



Is There a God Who Speaks?

A Debate on the Existence of God



Dan Barker
and
Richard G. Howe

The image features a background of Michelangelo's 'The Creation of Adam' with the text overlaid. Two portraits of the debaters are shown at the bottom.

Forty Cents APRIL 8, 1966

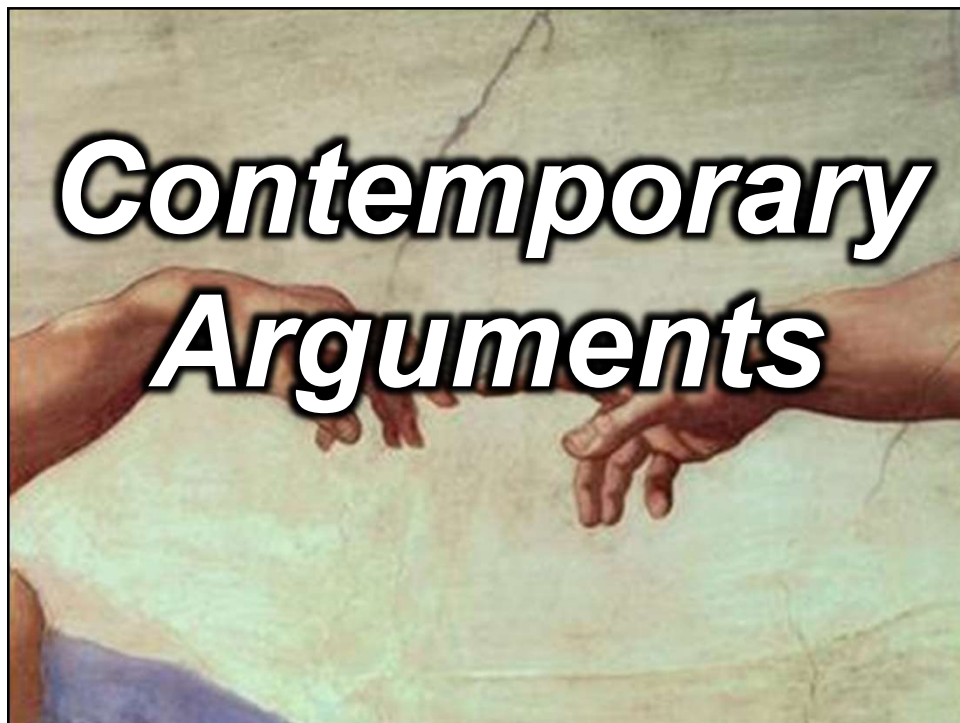
TIME

THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE

Is God Dead?

VOL. 87 NO. 14

The image shows the cover of TIME magazine from April 8, 1966, with the headline 'Is God Dead?' in large red letters.





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.***



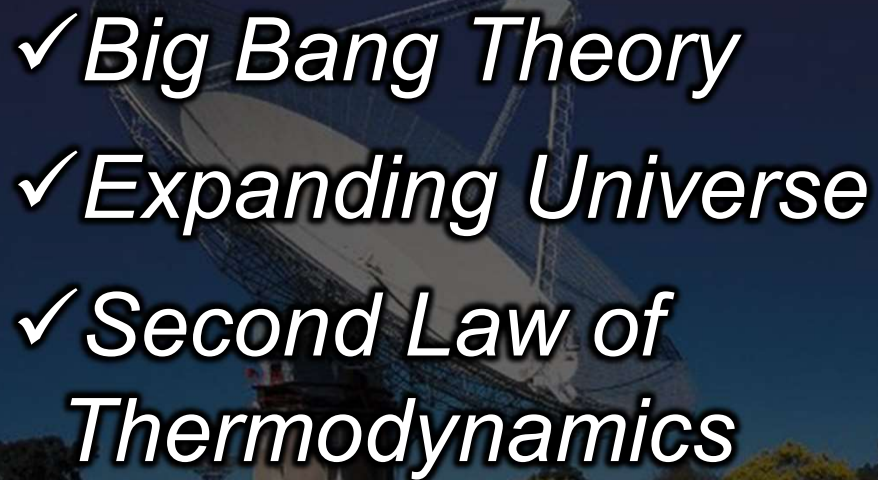
1. *The Universe began to exist.*

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 ∞

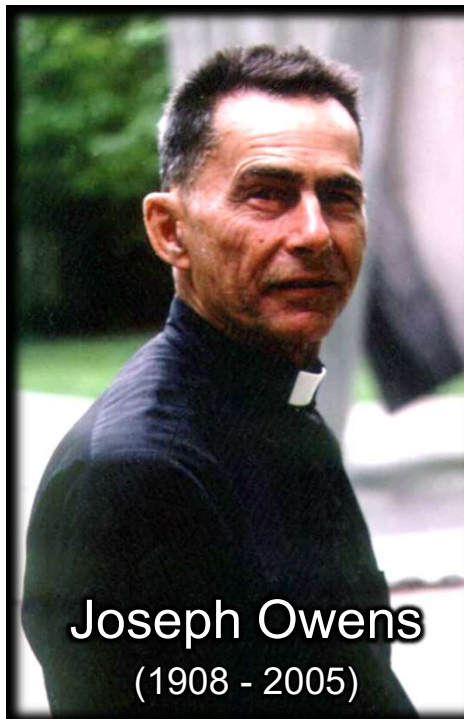
- *These arguments do not demonstrate that the cause of the universe still exists.*
- *These arguments do not demonstrate that the cause of the universe is God (i.e., that the cause has the attributes of classical theism).*

∞ 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.*

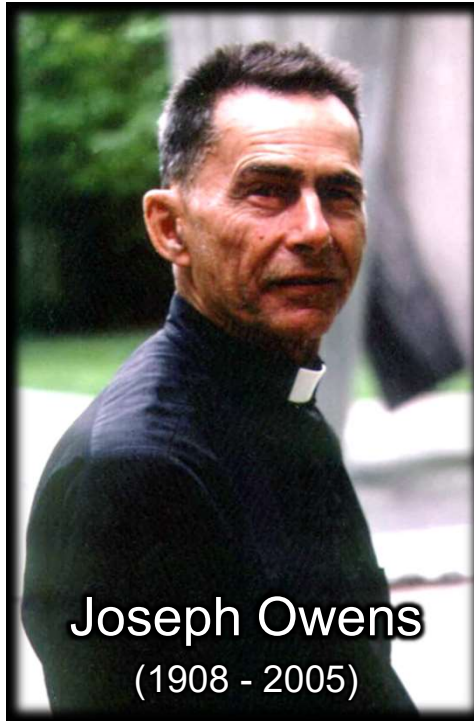
∞ *My Weaknesses* ∞

- *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)

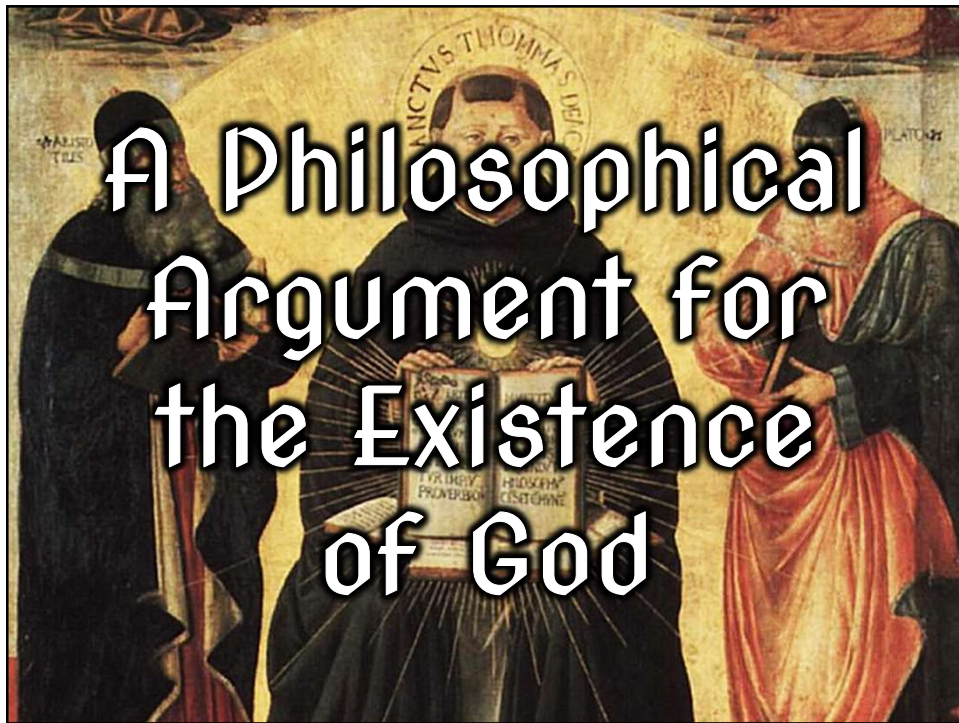
"Other arguments may vividly suggest the existence of God, press it home eloquently to human consideration, and for most people provide much greater spiritual and religious aid than difficult metaphysical demonstrations.



