle
(384-322 BC)

♪ **Genus** ♪
animal

♪ **Specific difference** ♪
rationality

♪ **Species** ♪
human

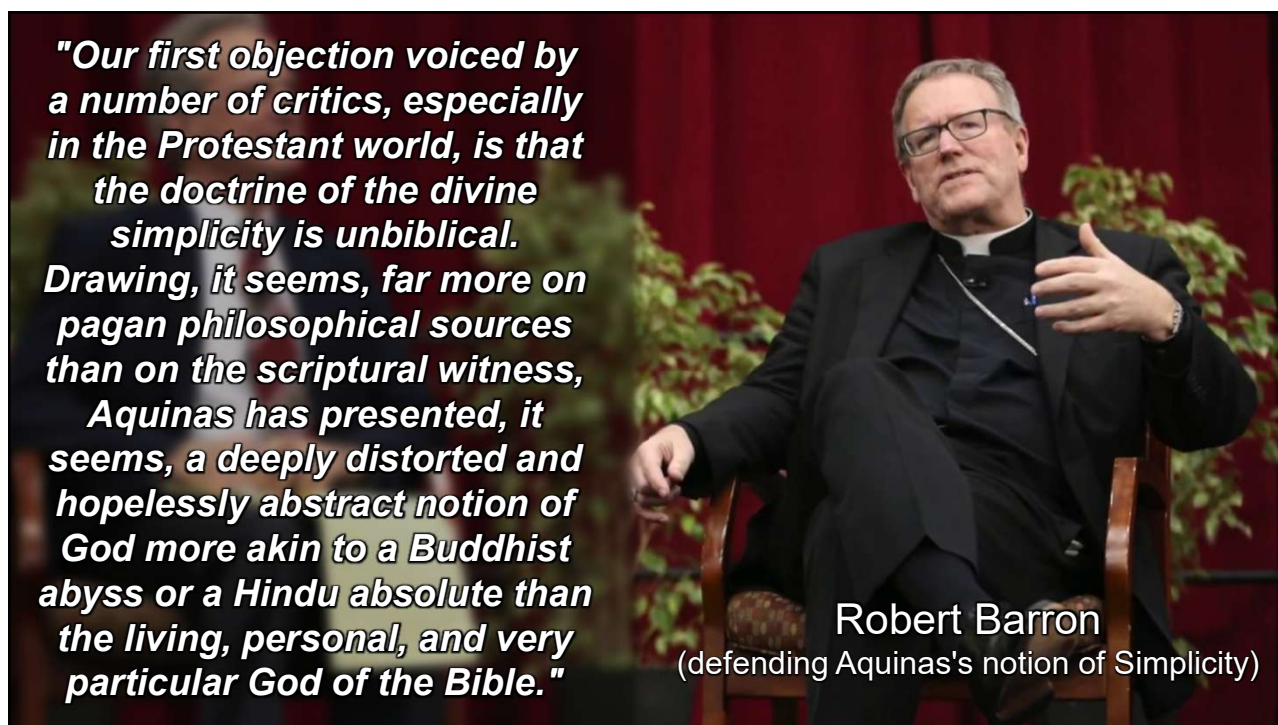
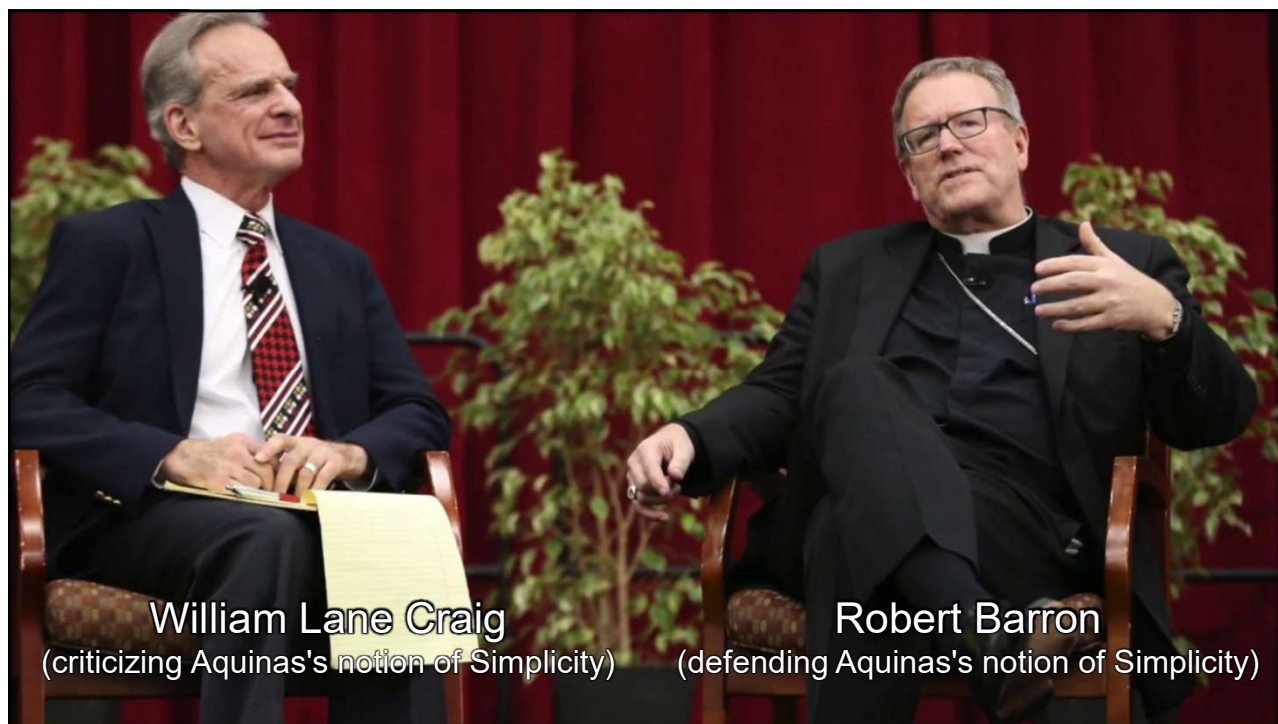
♪ **Proper accident** ♪
five fingers per hand

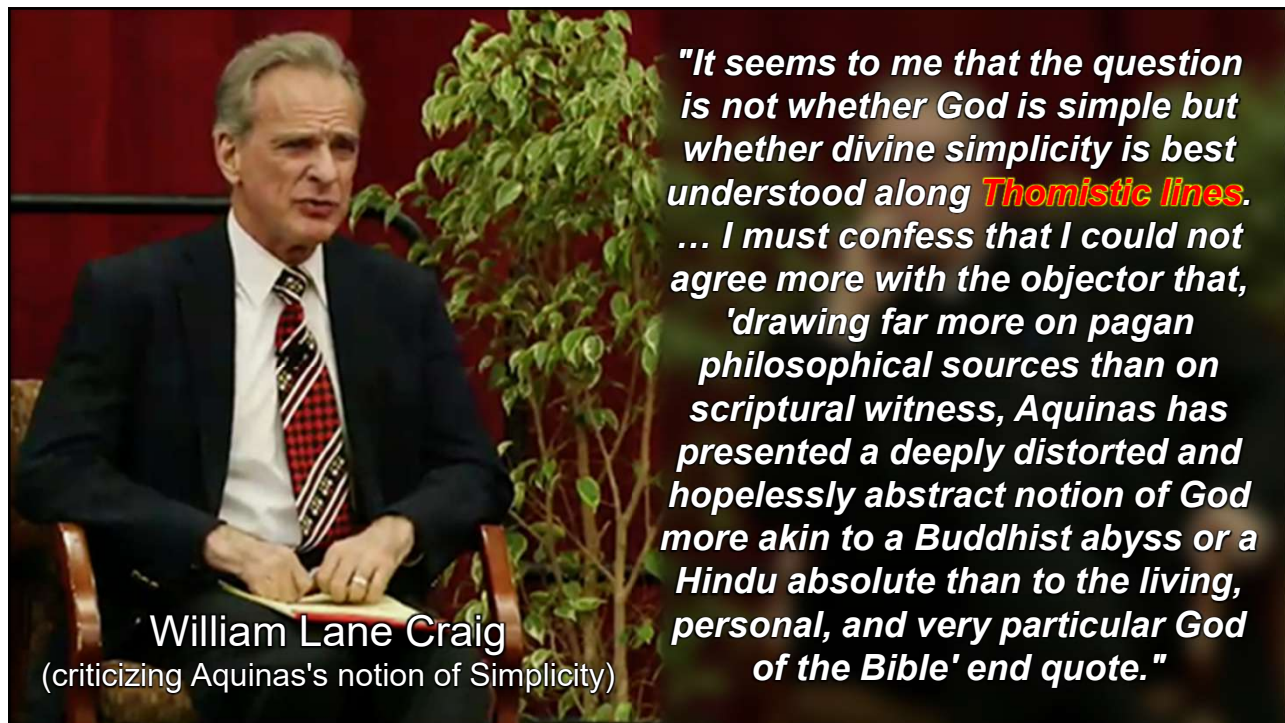
♪ **Accident** ♪
black, blonde, or no hair



Aristotle
(384-322 BC)



