



God as the Cause of the Beginning of the Universe

- 1. The Universe began to exist.***
 - 2. Whatever begins to exist has a cause of its existence.***
- Therefore, the universe has a cause of its existence.***




1. *The Universe began to exist.*

2. *Whatever begins to exist has a cause of its existence.*

Therefore, the universe has a cause of its existence.



**The Scientific
Evidence for the
Beginning
of the Universe**

- 
- ✓ *Big Bang Theory*
 - ✓ *Expanding Universe*
 - ✓ *Second Law of Thermodynamics*



**God as the
Cause of the
Design of the
Universe**



God as the
Cause of the
Design of the
Universe



The Scientific
Evidence for the
Design in the
Universe

Extrinsic Design of the Universe as a Whole

- ❖ *Design as fine tuning for life*
- ❖ *Design as the origin of life*

Intrinsic Design of Living Systems

- ❖ *Design as information*
- ❖ *Design as irreducible complexity*
- ❖ *Design as knowledge of reality*



∞ Strengths ∞

- *They appeal to the common sense notion that something can only begin to exist by being caused to exist.*
- *They appeal to the common sense notion that anything that exhibits sufficient evidence of design is likely caused by an intelligence.*

∞ Strengths ∞

- *They often appeal to data from contemporary science (with all of science's social, etc., clout).*
- *They generally avoid trafficking in the technicalities of academic philosophy.*

∞ Weaknesses ∞

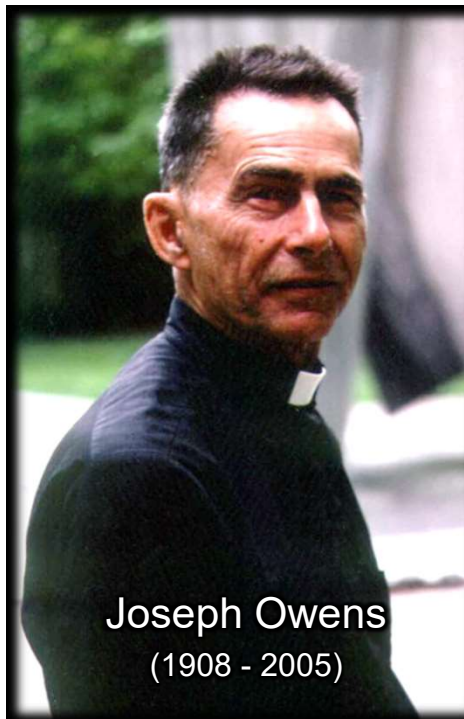
- *These arguments do not demonstrate that the cause of the universe still exists.*
- *These arguments do not demonstrate that the cause of the universe is God (i.e., that the cause has the attributes of classical theism).*

∞ My Weaknesses ∞

- *Certain aspects of the science are disputed by some.*
- *Such disputes invariably get technical and, thus, are beyond the knowledge of the non-scientist.*

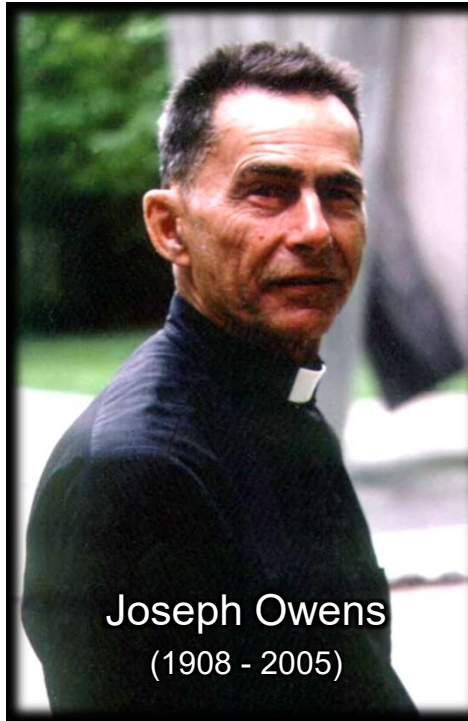
∞ *My Weaknesses* ∞

- *Certain aspects of the science are disputed by some.*
- *Such disputes invariably get technical and, thus, are beyond the knowledge of the non-scientist like me.*



Joseph Owens
(1908 - 2005)

"Other arguments may vividly suggest the existence of God, press it home eloquently to human consideration, and for most people provide much greater spiritual and religious aid than difficult metaphysical demonstrations.



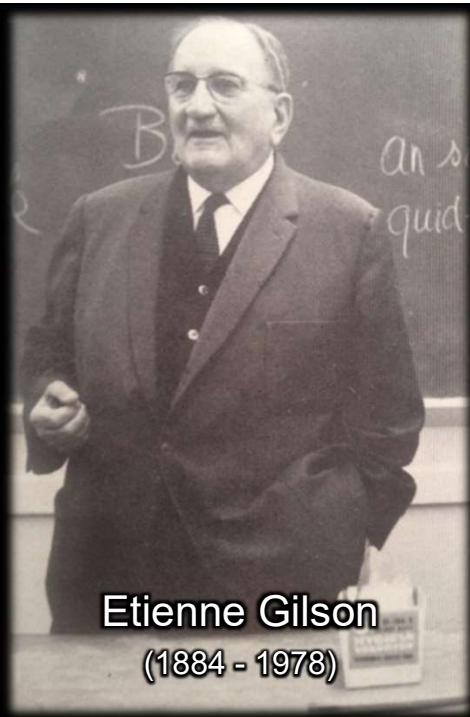
Joseph Owens
(1908 - 2005)

"But on the philosophical level these arguments are open to rebuttal and refutation, for they are not philosophically cogent."

[Joseph Owens, "Aquinas and the Five Ways," *Monist* 58 (Jan. 1974): 16-35. [p. 33]]

Etienne Gilson

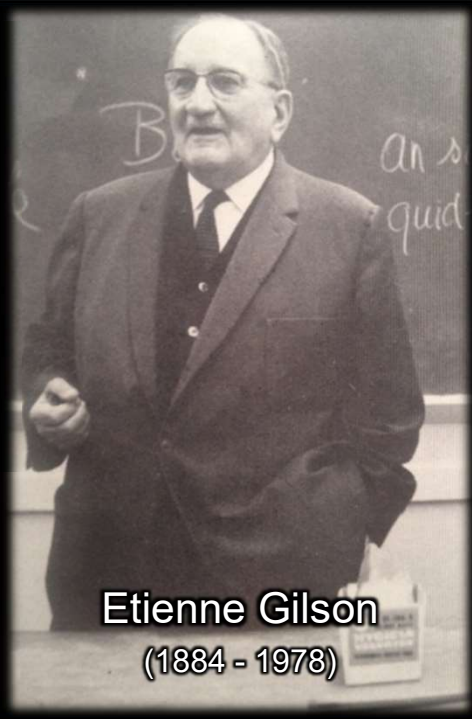
Gilson was concerned about "the liberty which [physicists and biologists] grant themselves of philosophizing ... and presenting their philosophy as if it were a matter of their science. ..."



Etienne Gilson
(1884 - 1978)

Etienne Gilson

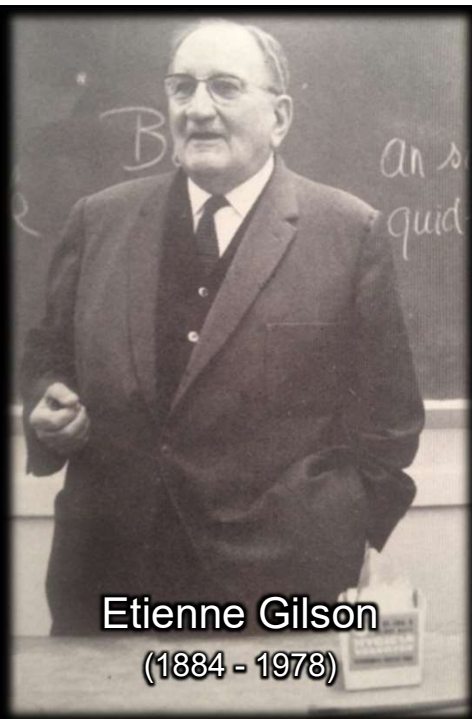
"It does not bother them if the philosophy thus bandied about under the name of science often consists in a denial of the validity of philosophical position as accepted by those whose *metier* is philosophy. ...

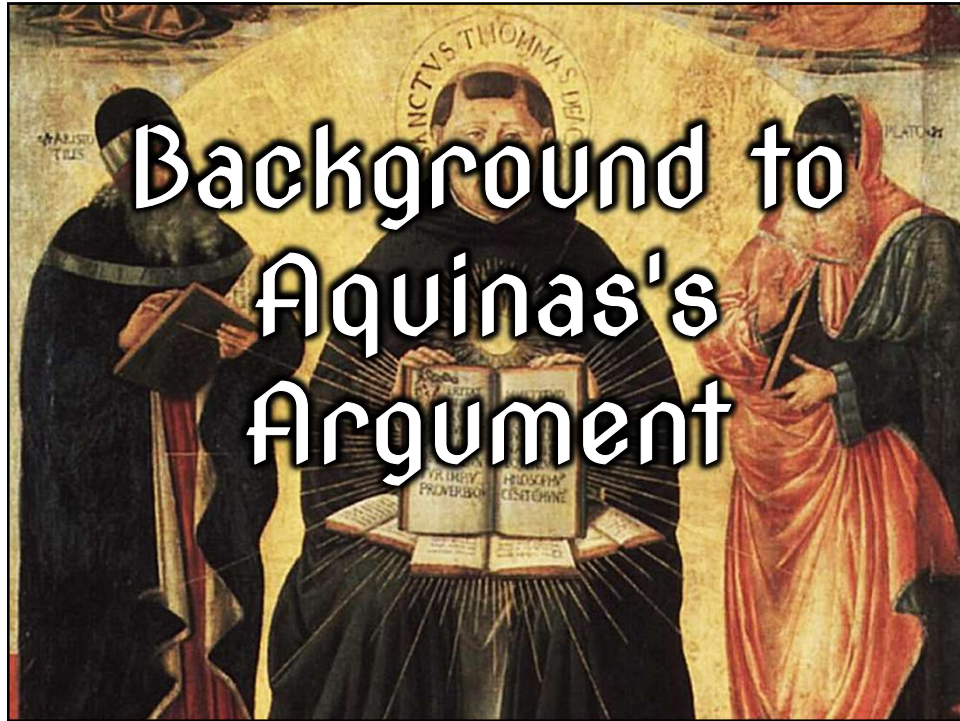


Etienne Gilson

"Holding reasonably that it is necessary to have learned a science in order to be authorized to speak about it, he does not for an instant doubt that it is a matter of indifference who may be authorized to speak of philosophy, provided only that he knows some other discipline."

[Etienne Gilson, *Linguistics and Philosophy: An Essay on the Philosophical Constants of Language* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), xvii]





Background to Aquinas's Argument

**There are two great
philosophical traditions
in Western thought that
have endured since the
ancient Greeks.**

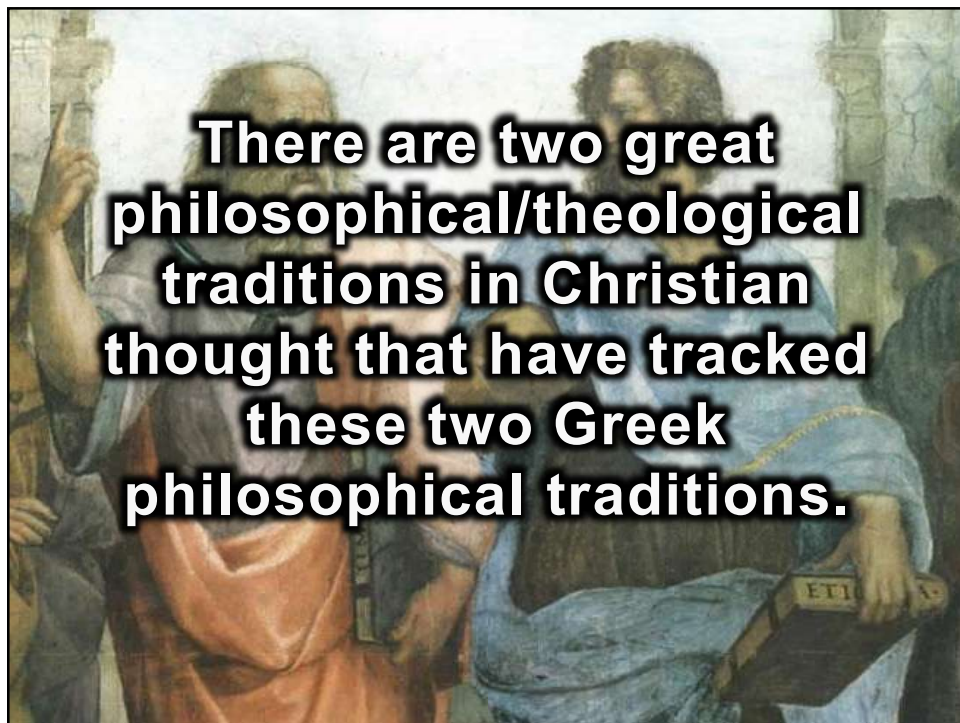


Plato

(428-348 BC)

Aristotle

(384-322 BC)

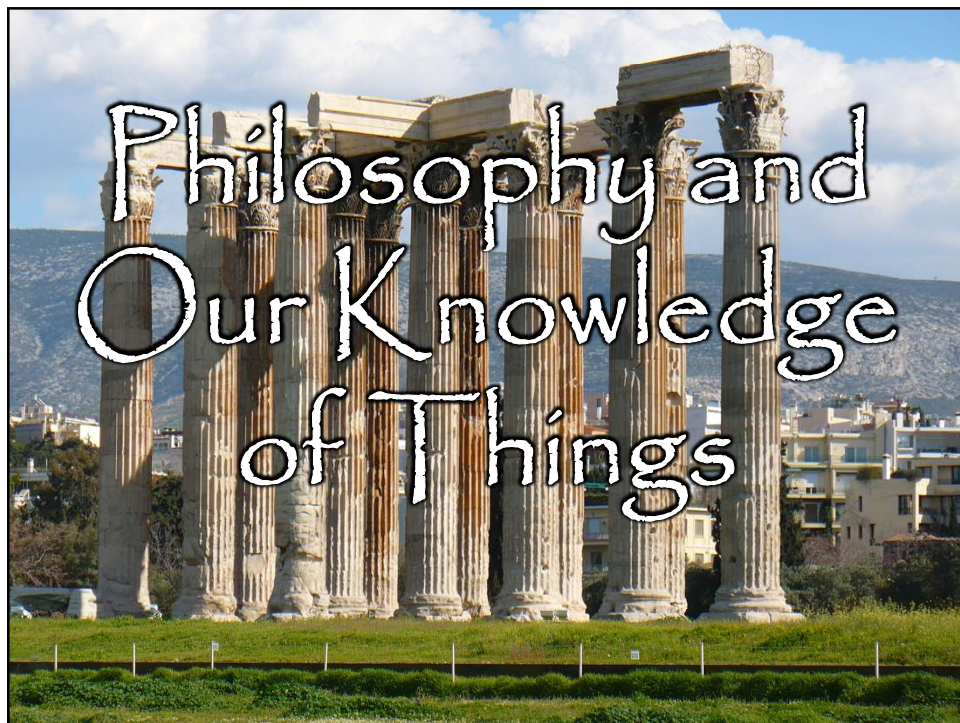
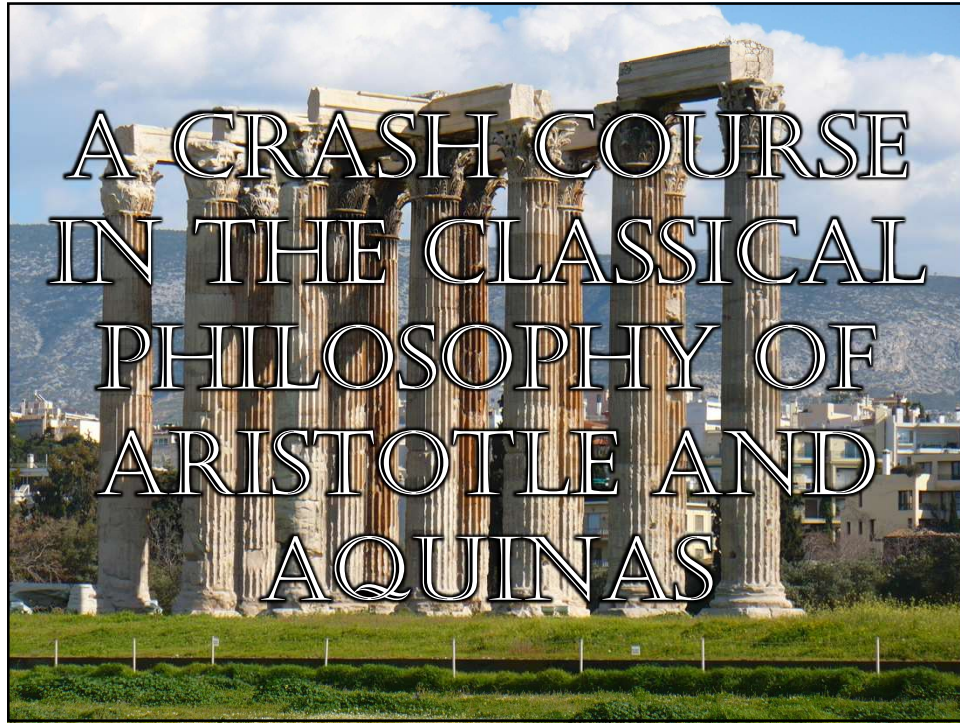


There are two great philosophical/theological traditions in Christian thought that have tracked these two Greek philosophical traditions.



Exploring the contours of how these traditions have answered certain basic questions about the nature of reality and our knowledge of it, will enable us to position many questions and concerns we have as Christians.







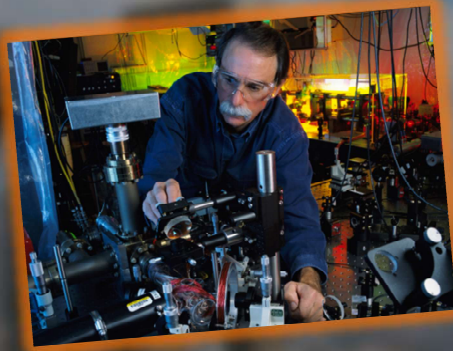
*A child can know what a flower is.
She knows that a flower is not a person.*



*However, to delve deeper into the
physical nature of a flower, one would
need to understand botany.*



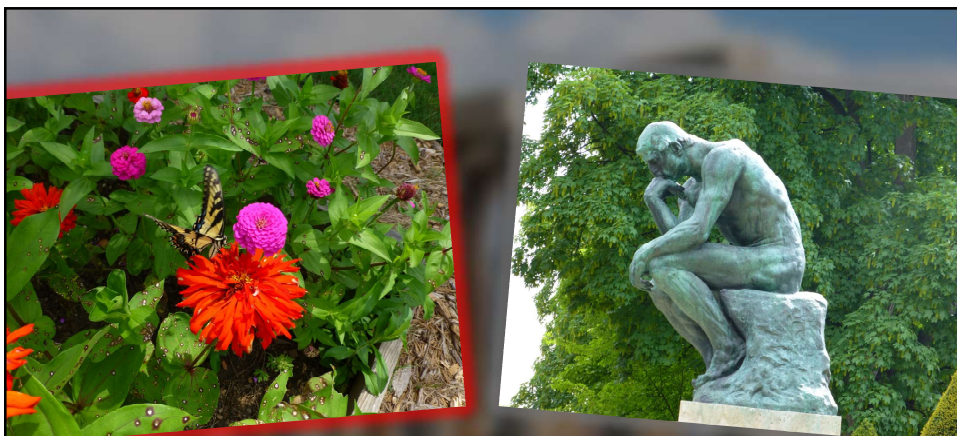
To delve deeper still, one would need to understand chemistry (to understand, e.g., photosynthesis).



And to delve deeper still, one would need to understand physics.

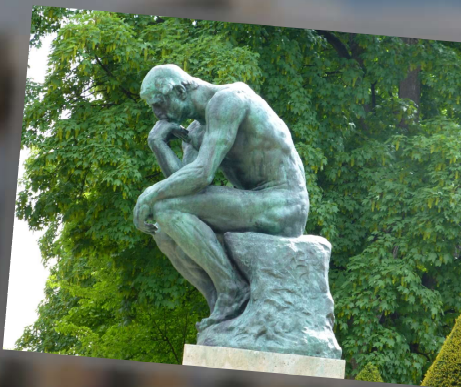


Suppose we wanted to account for a number of other aspects of the flower and the person.



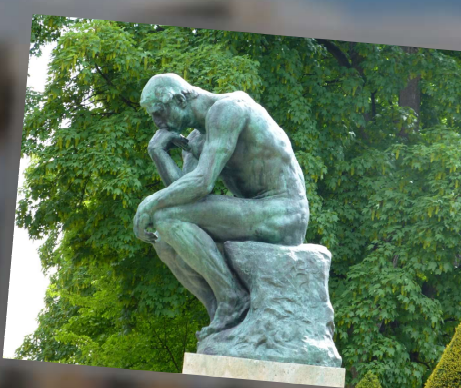
What makes a flower a flower and a person a person are their respective natures.

Metaphysics



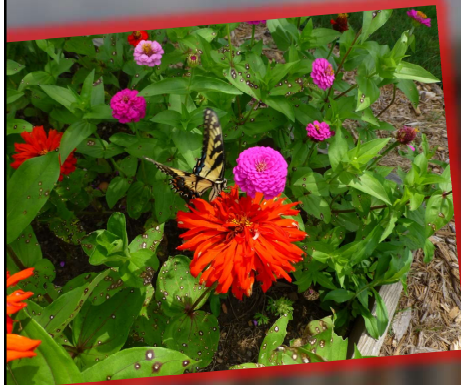
We can know that one is a flower and the other is a person by our senses.

Epistemology



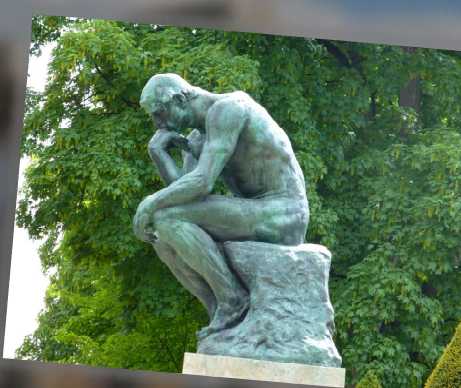
We value the person over the flower because of the different kinds of things they are.

Ethics



We insist that others value the person over the flower and hold them accountable when they don't.

Political Philosophy

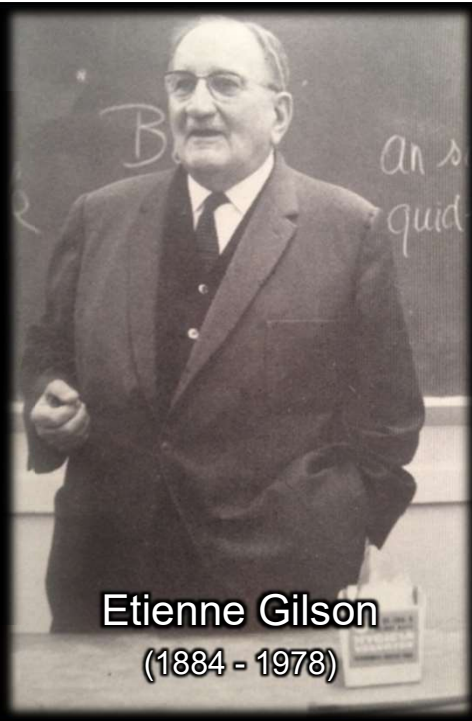


We know that both the flower and the person cannot account for their own existence but are created by God.