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

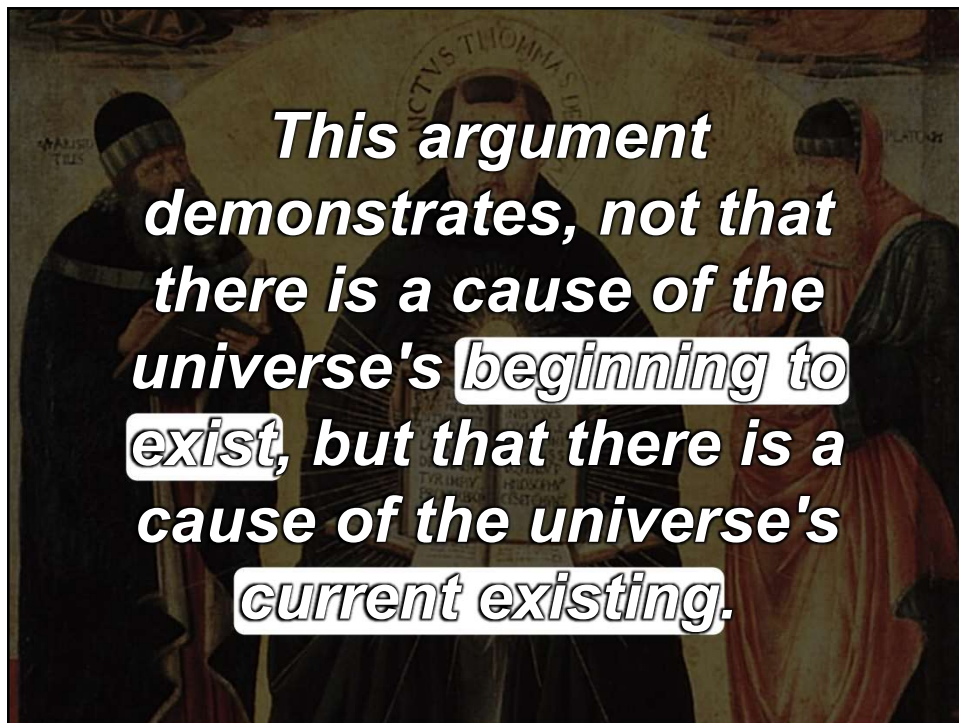
[Joseph Owens, "Aquinas and the Five Ways," *Monist* 58 (Jan. 1974): 16-35. [p. 33]]

Joseph Owens
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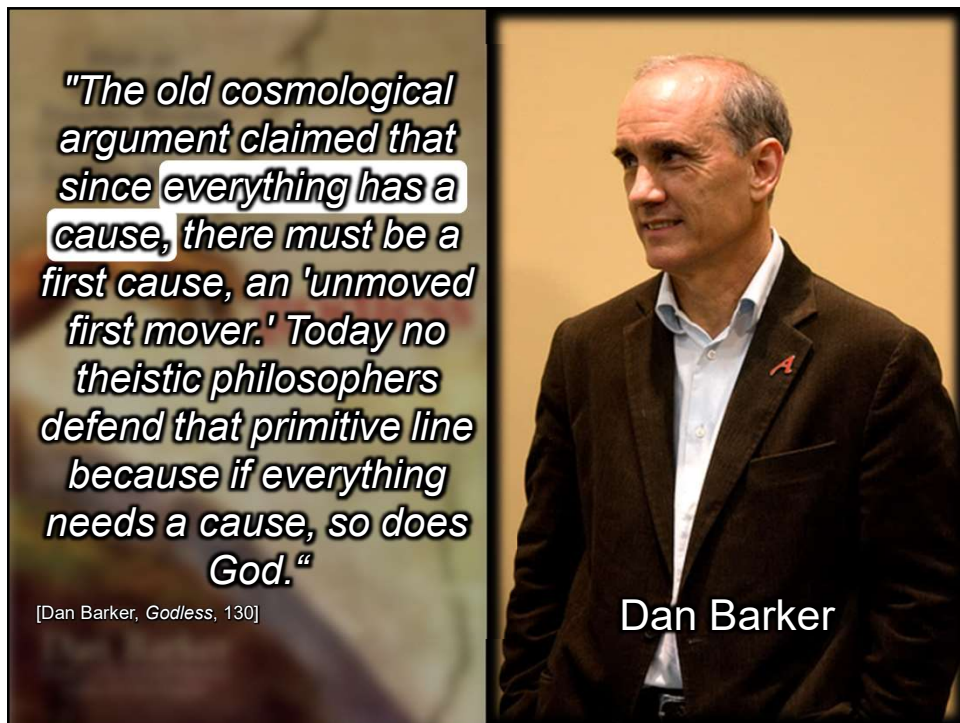
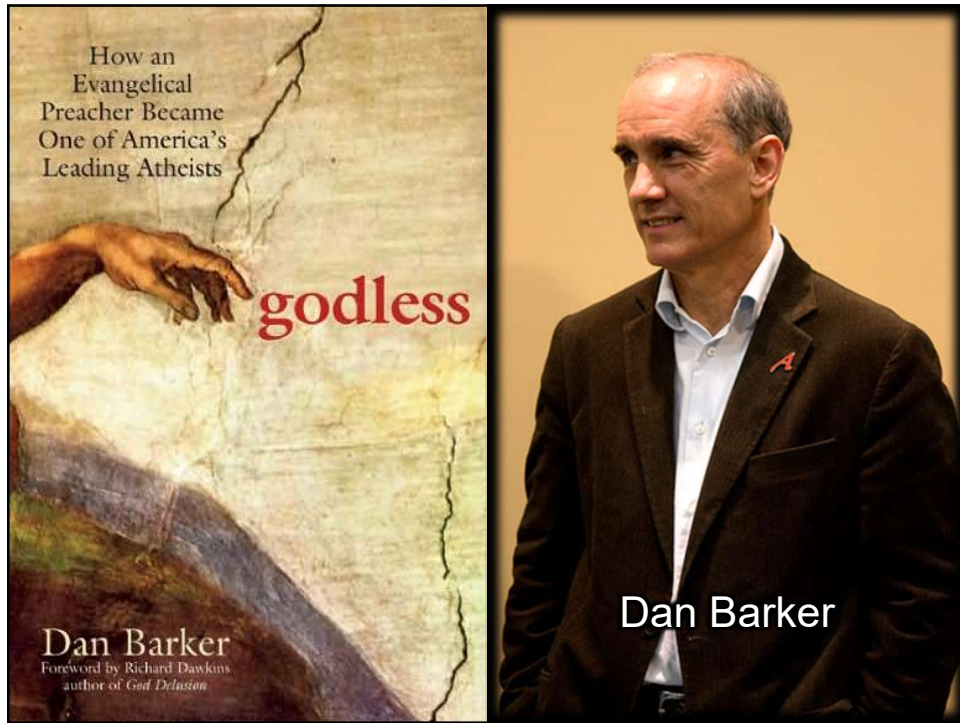


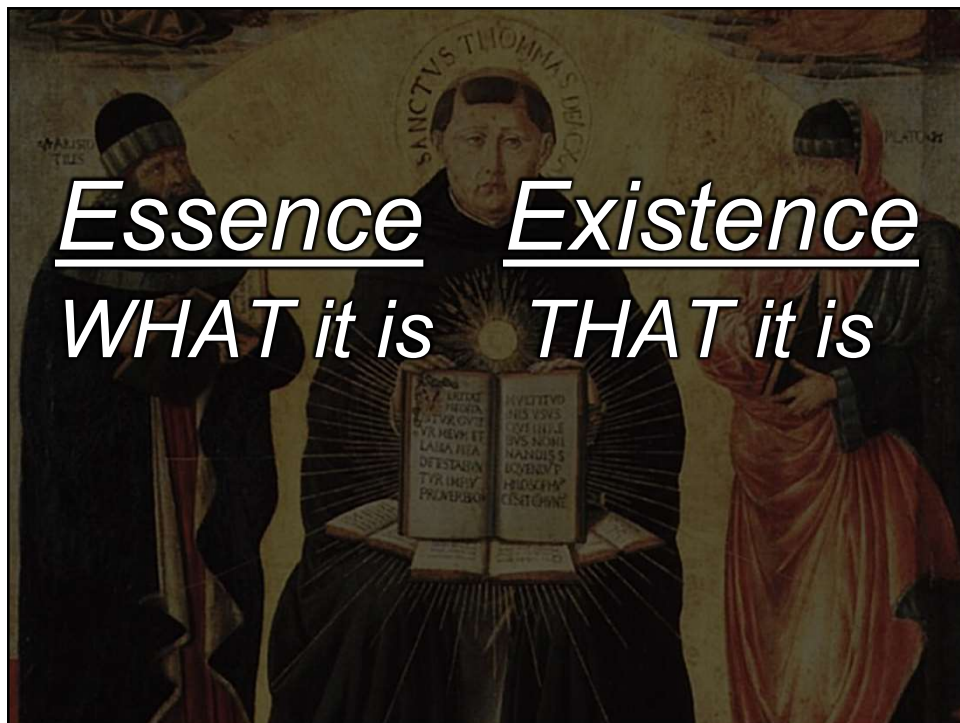
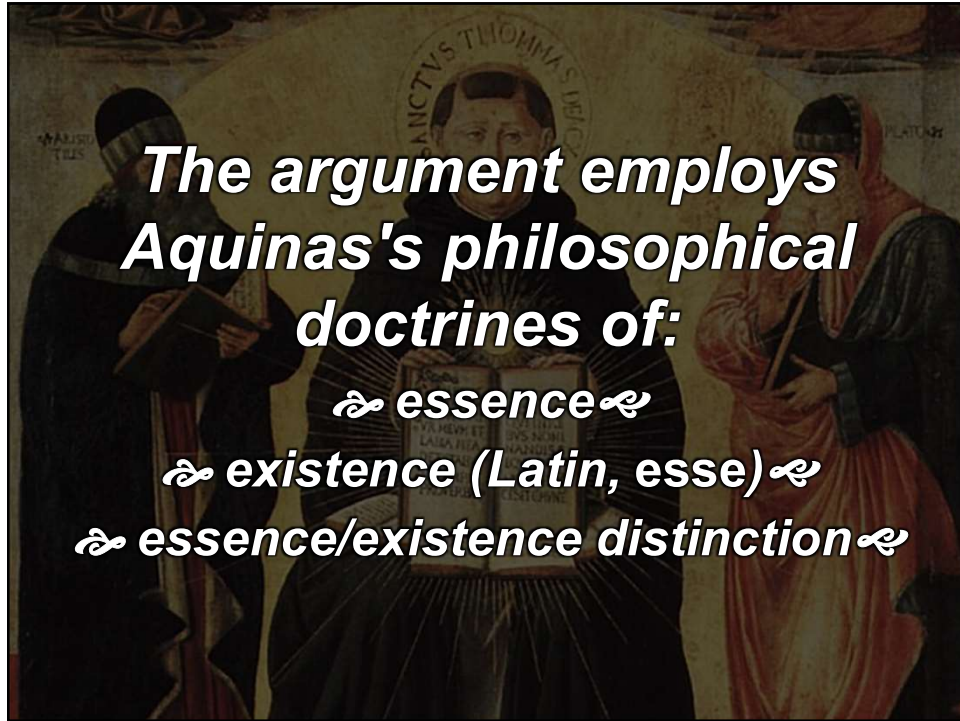