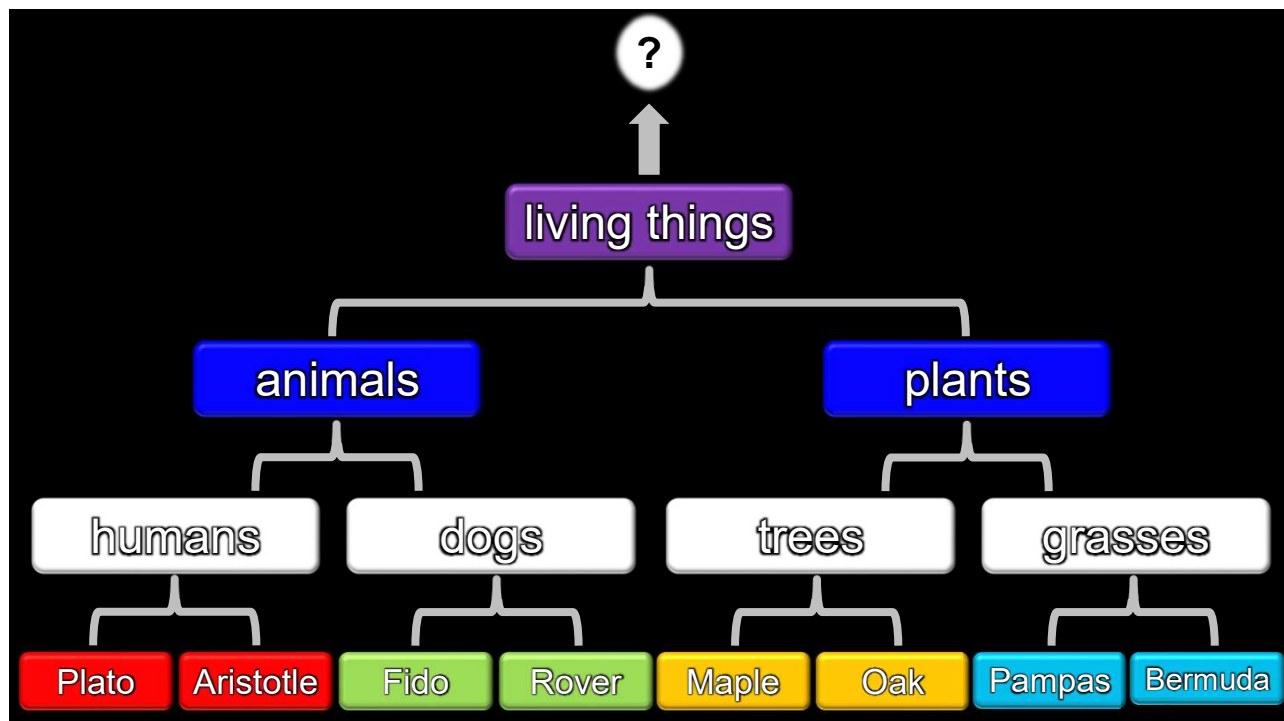


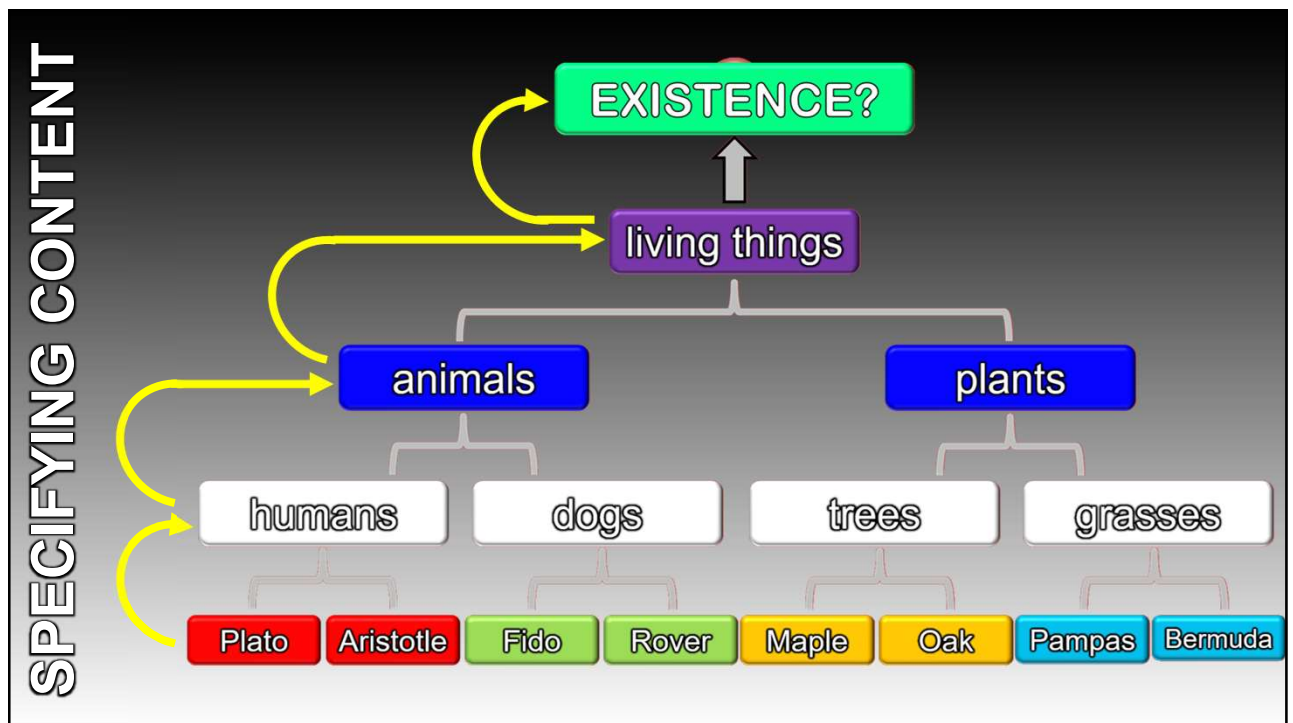
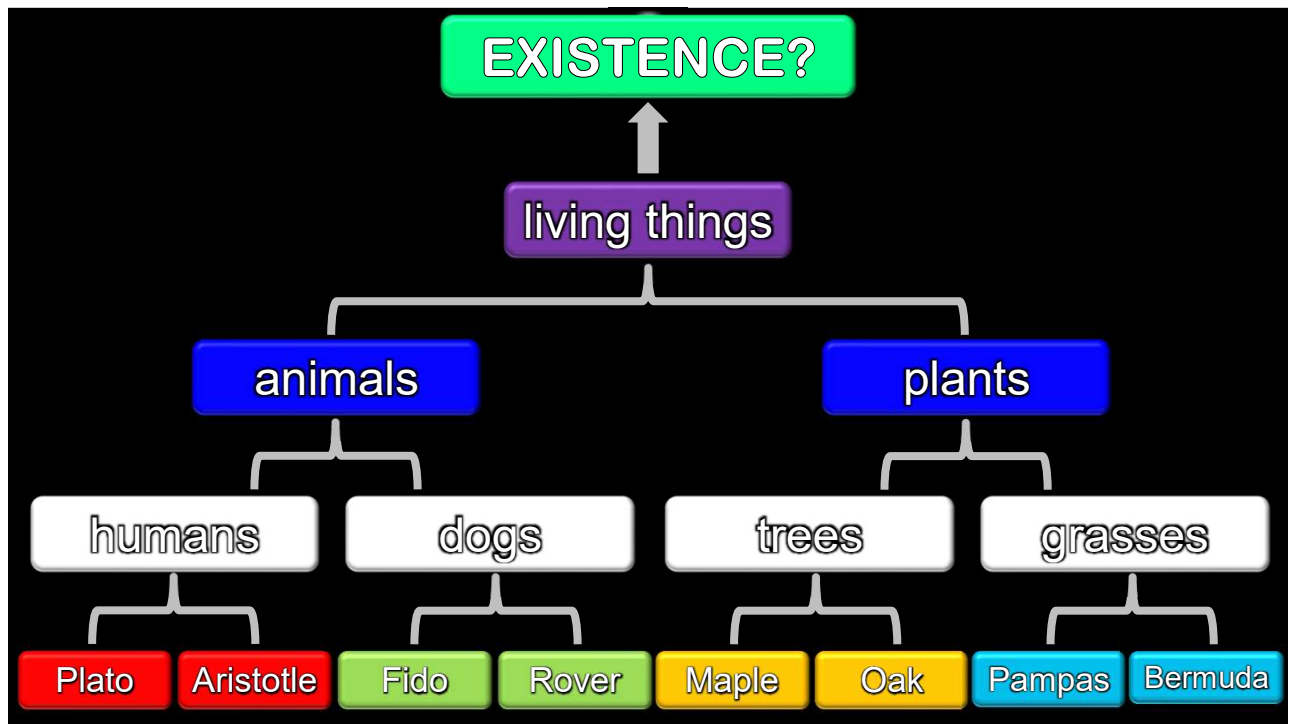


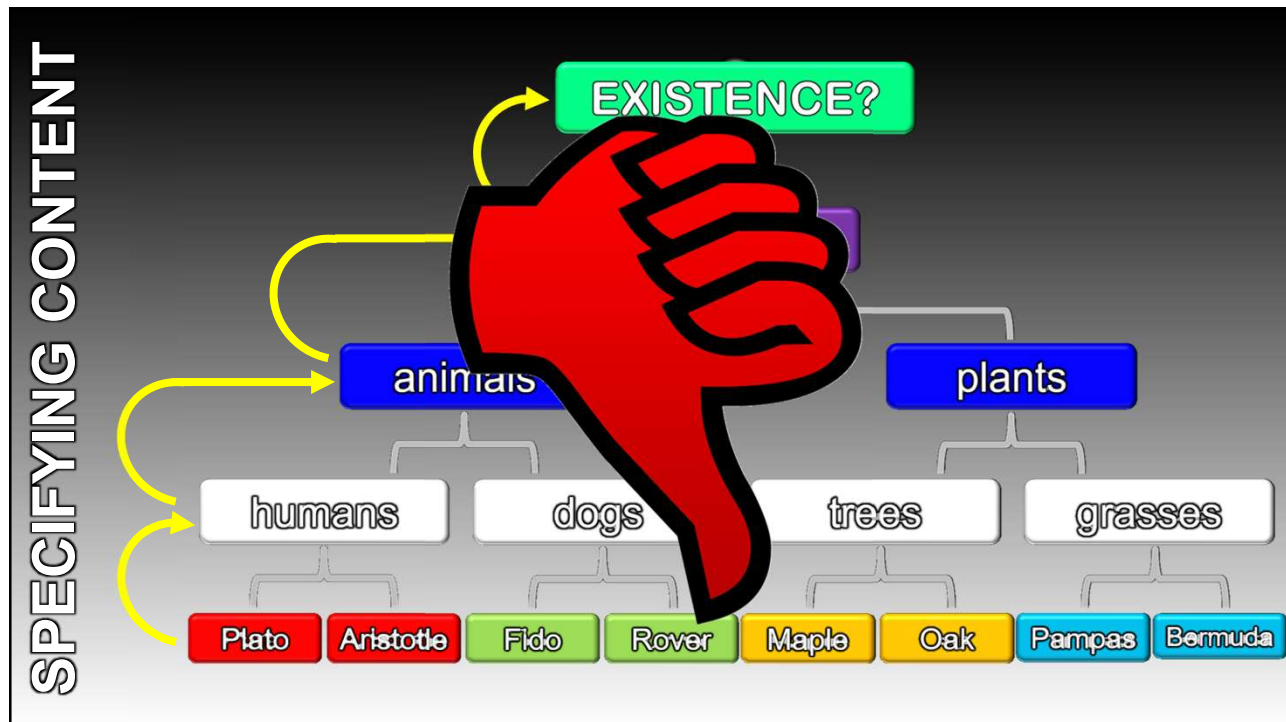
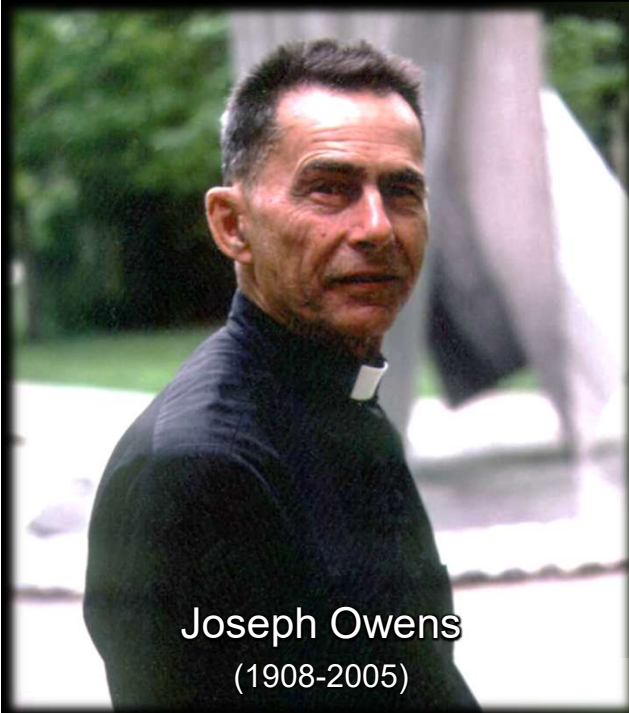
I submit that Craig is mistakenly treating Aquinas's doctrine of divine simplicity as if Aquinas is taking existence to be a genus.

The thinking would go like this:

*"It seems to me that the question is not whether God is simple but whether divine simplicity is best understood along **Thomistic lines**. ... I must confess that I could not agree more with the objector that, 'drawing far more on pagan philosophical sources than on scriptural witness, Aquinas has presented a deeply distorted and hopelessly abstract notion of God more akin to a Buddhist abyss or a Hindu absolute than to the living, personal, and very particular God of the Bible' end quote."*



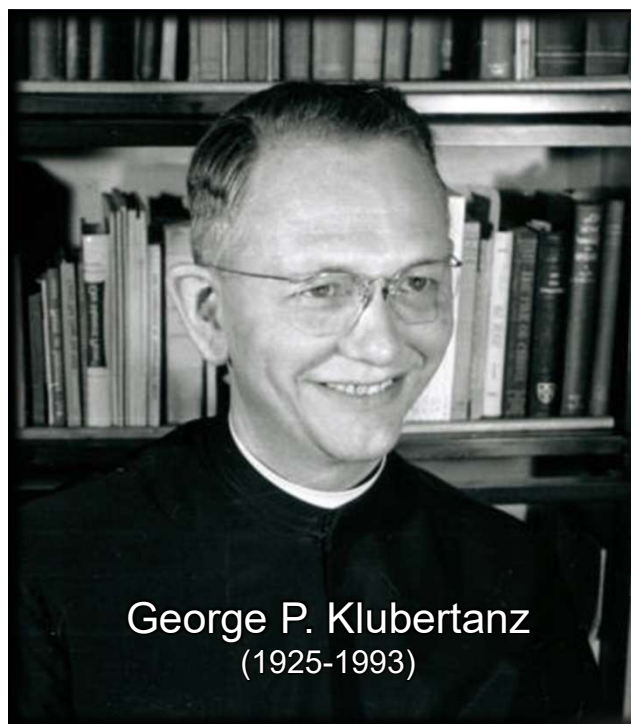


Joseph Owens
(1908-2005)

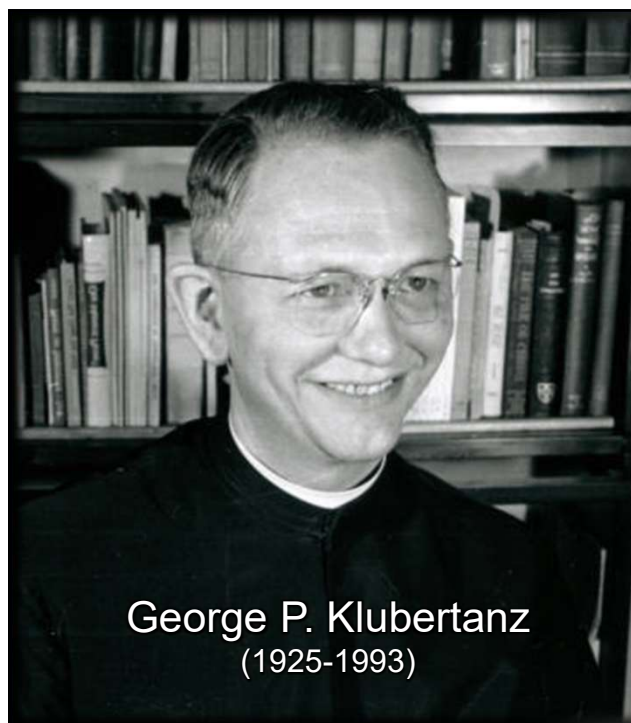
"Being, when considered as a nature isolated by a process of abstraction in the way humanity or animality is isolated, turns out to be an empty concept that is the equivalent of nothing and is a notion incapable of serving as an object of scientific investigation."

[Joseph Owens, "The 'Analytics' and Thomistic Metaphysical Procedure," *Medieval Studies* 26 (1964): 83-108 (84)]



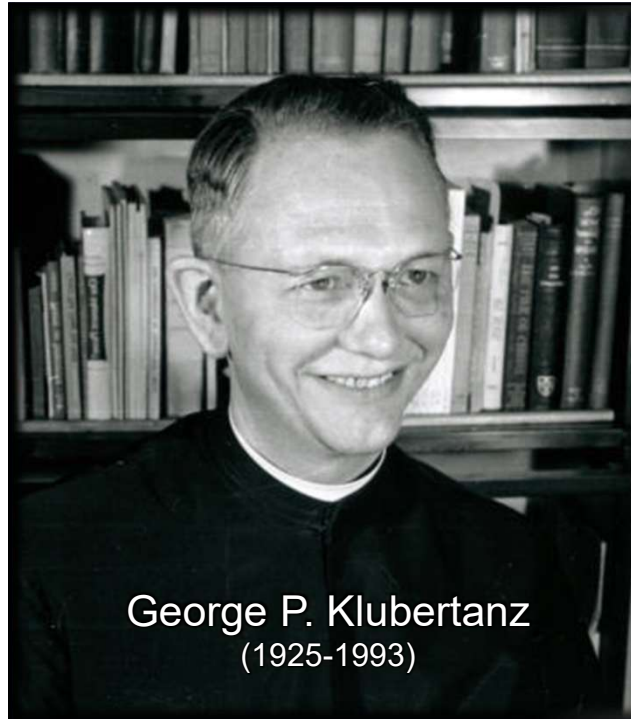
George P. Klubertanz
(1925-1993)

"Being as it is understood in its first and proper metaphysical sense is named from that which is most actual and concrete, namely, the act of existing."



George P. Klubertanz
(1925-1993)

"Being is not the 'widest in extension and the least in comprehension,' because the logical rule of the inverse variation of extension and comprehension holds only for universals."