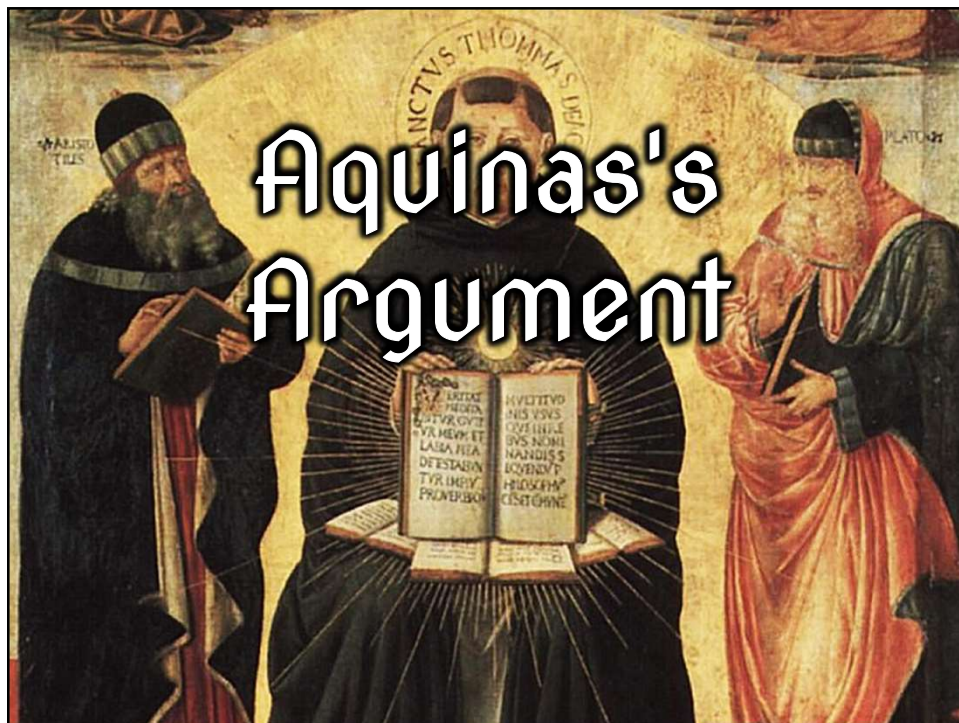
Philosophy of Religion

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

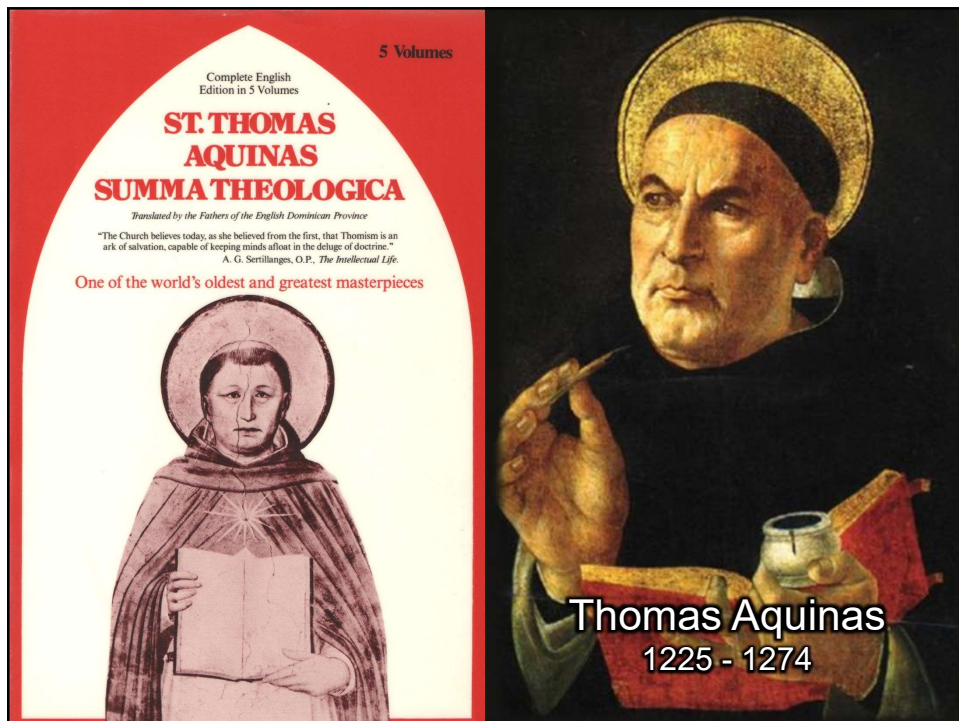
[Etienne Gilson, *Thomist Realism and the Critique of Knowledge* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1983), 199]



Etienne Gilson
(1884 - 1978)

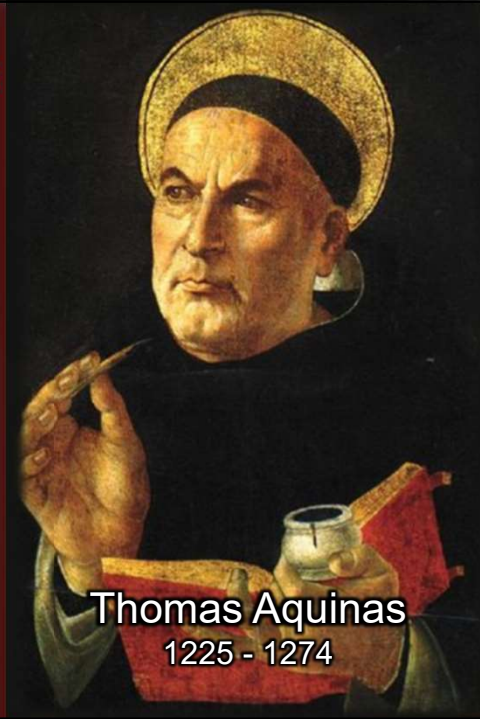


**Thomas Aquinas was
a 13th Century
Dominican theologian.**



Thomas Aquinas's "Five Ways"

- *Argument from motion*
- *Argument from efficient causality*
- *Argument from necessary being*
- *Argument from degrees of perfection*
- *Argument from final causality*



Thomas Aquinas
1225 - 1274

All of Aquinas's arguments demonstrate, not that there is a cause of the universe's beginning to exist, but that there is a cause of the universe's current existing.

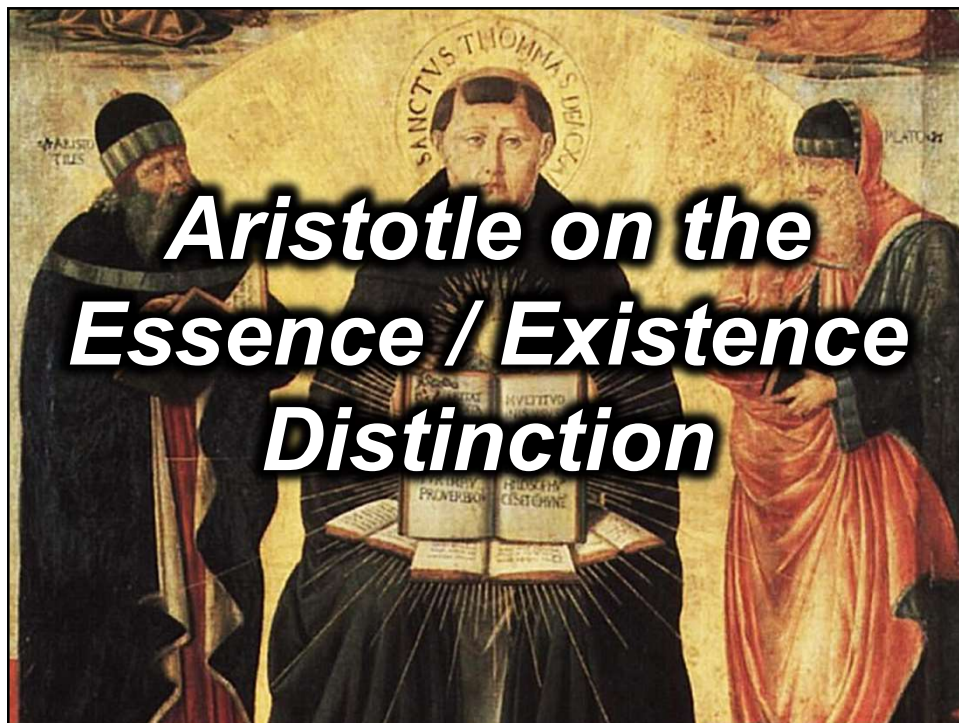
His arguments are indifferent as to whether the universe began to exist a finite time ago or has existed from all eternity.

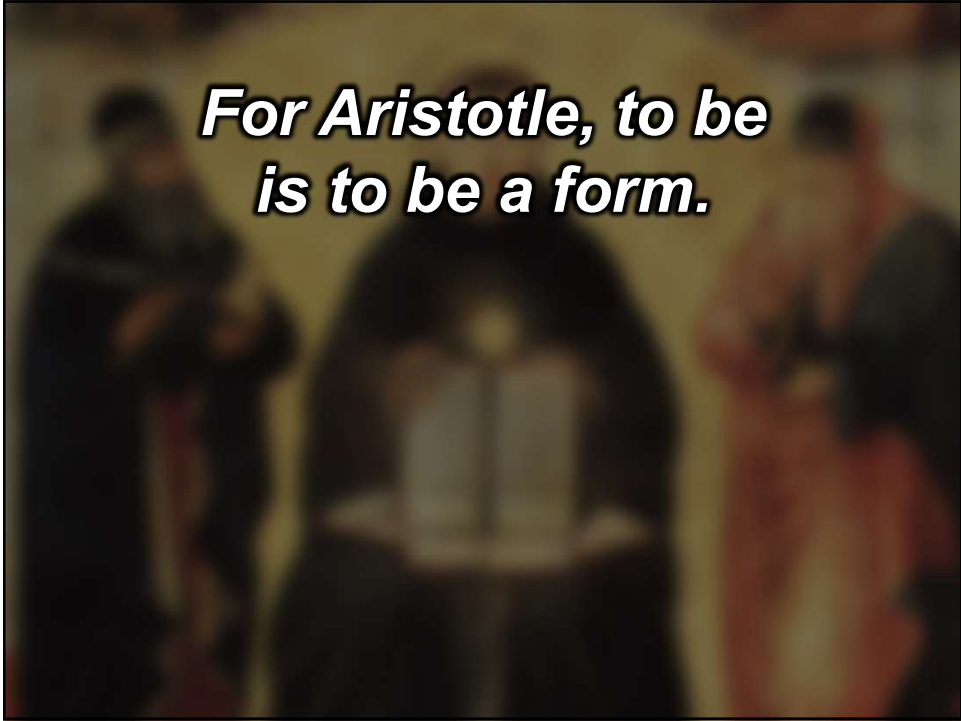
***essence
existence (esse)
essence / existence
distinction***



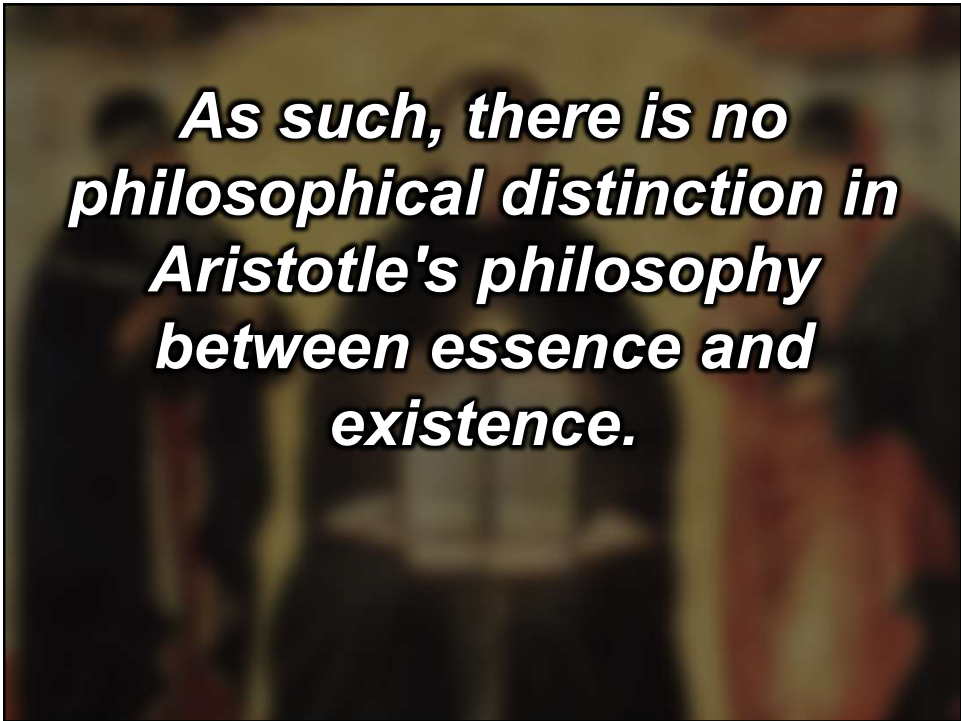
The essence / existence distinction maintains that there is a real difference between in a created thing between its essence and its existence.

Essence Existence
WHAT it is *THAT it is*

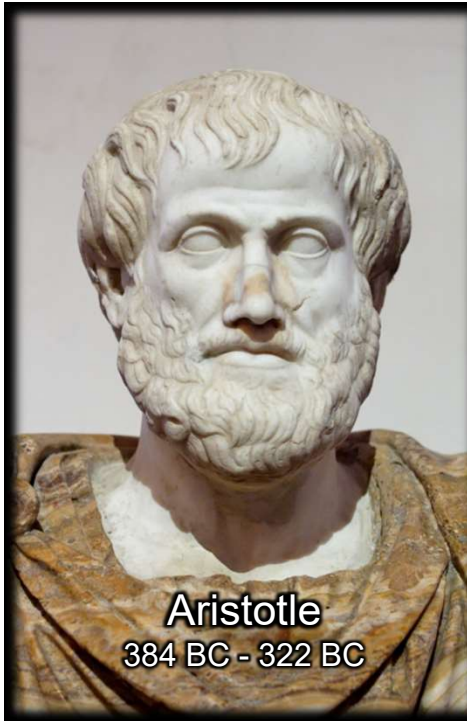




***For Aristotle, to be
is to be a form.***



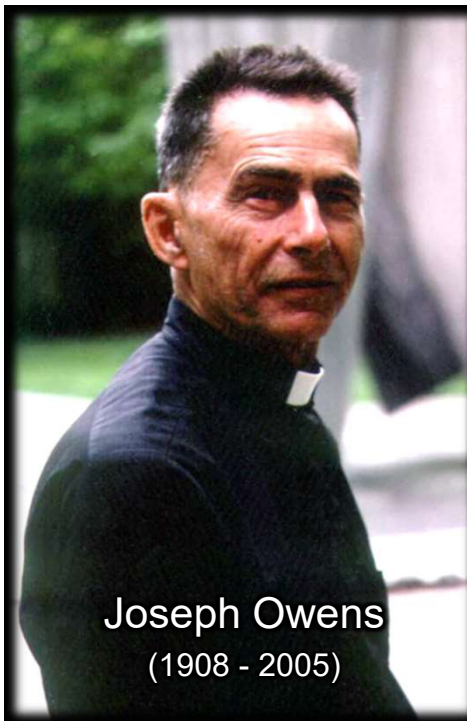
***As such, there is no
philosophical distinction in
Aristotle's philosophy
between essence and
existence.***



Aristotle
384 BC - 322 BC

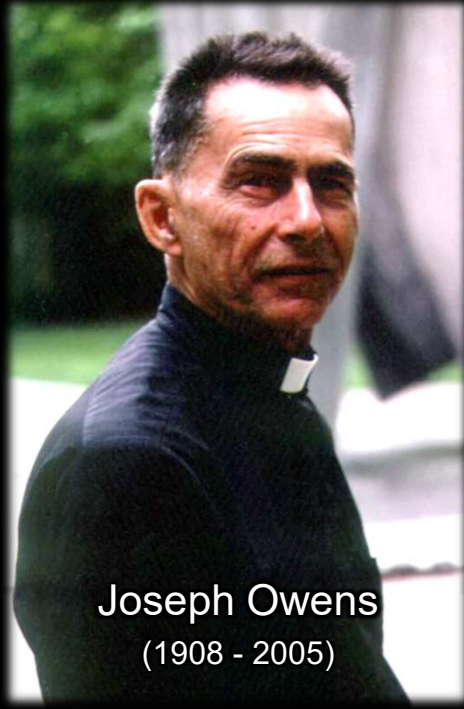
"For 'one man' and 'man' are the same thing, and so are 'existing man' and 'man' and the doubling of the words in 'one man' and 'one existing man' does not express anything different."

[*Metaphysics*, Δ (4), 2, 1003^b26-27, trans. W. D. Ross in Richard McKeon, ed. *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York: Random House, 1941), Ross, in McKeon, 733]



Joseph Owens
(1908 - 2005)

"From the viewpoint of the much later distinction between essence and the act of existing, this treatment must mean that Aristotle is leaving the act of existing, entirely outside the scope of his philosophy."

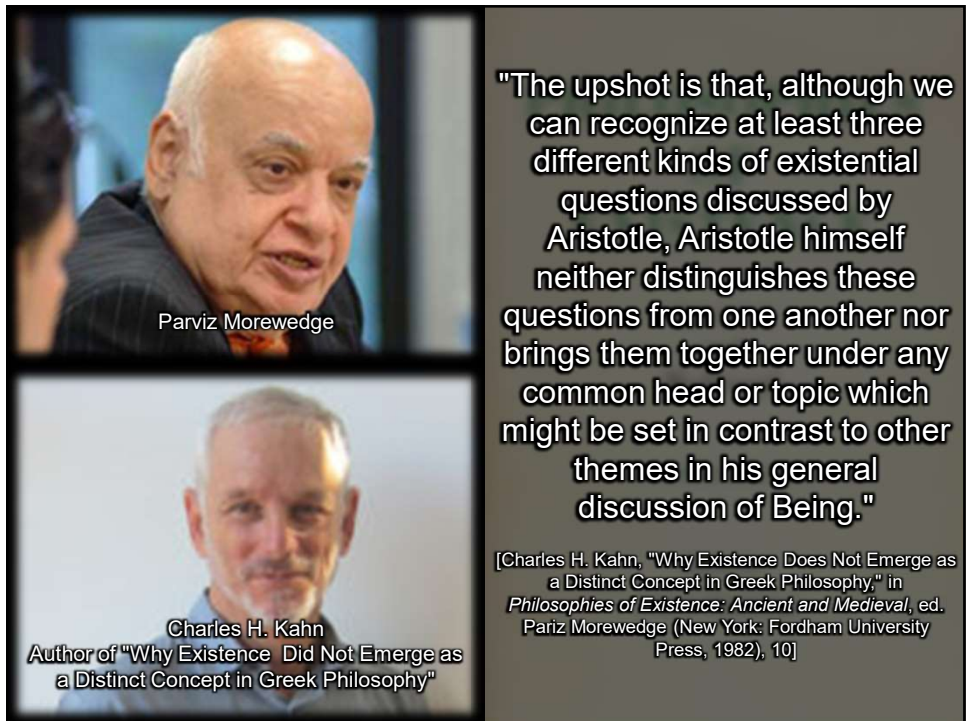
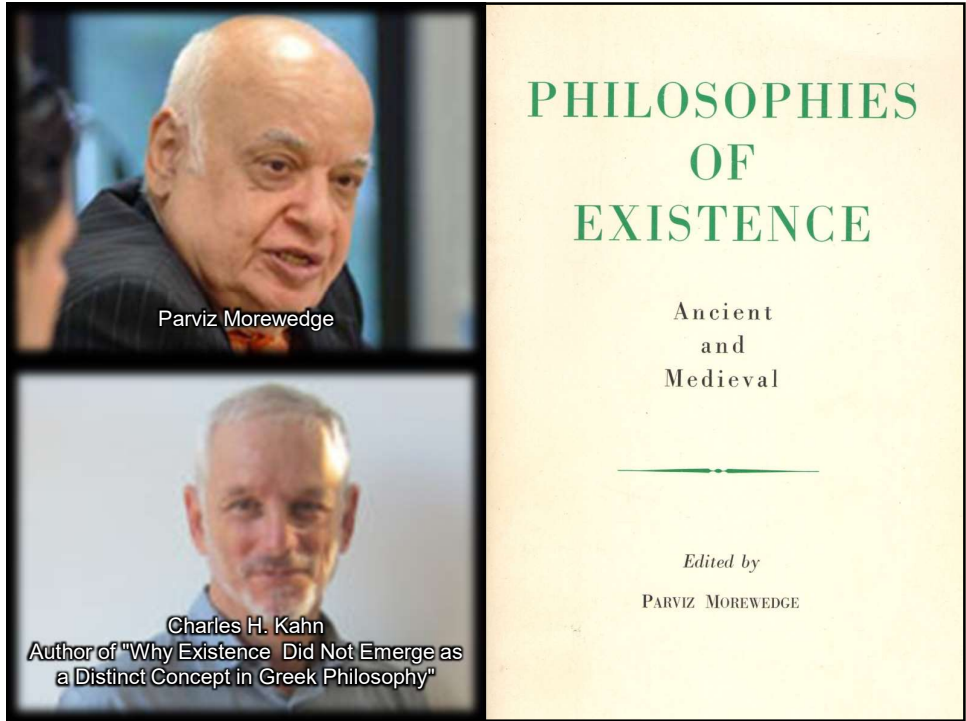
A portrait of Joseph Owens, a man with short dark hair, wearing a black clerical shirt with a white collar. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera.

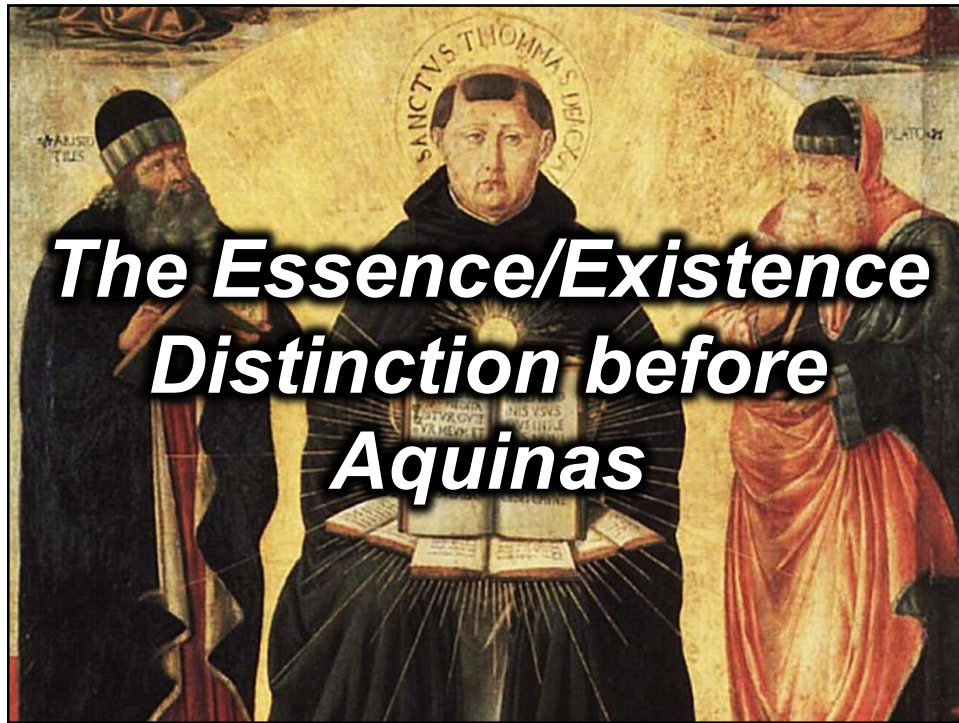
Joseph Owens
(1908 - 2005)

"The act of existing must be wholly escaping his *scientific* consideration. All necessary and definite connections between things can be reduced to essence."

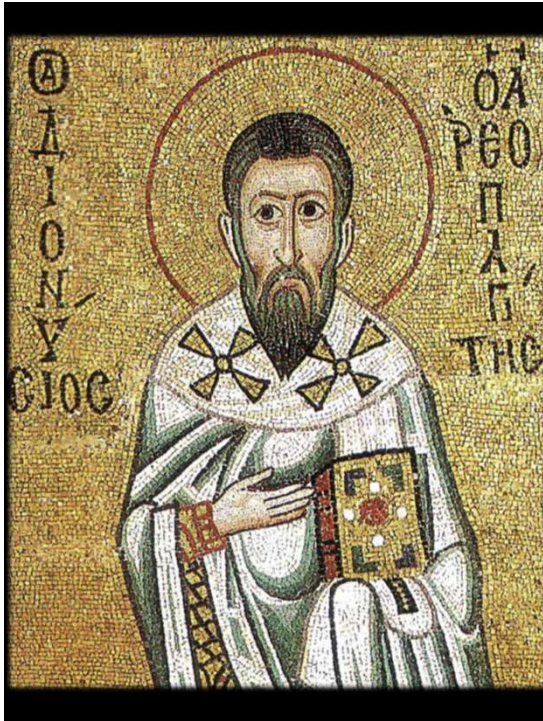
[Joseph Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics: A Study in the Greek Background of Mediaeval Thought*, 3rd ed (Toronto: The Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies), 309 emphasis in original]

Indeed, there does not seem to be a distinctive philosophical discussion of existence as such in any Greek philosophy, and, thus, no notion of an essence / existence distinction.





Thomas was certainly not the first philosopher to make a specific mention of the essence/existence distinction.