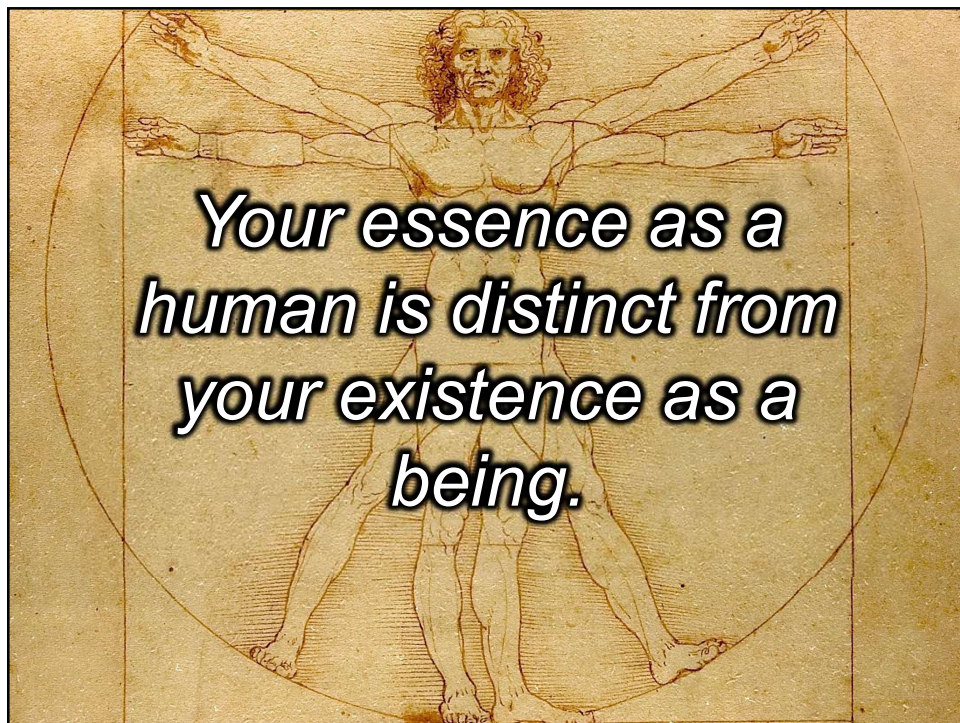
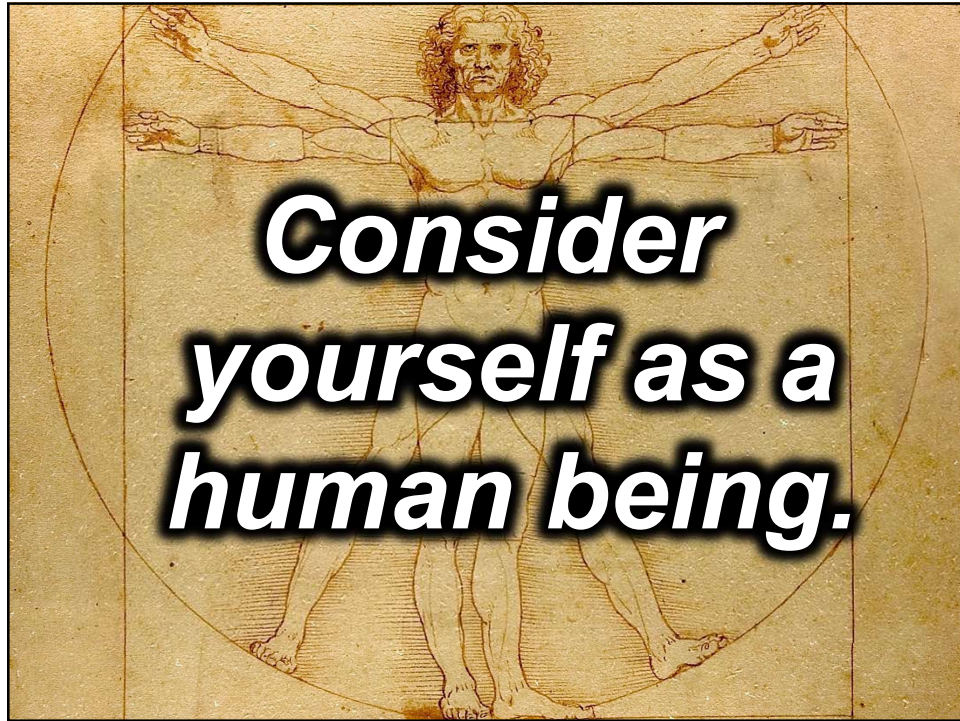
A part of the historical force

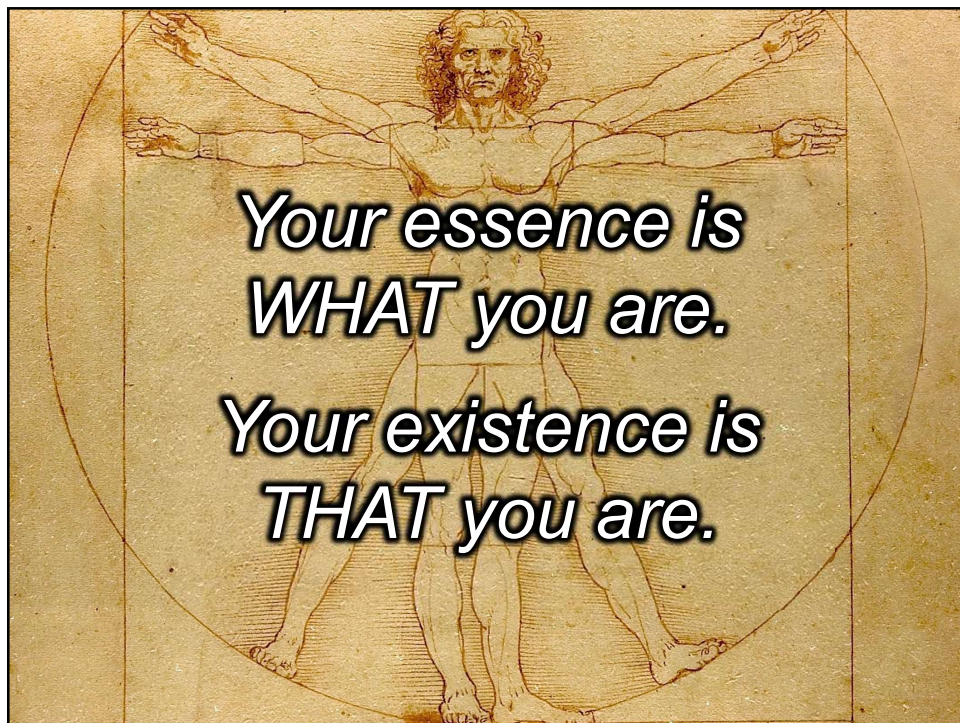
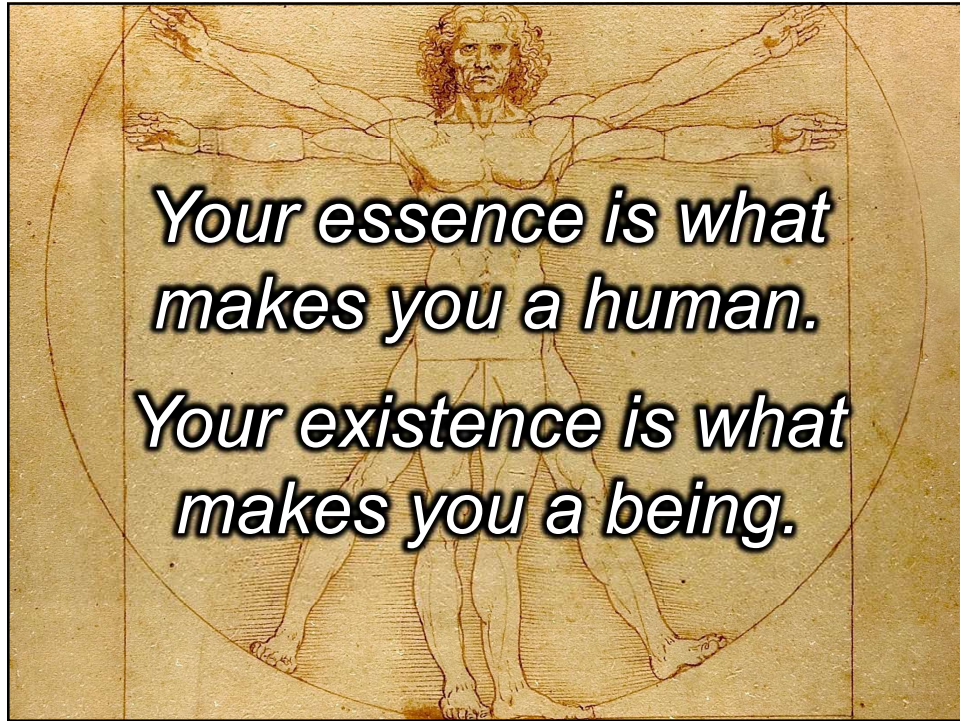


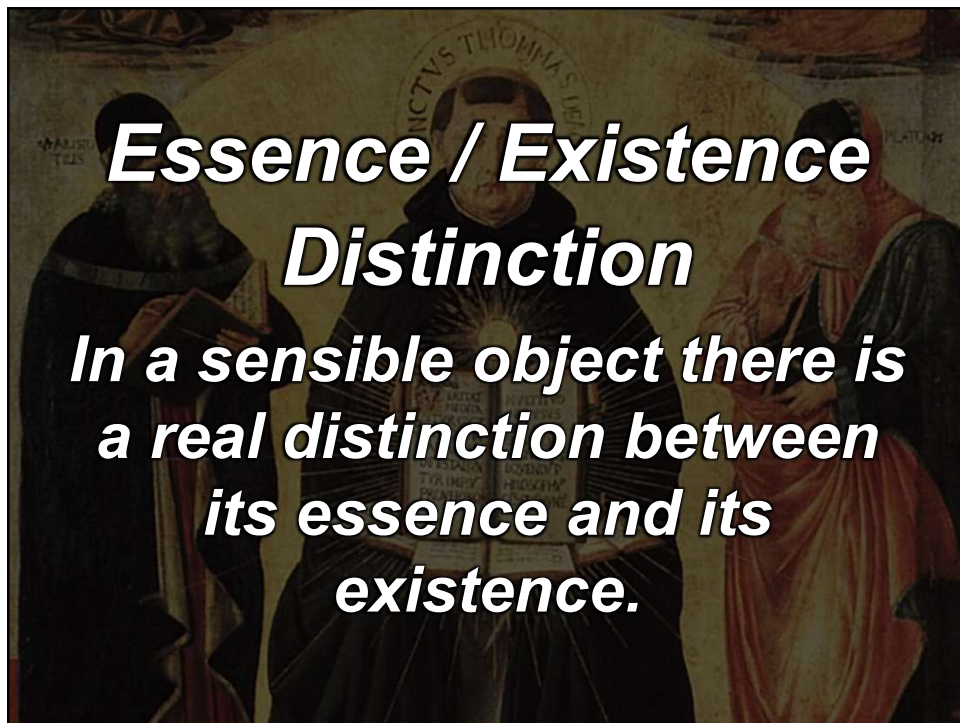
This argument demonstrates, not that there is a cause of the universe's beginning to exist, but that there is a cause of the universe's current existing.