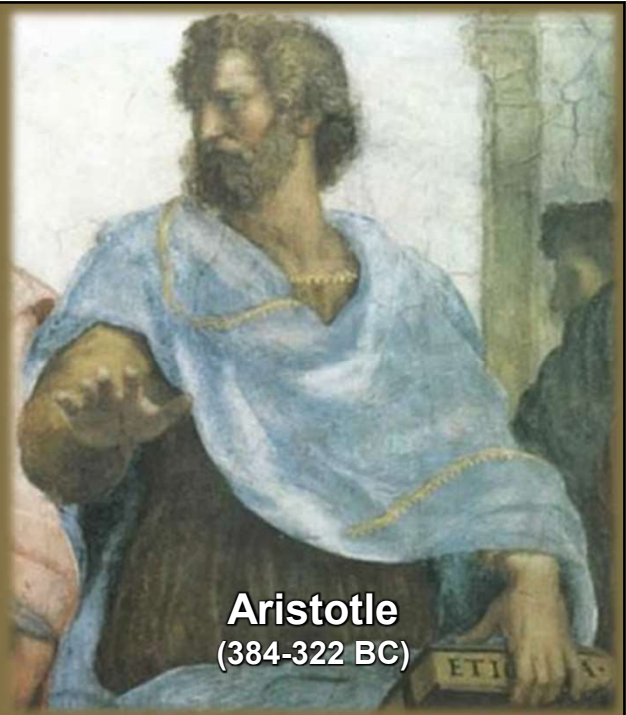
George P. Klubertanz
(1925-1993)

"Being is at once the widest in extension—for "is" can be said of all things—and the fullest in (implicit) comprehension—for any real act or perfection IS."

[George Klubertanz, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Being* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1995), 185-186, emphasis in original]

"But it is not possible that ... being should be a single genus of things; for the differentiae of any genus must ... have being ... but it is not possible for the genus taken apart from its species ... to be predicated of its proper differentiae; so that if ... being is a genus, no differentia will ... have being."

[Aristotle, *Metaphysics* B (III), 3, 998b 21-26, trans. W. D. Ross in Richard McKeon, ed. *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York: Random House, 1941), 723]



Aristotle
(384-322 BC)

☞ Genus ☞
animal

☞ Specific difference ☞
rationality

☞ Species ☞
human



Aristotle
(384-322 BC)

☞ Genus ☞
animal

☞ Specific difference ☞
rationality

☞ Species ☞
human

The specific difference is not included in the genus but neither is it necessarily excluded by the genus.

The specific difference added to the genus gives rise to the species.

♪ **Genus** ♪
 being (existence)

♪ **Specific difference** ♪
 ?

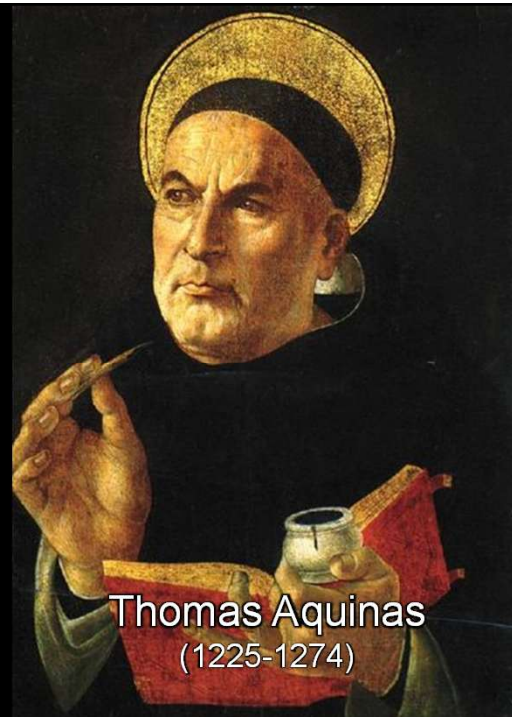
♪ **Species** ♪
 ?

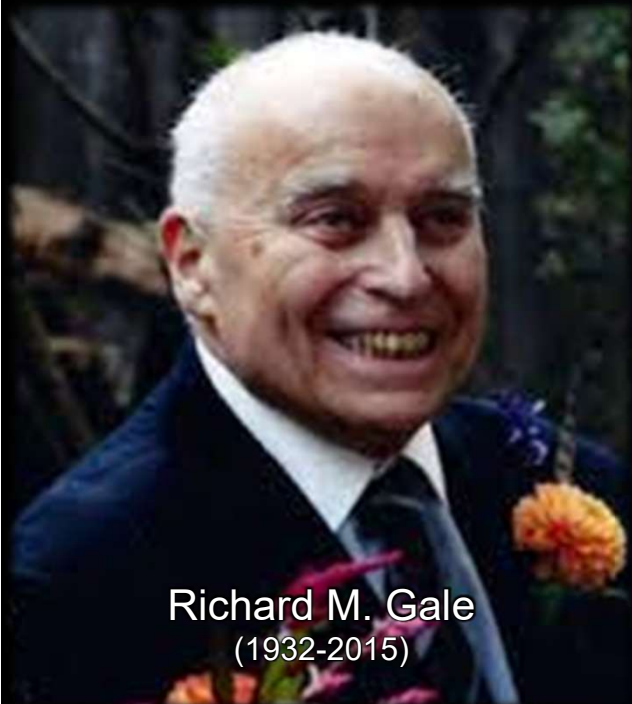
But if the specific difference is not included in the genus, and the genus is existence, this would mean that the specific difference would not exist.

But if the specific difference does not exist, it cannot specify anything, which is to say it cannot give rise to the species.

"Since the existence of God is His essence, if God were in any genus, He would be the genus 'being,' because, since genus is predicated as an essential it refers to the essence of a thing. But the Philosopher has shown [Metaph. iii] that being cannot be a genus, for every genus has differences distinct from its generic essence. Now no difference can exist distinct from being; for non-being cannot be a difference. It follows then that God is not in a genus."

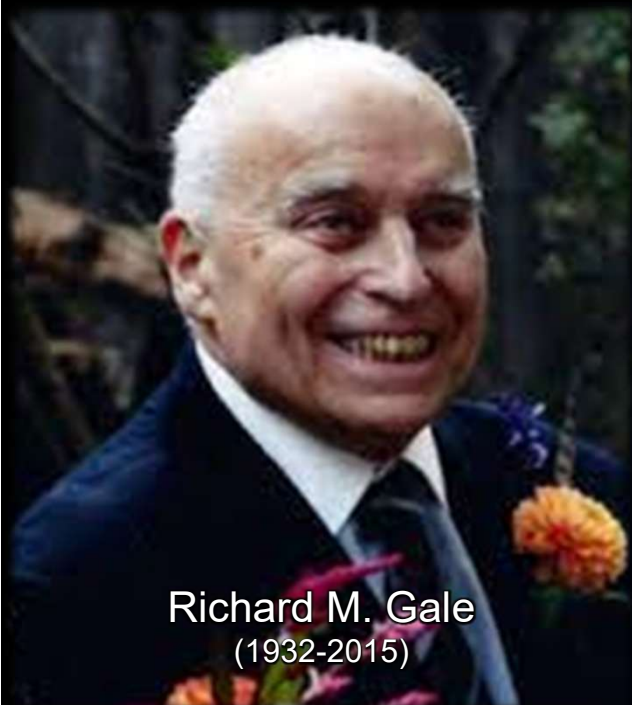
[Summa Theologiae I, 3, 5. trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Westminster: Christian Classics, 1948)]





Richard M. Gale
(1932-2015)


Is the Principle of Sufficient Reason true?



Richard M. Gale
(1932-2015)

*"A cosmological argument typically has three components: **a contingent, value-neutral existential fact, a suitably tailored version of the principle of sufficient reason (PSR) that requires that every fact of this kind have an explanation, and an explanatory argument to show that the only possible explanation for this fact is in terms of the causal efficacy of a necessarily existence God-like being.**"*


[Richard M. Gale, "The Failure of Classical Theistic Arguments," in *Cambridge Companion*, 90]



Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz
(1646-1716)


"Our reasonings are based on two great principles, that of contradiction, in virtue of which we judge that which involves a contradiction to be false, and that which is opposed or contradictory to the false to be true. And that of sufficient reason, by virtue of which we consider that we can find no true or existent fact, no true assertion, without there being a sufficient reason why it is thus and not otherwise, although most of the time these reasons cannot be known to us."

[Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, "Monadology," in *G. W. Leibniz Philosophical Essays*, trans. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989), 217]



Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz
(1646-1716)

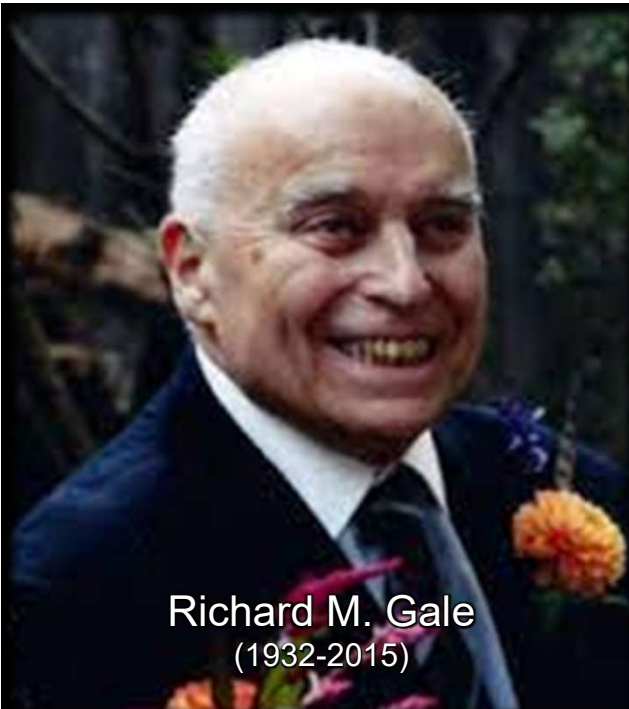
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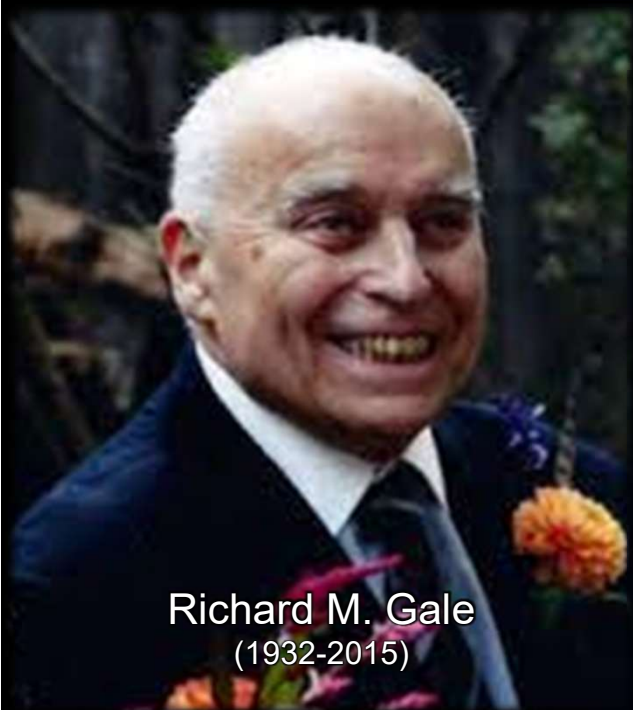
*And that of sufficient reason,
by virtue of which we
consider that we can find no
true or existent fact, no true
assertion, without there
being a sufficient reason why
it is thus and not otherwise,
although most of the time
these reasons cannot be
known to us."*

[Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, "Monadology," in *G. W. Leibniz Philosophical Essays*, trans. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989), 217]



Richard M. Gale
(1932-2015)

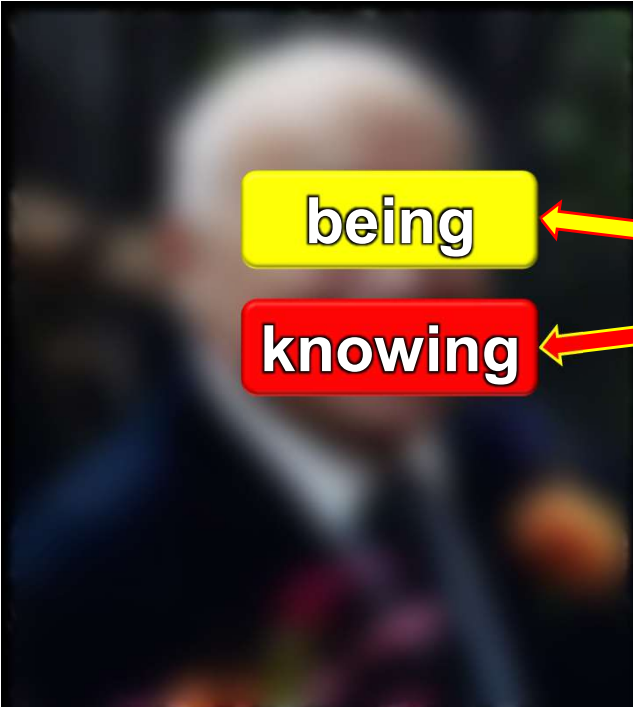
**Is there a
primacy of
epistemology
to ontology?**



Richard M. Gale
(1932-2015)

*"Nevertheless, Reichenbach's rebuttal is far too facile for it fails to face the fact that our only access to the **ontological order** is through the **epistemic order**. The only way that we humans can go about determining what has the possibility of existing is by appeal to what we can conceive to be possible."*

[Richard M. Gale, "The Failure of Classical Theistic Arguments," in *Cambridge Companion*, 95]



being

knowing

*"Nevertheless, Reichenbach's rebuttal is far too facile for it fails to face the fact that our only access to the **ontological order** is through the **epistemic order**. The only way that we humans can go about determining what has the possibility of existing is by appeal to what we can conceive to be possible."*

[Richard M. Gale, "The Failure of Classical Theistic Arguments," in *Cambridge Companion*, 95]

Gale's point here is predicated on a denial of any classical understanding of knowledge.

But nowhere in this context does he give any argument against it, nor even acknowledge it.

"Nevertheless, Reichenbach's rebuttal is far too facile for it fails to face the fact that our only access to the ontological order is through the epistemic order. The only way that we humans can go about determining what has the possibility of existing is by appeal to what we can conceive to be possible."