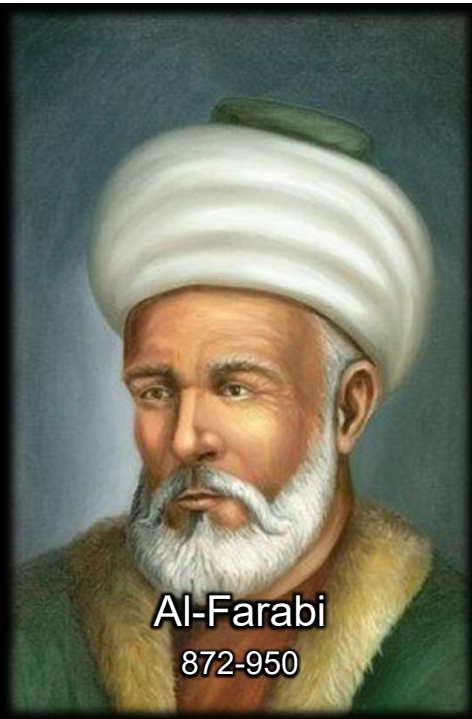


Further, Aquinas's developed notion of existence was inspired by the earlier thinker Pseudo-Dionysius.

However, Aquinas seems to be the first for whom his notion of existence and the essence / existence distinction will figure so prominently in his own philosophy.

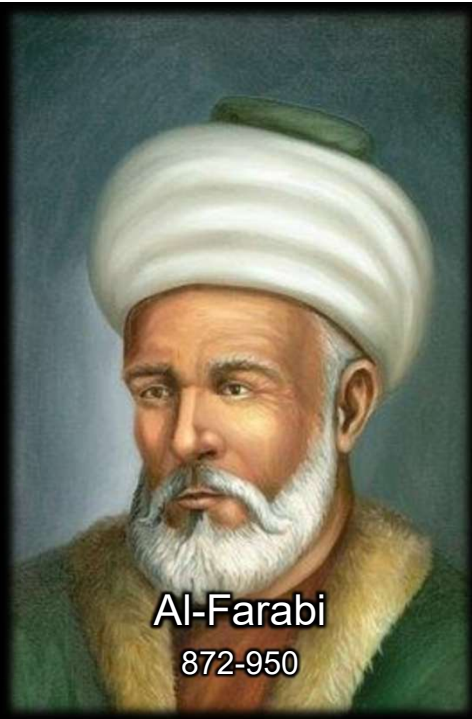
His thinking will go on to play a significant role in subsequent Christian philosophical theology.

There is an earlier mention of it is by the tenth century Arabic philosopher Al-Farabi.

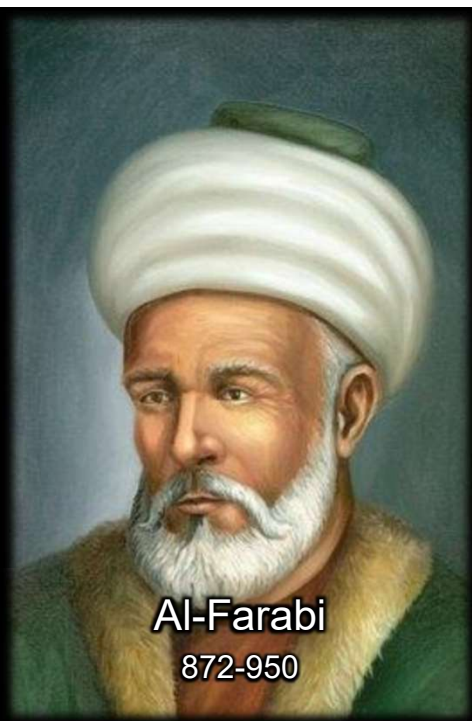


Al-Farabi
872-950

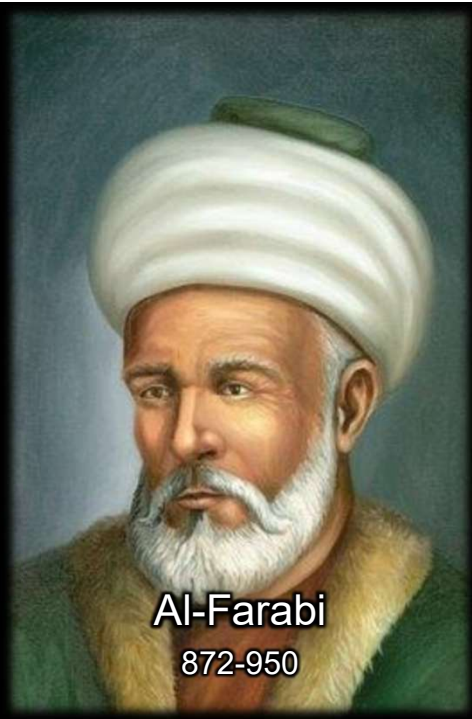
"We admit that essence and existence are distinct in existing things. The essence is not the existence, and it does not come under its comprehension. If the essence of man implied his existence, to conceive his essence would also be to conceive his existence, and it would be enough to know what a man is, in order to know that man exists, so that every representation would entail an affirmation.



"But the same token, existence is not included in the essence of things; otherwise it could become one of their constitutive characters, and the representation of what essence is would remain incomplete without the representation of its existence. And what is more, it would be impossible for us to separate them by the imagination.

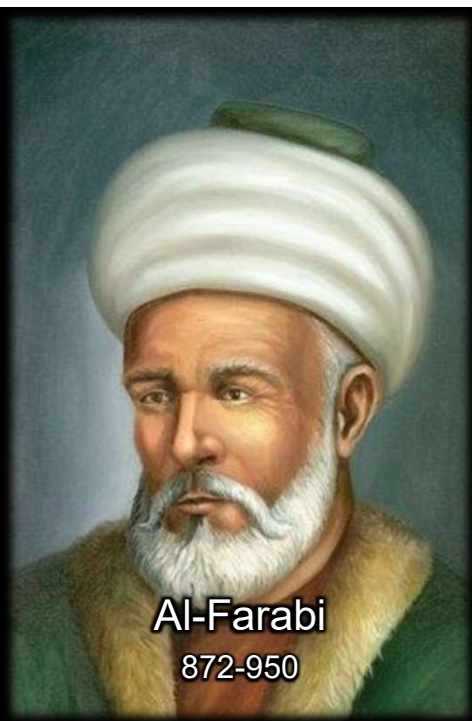


"If man's existence coincided with his corporeal and animal nature, there would be nobody who, having an exact idea of what man is, and knowing is corporeal and animal nature, could question man's existence. But that is not the way it is, and we doubt the existence of things until we have direct perception of them through the senses, or mediate perception through a proof."

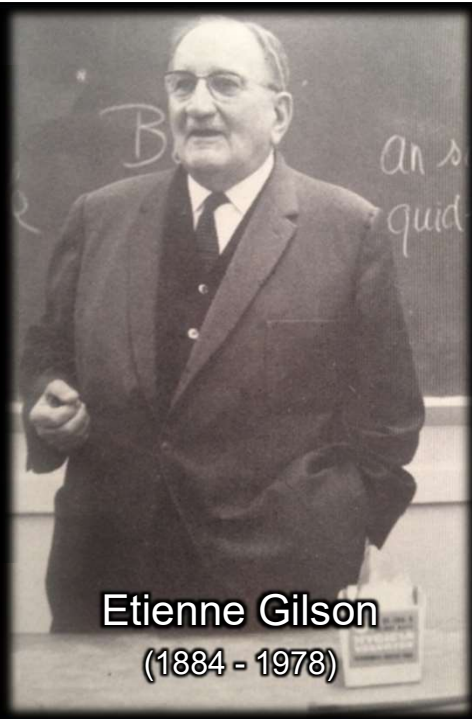


"If Thus existence is not a constitutive character, it is only an accessory accident."

[This is a tertiary quote. Djemil Saliba quotes Alfarabi in his *Etude sur la métaphysique*, pp. 84-85. Saliba is quoted by Etienne Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1955, reprinted 1972), 186]



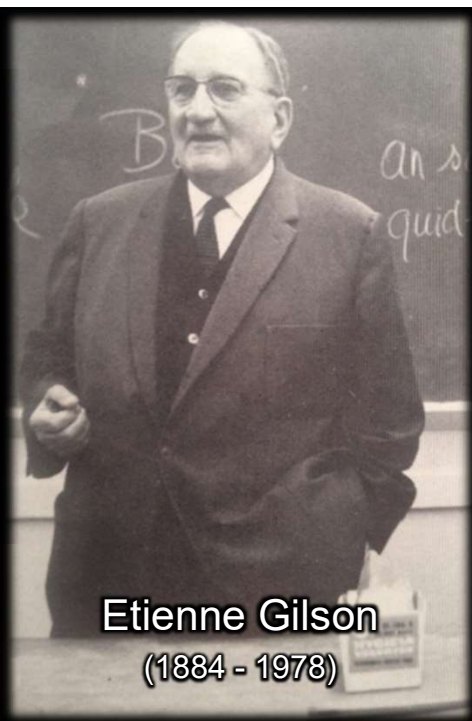
"In order not to confuse this important metaphysical move [in Alfarabi] with later ones, it should be noted that the primacy of essence dominates the whole argumentation. Not for an instant is there any doubt that existence is a predicate of essence, and because it is not essentially included in it, it is considered an 'accident.'



Etienne Gilson
(1884 - 1978)

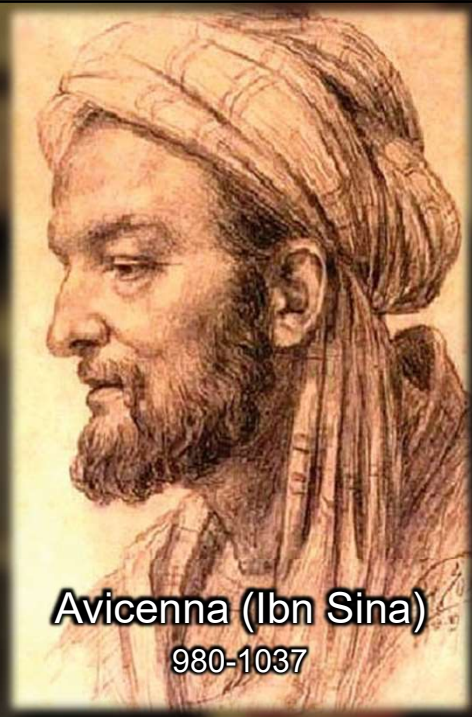
"We are still far away from the Thomistic position, which will deny both that existence is included in essence and that it is accidental to it. With Thomas Aquinas, existence will become the 'act' of essence, and therefore the act of being; we are not there, but we are on the way to it.

Gilson, History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages, 186.



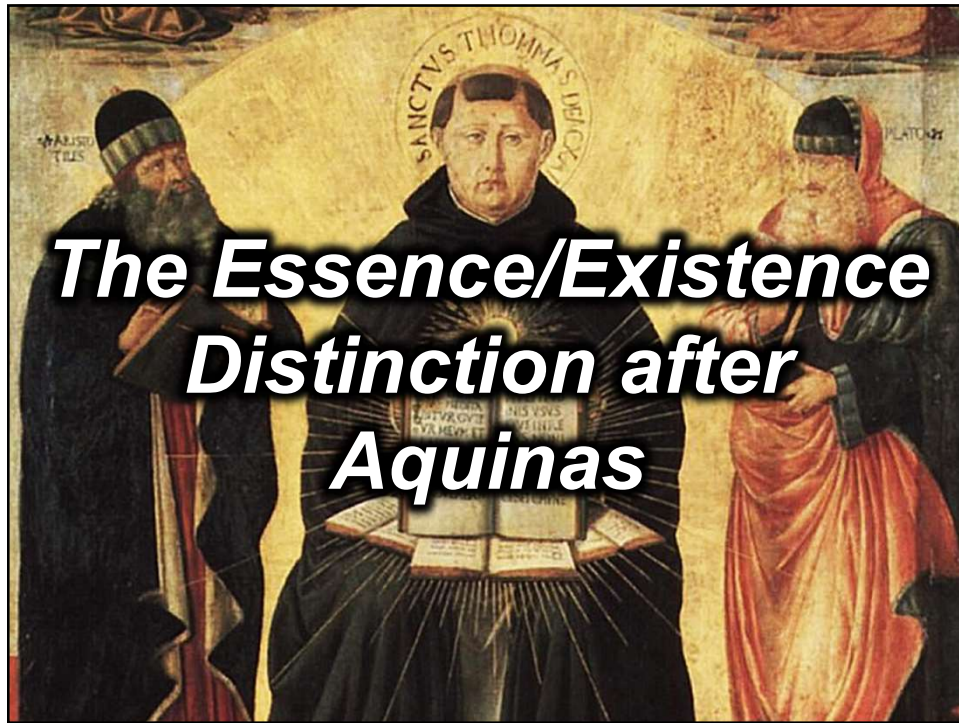
Etienne Gilson
(1884 - 1978)

Probably the biggest influence that suggested the essence/existence distinction was Avicenna, though Aquinas will significantly change the meanings of the terms.



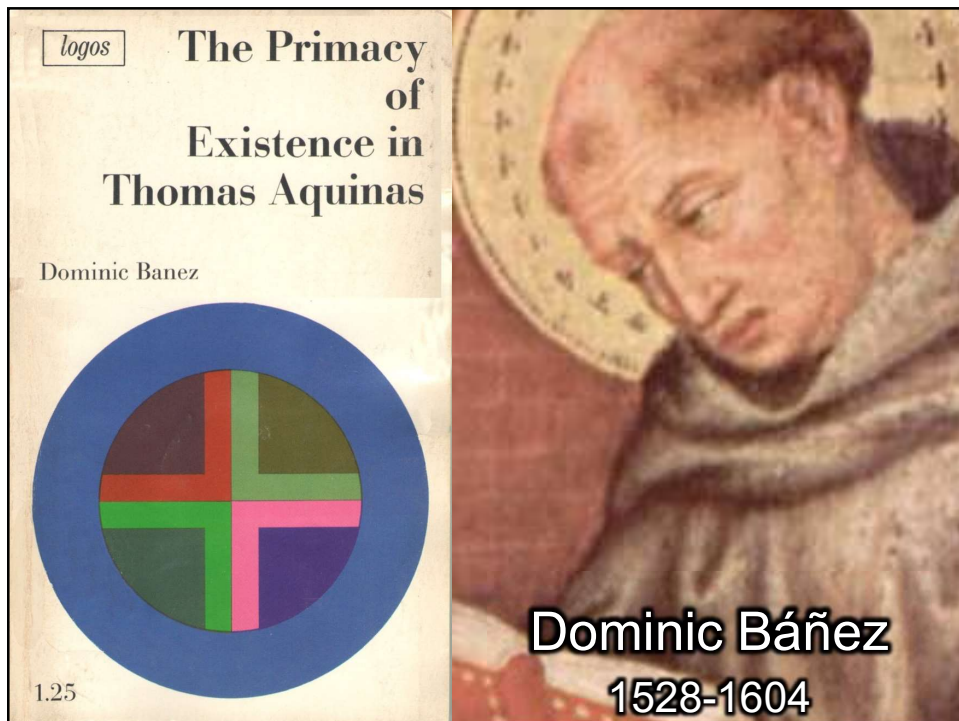
Avicenna (Ibn Sina)
980-1037

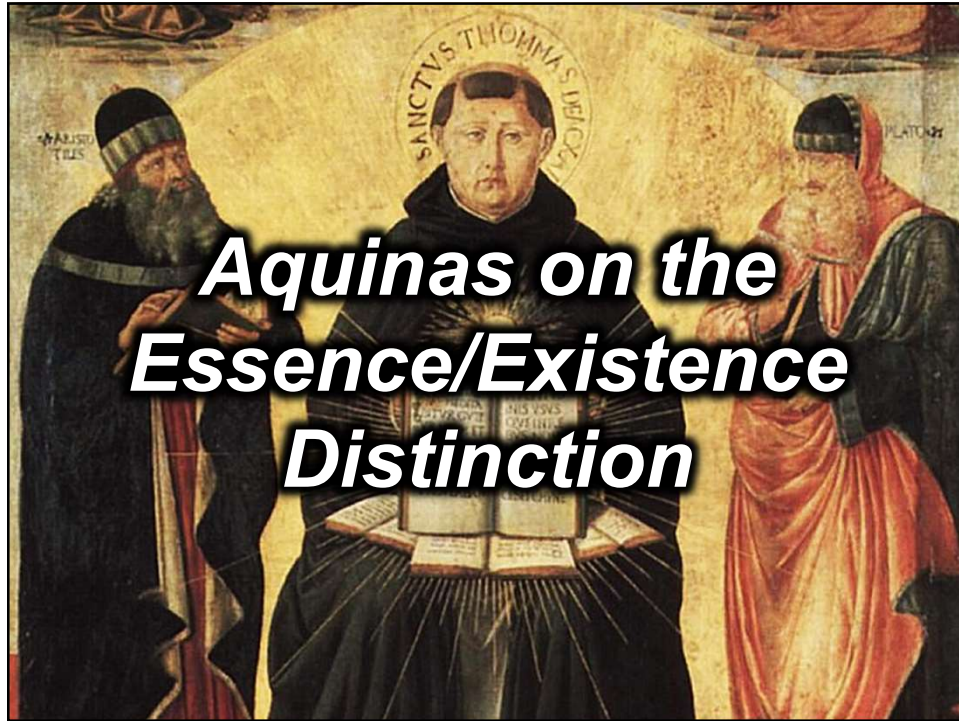
The language of the distinction between form and being (essence and existence) is also found in the Liber de Causis (Book of Causes, dated late 1000s to early 1100s) and was accommodated by Aquinas for his own purposes.



Controversy over the place of existence in Aquinas' philosophy in light of the essence/existence distinction erupted as early as the sixteenth century.

*The 16th Century Thomist philosopher Dominic Báñez (in his *The Primacy of Existence in Thomas Aquinas*) defended the notion that in the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas, existence is the primary metaphysical notion.*





Aquinas on the Essence/Existence Distinction

**Aquinas lays
out his
understanding
of the essence /
existence
distinction in his
*On Being and
Essence.***

Thomas Aquinas
On being and
essence

Translated by
Armand Maurer

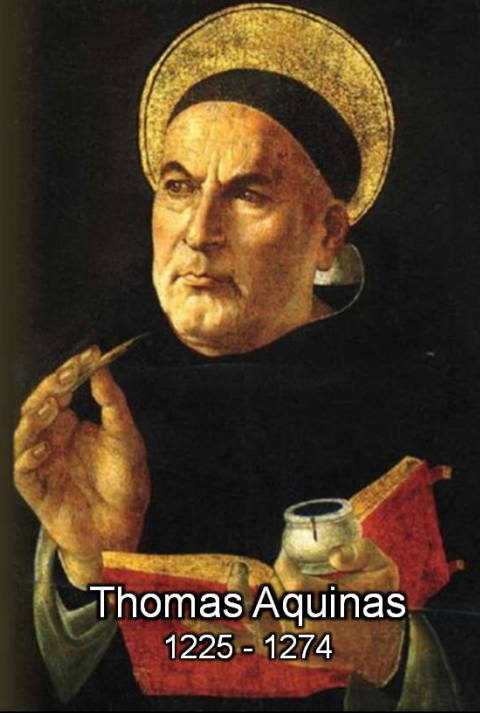


That essence and existence are distinct in sensible objects is evident from the fact that one can understand the essence of a thing without knowing whether it exists.





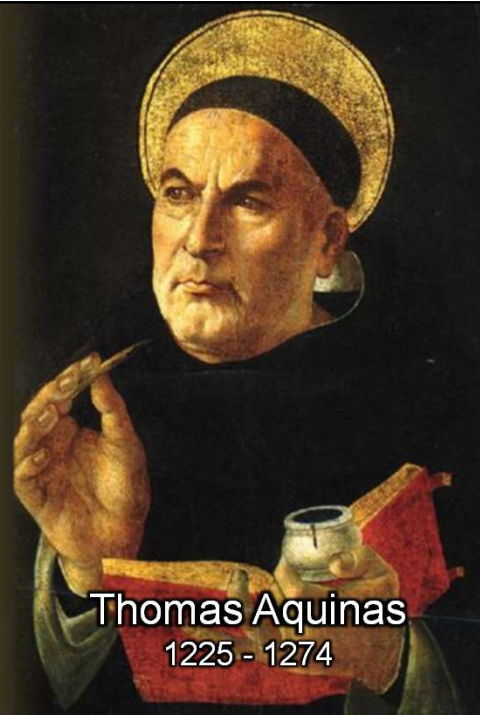
"Now, every essence ... can be understood without knowing anything about its being. I can know, for instance, what a man or a phoenix is and still be ignorant whether it has being in reality."



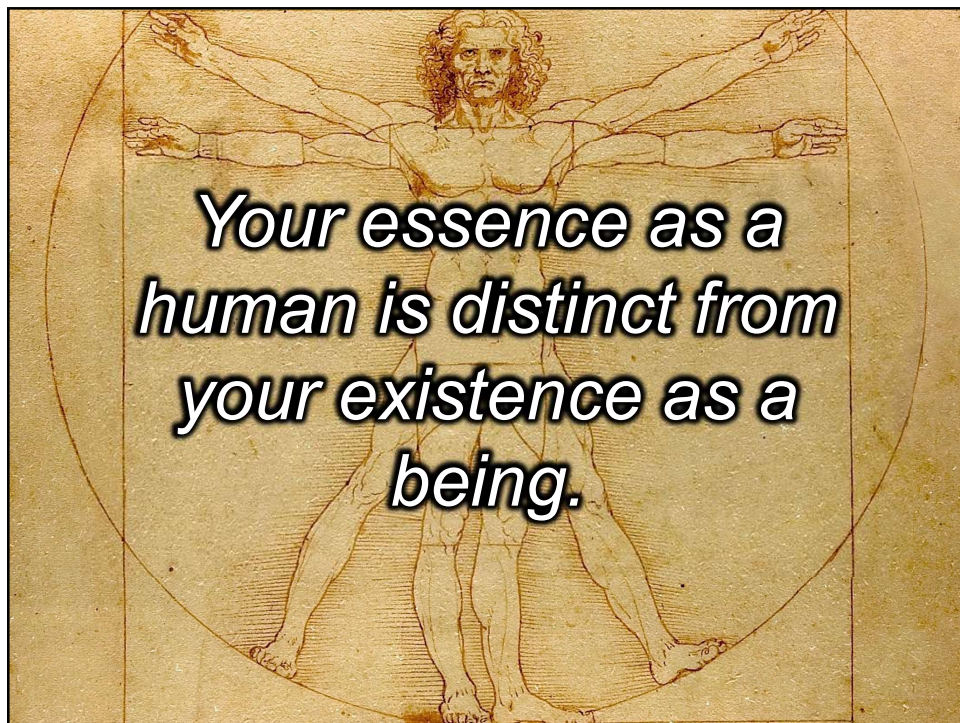
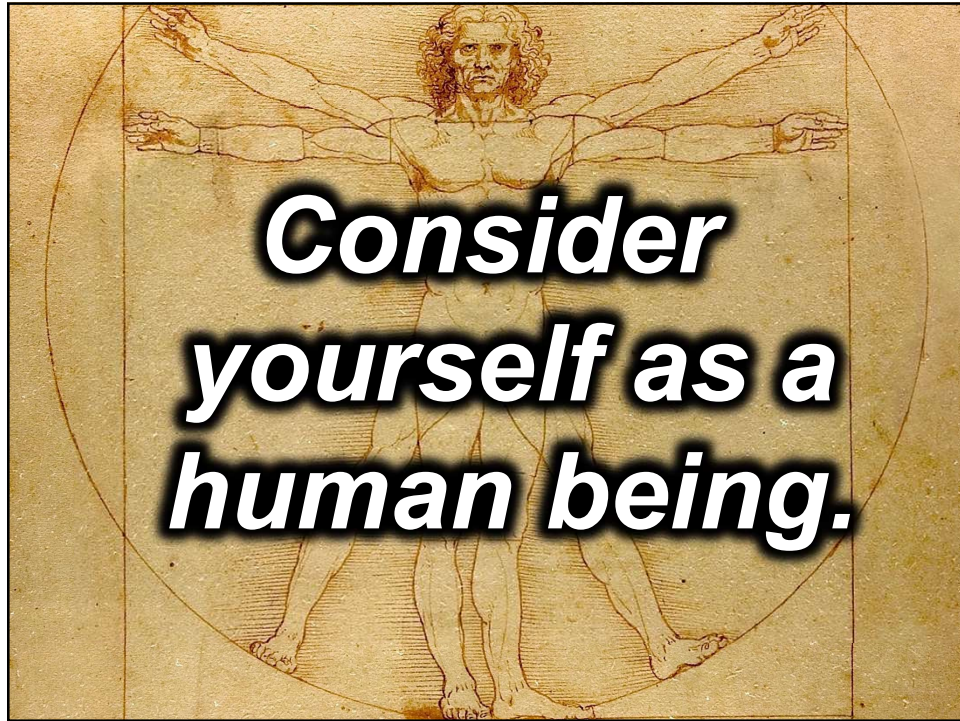
Thomas Aquinas
1225 - 1274