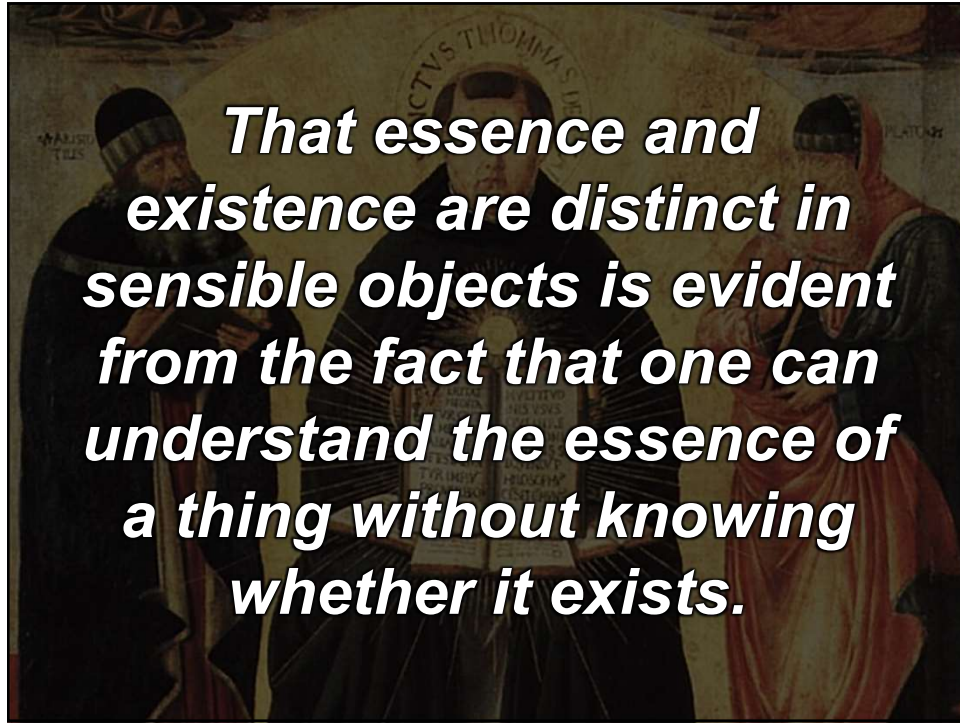


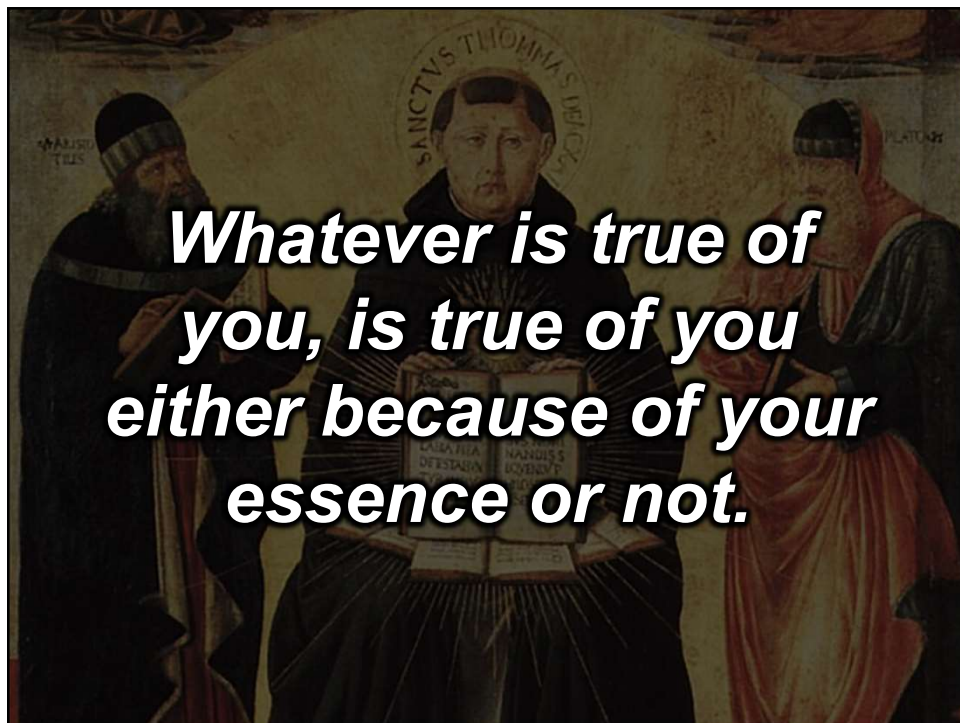
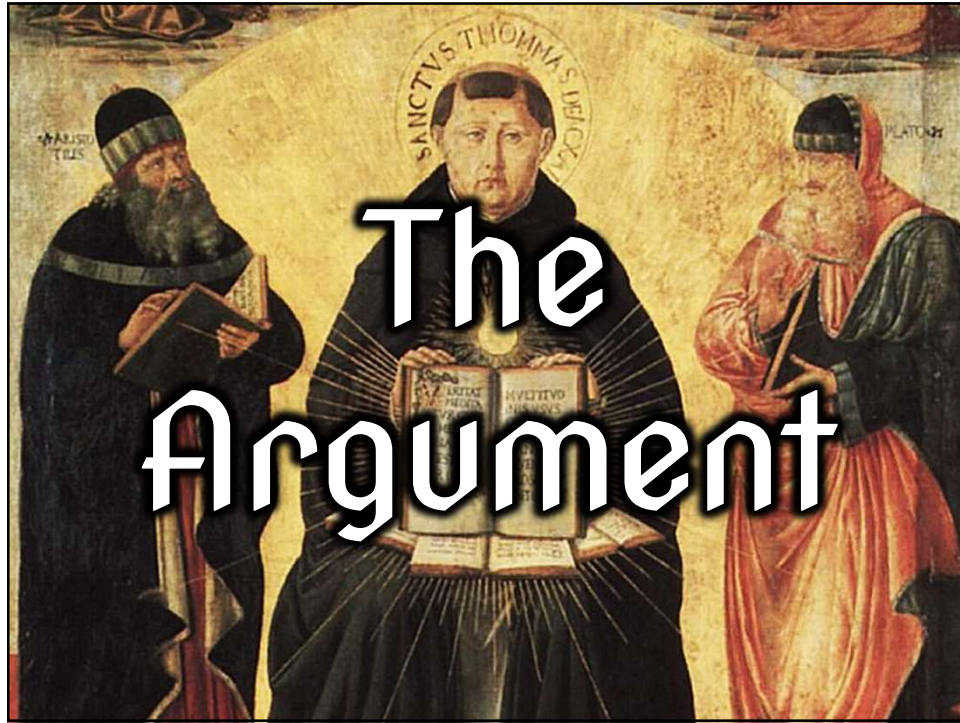


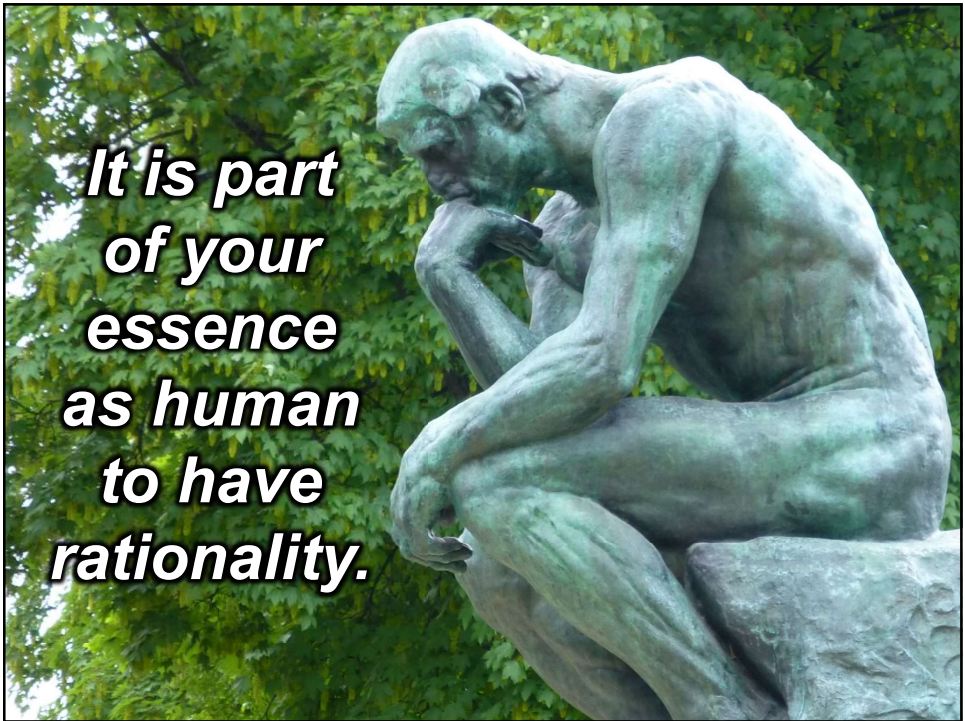
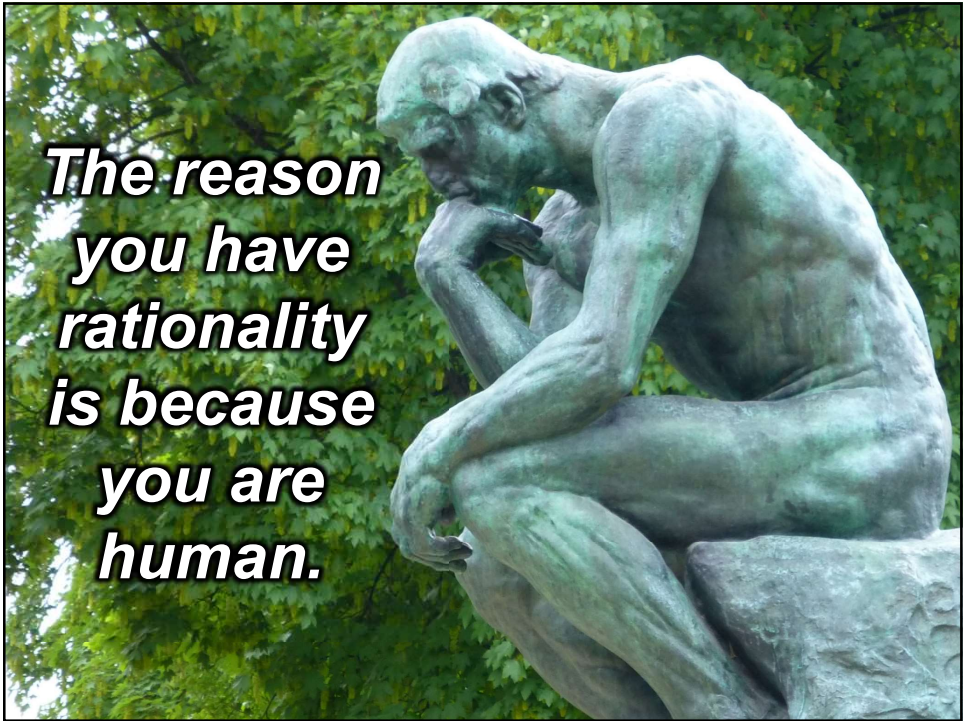