[Richard M. Gale, "The Failure of Classical Theistic Arguments," in *Cambridge Companion*, 95]

In other words, it would seem that nowhere in Gale's philosophy of human knowing does he allow for the formal identity of knower and known.

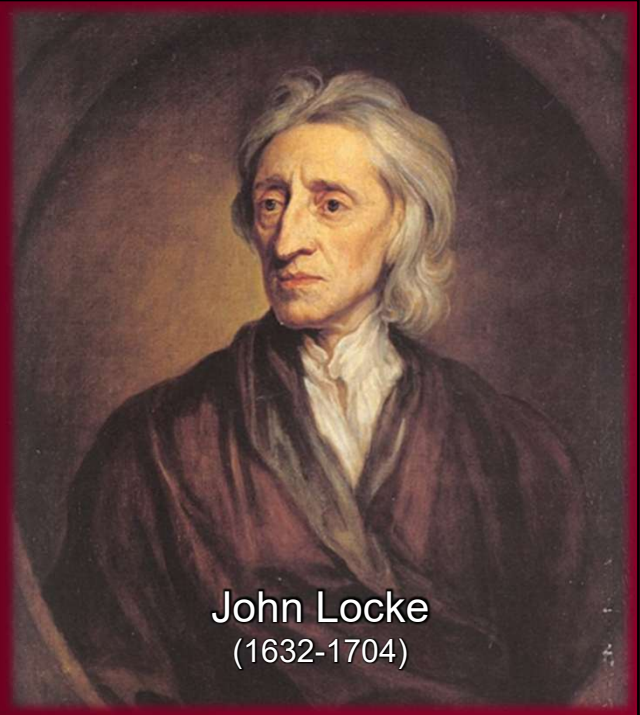
This confines him to an epistemological dualism.

"Nevertheless, Reichenbach's rebuttal is far too facile for it fails to face the fact that our only access to the ontological order is through the epistemic order. The only way that we humans can go about determining what has the possibility of existing is by appeal to what we can conceive to be possible."

[Richard M. Gale, "The Failure of Classical Theistic Arguments," in *Cambridge Companion*, 95]

*"Since the Mind, in all its Thought and Reasonings, hath **no other immediate Object** but its own Ideas, which it alone does or can contemplate, it is evident, that **our Knowledge is only conversant about them**. Knowledge then seems to me to be nothing but the perception of the connexion and agreement, or disagreement and repugnancy of any of our Ideas. In this alone it consists."*

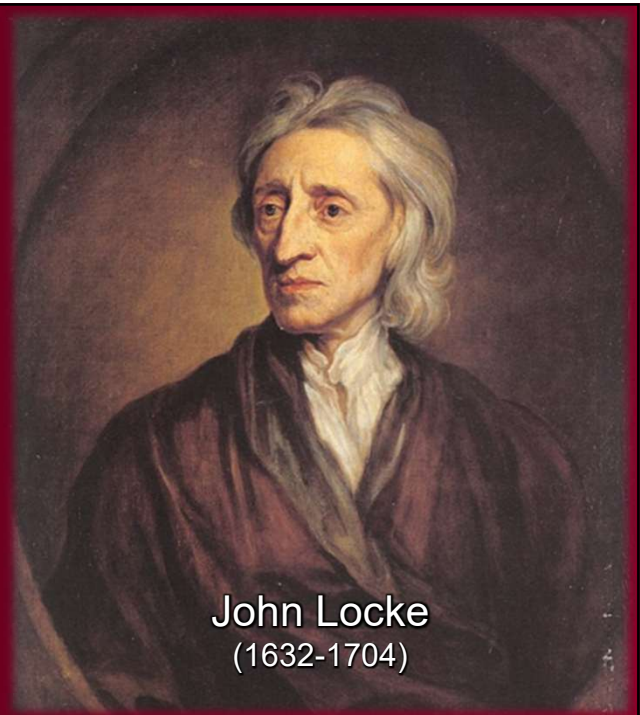
[An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, IV, I, 1, §1-§2, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 525]



John Locke
(1632-1704)

"Tis evident, the Mind knows not Things immediately, but only by the intervention of the Ideas it has of them. Our Knowledge therefore is real, only so far as there is a conformity between our Ideas and the reality of Things.

[An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, IV, I, 4, §3-§5, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 563]

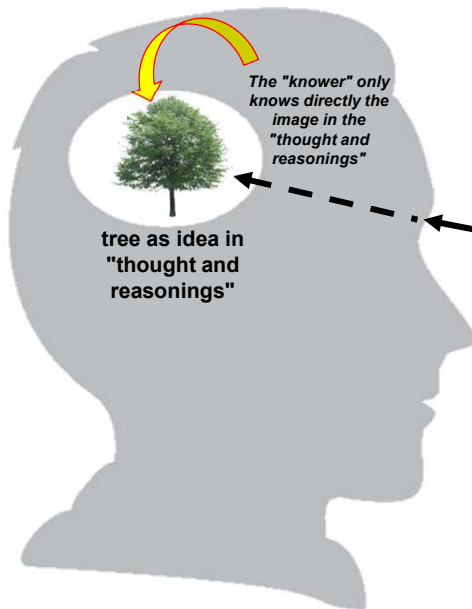


John Locke
(1632-1704)

Epistemological Dualism

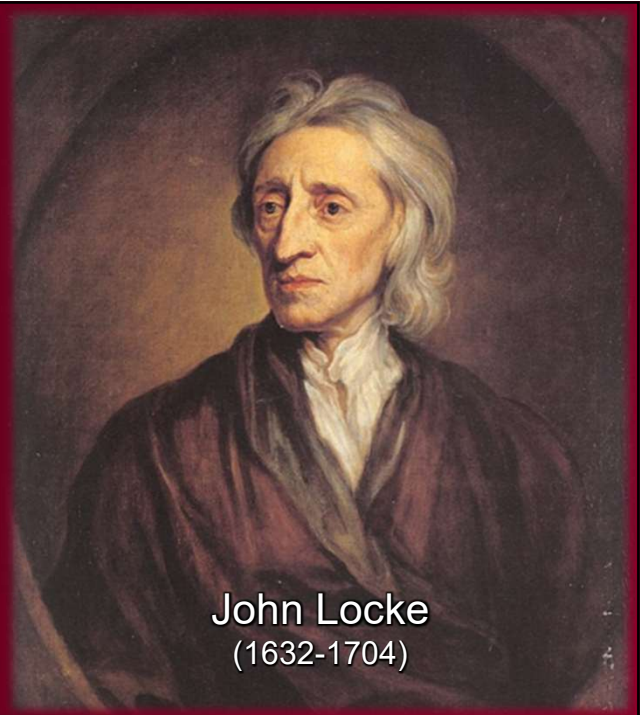
Upon "seeing" the tree, an idea of the tree is formed in the "thought and reasonings." The idea is the only thing that the knower knows immediately.

The challenge for such a view is whether and how it can confirm that the idea in the mind of the knower conforms to the thing known in external reality.



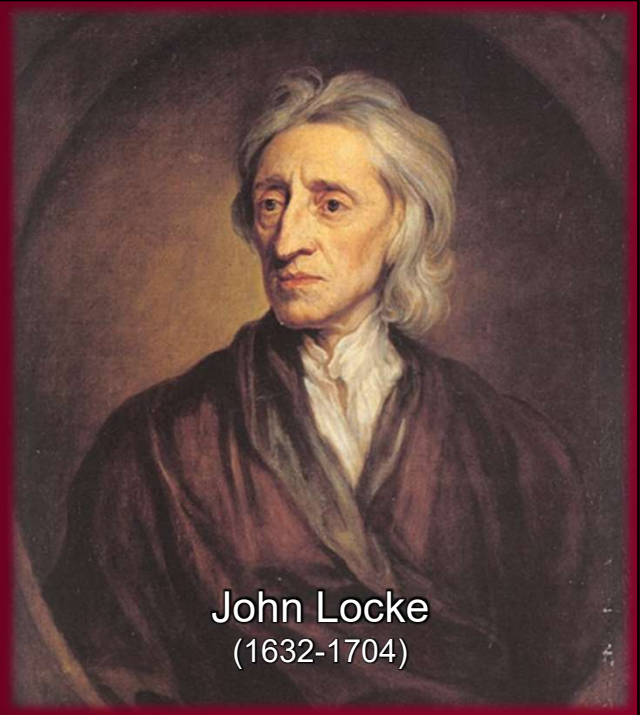
tree in reality external to the knower

"But what shall be here the Criterion? How shall the Mind, when it perceives nothing but its own Ideas, know that they agree with Things themselves? This, though it seems not to want difficulty, yet, I think there be two sorts of Ideas, that, we may be assured, agree with Things.



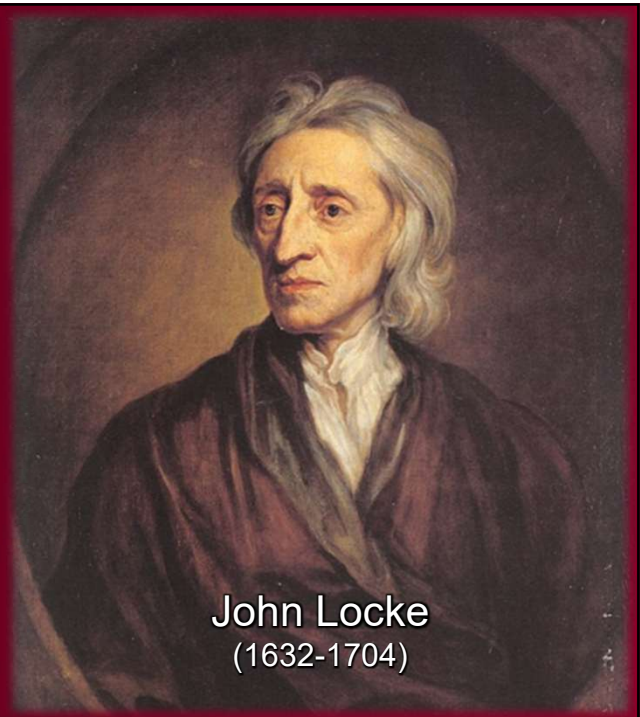
John Locke
(1632-1704)

"First, The first are simple Ideas, which since the Mind, as has been shewed, can by no means make to it self, must necessarily be the product of Things operating on the Mind in a natural way, and producing therein those Perceptions which by the Wisdom and Will of our Maker they are ordained and adapted to.



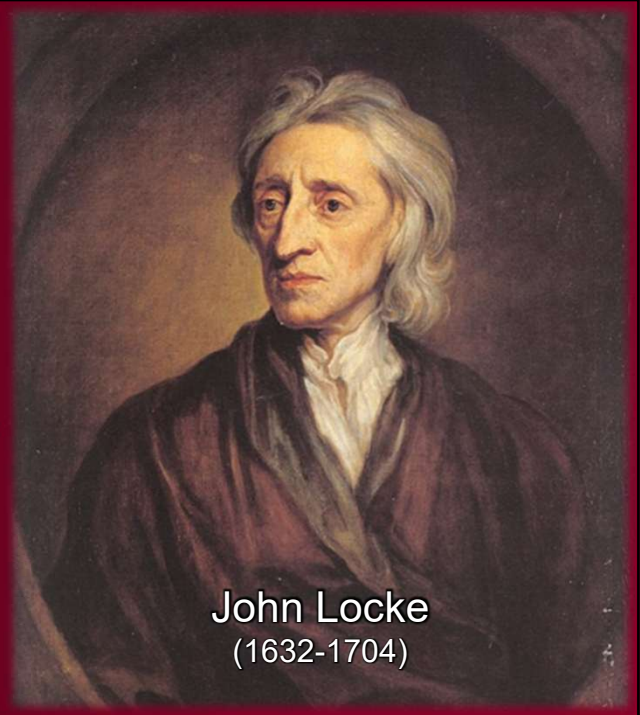
John Locke
(1632-1704)

"From whence it follows, that simple Ideas are not fictions of our Fancies, but the natural and regular productions of Things without us, really operating upon us; and so carry with them all the conformity which is intended; or which our state requires: ...



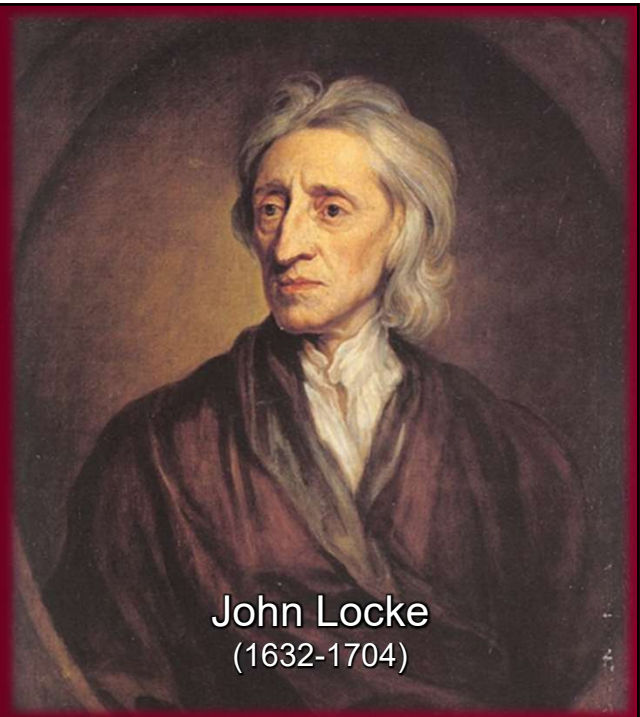
John Locke
(1632-1704)

"Secondly, All our complex Ideas, except those of Substances, being Archetypes of the Mind's own making, not intended to be the Copies of any thing, nor referred to the existence of any thing, as to their Originals, cannot want any conformity necessary to real Knowledge. For that which is not designed to represent any thing



John Locke
(1632-1704)

"but it self, can never be capable of a wrong representation, nor mislead us from the true apprehension of any thing, by tis dislikeness to it: and such, excepting those of Substances, are all our complex Ideas, which the Mind, by its free choice, puts together, without considering any connexion they have in Nature."