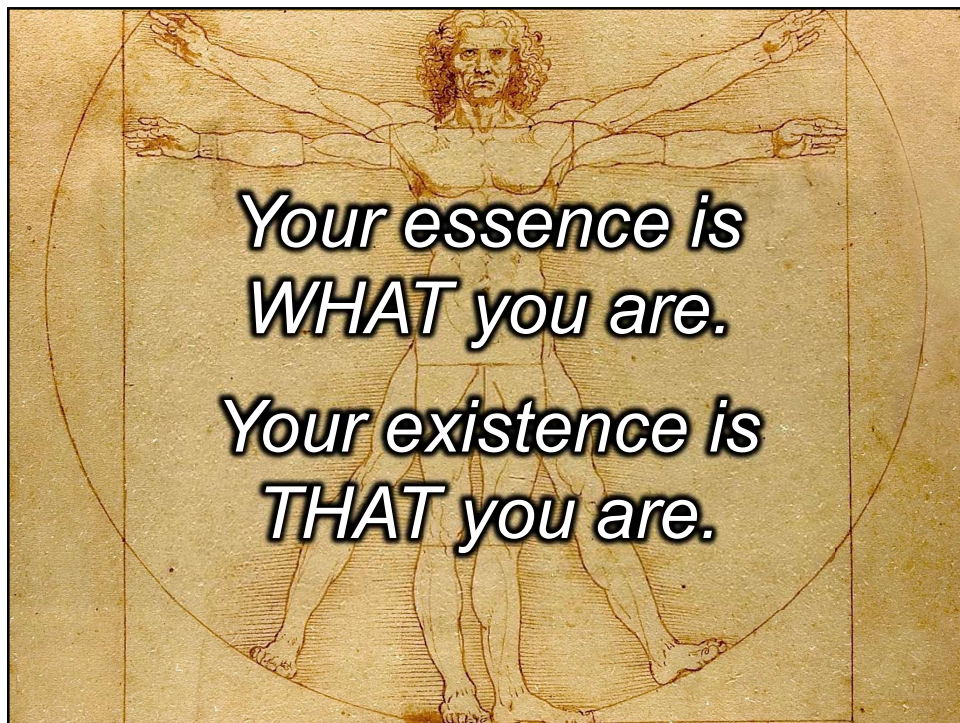
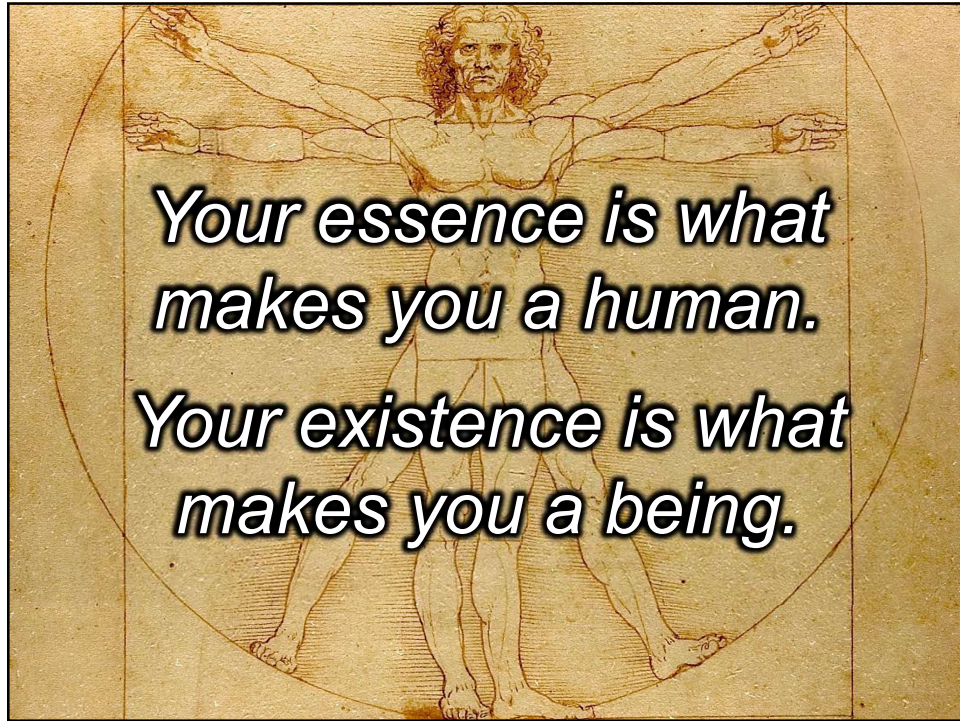
"From this it is clear that being is other than essence ... unless perhaps there is a reality who quiddity [essence] is its being."

[On Being and Essence, IV, §6, trans. Armand Maurer, (Toronto: The Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1968), 55]



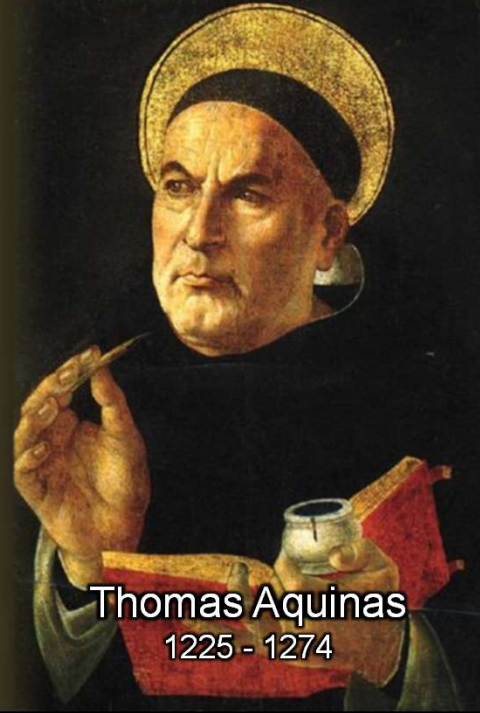
Thomas Aquinas
1225 - 1274





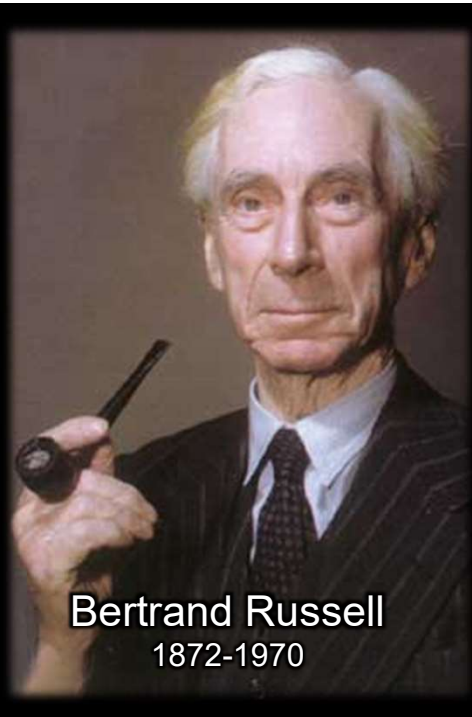
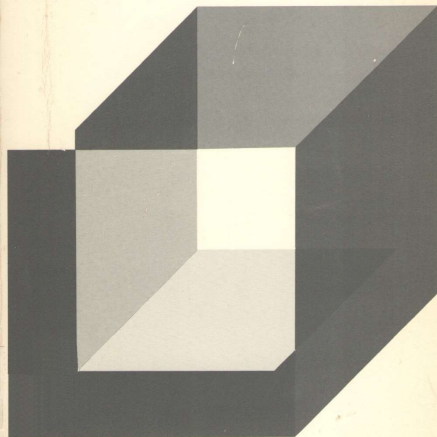
"Everything that is in the genus of substance is composite with a real composition, because whatever is in the category of substance is subsistent in its own existence, and its own act of existing must be distinct from the thing itself; otherwise it could not be distinct in existence from the other things with which it agrees in the formal character of its quiddity; for such agreement is required in all things that are directly in a category. Consequently everything that is directly in the category of substance is composed at least of the act of being and the subject of being."

[*On Truth (De Veritate)* XXVII, 1, ad. 8, trans. Robert W. Schmidt (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), v. 3, pp. 311-312]



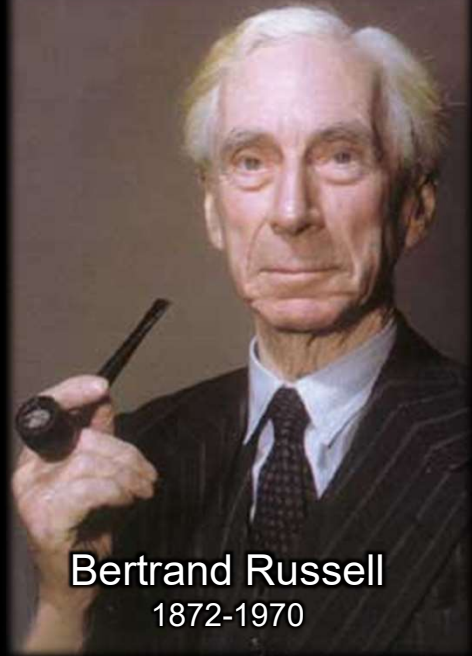
Thomas Aquinas
1225 - 1274

Bertrand
Russell
A History of
Western
Philosophy



Bertrand Russell
1872-1970

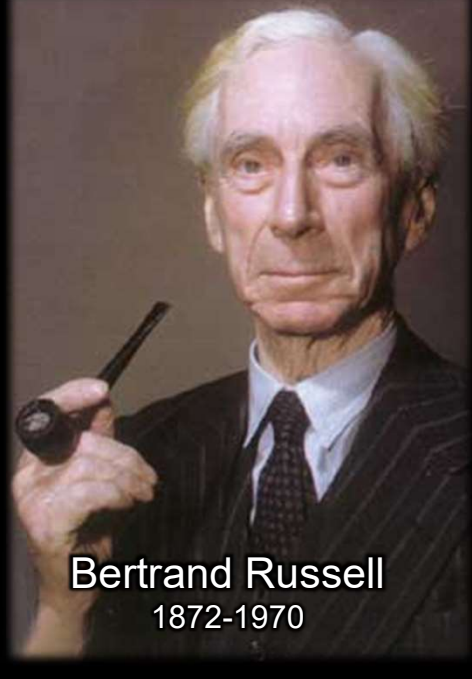
"The contentions that God's essence and existence are one and the same, that God is His own goodness, His own power, and so on, suggest a confusion, found in Plato, but supposed to have been avoided by Aristotle, between the manner of being of particulars and the manner of being of universals.



Bertrand Russell
1872-1970

God's essence is, one must suppose, of the nature of universals, while His existence is not. It is not easy to state this difficulty satisfactorily, since it occurs within a logic that can no longer be accepted. But it points clearly to some kind of syntactical confusion, without which much of the argumentation about God would lose its plausibility."

[Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945), 462]



Bertrand Russell
1872-1970



A CRITIQUE OF THE QUANTIFICATIONAL ACCOUNT OF EXISTENCE

William F. Vallicella

University of Dayton
Dayton, Ohio

A CRITICISM OFTEN brought against philosophers who raise questions about Being or existence charges that these philosophers have simply been misled by the surface grammar of existence statements into thinking that "exists" and its cognates are logical¹ predicates, and thus into thinking that there must be some mysterious property or quasi-property called "Being"² to which this putative predicate refers, and into which it would make sense to inquire. According to Bertrand Russell,

... there is a vast amount of philosophy that rests upon the notion that existence, is, so to speak, a property that you can attribute to things, and that the things that exist have the property of existence and the things that do not exist do not. That is rubbish...³

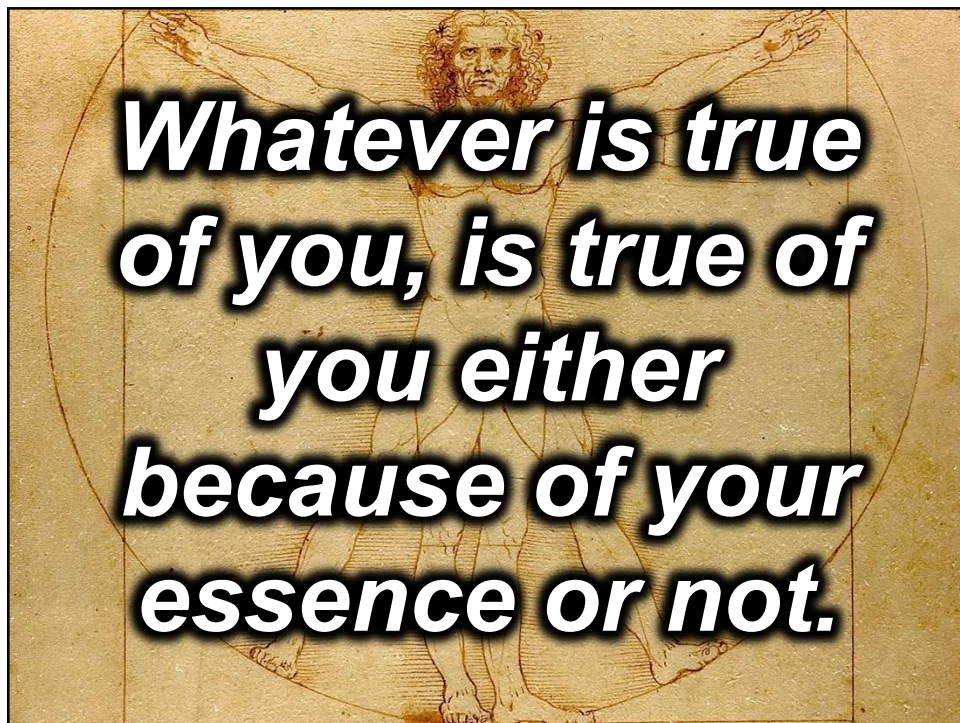
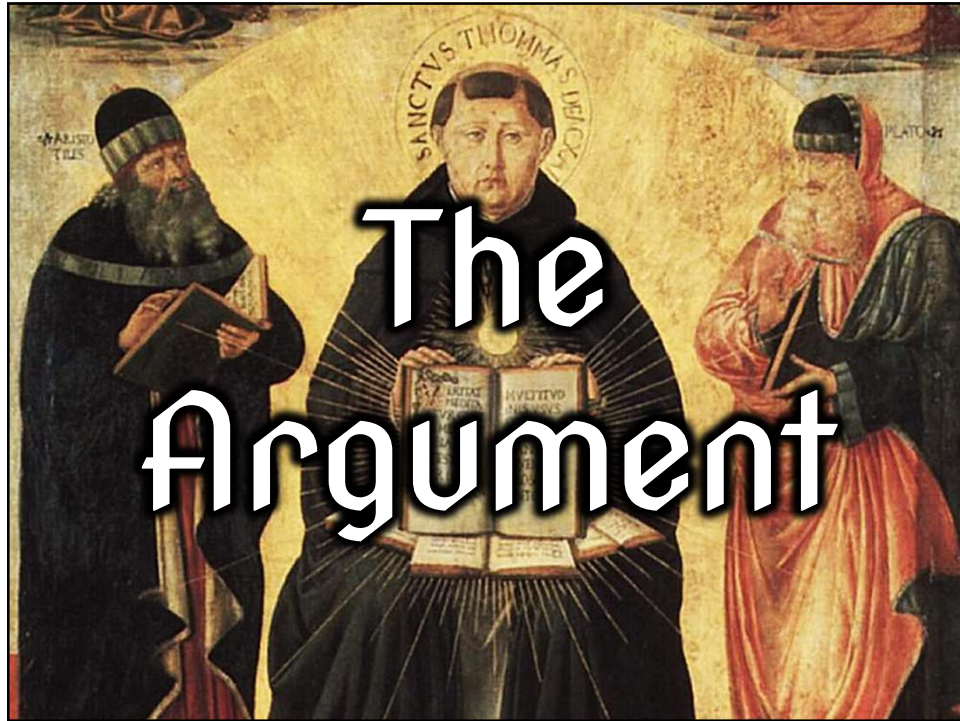
In a somewhat more restrained tone, Rudolf Carnap agrees that "Most metaphysicians since antiquity have allowed themselves to be seduced into pseudostatements by the verbal, and therewith the predicative form of the word 'to be,' e.g., 'I am.'"

¹ "Logical" as opposed to "grammatical." Note that Kant uses "logical" in the sense of "grammatical." For Kant it is self-evident that "exists" is a logical predicate; the only question is whether it is a "real" or "determining" predicate. (See *Critique of Pure Reason* A56/B425.) In recent discussions, it is taken as self-evident that "exists" is a grammatical predicate; the only question is whether it is also a logical predicate.

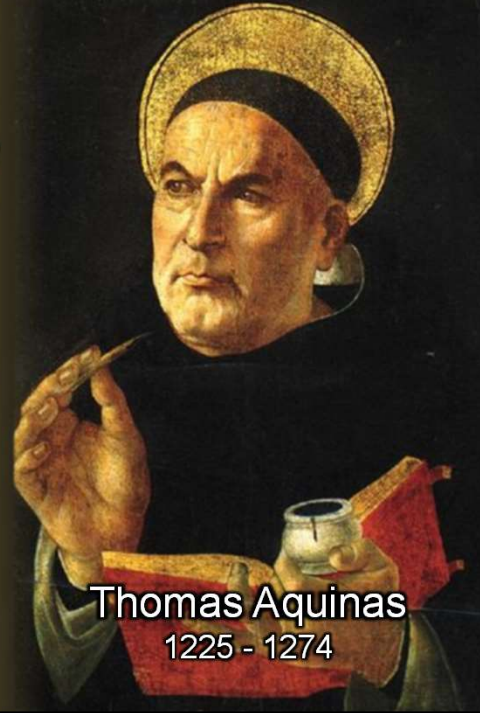
² I capitalize the initial letter of "Being," not out of misplaced piety, but in order to mark the distinction between Being and being. Lower case "being" can be used to refer collectively or distributively to the totality of beings. Lower case "Being" refers, however, not to beings collectively or distributively, but to that which constitutes beings as beings, the "property" which they all have "in common."

³ "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism" in *Logic and Knowledge*, ed. Robert C. Marsh (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1971), p. 252. Cited hereafter as LK.



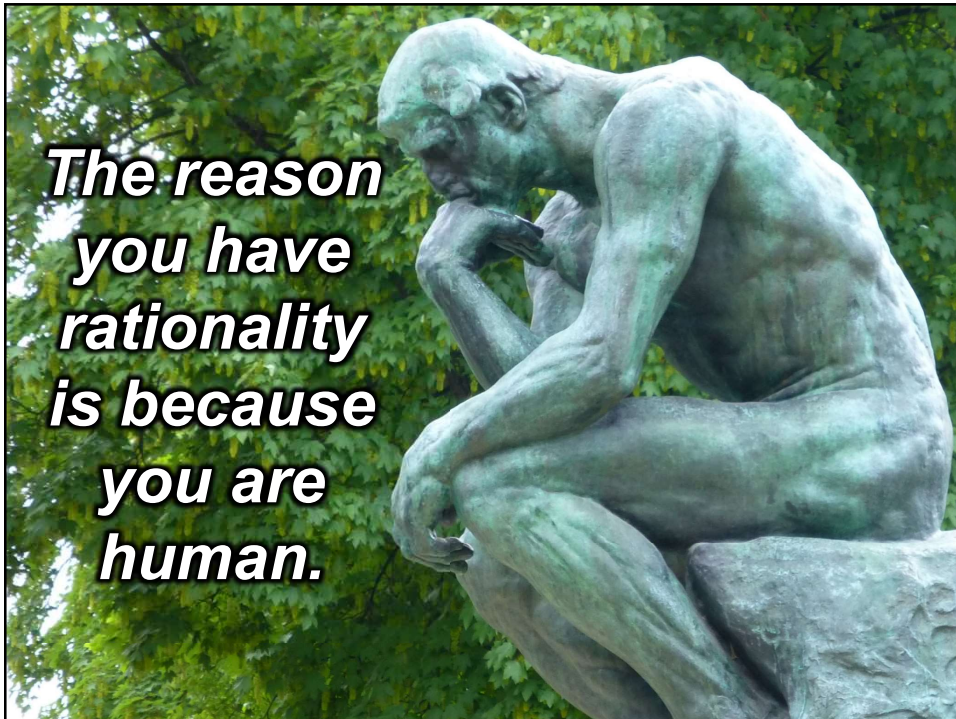


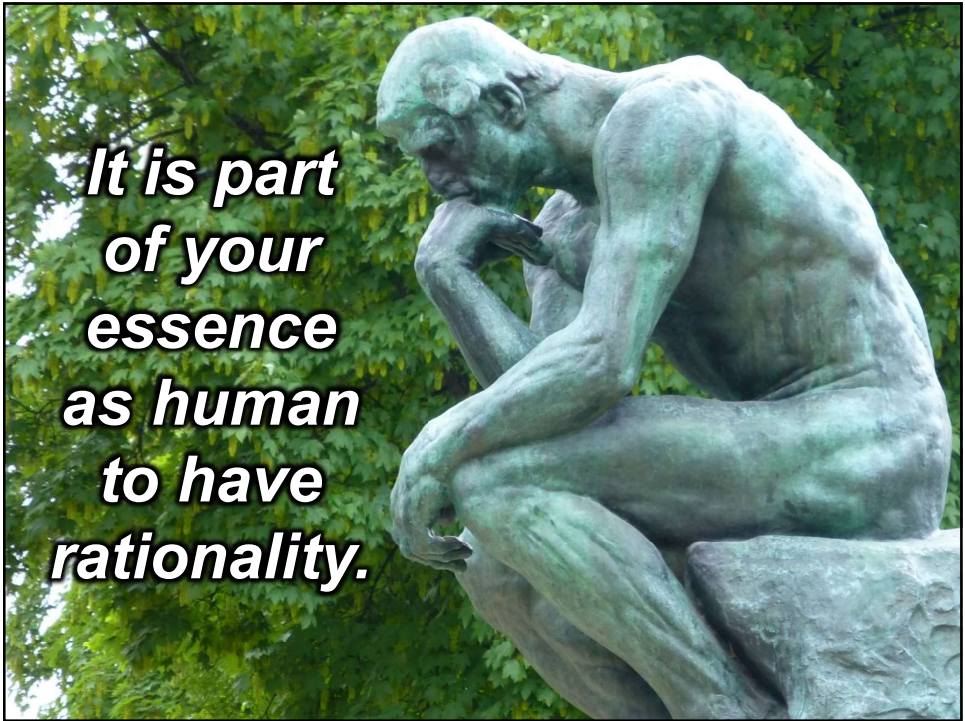
"Whatever belongs to a thing is either caused by the principles of its nature ... or comes to it from an extrinsic principle.



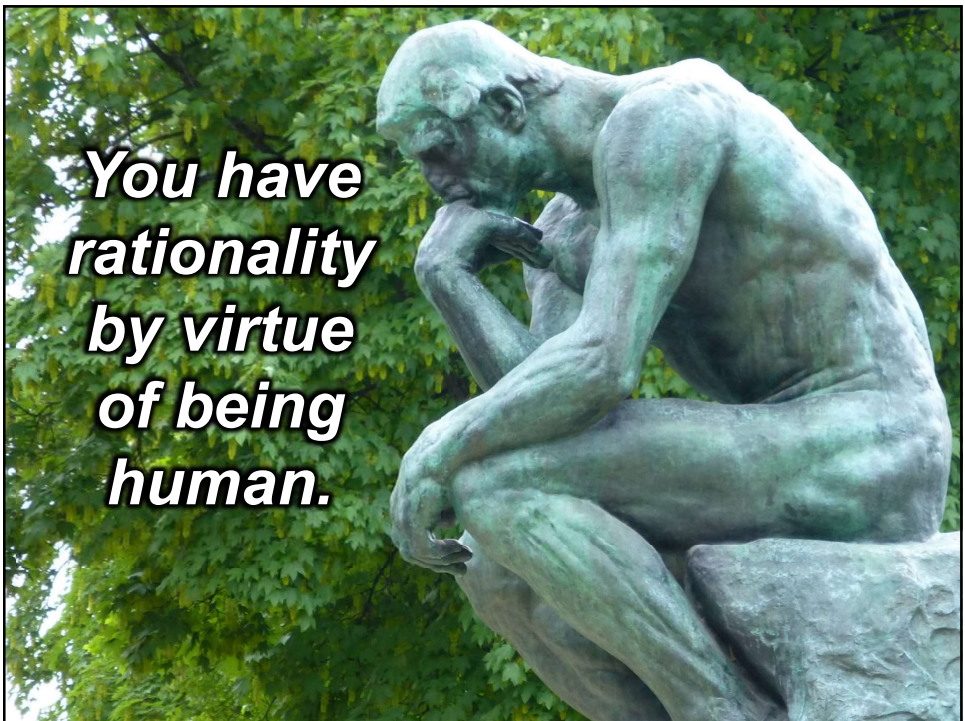
Thomas Aquinas
1225 - 1274

The reason you have rationality is because you are human.