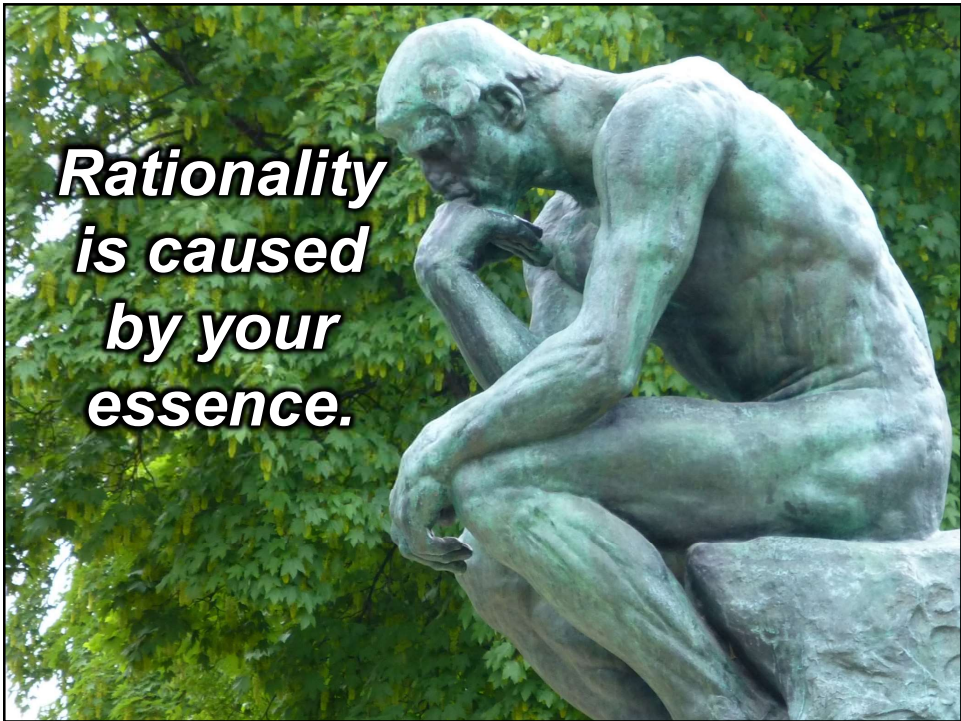
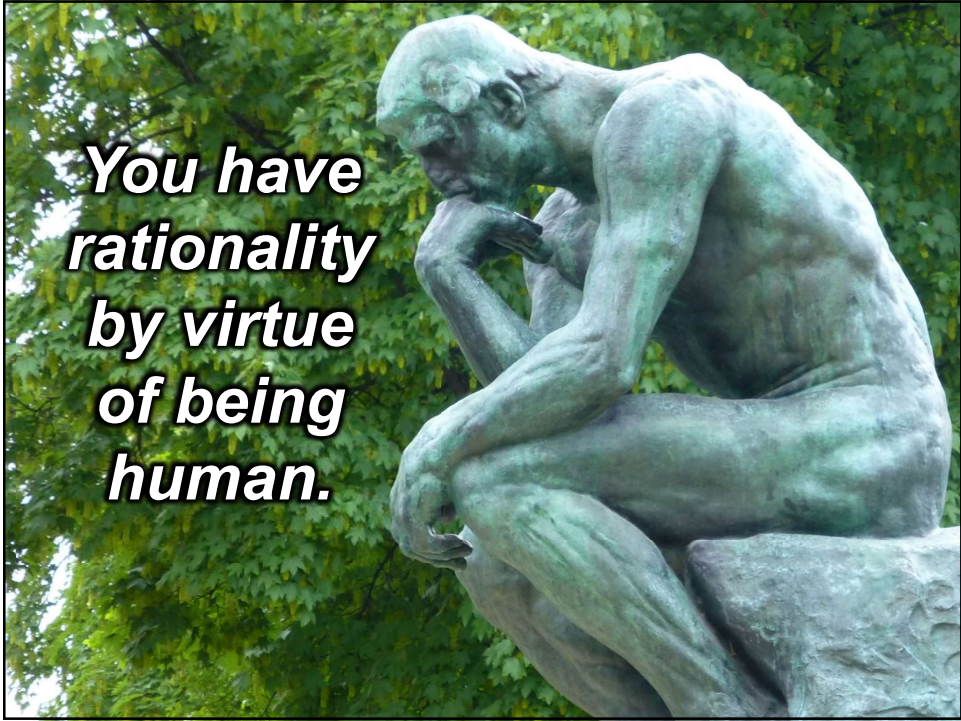


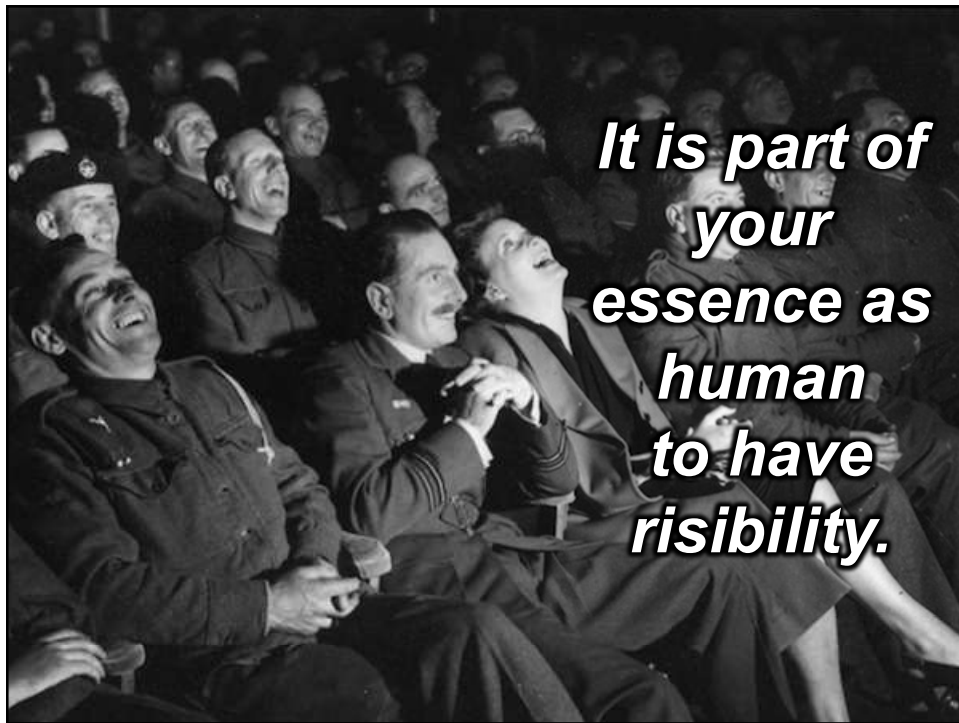
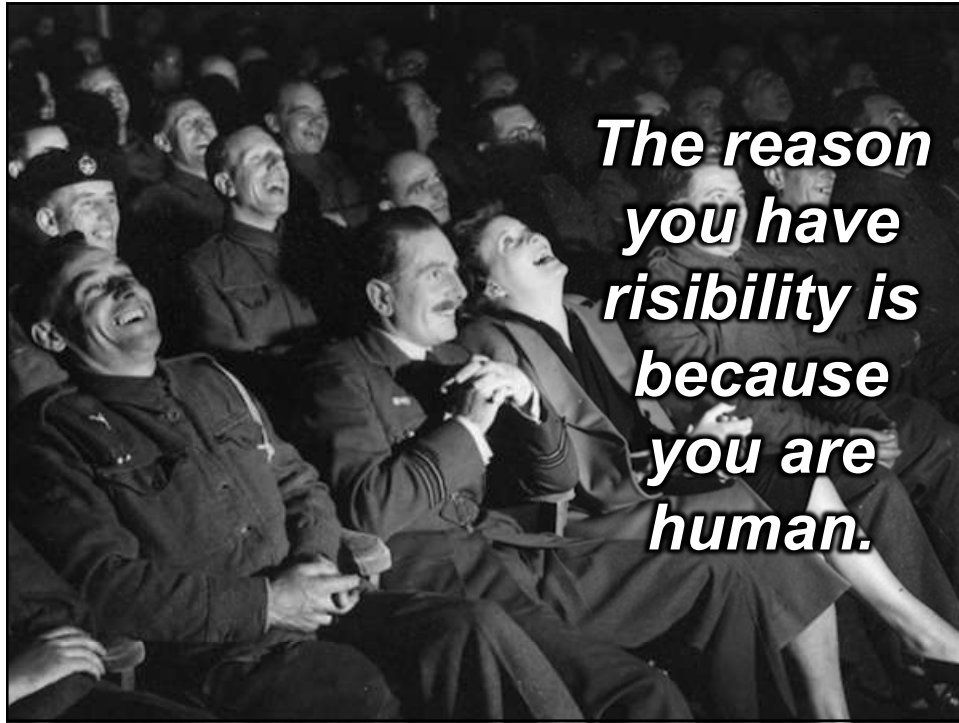