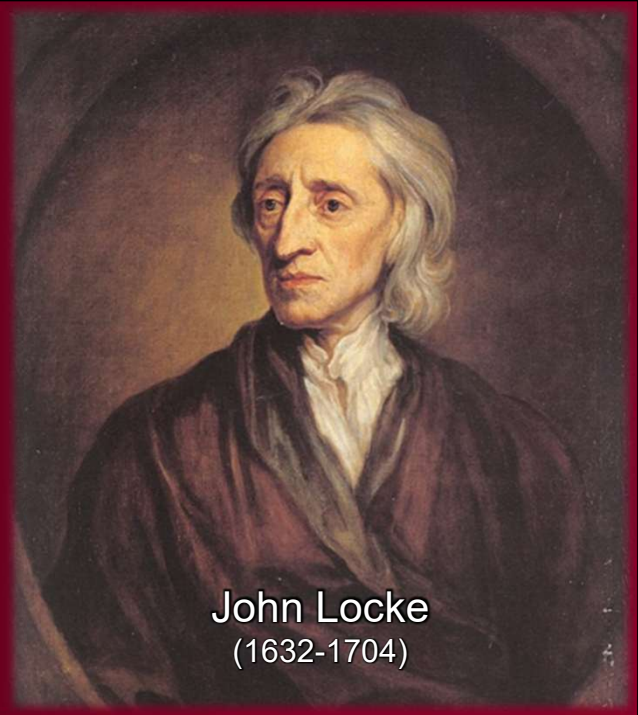


John Locke
(1632-1704)

[An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, IV, I, 4, §3-§5, ed. Peter H. Niddich (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 563-564]

Though Locke admitted that material substance itself was not perceivable, he maintained that it was necessary to affirm its reality as an explanation:

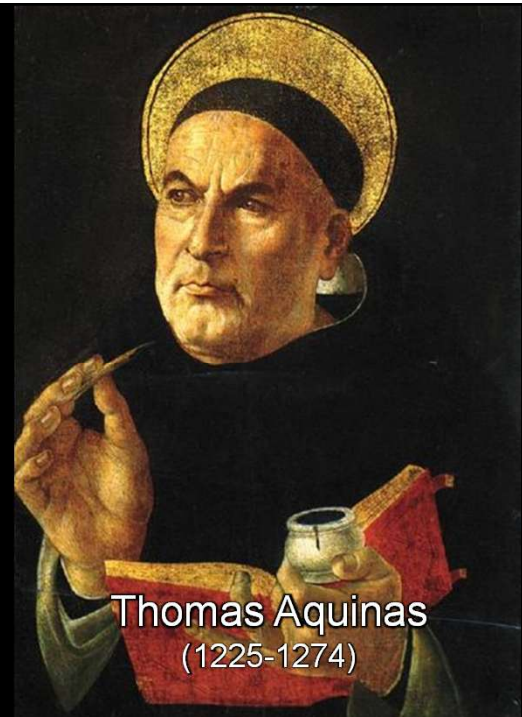
- 1) *for the continuity of our experiences (when leaving and then returning to a room, our experience of the room is the same), and*
- 2) *for the passivity of our experience (what we perceive in the room is happening "to" us and not something we are causing in ourselves).*



John Locke
(1632-1704)

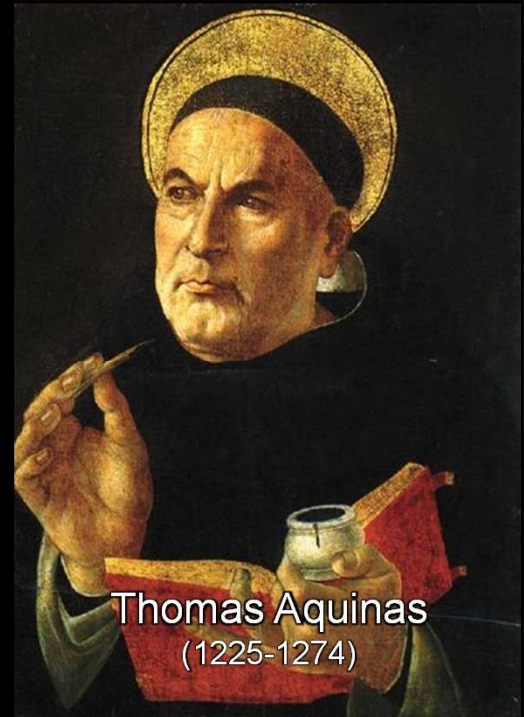
"Our knowledge, taking its start from things, proceeds in this order. First, it begins in sense; second, it is completed in the intellect."

[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)]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

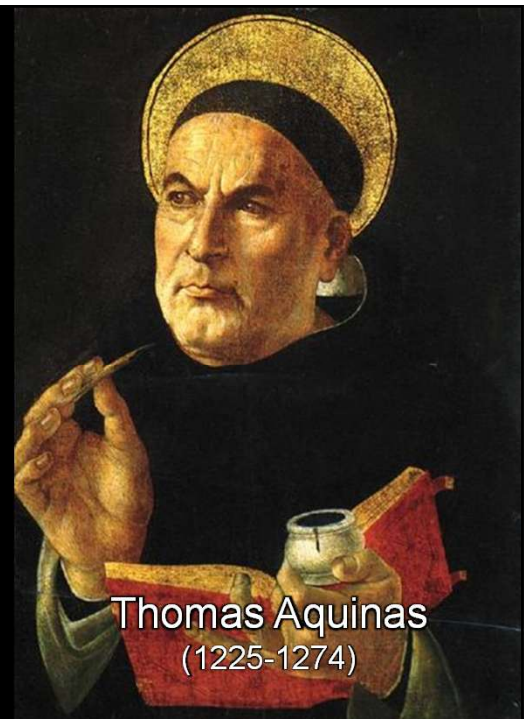
"Now our soul possess two cognitive powers; one is the act of a corporeal organ, which naturally knows things existing in individual matter; hence sense knows only the singular. But there is another kind of cognitive power in the soul, called the intellect; and this is not the act of any corporeal organ."



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

"Wherefore the intellect naturally knows natures which exist only in individual matter; not as they are in such individual matter, but according as they are abstracted therefrom by the considering act of the intellect; hence it follows that through the intellect we can understand these objects as universal; and this is beyond the power of sense."

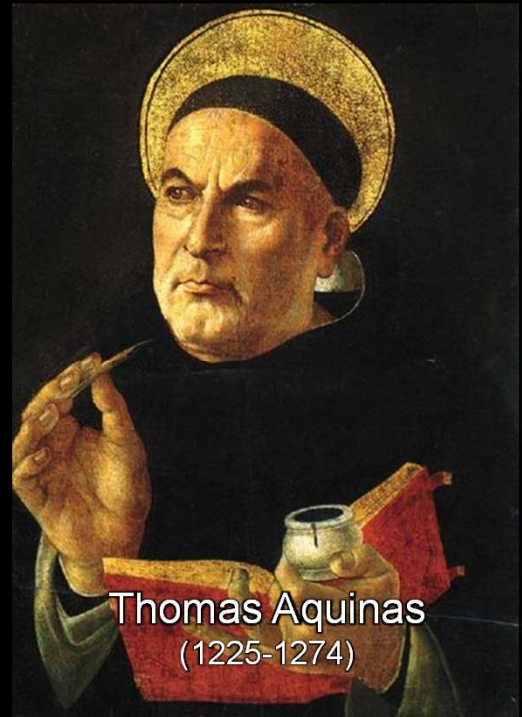
[Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, Q12, art. 4, trans. Father of the English Dominican Province (Westminster: Christian Classics), 52]



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."

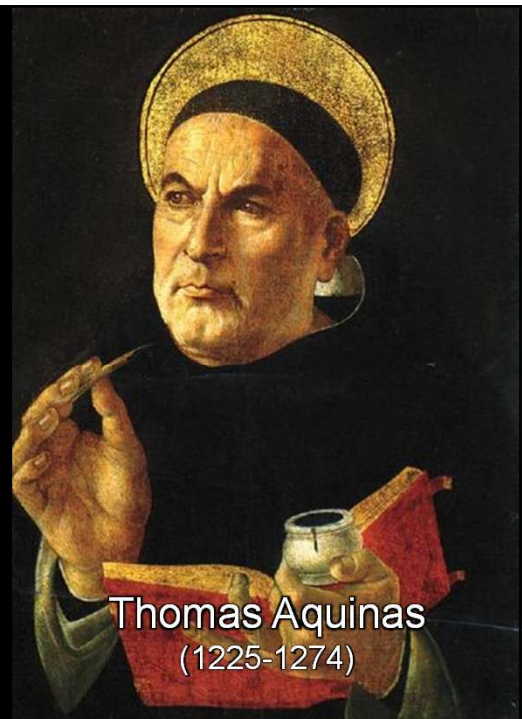
[Thomas Aquinas, *ST*, I, Q. 12, art. 13, p. 59]



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.



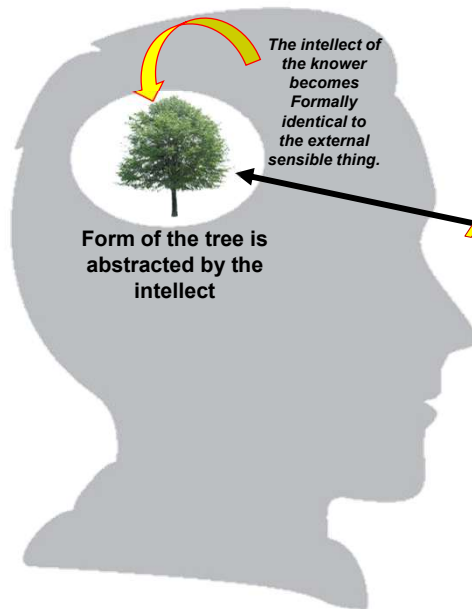
Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

Classical Realism

Also known as *Direct Realism*, this view of Aristotle and Aquinas seeks to account for how it is (not whether it is) that we know the sensible world around us.

There is no "epistemological dualism" since the same Form that is individuated by Matter in the real tree exists Formally in the intellect of the knower.

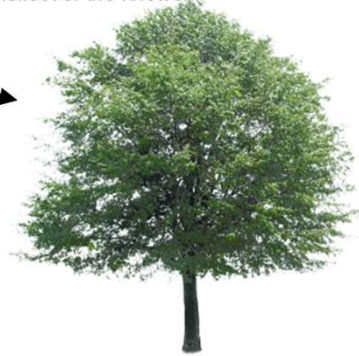
What is individuated by Matter in the sensible object, is a universal in the intellect of the knower.



Form of the tree is abstracted by the intellect

The intellect of the knower becomes Formally identical to the external sensible thing.

ABSTRACTION



tree in reality (composed of Form/Matter) external to the knower

Further, there is a difference between what is logically possible and what is actually possible physically or metaphysically.

"Nevertheless, Reichenbach's rebuttal is far too facile for it fails to face the fact that our only access to the ontological order is through the epistemic order. The only way that we humans can go about determining what has the possibility of existing is by appeal to what we can conceive to be possible."

[Richard M. Gale, "The Failure of Classical Theistic Arguments," in *Cambridge Companion*, 95]

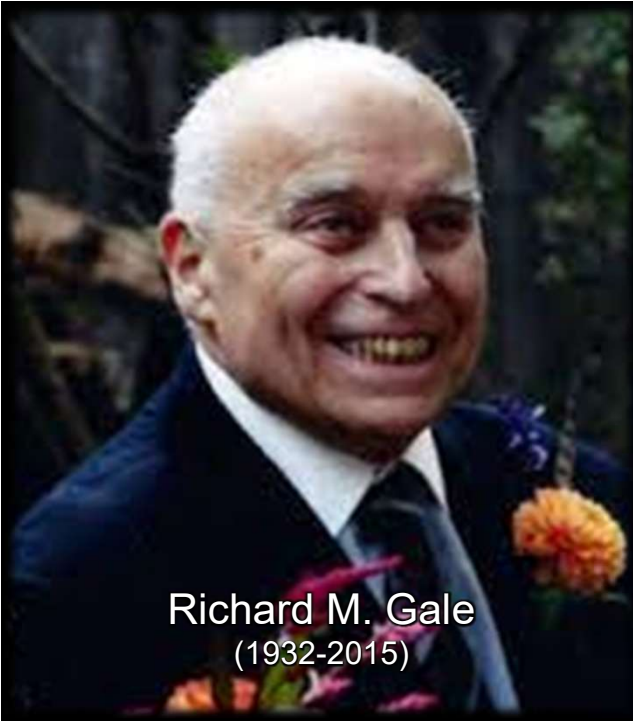
Last, this standard commits Gale to only being able to access this statement "through the epistemic order."

This amounts to an infinite regress.

Gale's epistemology never enables him to have direct knowledge of reality.