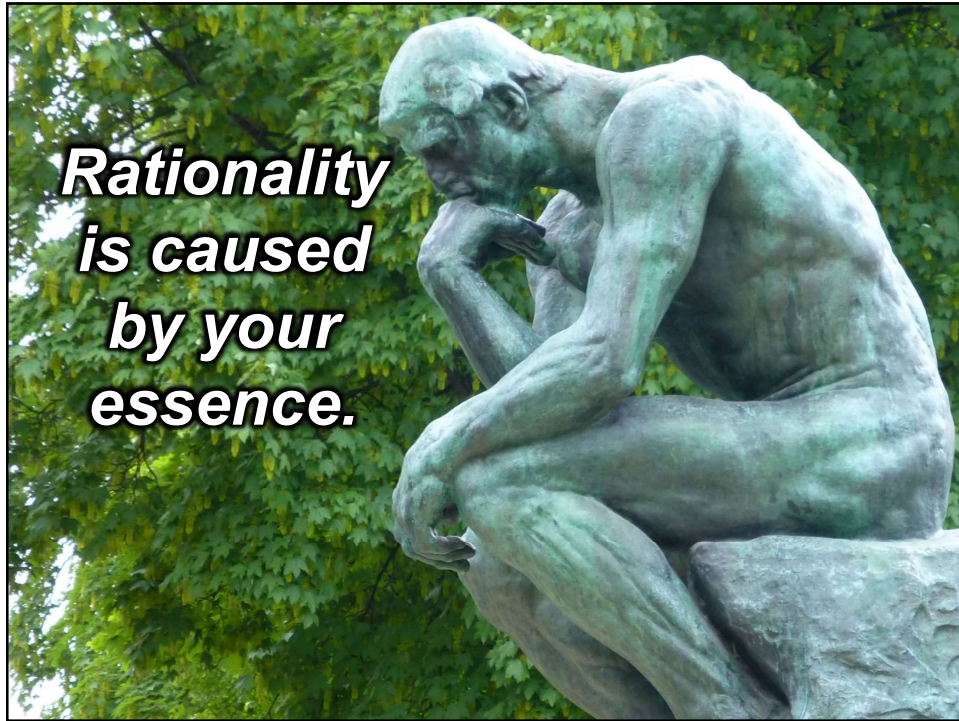




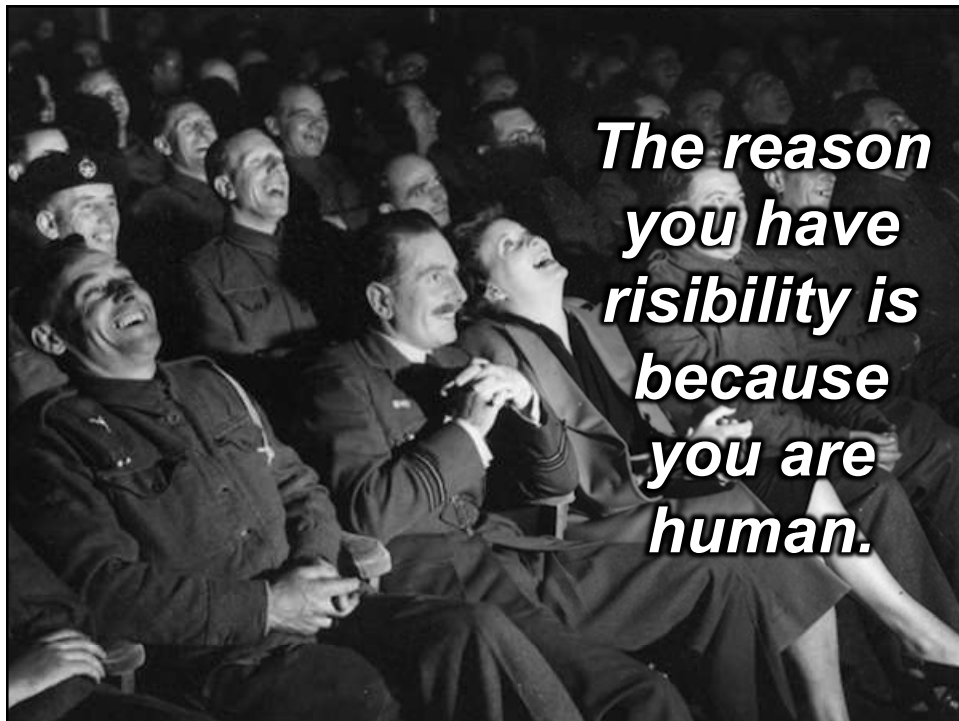
***It is part
of your
essence
as human
to have
rationality.***



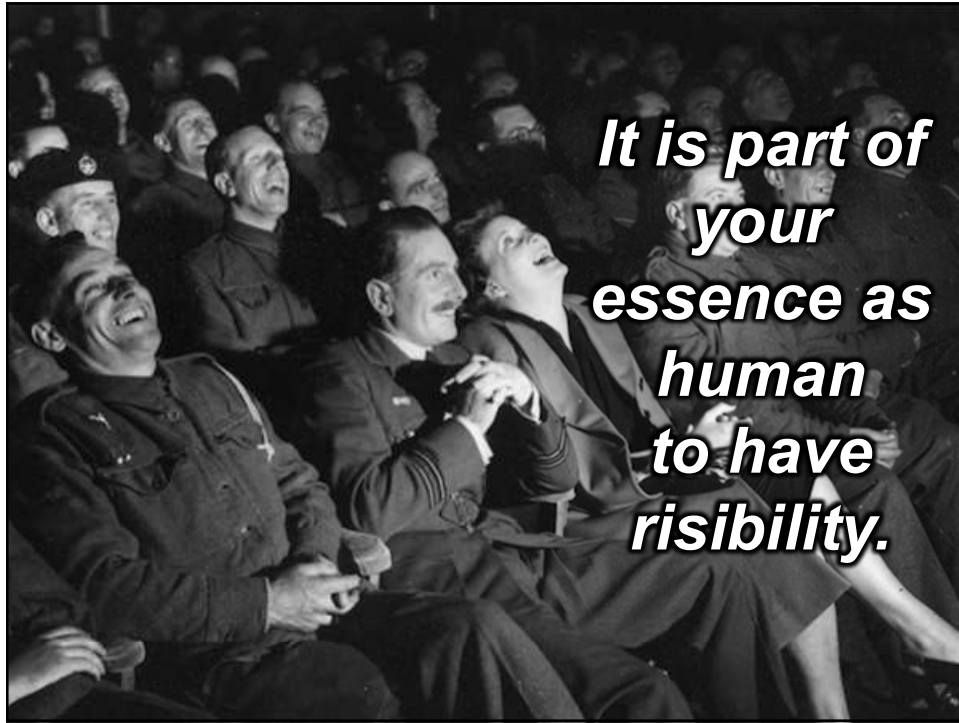
***You have
rationality
by virtue
of being
human.***



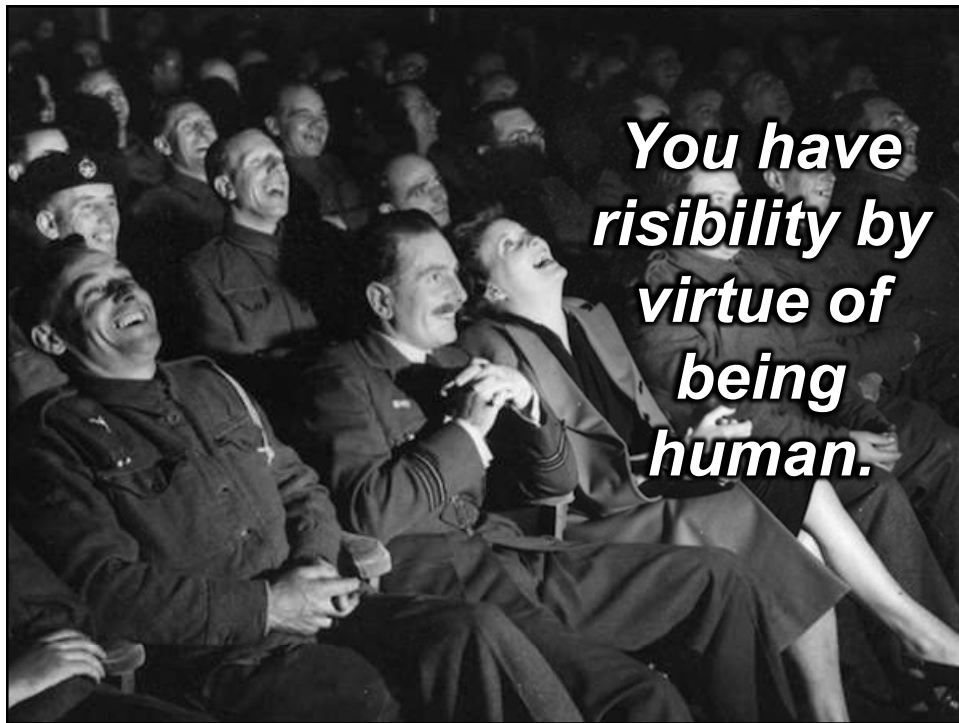
***Rationality
is caused
by your
essence.***



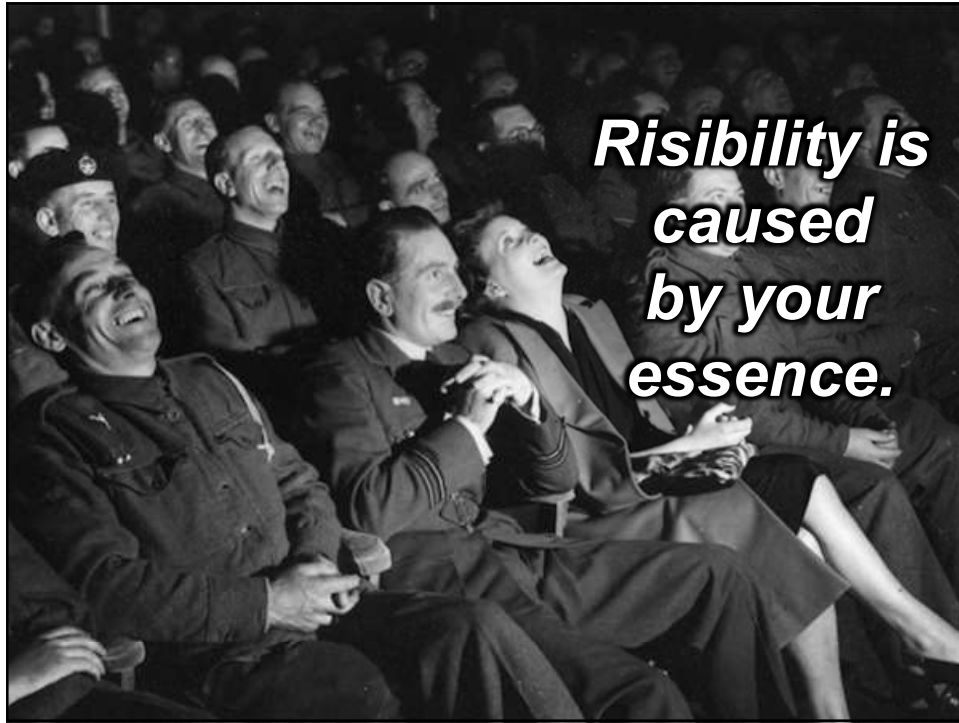
***The reason
you have
risibility is
because
you are
human.***



*It is part of
your
essence as
human
to have
risibility.*



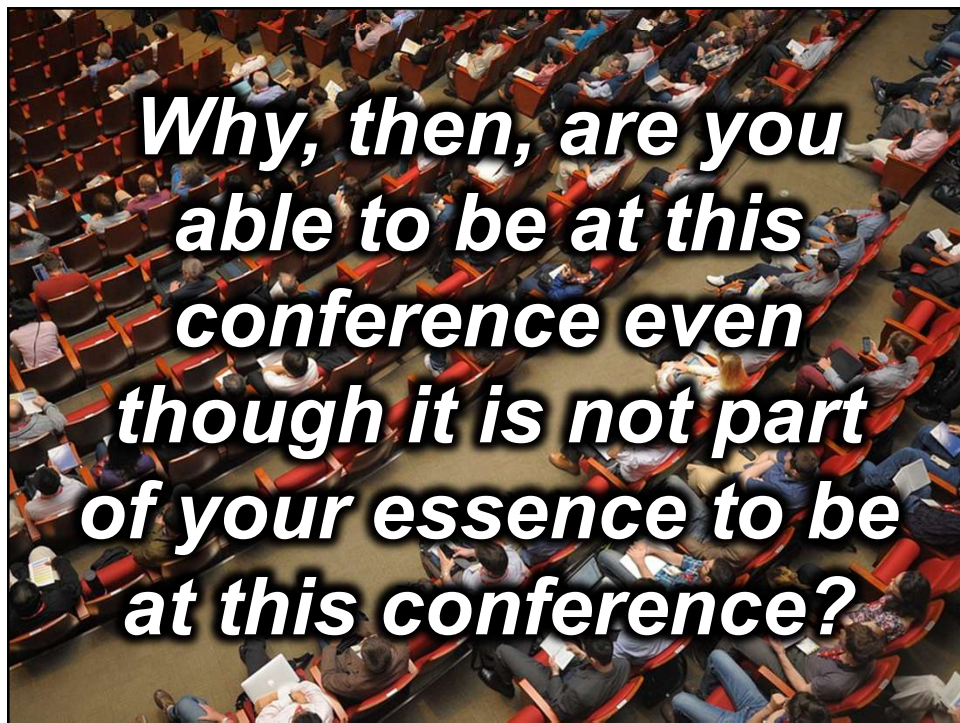
*You have
risibility by
virtue of
being
human.*



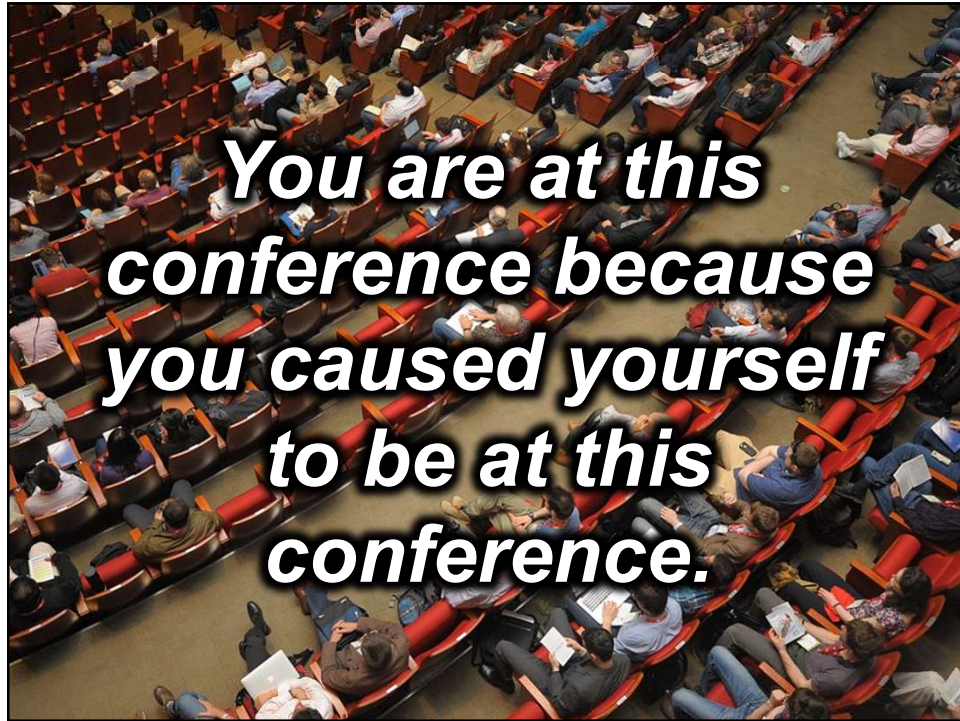




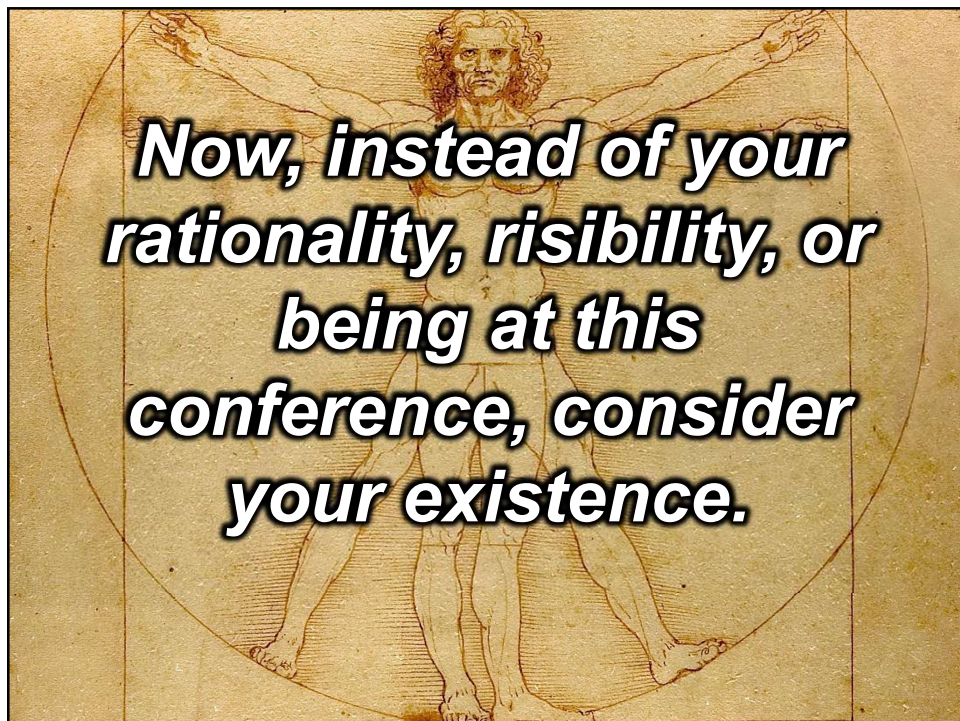
Is being at this conference caused by your essence?



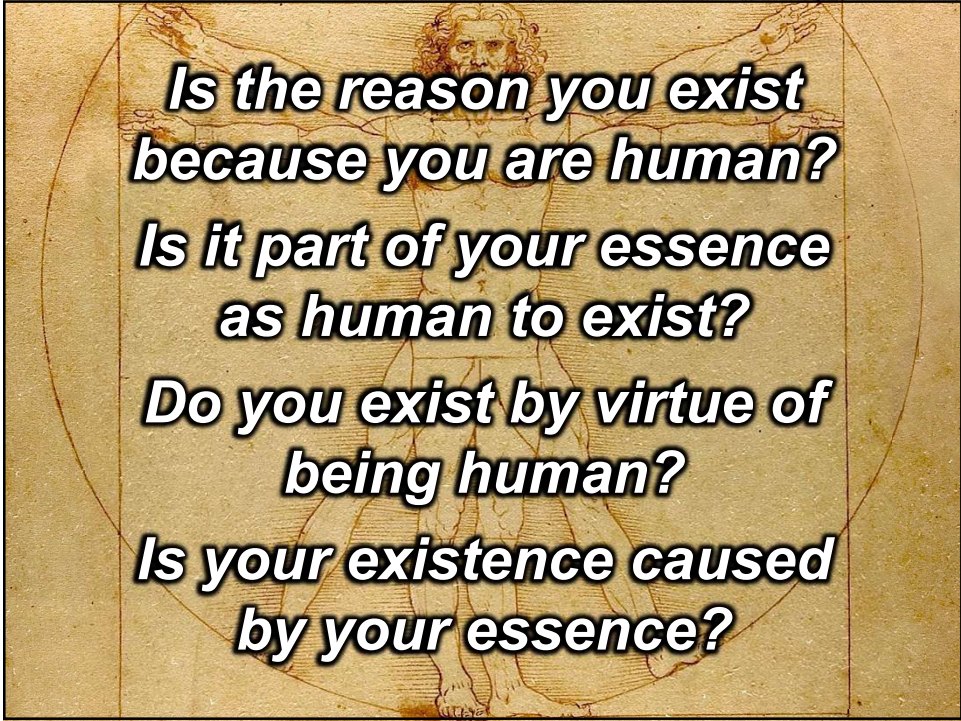
Why, then, are you able to be at this conference even though it is not part of your essence to be at this conference?



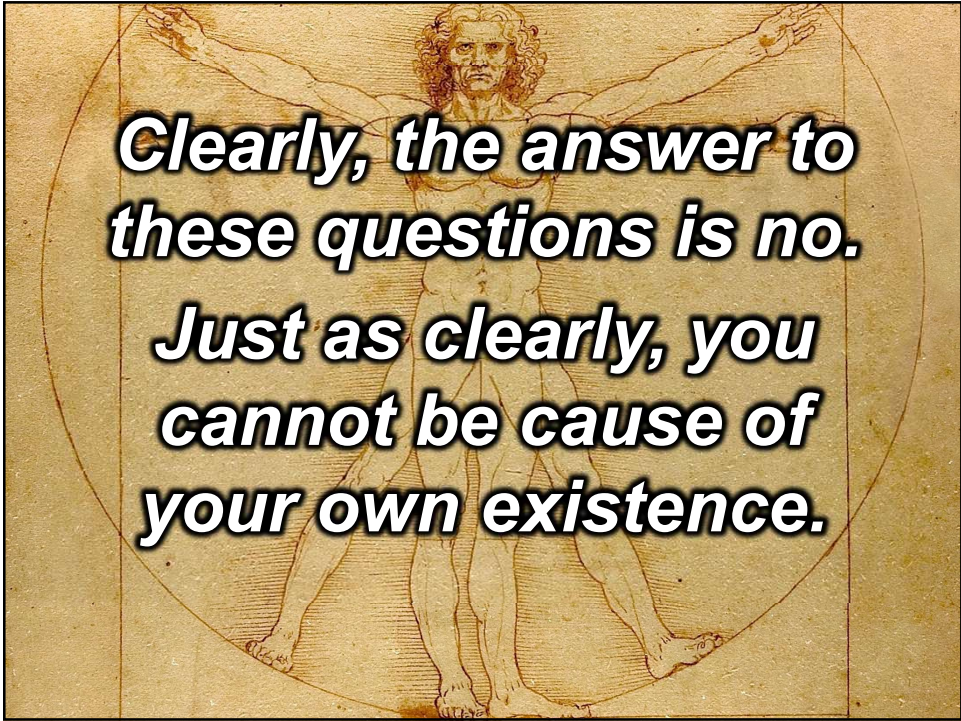
You are at this conference because you caused yourself to be at this conference.



Now, instead of your rationality, risibility, or being at this conference, consider your existence.