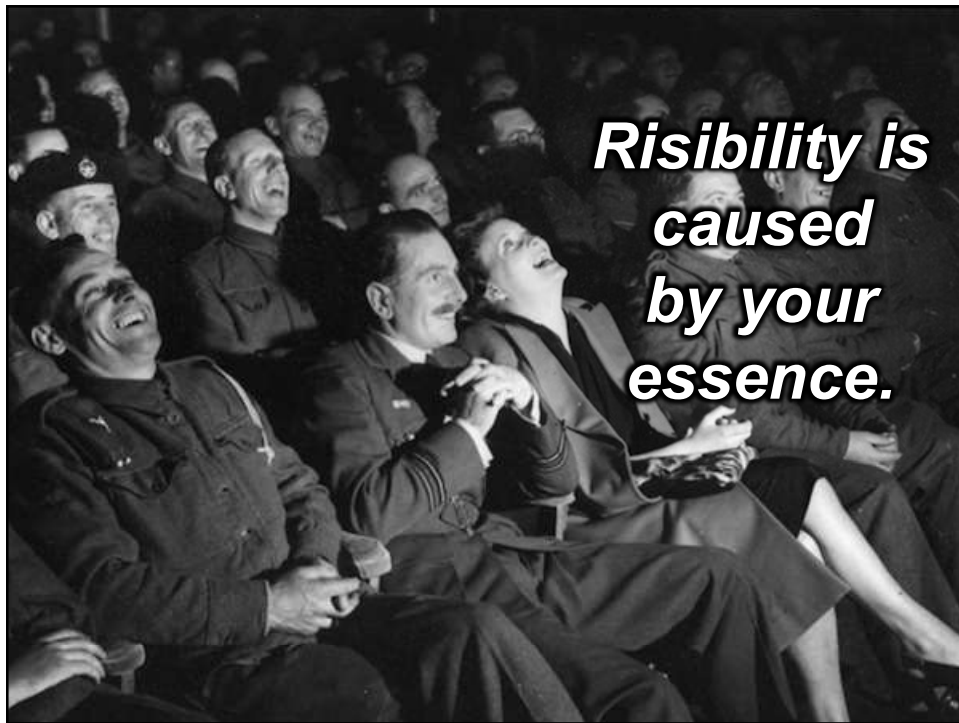
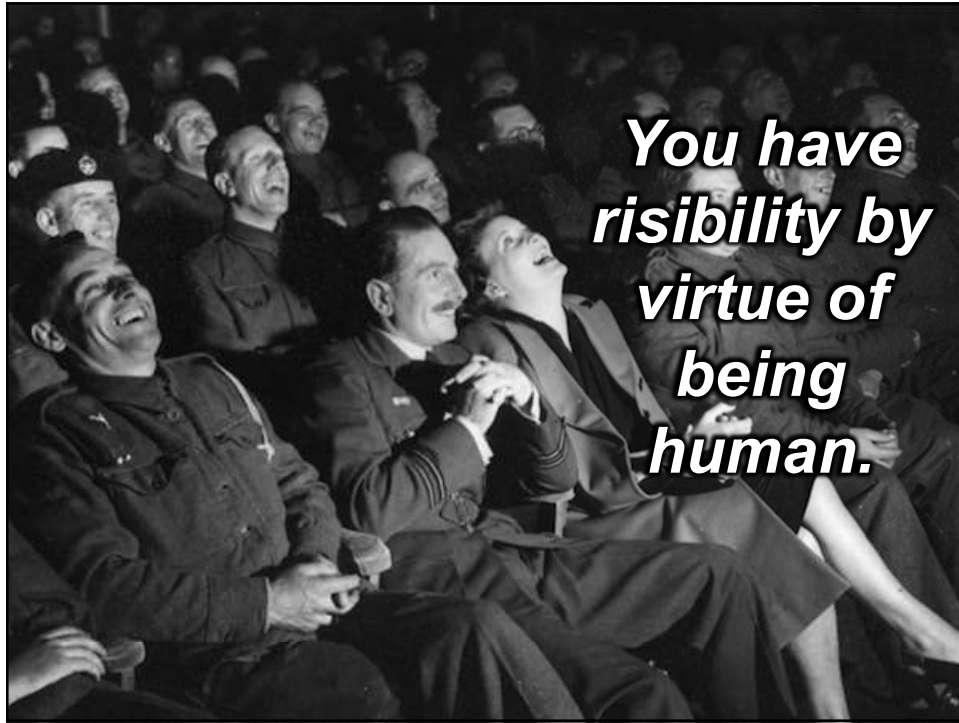


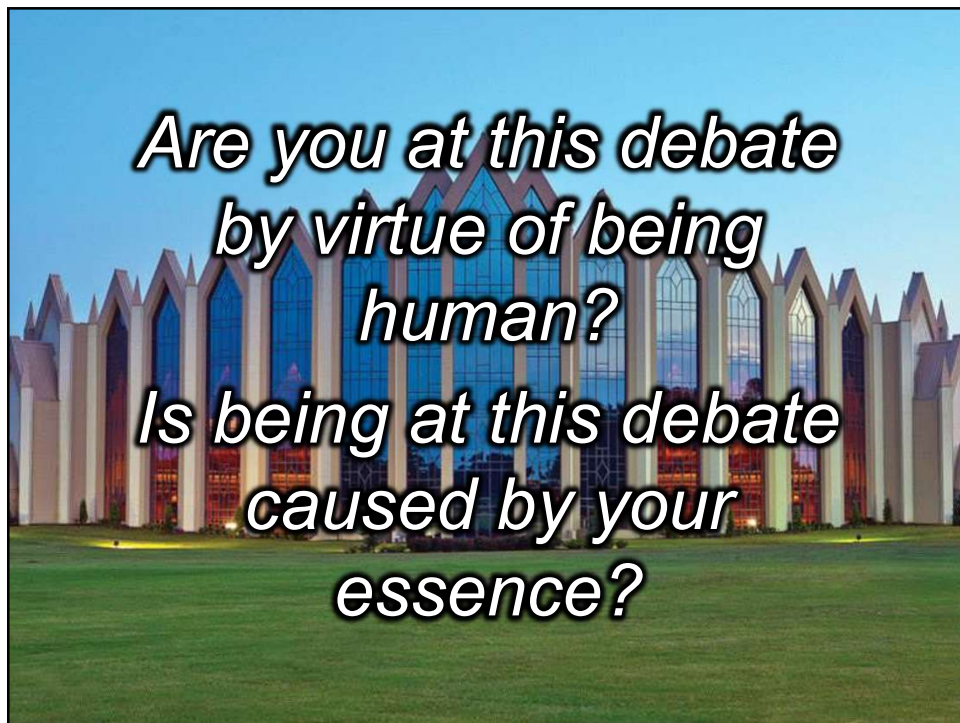
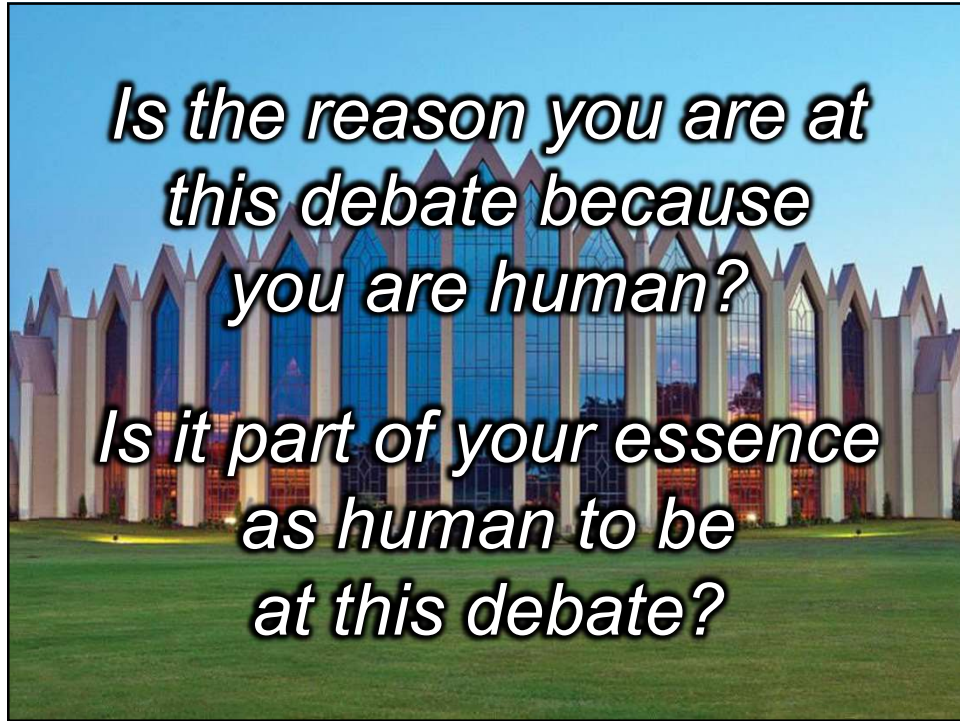