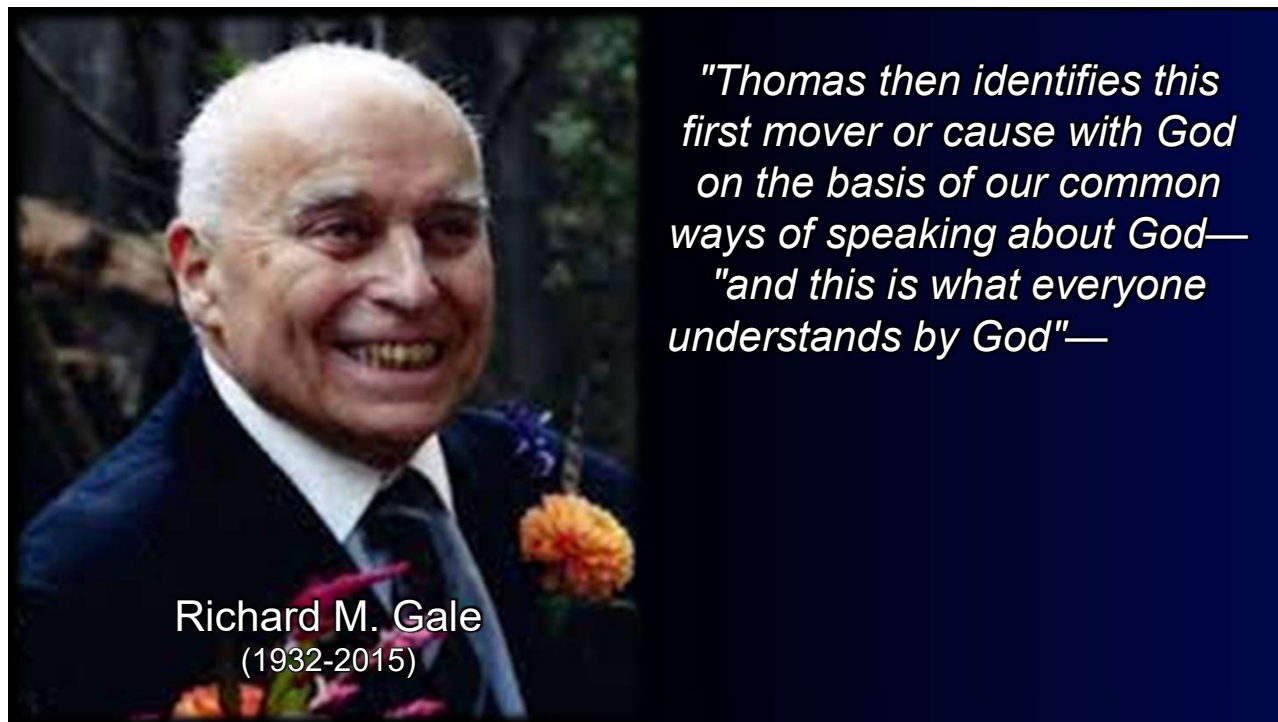
"Nevertheless, Reichenbach's rebuttal is far too facile for it fails to face the fact that our only access to the ontological order is through the epistemic order. The only way that we humans can go about determining what has the possibility of existing is by appeal to what we can conceive to be possible."

[Richard M. Gale, "The Failure of Classical Theistic Arguments," in Cambridge Companion, 95]



Does the First Cause have the essential divine attributes?

Richard M. Gale
(1932-2015)



☞ **First Way** ☞
"... and this everyone understands to be God."
 et hoc omnes intelligunt Deum

☞ **Second Way** ☞
"... to which everyone gives the name of God."
 quam omnis Deum nominant

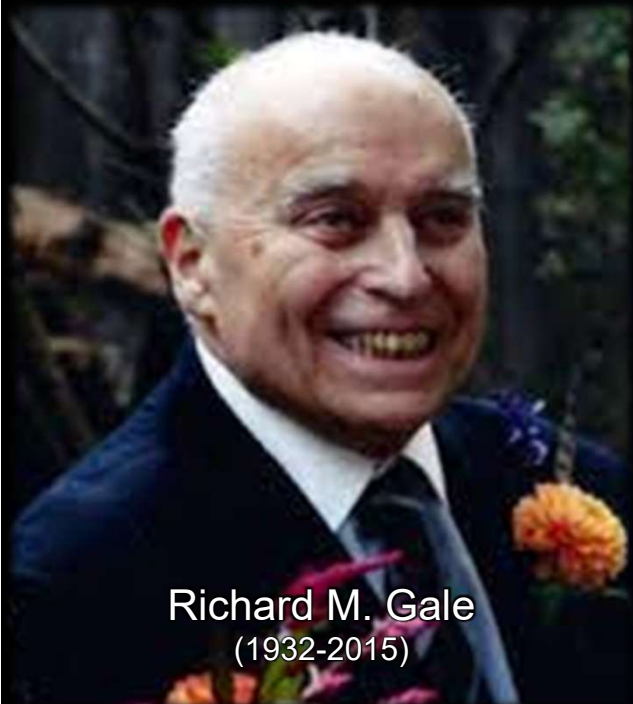
☞ **Third Way** ☞
"This all men speak of as God."
 quod omnes dicunt Deum

☞ **Fourth Way** ☞
"... and this we call God."
 et hoc dicimus Deum

☞ **Fifth Way** ☞
"... and this being we call God."
 et hoc dicimus Deum

[Summa Theologiae I, 2, 3. Translation, Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics), 13-14]

Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)



Richard M. Gale
(1932-2015)

*"Thomas then identifies this first mover or cause with God on the basis of our common ways of speaking about God—
"and this is what everyone understands by God"—**thereby papering over a serious gap problem, since his arguments do not establish that these beings have all the essential divine attributes.**"*

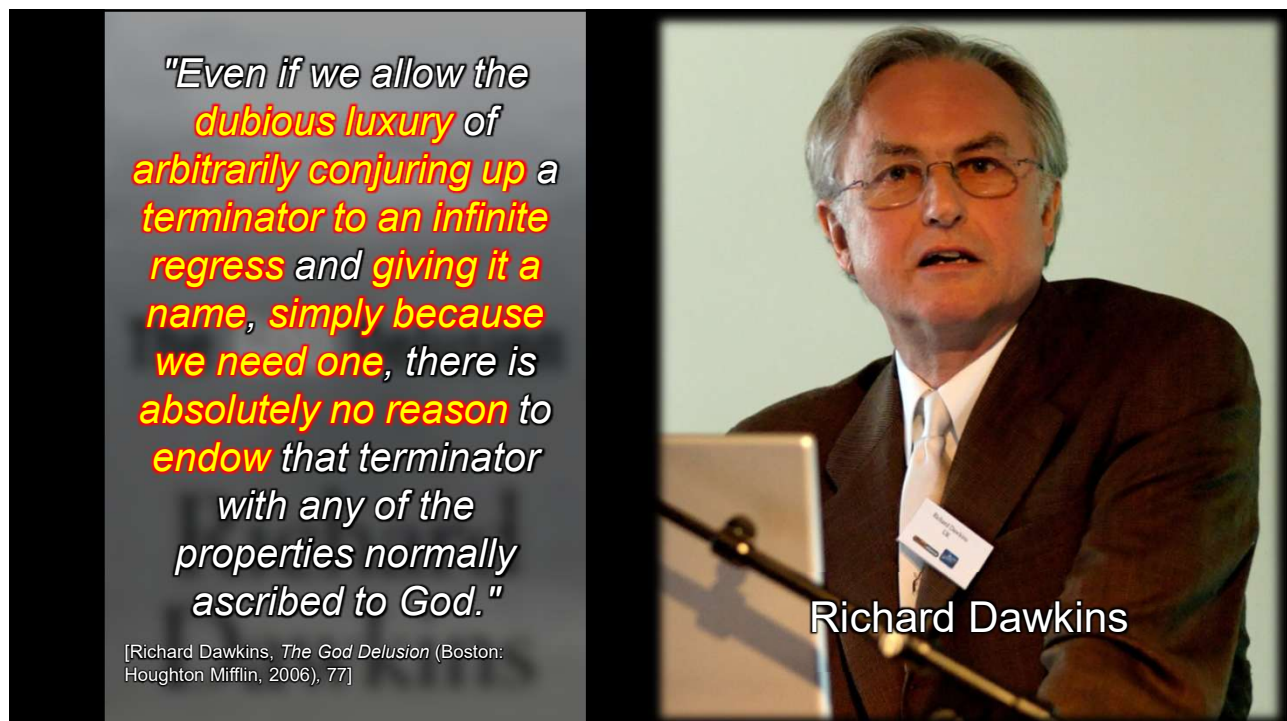
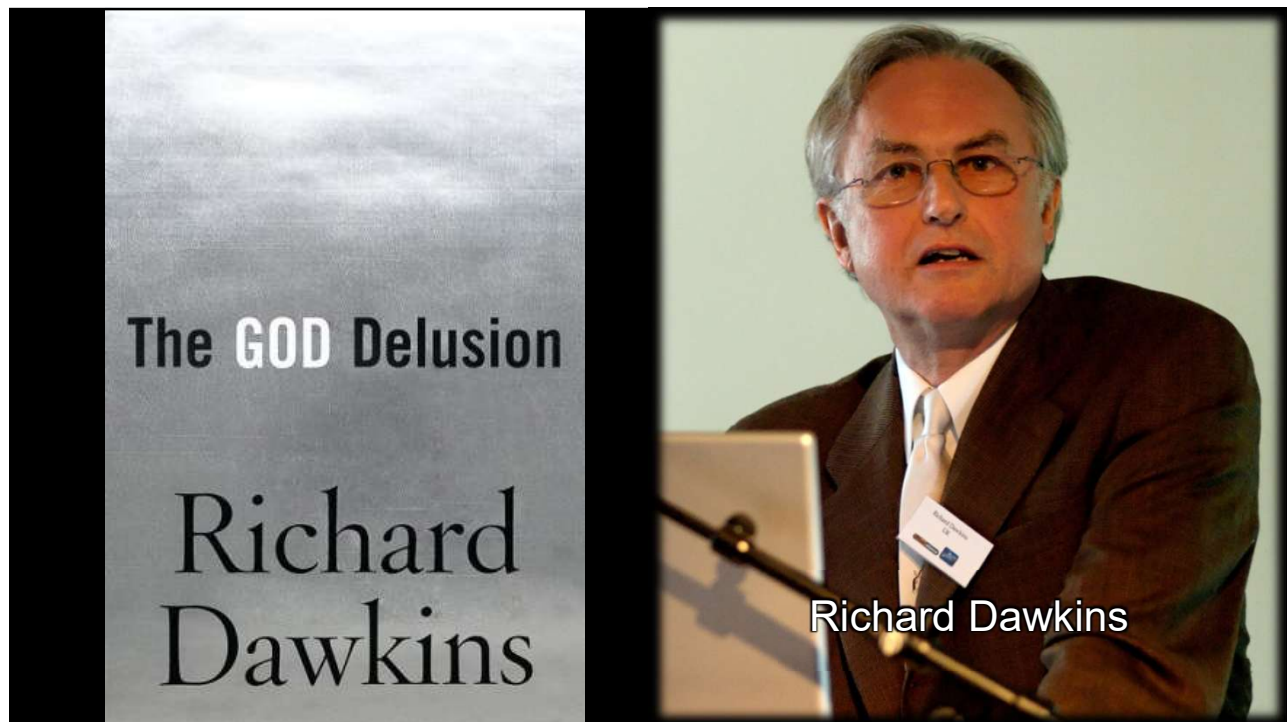
[Richard M. Gale, "The Failure of Classical Theistic Arguments," in *Cambridge Companion*, 90]

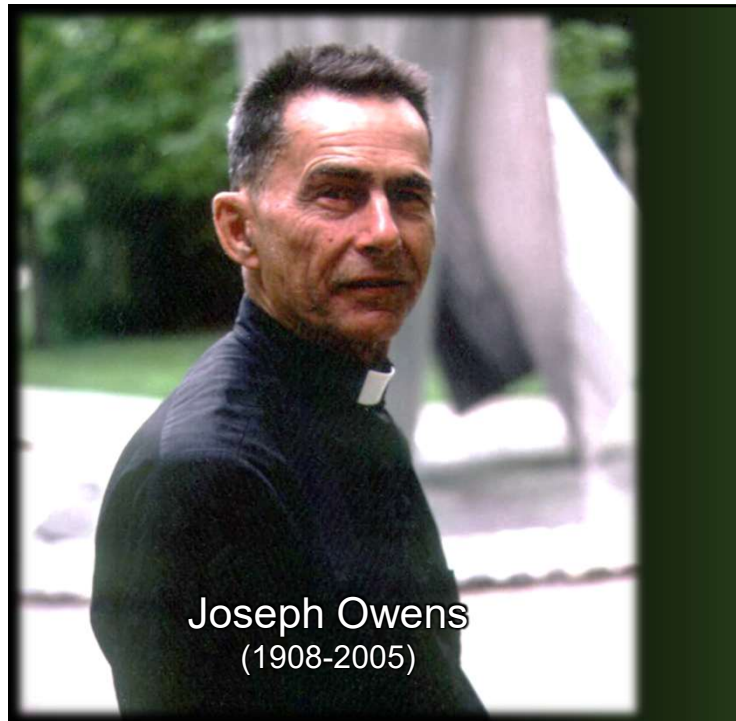


Richard M. Gale
(1932-2015)

*"This completes our brief survey of traditional cosmological arguments. It is now time to evaluate them critically. It was seen that each faced an **unresolved gap problem** consisting in **its failure to show that the first cause, unmoved mover, or necessary being has all the essential divine attributes.**"*

[Richard M. Gale, "The Failure of Classical Theistic Arguments," in *Cambridge Companion*, 95]





Joseph Owens
(1908-2005)

AQUINAS AND THE FIVE WAYS

I

Do the well-known "five ways" in the *Summa of Theology* represent satisfactorily the attitude of Thomas Aquinas towards the demonstration of God's existence? There are reasons for doubt. In their mode of expression, the "five ways" are puzzling. They are of conflicting historical provenance. They do not make clear whether they are more than one or just one proof, whether they are entirely metaphysical in character, or whether they need to be prolonged or completed to reach the Christian God.¹ Nowhere else in Aquinas is