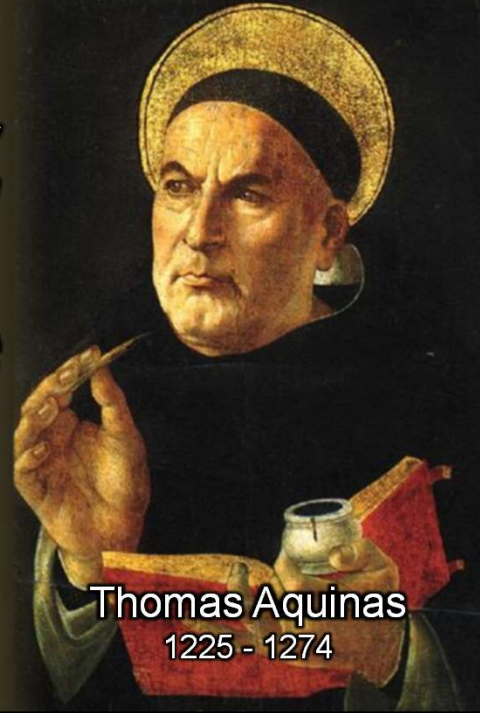


***Is the reason you exist
because you are human?
Is it part of your essence
as human to exist?
Do you exist by virtue of
being human?
Is your existence caused
by your essence?***



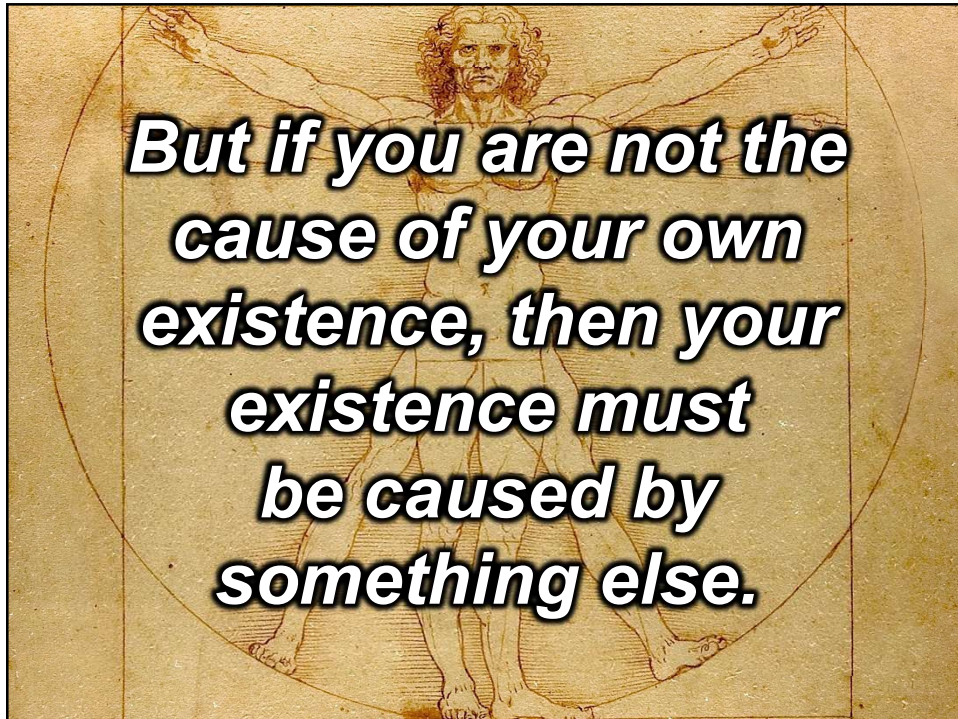
***Clearly, the answer to
these questions is no.
Just as clearly, you
cannot be cause of
your own existence.***

"Now being itself cannot be caused by the form ... of a thing (by 'caused' I mean by an efficient cause), because that thing would then be its own cause and it would bring itself into being, which is impossible.



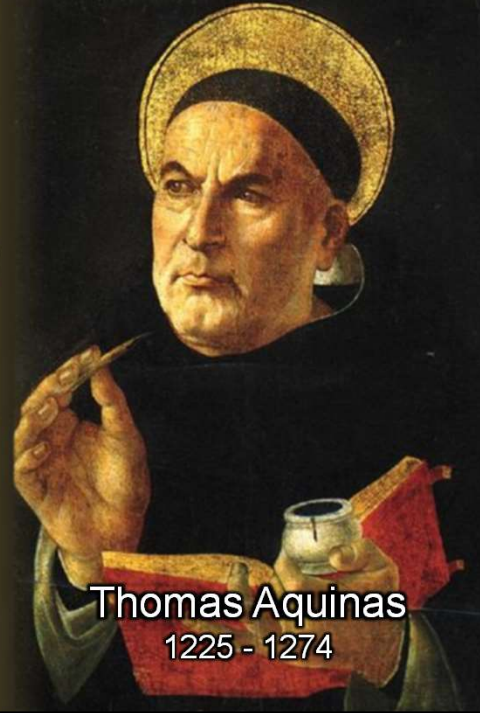
Thomas Aquinas
1225 - 1274

But if you are not the cause of your own existence, then your existence must be caused by something else.



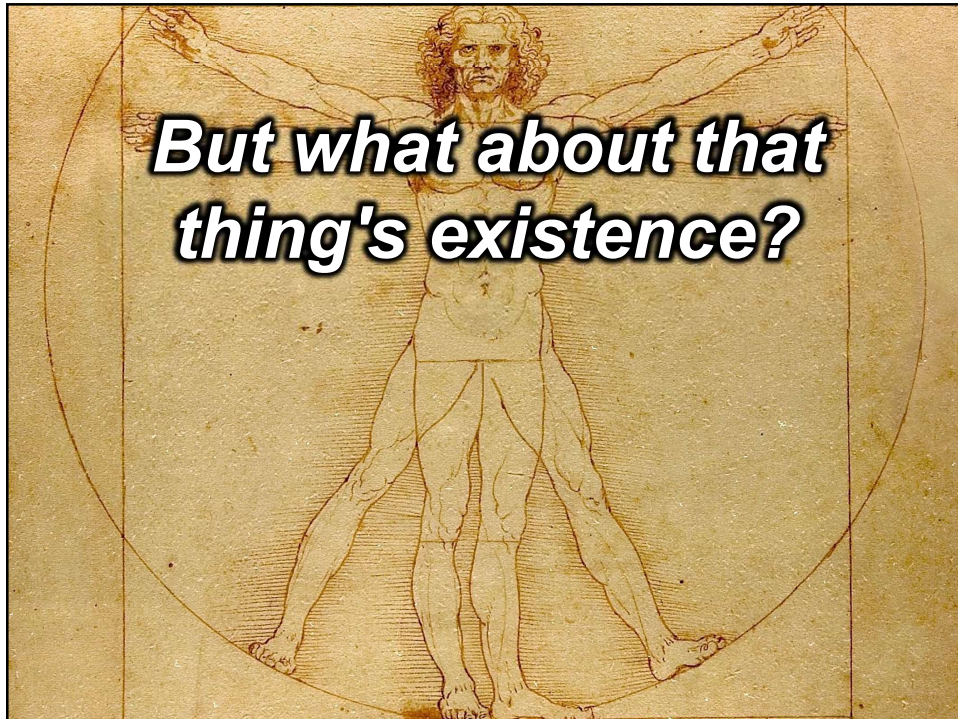
**"It follows that
everything whose
being is distinct
from its nature must
have being from
another."**

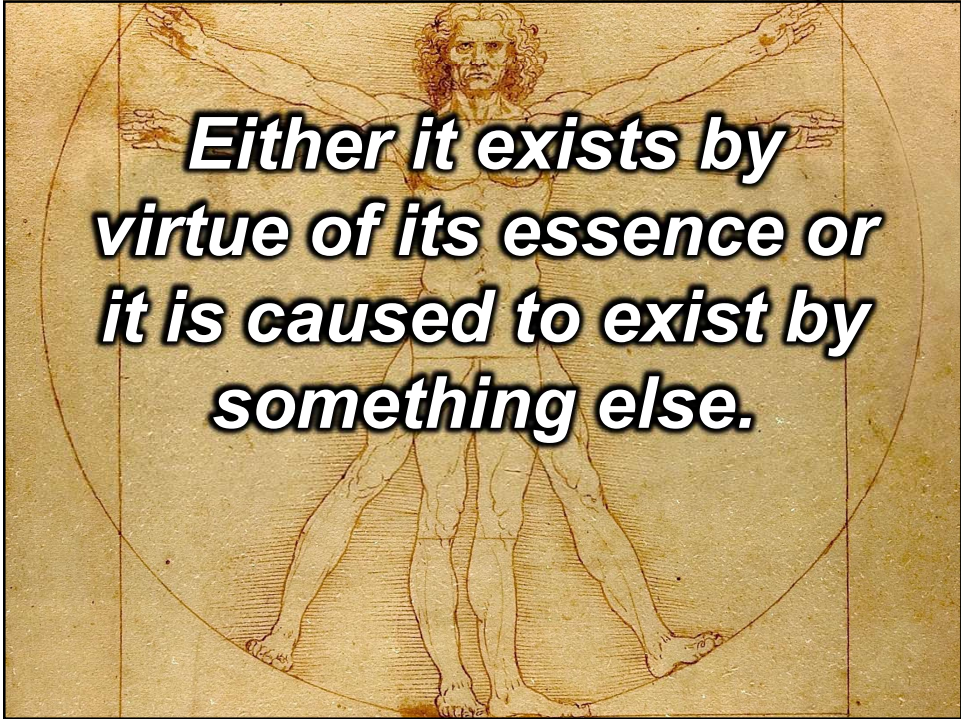
On Being and Essence, IV, §7, trans. Maurer, 56-57



**Thomas Aquinas
1225 - 1274**

**But what about that
thing's existence?**



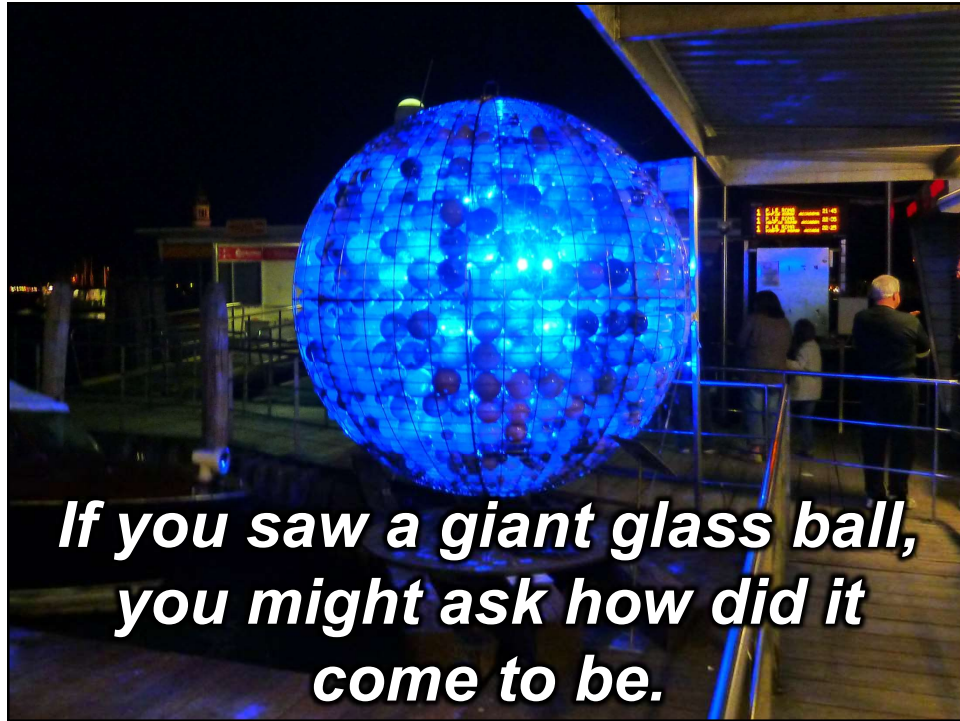
The background of the first slide is a reproduction of Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man drawing. The figure of the man is centered within a circle and a square, with his arms and legs extended to touch the boundaries. The drawing is rendered in a light brown, aged paper style.

***Either it exists by
virtue of its essence or
it is caused to exist by
something else.***

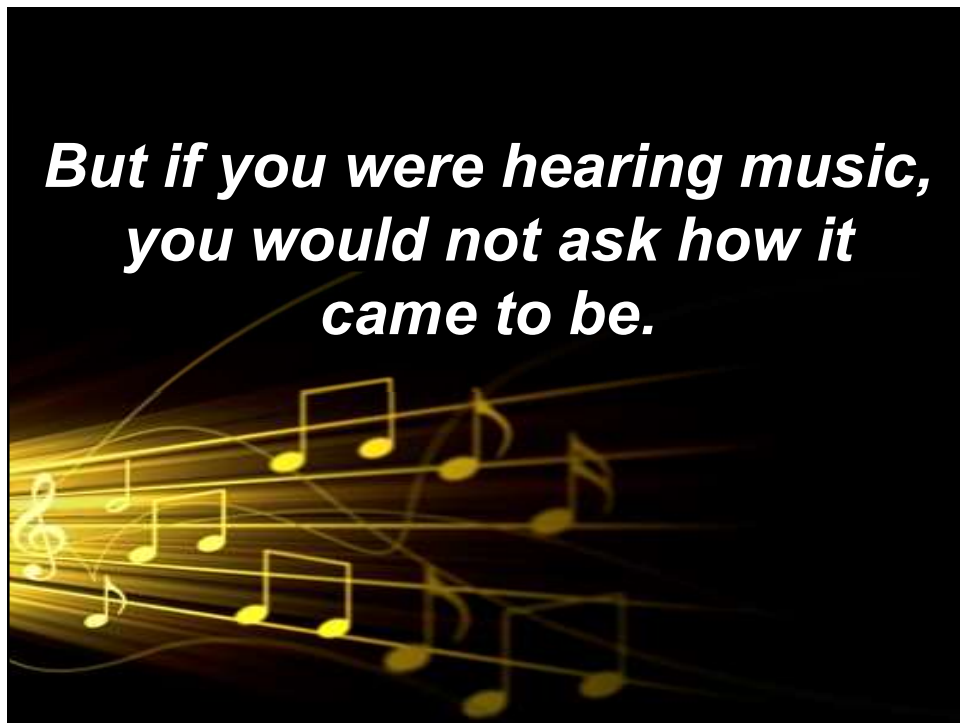
The background of the second slide shows a person sitting on a wooden pier or boardwalk. The person is seen from behind, looking out towards a bright, hazy horizon. The wooden planks of the pier create a strong sense of perspective, leading the eye towards the horizon.

***What about the
infinite regress?***





***If you saw a giant glass ball,
you might ask how did it
come to be.***

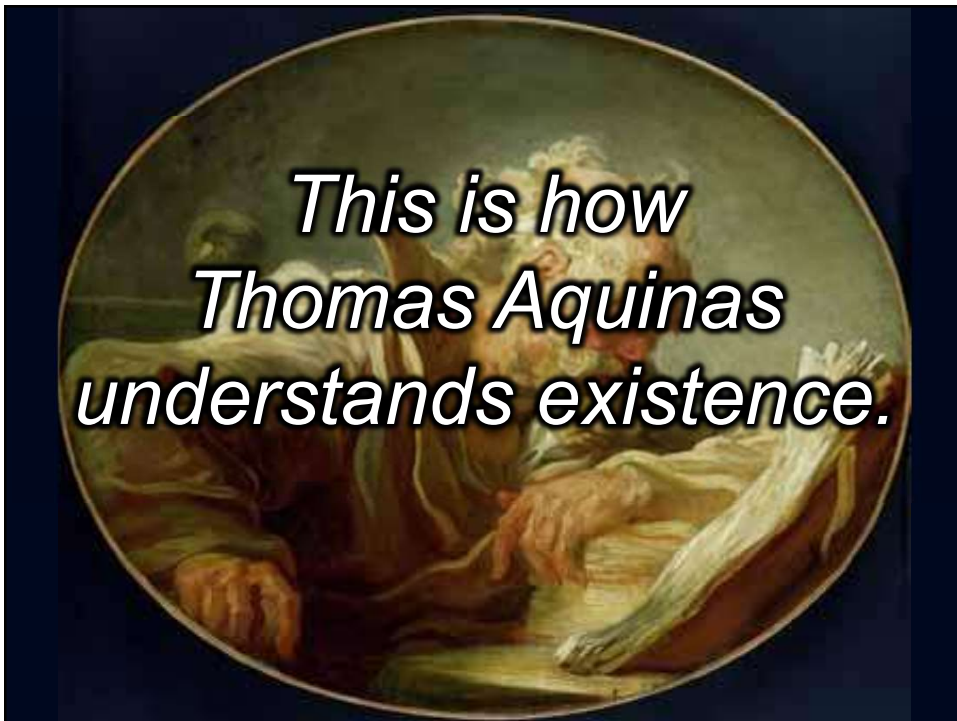


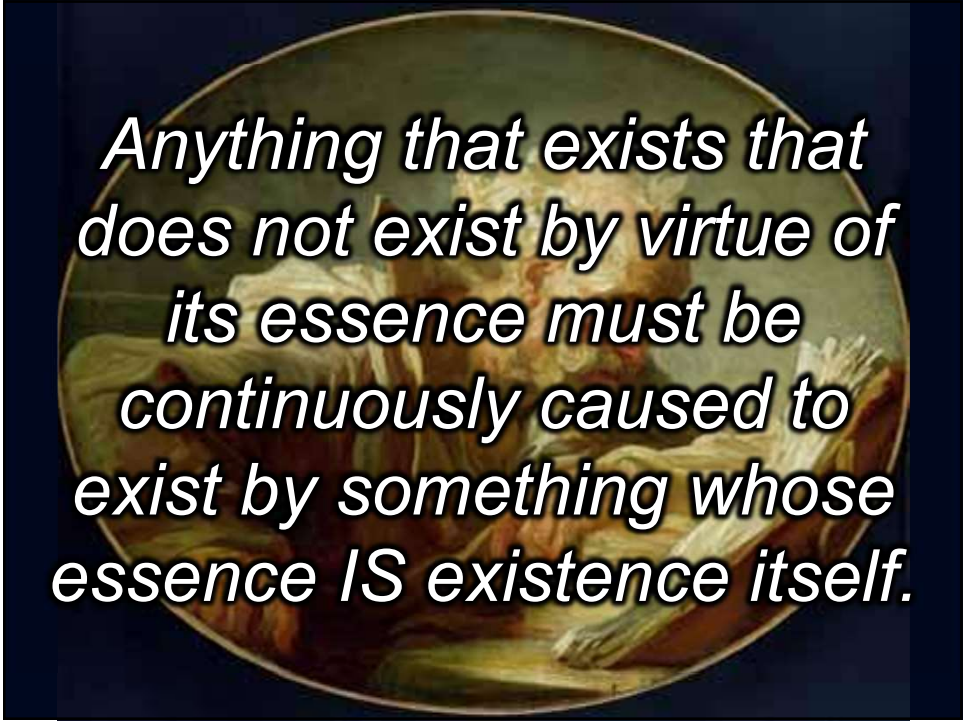
***But if you were hearing music,
you would not ask how it
came to be.***

***Rather, you would ask what is
causing the music to be
right now.***



***This is how
Thomas Aquinas
understands existence.***

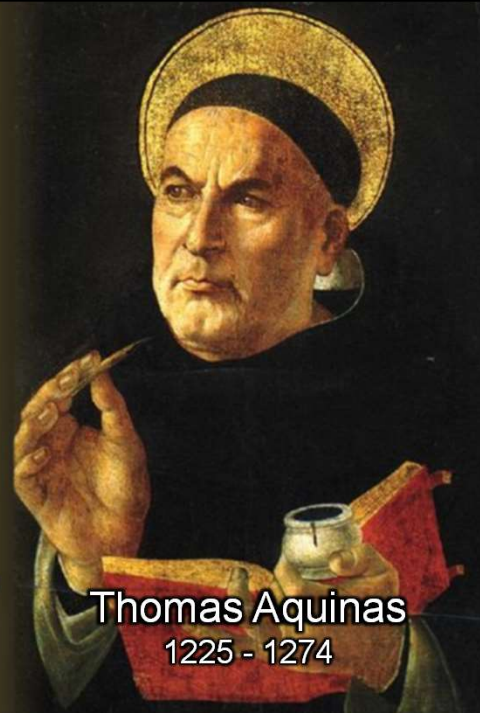




Anything that exists that does not exist by virtue of its essence must be continuously caused to exist by something whose essence IS existence itself.

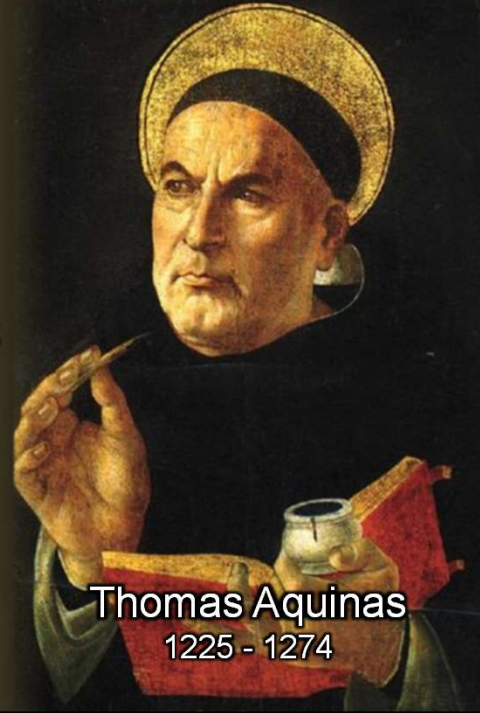
"Now since God is very being by His own essence, created being must be His proper effect ... Now God causes this effect in things not only when they first begin to be, but as long as they are preserved in being..."

ST 1, Q, 46, ii, ad 7



"As the production of a thing into existence depends on the will of God, so likewise it depends on His will that things should be preserved; for He does not preserve them otherwise than by ever giving them existence; hence if He took away His action from them, all things would be reduced to nothing."

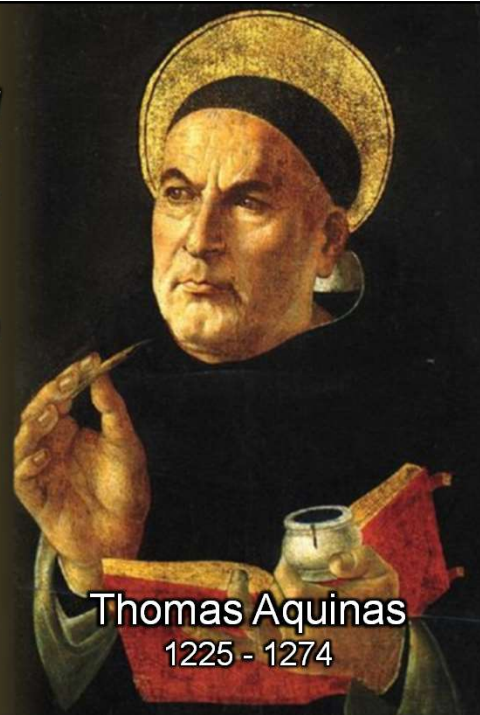
ST 1, Q, 9, ii



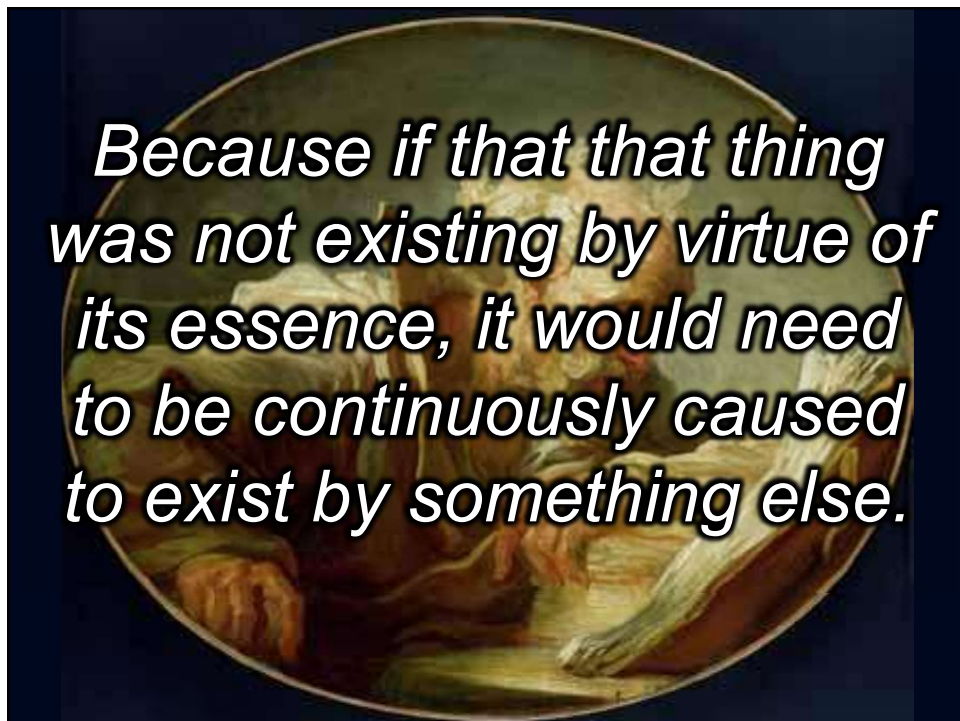
Thomas Aquinas
1225 - 1274

"Now there is a being that is its own being: and this follows from the fact that there must needs be a being that is pure act and wherein there is no composition. Hence from that one being all other beings that are not their own being, but have being by participation, must needs proceed."

[On the Power of God, *quæstiones disputatæ de potential dei*, Bk. I, Q. 3, art. 5, c, trans. English Dominican Fathers (Eugene: Wipf & Stock2004), 110.]