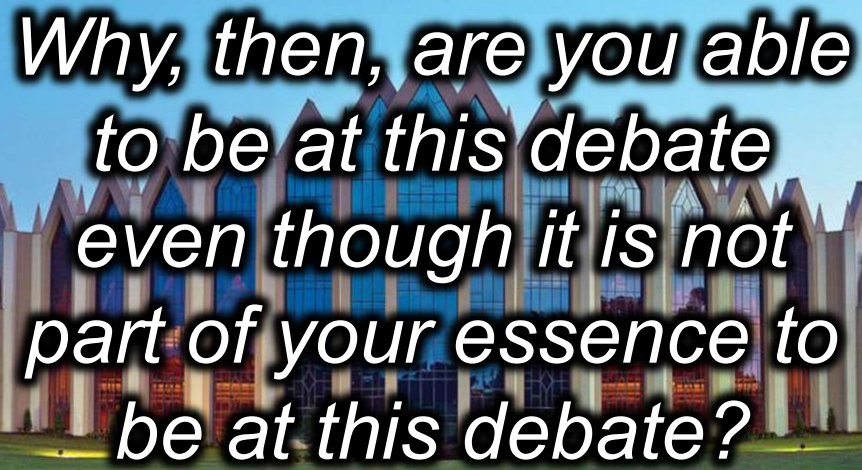




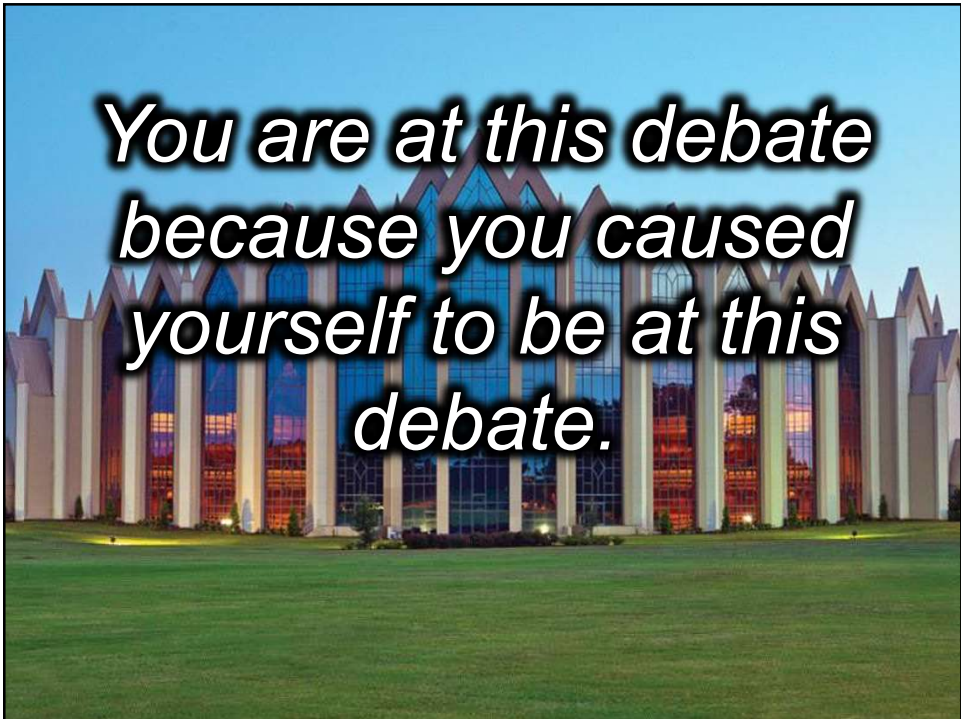




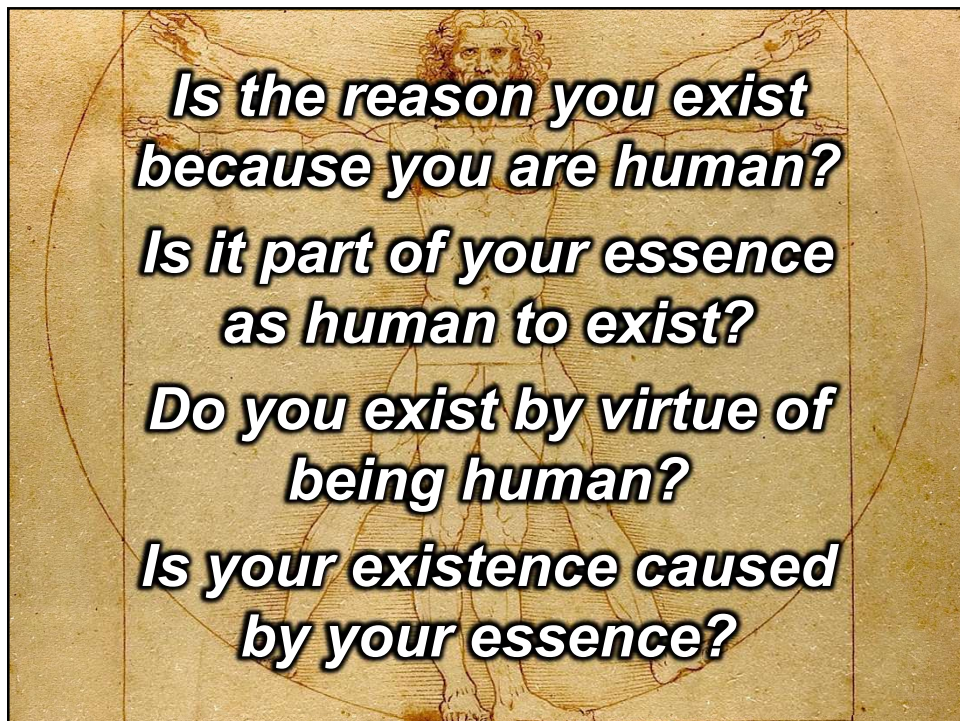
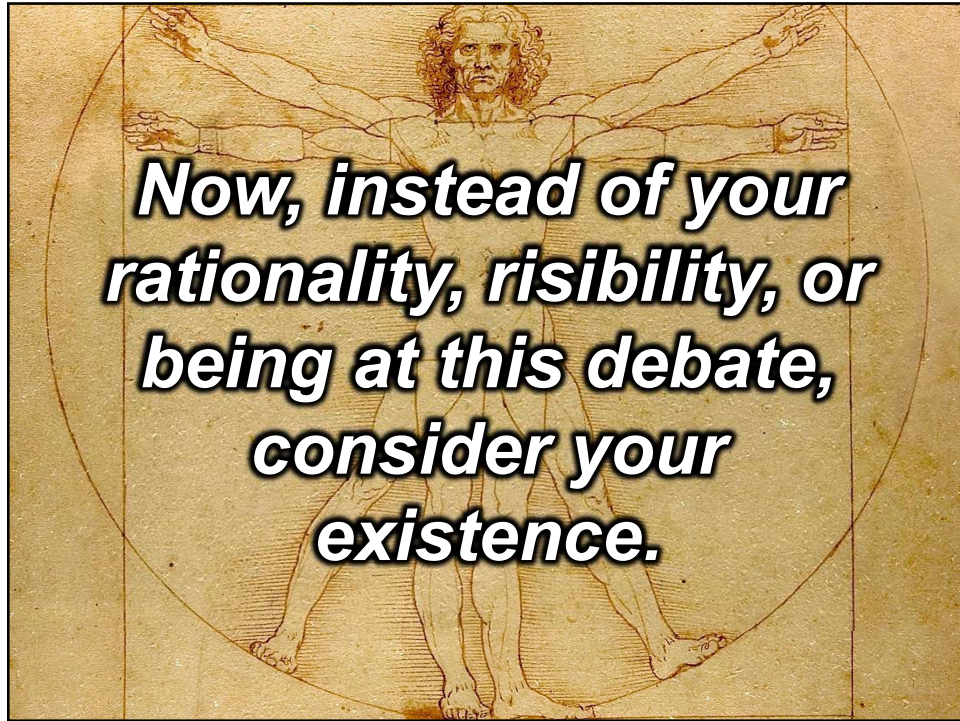


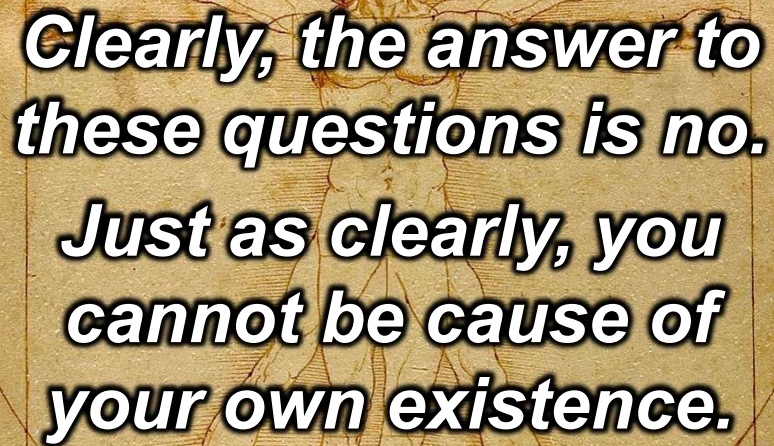


*Why, then, are you able
to be at this debate
even though it is not
part of your essence to
be at this debate?*