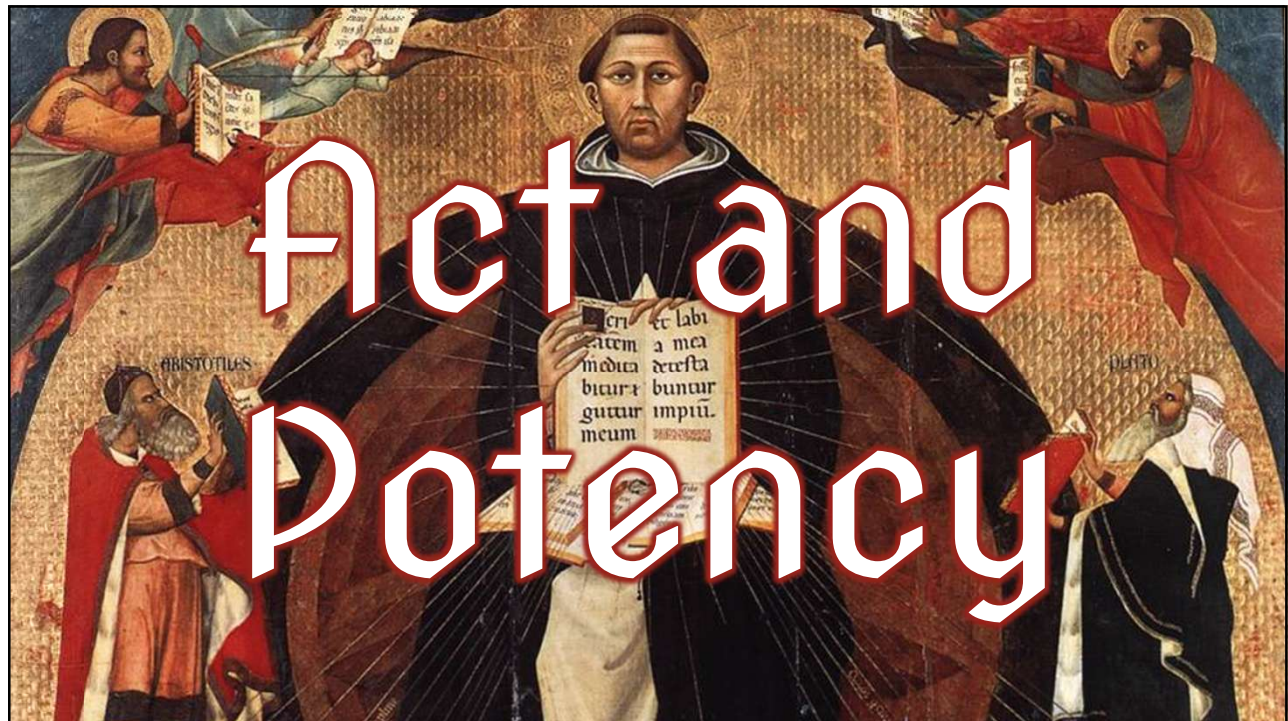
1. ST, I, 2, 3, c. The impression that the five ways are the only ones recognized by Aquinas, and that all other variations have to be reduced in one way or another to their forms, stems from the Neoscholastic manuals. More than twenty-five years ago this attitude was characterized as "la fidélité opiniâtre des milieux thomistes à la formule des *cinque voies*" by Fernand Van Steenberghe, "Le problème philosophique de l'existence de Dieu," *Revue philosophique de Louvain*, 45 (1947), 5. It was accentuated when a writer who had a new proof of his own to advance felt compelled to designate it as a "sixth way," e.g., Josef Grech, *Elementa philosophiae aristotelo-thomisticae*, 7th ed. (Freiburg i. Breisgau: Herder, 1957), Vol. II, pp. 199-201 (nos. 790-92); and Jacques Maritain, *Approaches to God*, trans. Peter O'Reilly (New York: Harper & Row, 1954), pp. 72-83. However, a comprehensive investigation of Aquinas's writings brings to light a number of other "ways" or arguments. These are grouped under eleven headings by Jules A. Bassée, "St. Thomas Aquinas's Proofs of the Existence of God Presented in their Chronological Order," in *Philosophical Studies in Honor of the Very Reverend Ignatius Smith, O. P.*, ed. John K. Ryan (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1952), pp. 63-64, listing frequency of occurrence. Accordingly "other independent proofs which he offers elsewhere" are recognized in Aquinas by Anthony Kenny, *The Five Ways* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 1, and other recent writers. Thirteen "proofs" expressly rejected by Aquinas are listed by Robert Teet Patterson, *The Conception of God in the Philosophy of Aquinas* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1933), pp. 21-39.

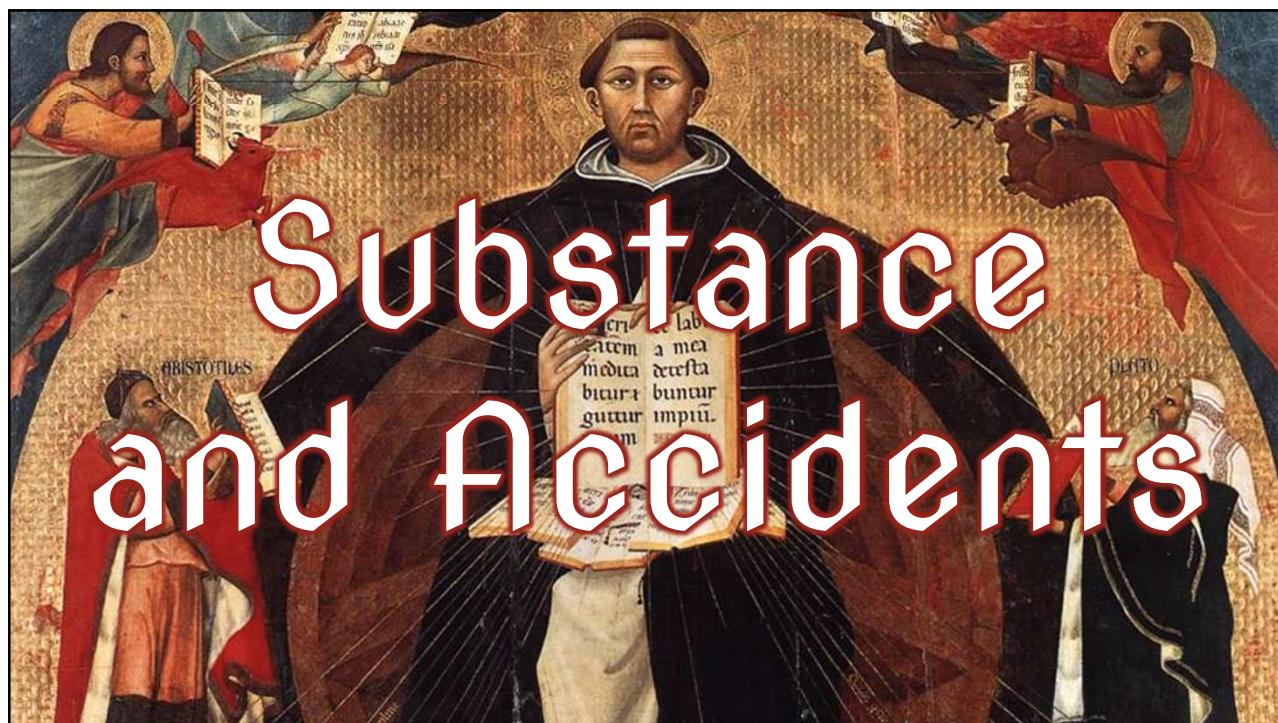
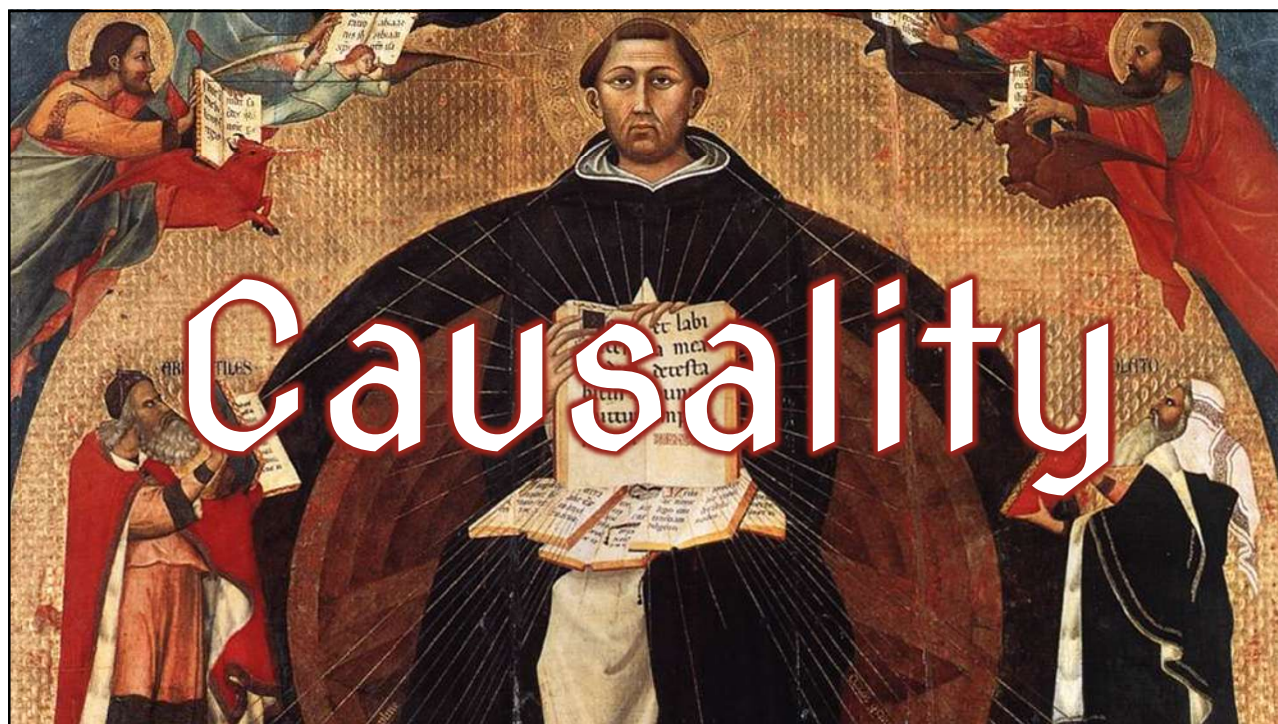
2. See discussion on "The Enigma of the Five Ways," in Edward A. Sillem, *Ways of Thinking about God: Thomas Aquinas and Some Recent Problems* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1961), pp. 55-78. On the notion of one proof though expressed in five different ways, see Michel

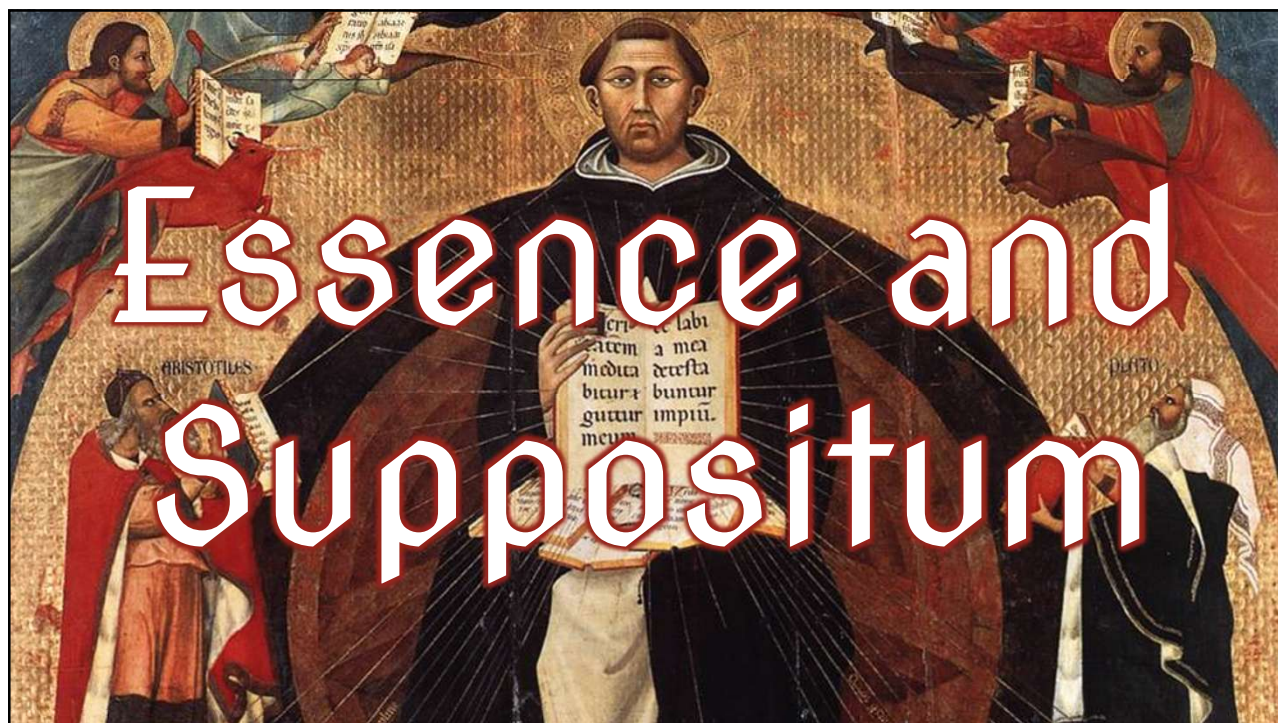
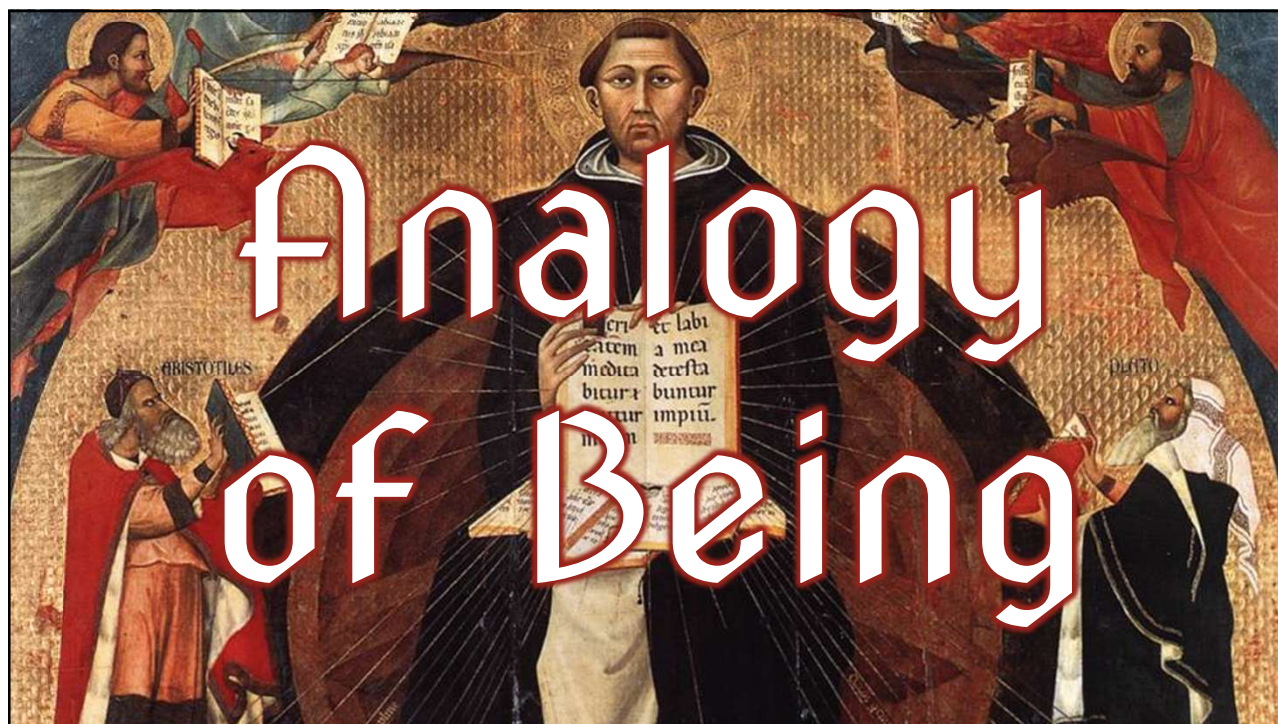
Owens, Joseph. "Aquinas and the Five Ways." In *The Monist* (Jan. 1974): 16-35.