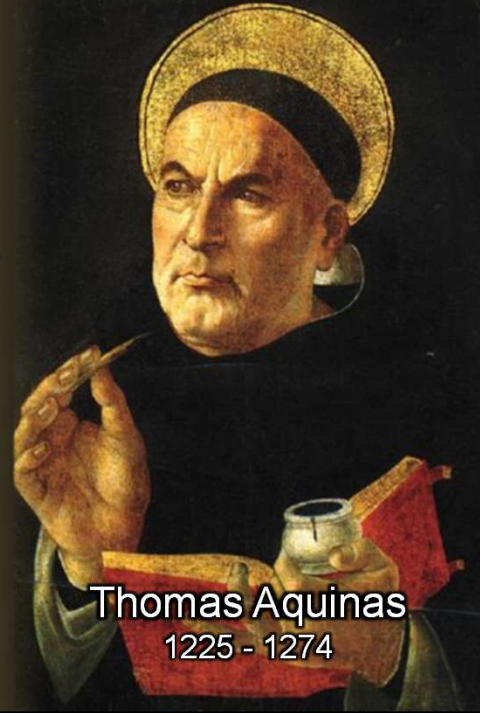


Thomas Aquinas
1225 - 1274



"... There must be a reality that is the cause of being for all other things, because it is pure being. If this were not so, we would go on to infinity in causes, for everything that is not pure being has a cause of its being, as has been said."

On Being and Essence, IV, §7, trans. Maurer, 56-57



Thomas Aquinas
1225 - 1274

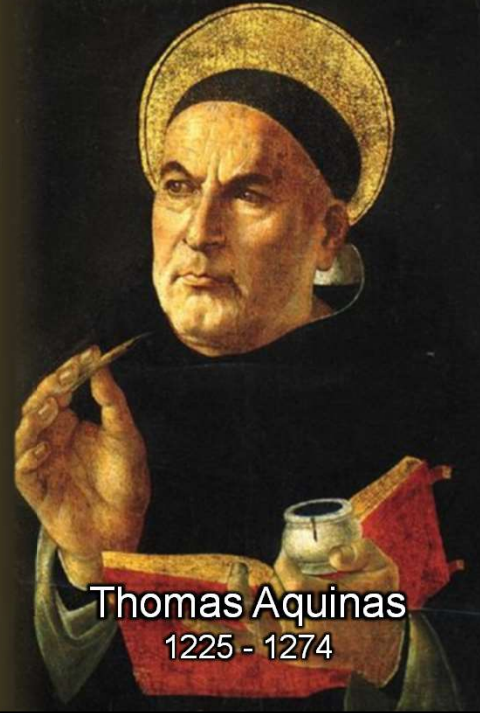
*Can this go on
to infinity?*



☞ First Way ☞

"If that by which it is put in motion be itself put in motion, then this also must needs be put in motion by another, and that by another again.

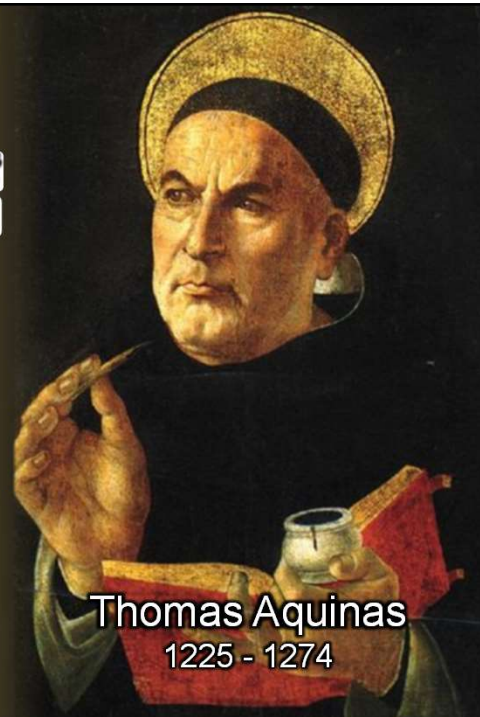
But this cannot go on to infinity, because then there would be no first mover ..."



Thomas Aquinas
1225 - 1274

☞ Second Way ☞

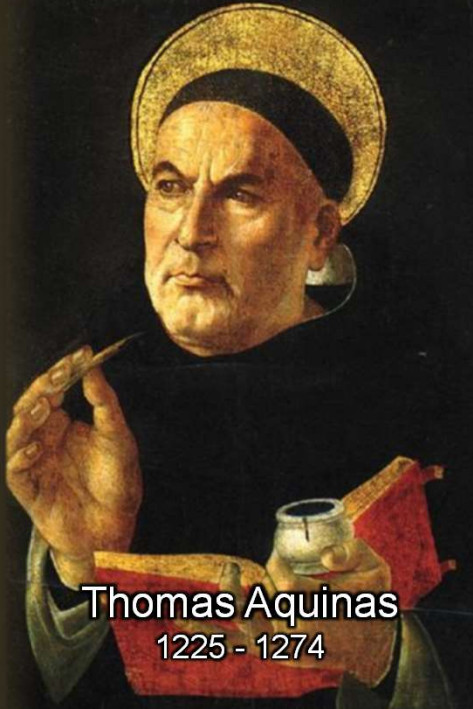
"Now in efficient causes, *it is not possible to go on to infinity*, because in all efficient causes following in order, the first is the cause of the intermediate cause."



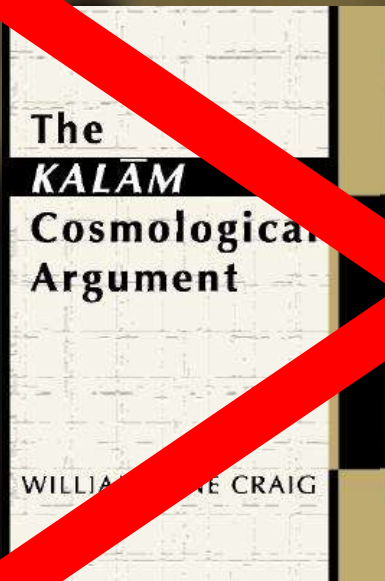
Thomas Aquinas
1225 - 1274

☞ Third Way ☞

"But every necessary thing either has its necessity caused by another, or not. **Now it is impossible to go on to infinity** in necessary things which have their necessity caused by another, as has been already proved in regard to efficient causes."



Thomas Aquinas
1225 - 1274



The Universe ~~has~~ to exist.
Whatever begins to exist has a cause of its existence.
Therefore, the universe has a cause of its existence.

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.

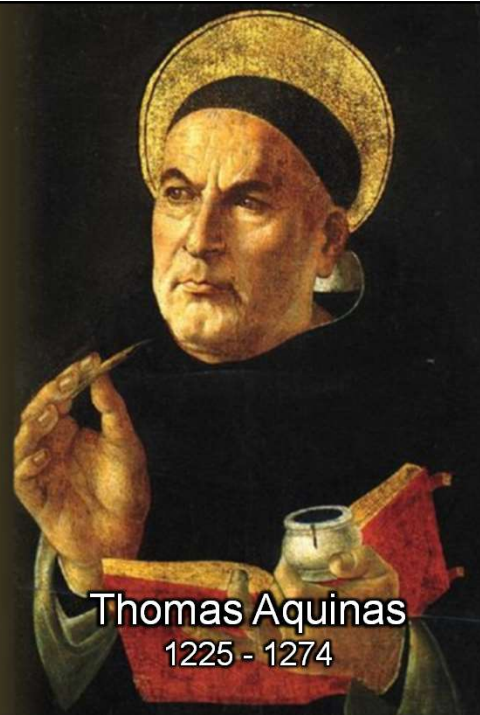
$$1. IR \supset \sim F$$

$$2. F / \therefore \sim IR$$



"In efficient causes it is impossible to proceed to infinity *per se*—thus, there cannot be an infinite number of causes that are *per se* required for a certain effect. ... But it is not impossible to proceed to infinity *accidentally* as regards efficient causes ..."

ST 1, Q, 46, ii, ad 7

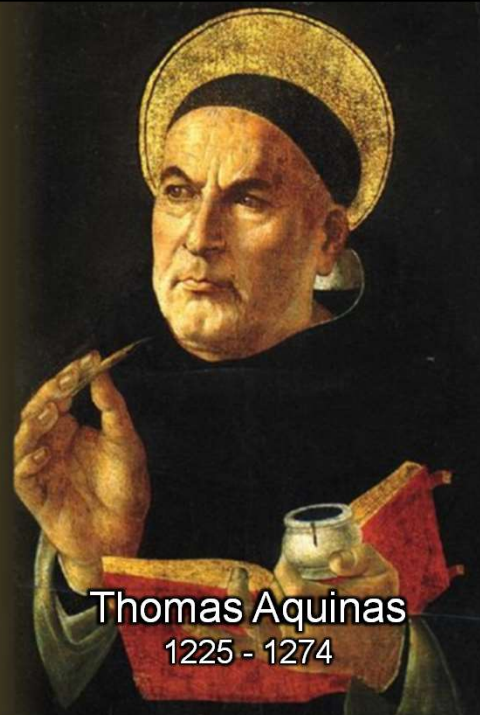


Thomas Aquinas
1225 - 1274



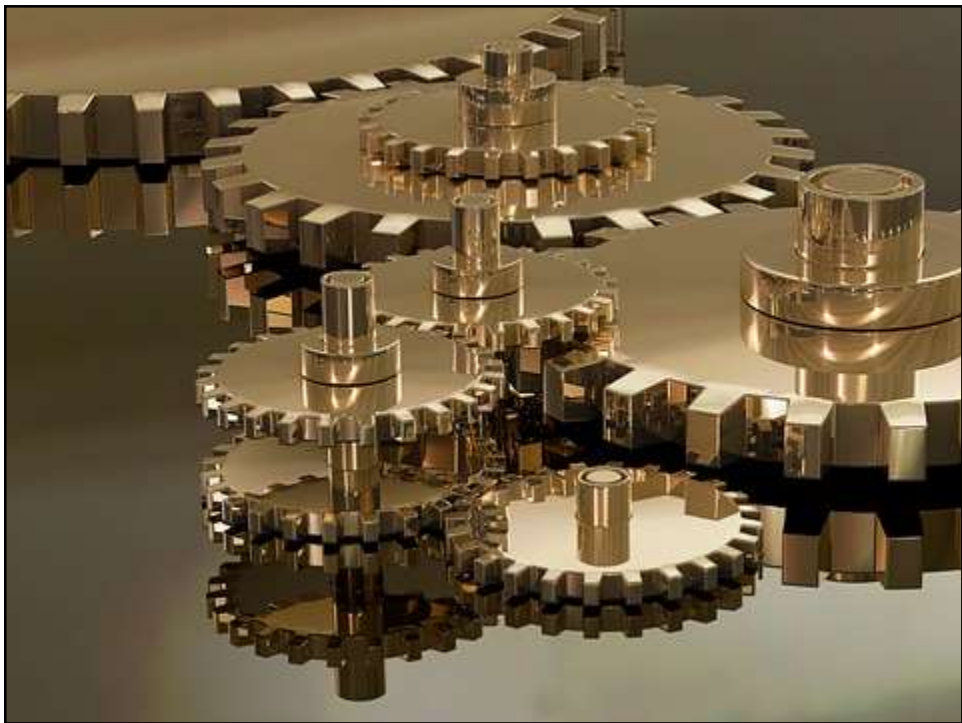
"It is accidental to this particular man as generator to be generated by another man; for he generates as a man, and not as the son of another man."

[*Summa Theologiae* 1, Q, 46, ii, ad 7]

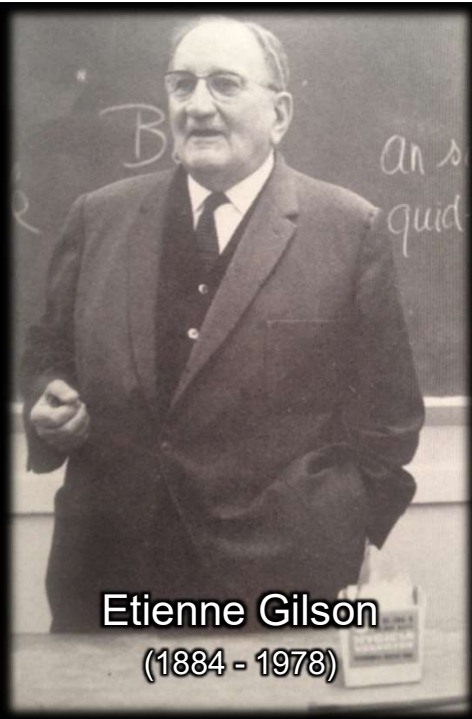


Thomas Aquinas
1225 - 1274

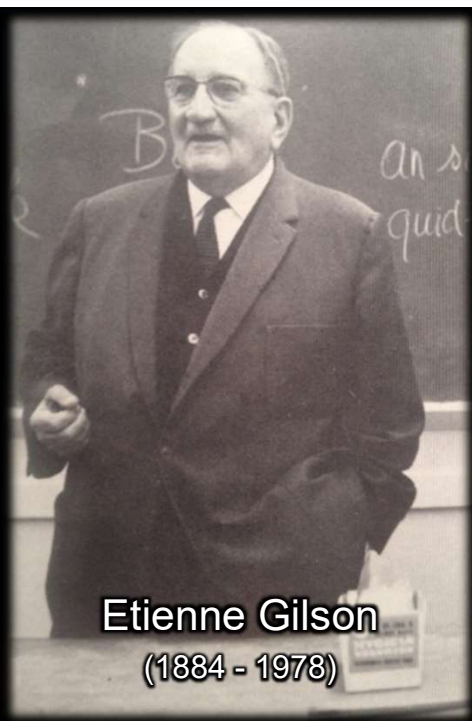




"The proof in no way considers movement as a present reality the existence of which requires an efficient cause in the past, which is God.

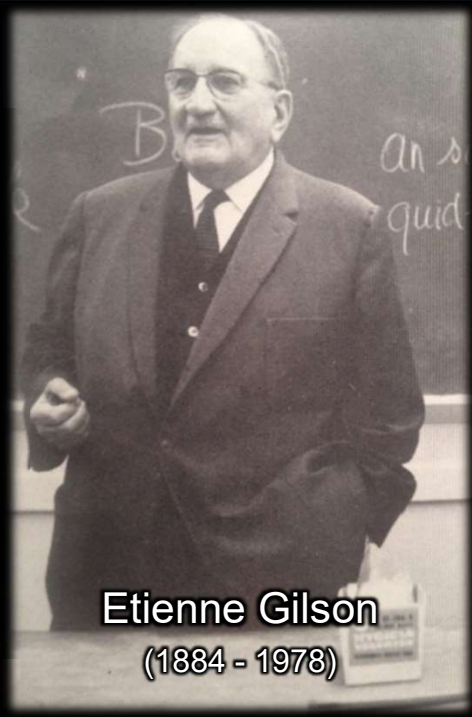


"It aims simply at establishing that in the universe as actually given, movement, as actually given, would be unintelligible without a first Mover communicating it to all things.



"In other words the impossibility of an infinite regress must not be taken as an infinite regress in time, but as applying to the present consideration of the universe."

The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, trans. Edward Bullough (New York: Dorset Press, n.d.), p. 76.

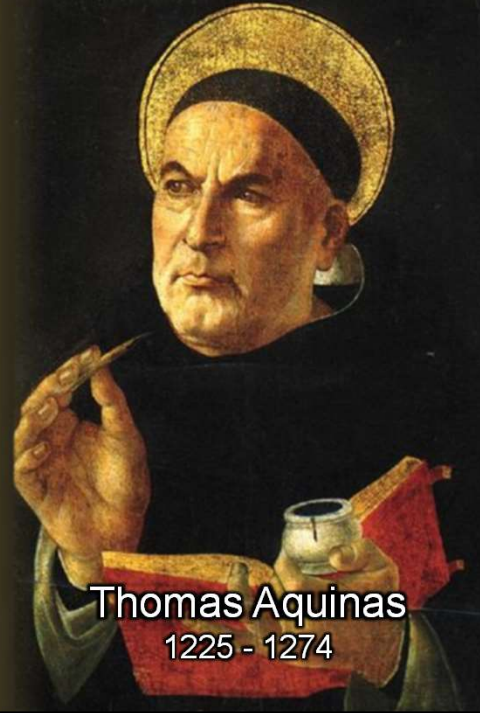


Etienne Gilson
(1884 - 1978)

Anything that exists that does not exist by virtue of its essence must be continuously caused to exist by something whose essence IS existence itself.

"Now since God is very being by His own essence, created being must be His proper effect ... Now God causes this effect in things not only when they first begin to be, but as long as they are preserved in being..."

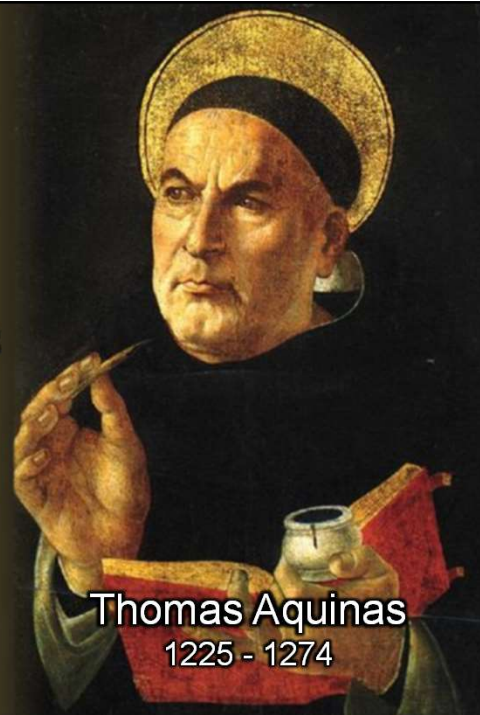
ST 1, Q, 46, ii, ad 7



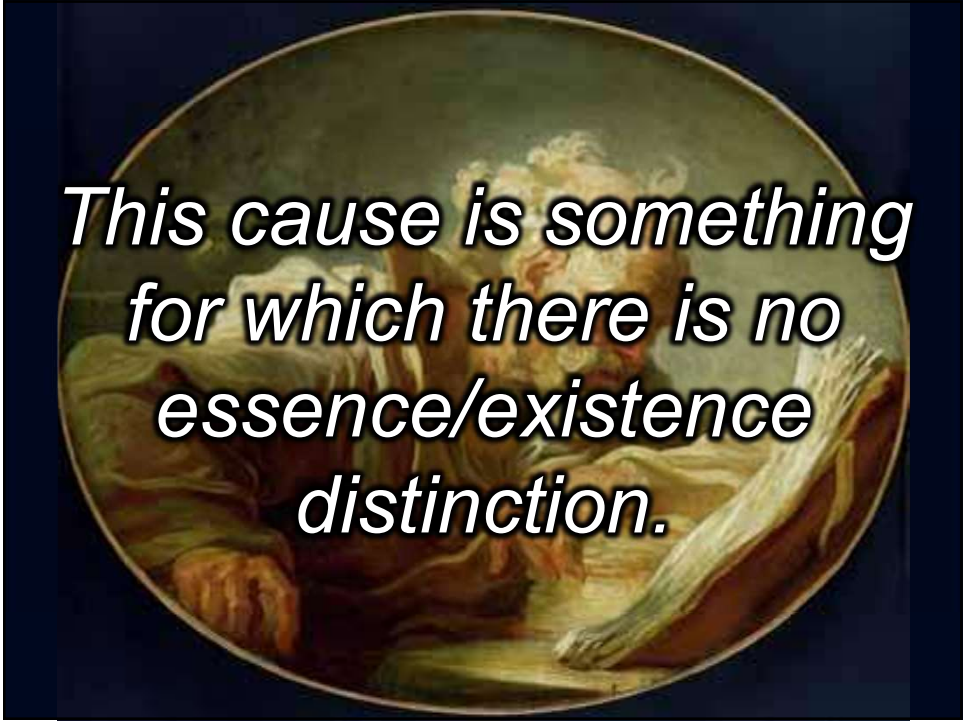
Thomas Aquinas
1225 - 1274

"As the production of a thing into existence depends on the will of God, so likewise it depends on His will that things should be preserved; for He does not preserve them otherwise than by ever giving them existence; hence if He took away His action from them, all things would be reduced to nothing."

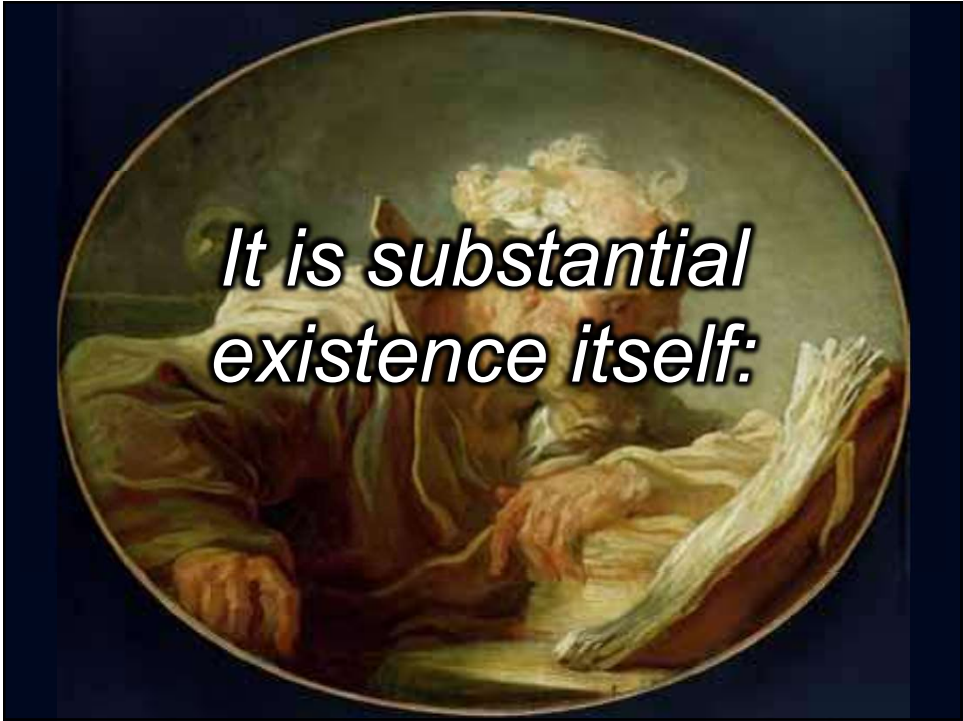
ST 1, Q, 9, ii



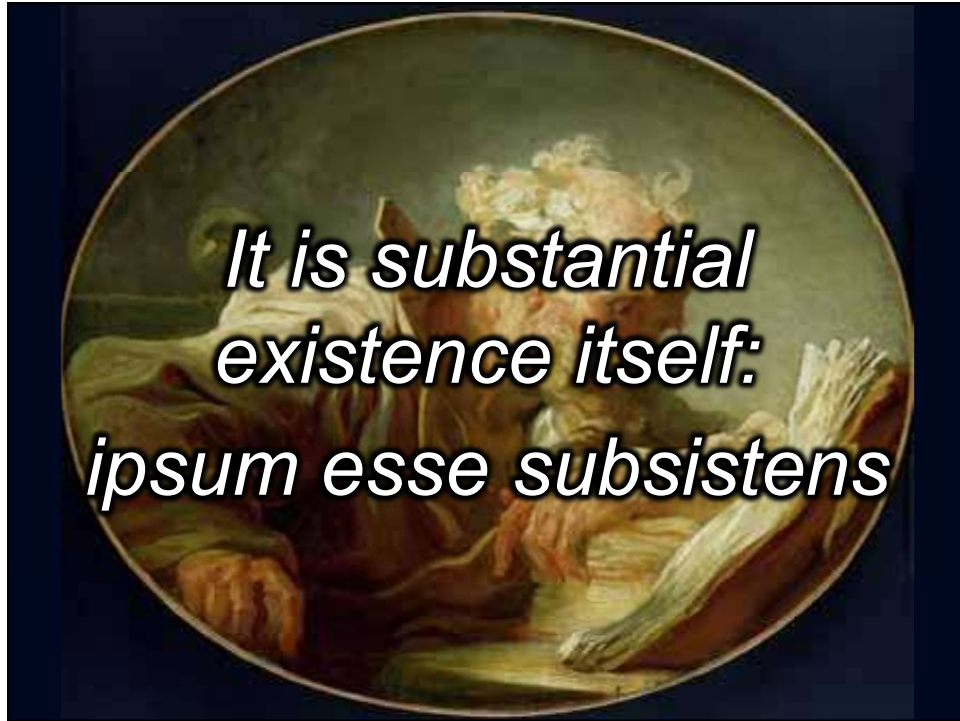
Thomas Aquinas
1225 - 1274



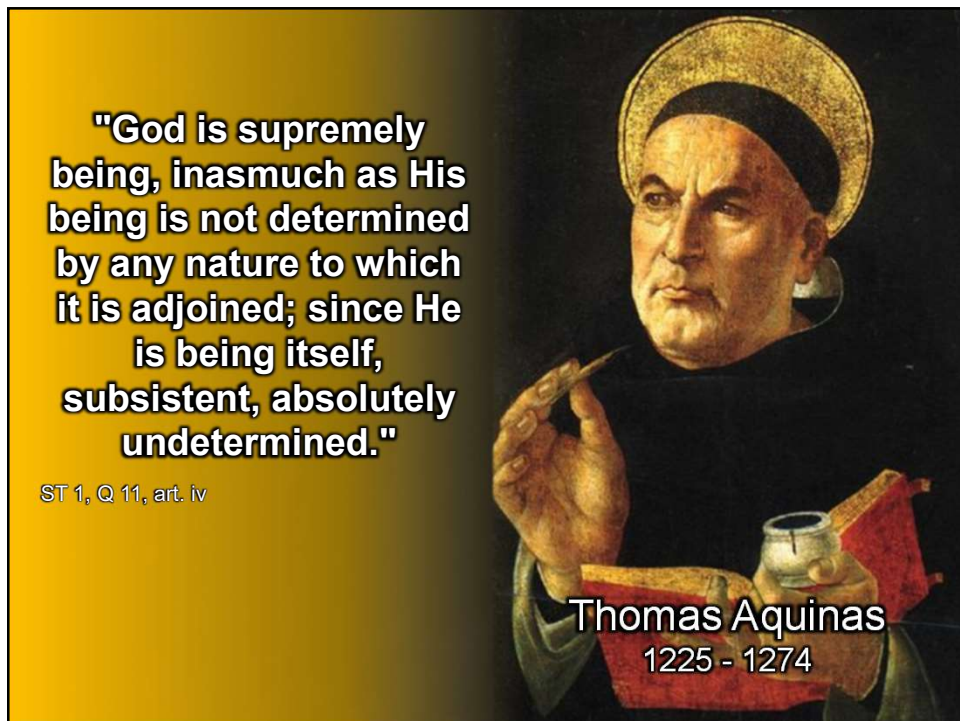
*This cause is something
for which there is no
essence/existence
distinction.*



*It is substantial
existence itself:*



*It is substantial
existence itself:
ipsum esse subsistens*



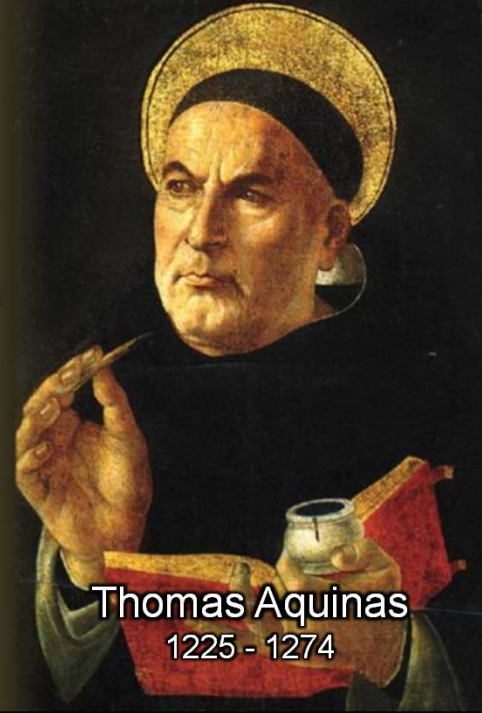
**"God is supremely
being, inasmuch as His
being is not determined
by any nature to which
it is adjoined; since He
is being itself,
subsistent, absolutely
undetermined."**

ST 1, Q 11, art. iv

Thomas Aquinas
1225 - 1274

"To God alone does it belong to be His own subsistent being. ... for no creature is its own existence, forasmuch as its existence is participated."