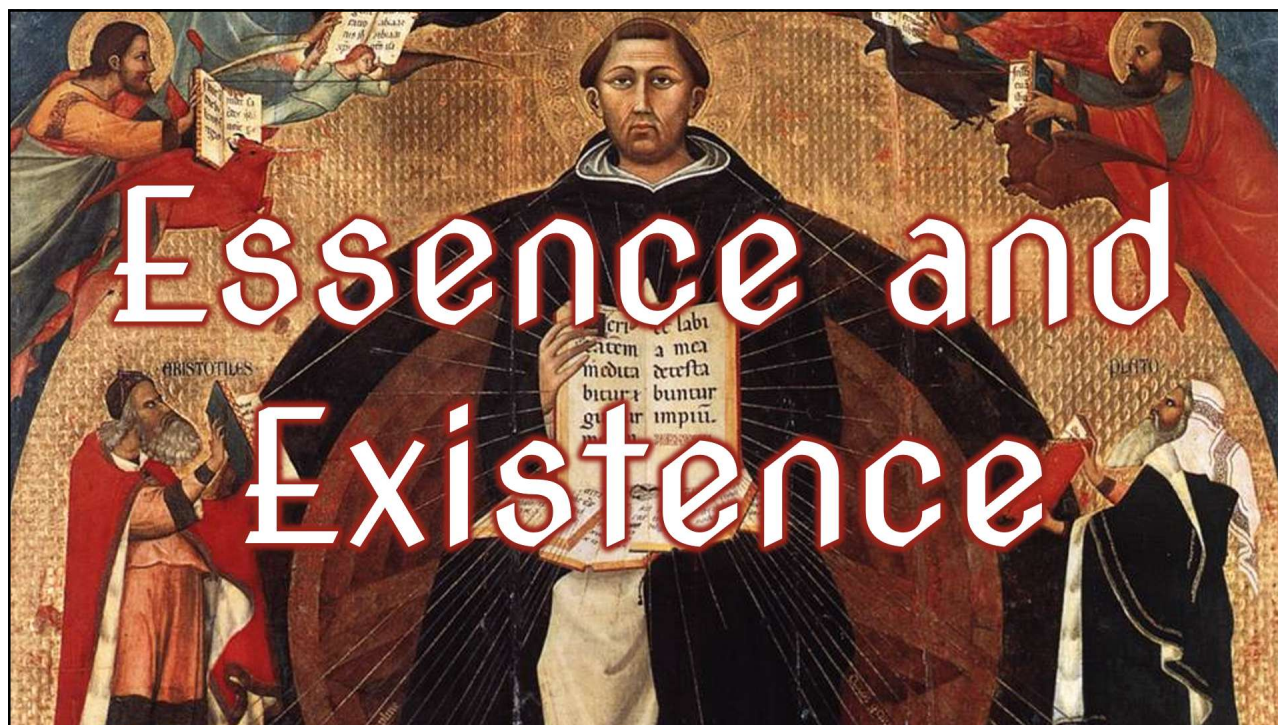
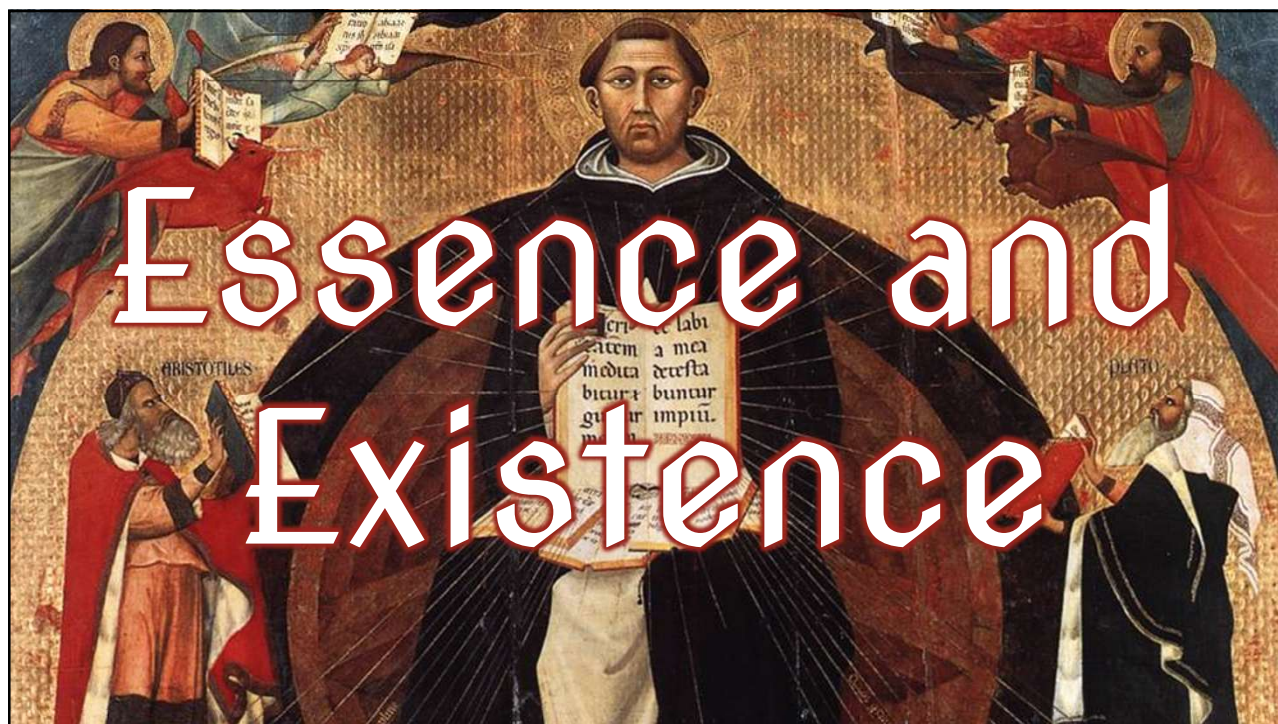


Having demonstrated the existence of God, Aquinas goes on to show how all the classical attributes of God cascade seamlessly and necessarily from the basic commitments of his metaphysics.





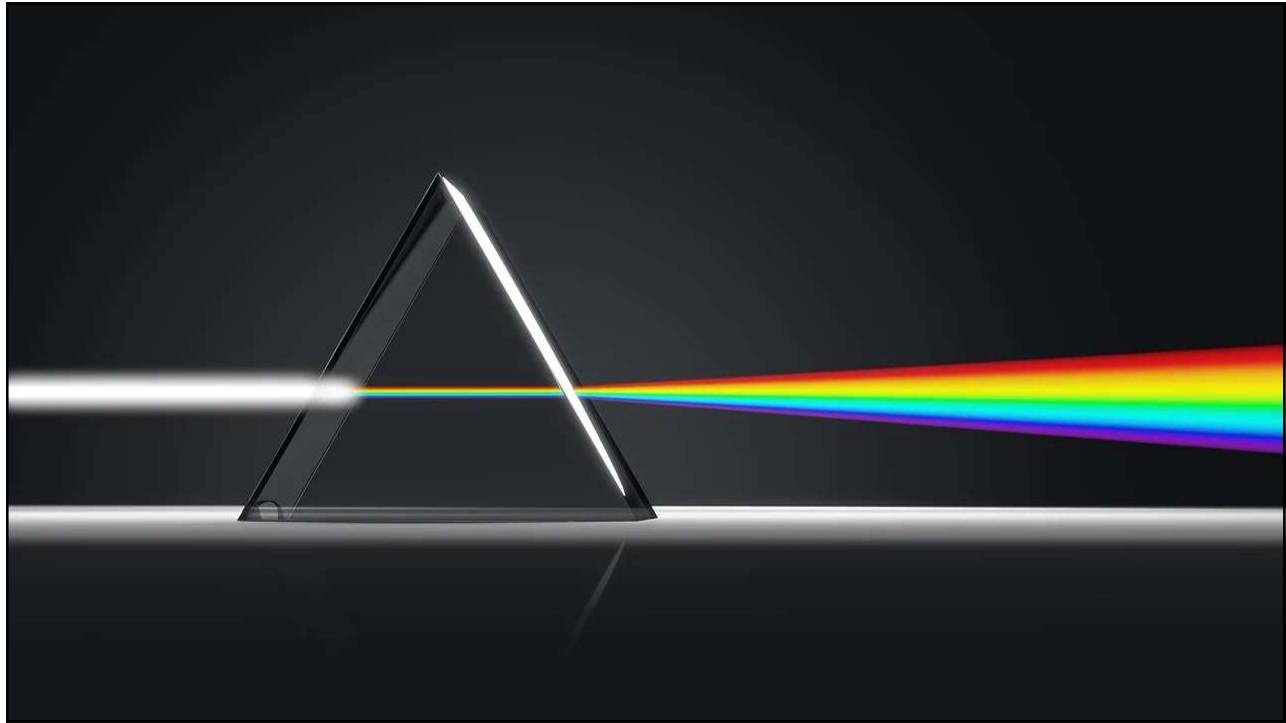






The metaphysics shows that the nature of the First Cause (God) must be simple.

God's simplicity means that God is entirely uncomposed, which is to say, God is without parts.




 Whether God Is a Body?

 Whether God is Composed of Matter and Form?

 Whether God is the Same as His Essence or Nature?

 Whether Essence and Existence are the Same in God?

 Whether God is Contained in a Genus?

 Whether in God There Are any Accidents?

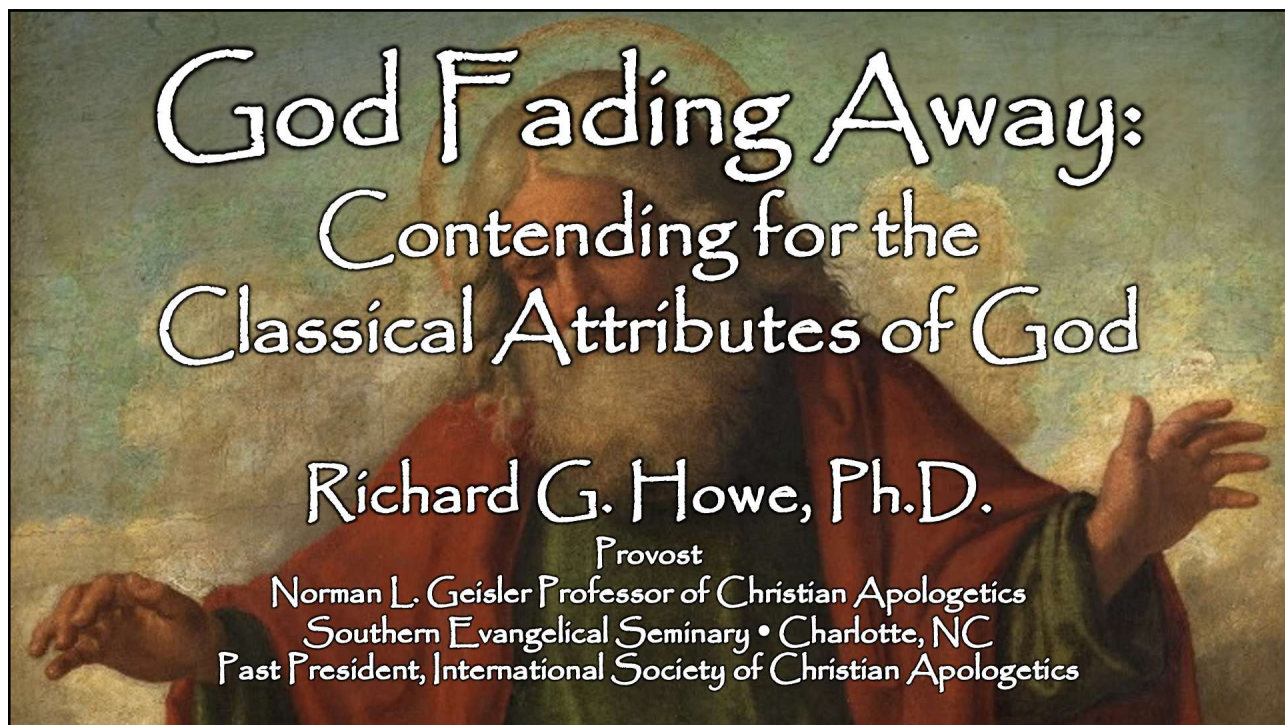
 Whether God is Altogether Simple?

 Whether God Enters into the Composition of Other Things?

✓ Simple	✓ True
✓ Perfect	✓ Living
✓ Good	✓ Personal
✓ Infinite	✓ Loving
✓ Immutable	✓ Just
✓ Eternal	✓ Merciful
✓ One	✓ Providential
✓ Omniscient	✓ Omnipresent



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)



God Fading Away: Contending for the Classical Attributes of God

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Norman L. Geisler Professor of Christian Apologetics
Southern Evangelical Seminary • Charlotte, NC
Past President, International Society of Christian Apologetics