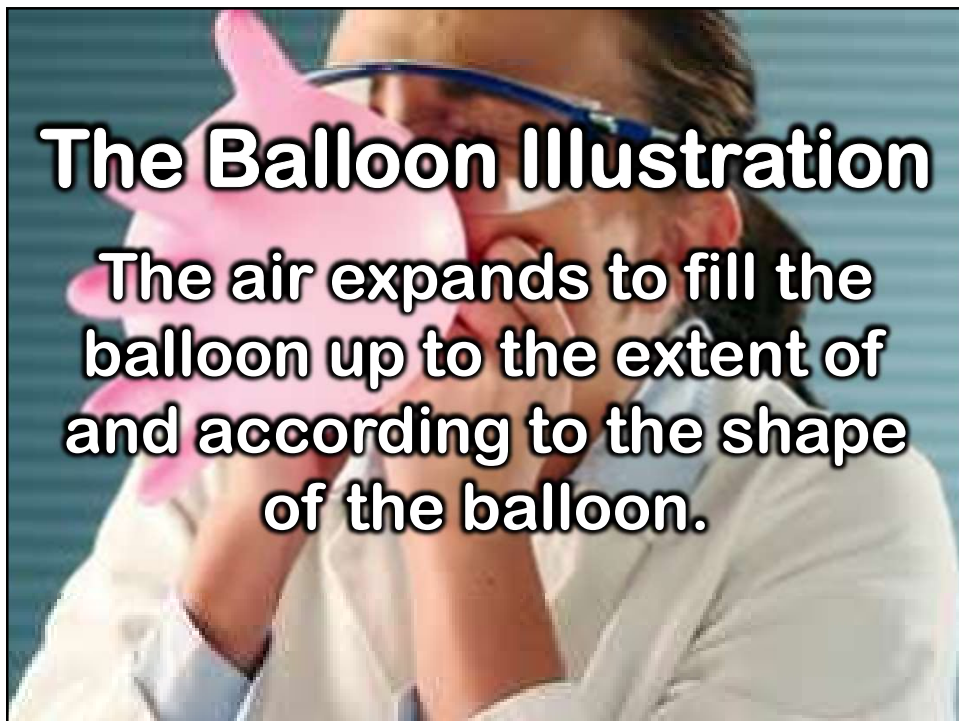
ST 1, Q 12, art. iv



Thomas Aquinas
1225 - 1274

Existence as such is unlimited and contains all perfections.

Existence is limited, if you will, only when conjoined with form or with form and matter.



A close-up photograph of a person with long hair, wearing a white shirt and blue safety glasses, blowing into a large, pink, star-shaped balloon. The background is a blurred blue sky.

The Balloon Illustration

By parallel, the act of existing of a creature "fills up" to the extent of and according to the "shape" of the essence of that creature.

A horse contains all the perfections of existence up to the extent of and according to the limitations of the essence of horse.



A human contains all the perfections of existence up to the extent of and according to the limitations of the essence of human.

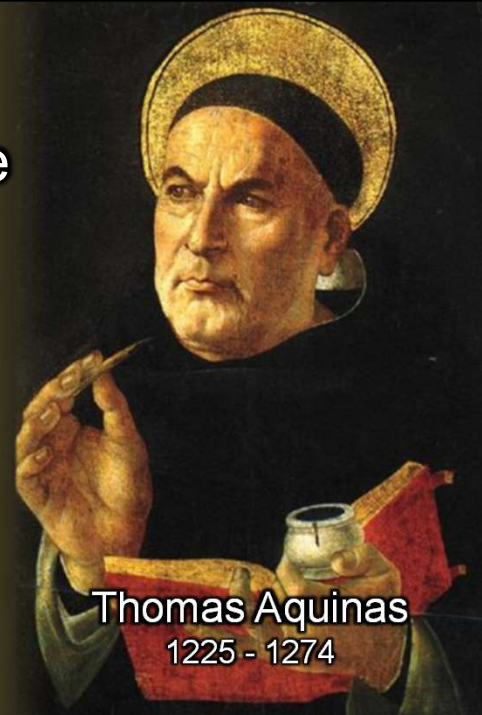


A being whose essence is its existence will be all the perfections of existence without limit.

***Since in God there is no
essence/existence
distinction, then all the
perfections of being exist in
God because God's being is
not conjoined with (and, thus,
limited by) form.***

**"God is absolute
form, or rather
absolute being"**

(Deus sit ipsa forma, vel potius ipsum esse).
Summa Theologiae, I, 3, 2 and I, 3, 7.

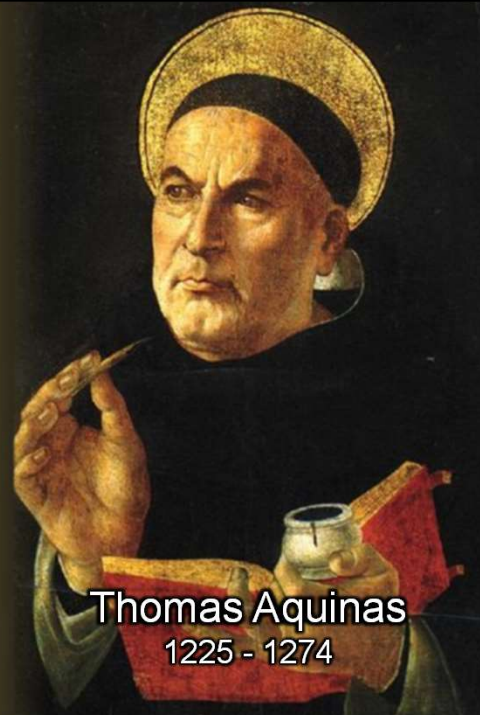


Thomas Aquinas
1225 - 1274

An infinite being (i.e., a being whose essence is esse) possesses all perfections in superabundance.

"... the perfections following from God to creatures ... pre-exist in God unitedly and simply, whereas in creatures they are received, divided and multiplied."

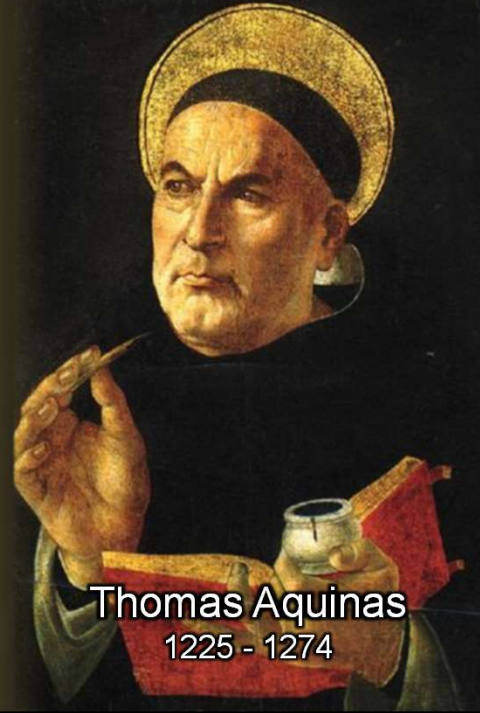
[Summa Theologiae, I, 13, 4]



Thomas Aquinas
1225 - 1274

"Wherefore it is clear that being as we understand it here is the actuality of all acts, and therefore the perfection of all perfections."

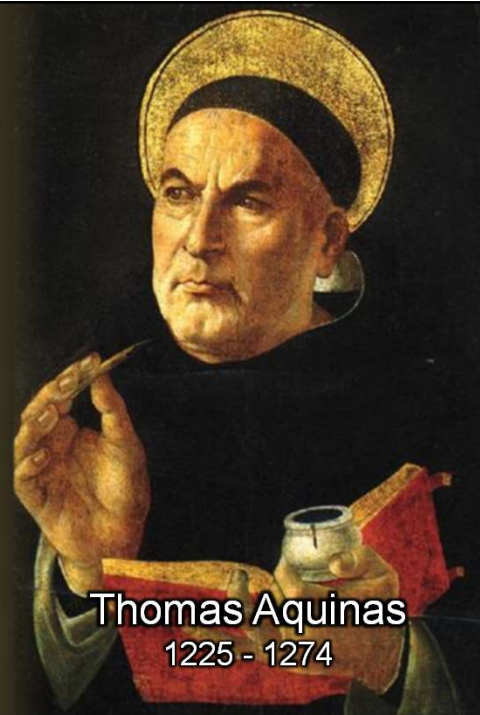
[On the Power of God, VII, 2, ad. 9, trans. English Dominican Fathers (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2004), v. III, p. 12]



Thomas Aquinas
1225 - 1274

"All perfections existing in creatures divided and multiplied, pre-exist in God unitedly."

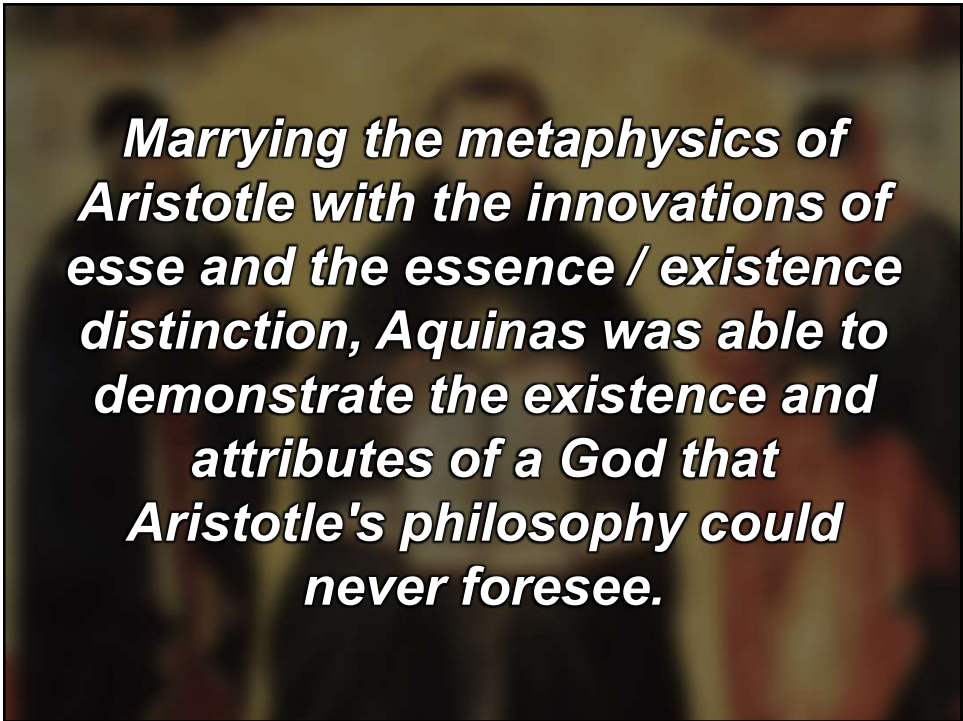
[Summa Theologia, I, 13, 5]



Thomas Aquinas
1225 - 1274

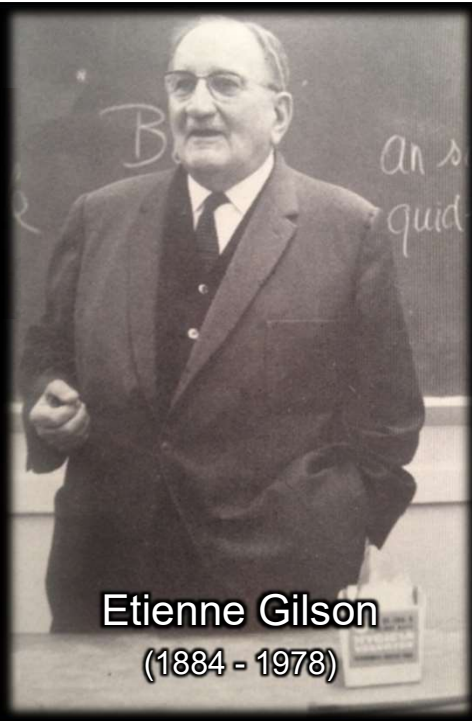


***This is the philosophical
grounding for all the
classical attributes of God.***

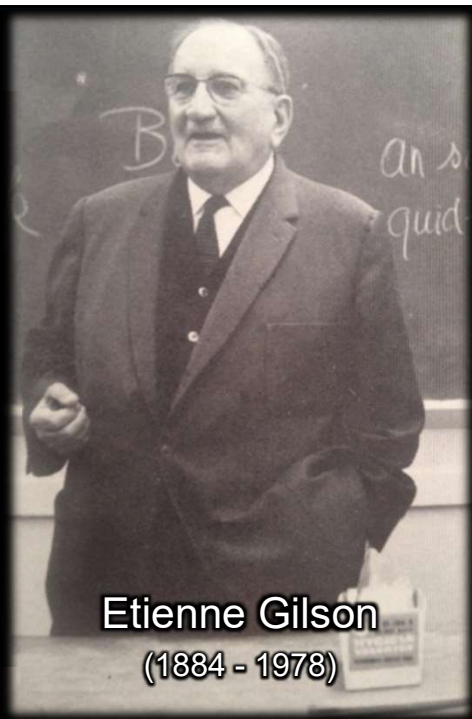


***Marrying the metaphysics of
Aristotle with the innovations of
esse and the essence / existence
distinction, Aquinas was able to
demonstrate the existence and
attributes of a God that
Aristotle's philosophy could
never foresee.***

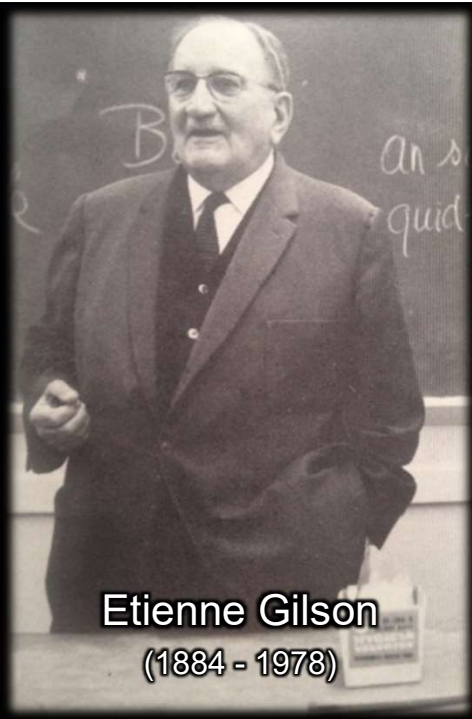
"Thomism was not the upshot of a better understanding of Aristotle. It did not come out of Aristotelianism by way of evolution, but of revolution.



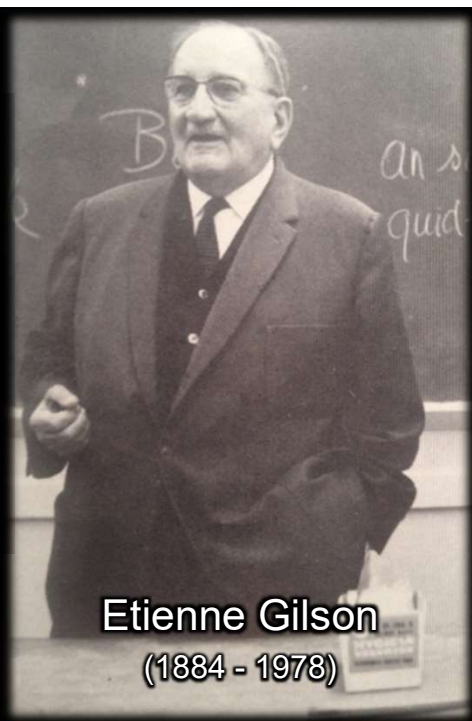
"Thomas uses the language of Aristotle everywhere to make the Philosopher say that there is only one God, the pure Act of Being, Creator of the world, infinite and omnipotent, a providence for all that which is, intimately present to every one of his creatures, especially to men, every one of whom is endowed with a personally immortal soul naturally able to survive the death of its body.



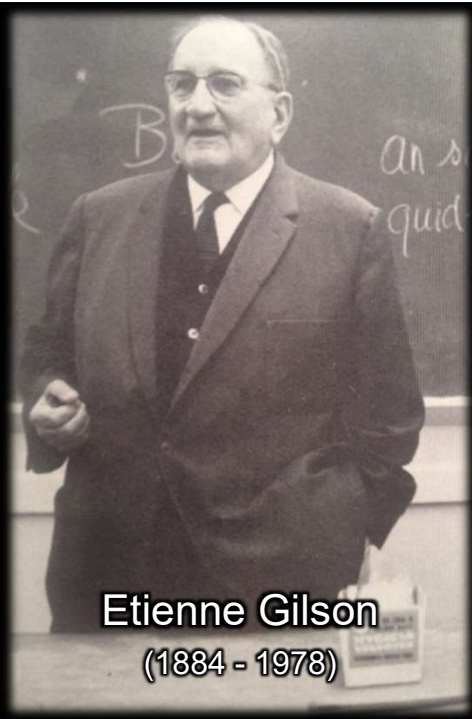
"The best way to make Aristotle say so many things he never said was not to show that, had he understood himself better than he did, he would have said them. For indeed Aristotle seems to have understood himself pretty well.



"He has said what he had to say, given the meaning which he himself attributed to the principles of his own philosophy. Even the dialectical acumen of Saint Thomas Aquinas could not have extracted from the principles of Aristotle more than what they could possibly yield.

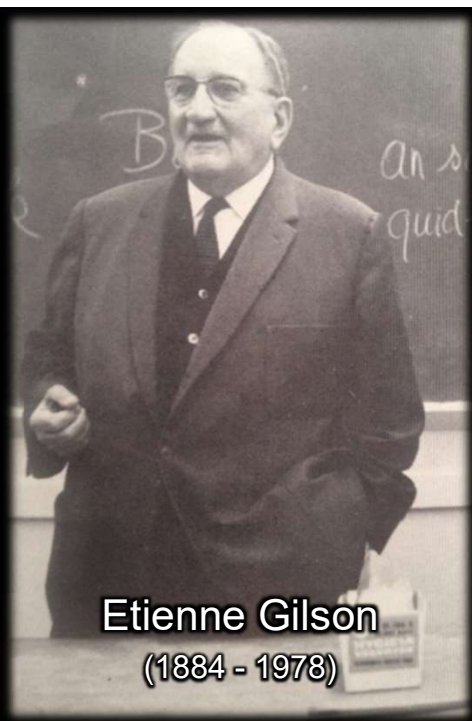


"The true reason why his conclusions were different from those of Aristotle was that his own principles themselves were different. ...



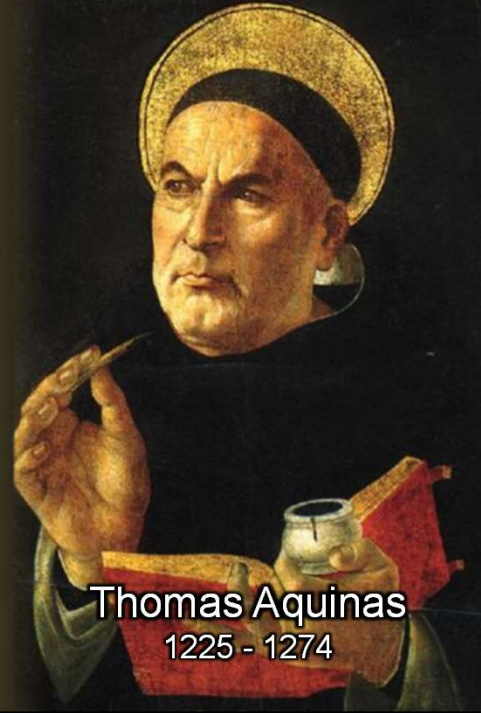
"In order to metamorphose the doctrine of Aristotle, Thomas has ascribed a new meaning to the principles of Aristotle. As a philosophy, Thomism is essentially a metaphysics. It is a revolution in the history of the metaphysical interpretation of the first principle, which is "being."

Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy*, 365.



**"It is evident, then,
... that it holds its
being from the first
being, which is
being in all its
purity; and this is
the first cause,
God.**

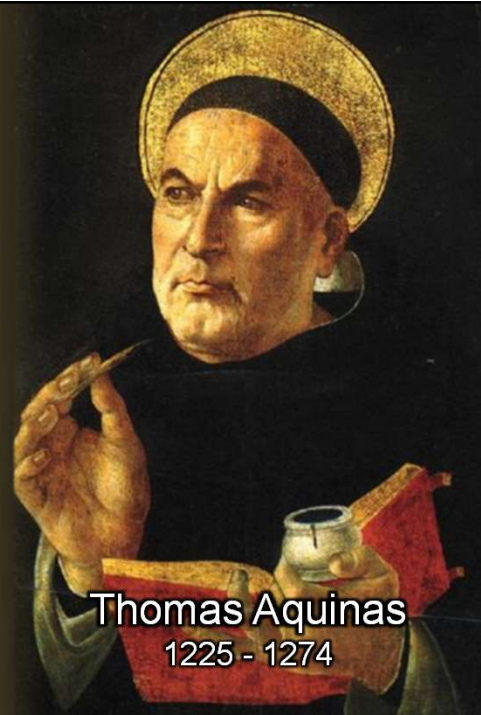
*On Being and Essence, IV, §7, trans. Maurer,
56-57.*



Thomas Aquinas
1225 - 1274

***"All men know
this to be God."***

Summa Theologia I, 2, 3



Thomas Aquinas
1225 - 1274



***And God said to Moses,
"I AM WHO I AM." And He
said, "Thus you shall say
to the children of Israel, 'I
AM has sent me to you.'"***

Exodus 3:13 - 14