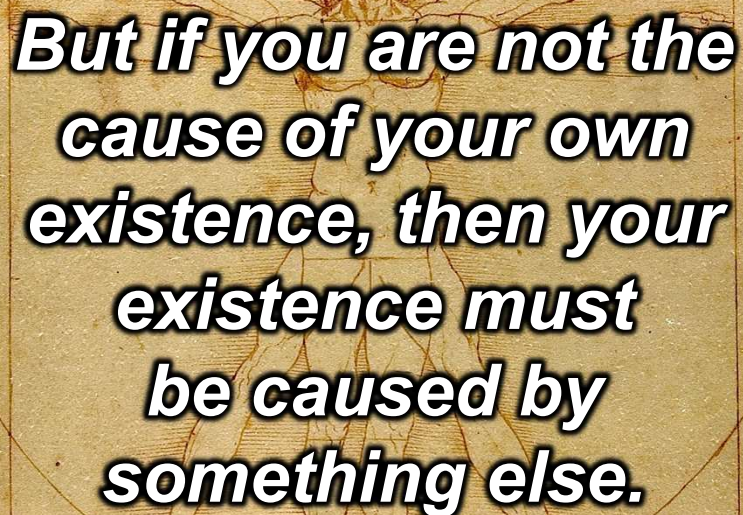


*You are at this debate
because you caused
yourself to be at this
debate.*

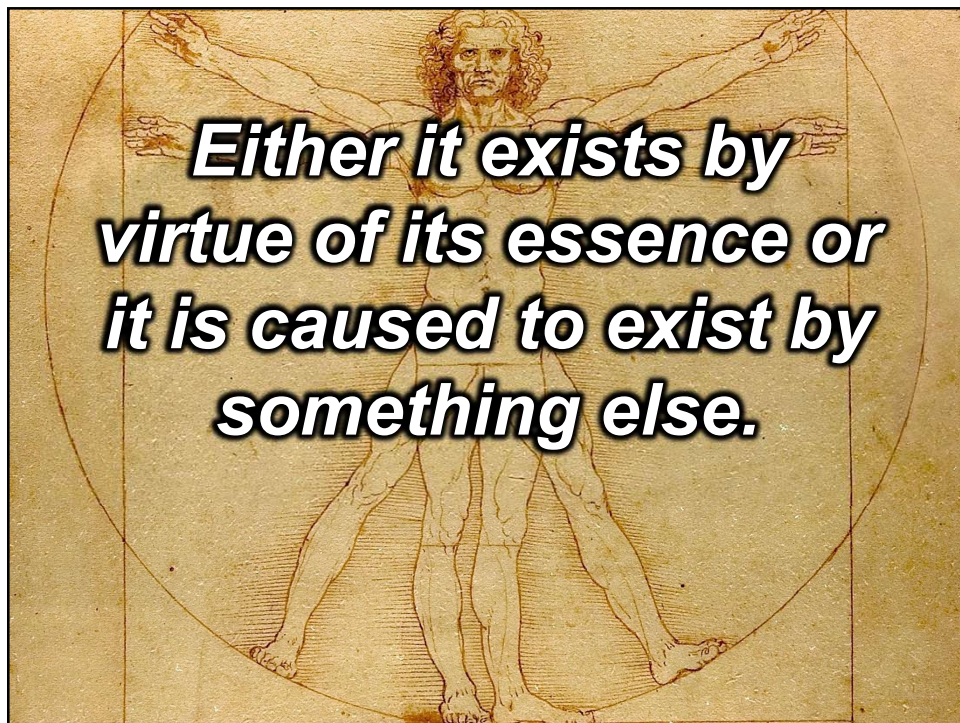
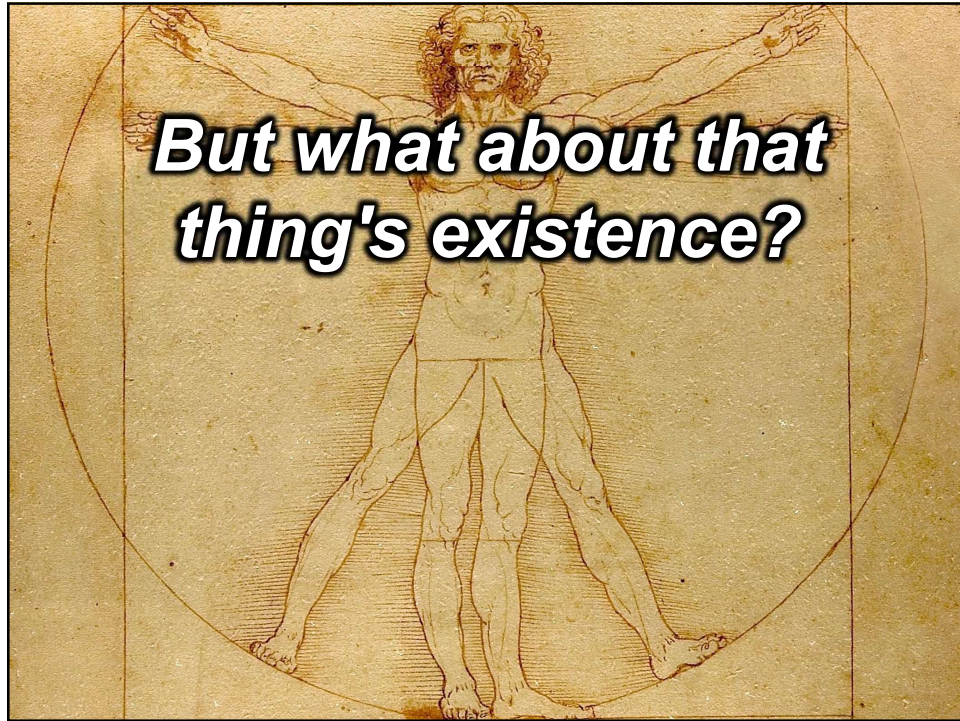




Clearly, the answer to these questions is no. Just as clearly, you cannot be cause of your own existence.



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



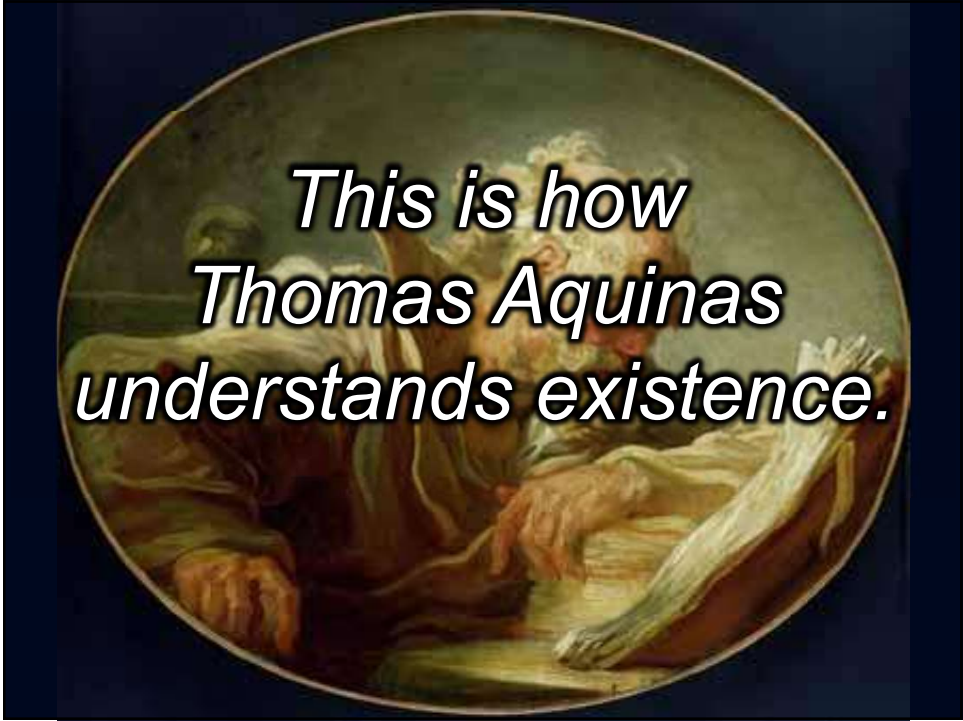


***But if you were hearing music,
you would not ask how it
came to be.***

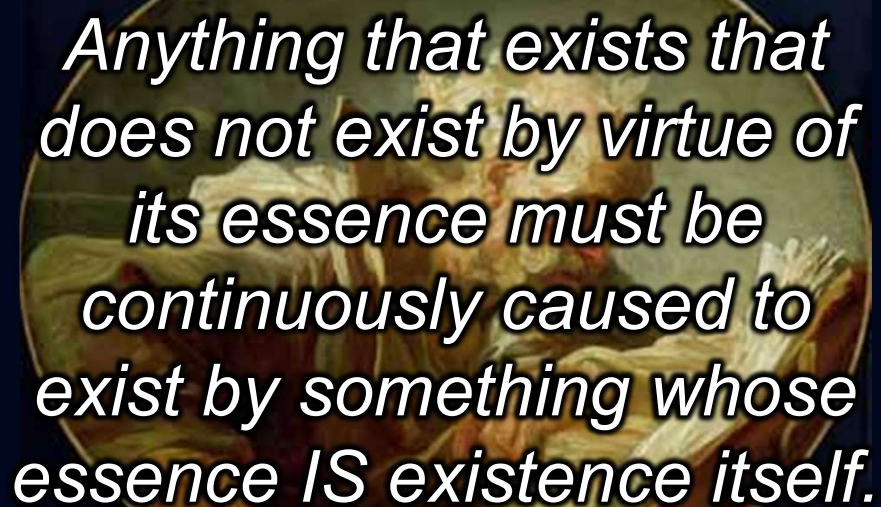


***Rather, you would ask what is
causing the music to be
right now.***

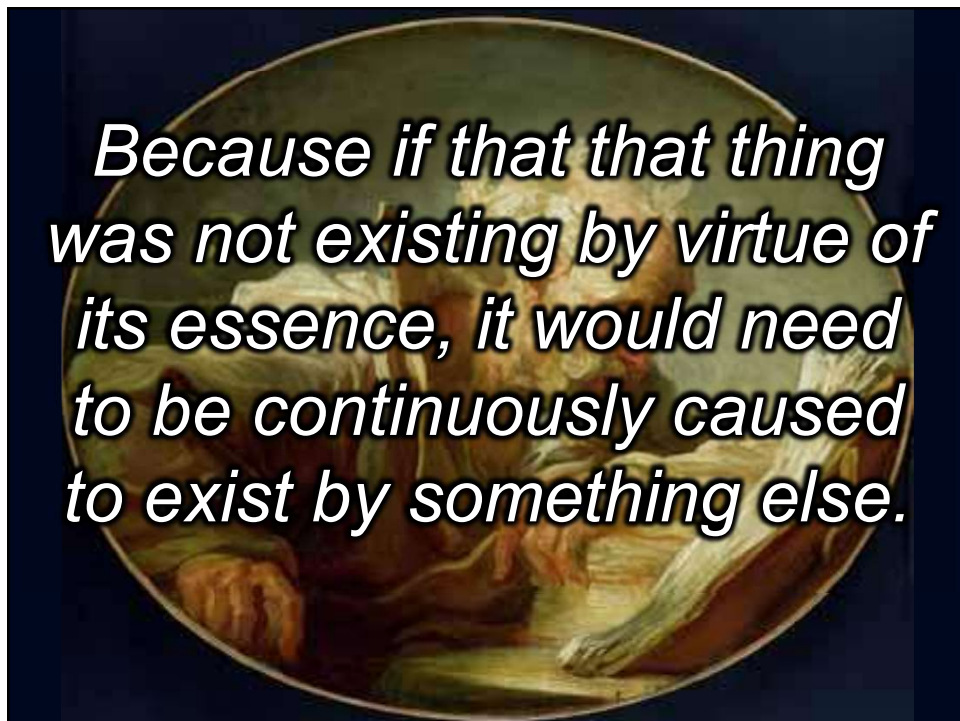




*This is how
Thomas Aquinas
understands existence.*



*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.*



*Can this go on
to infinity?*



per se Infinite

vs.

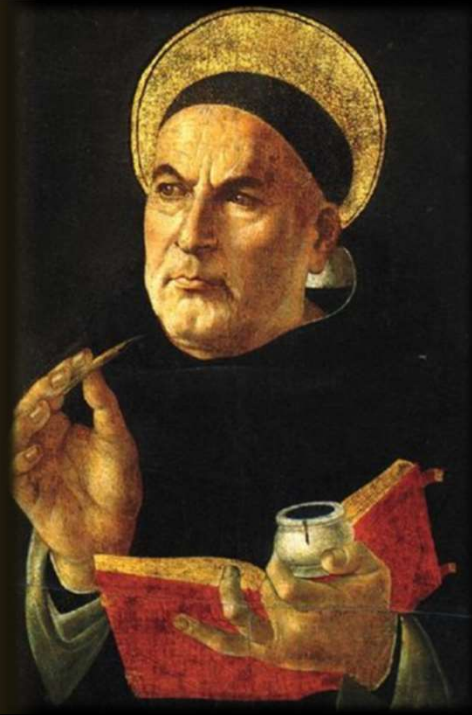
per accidens Infinite

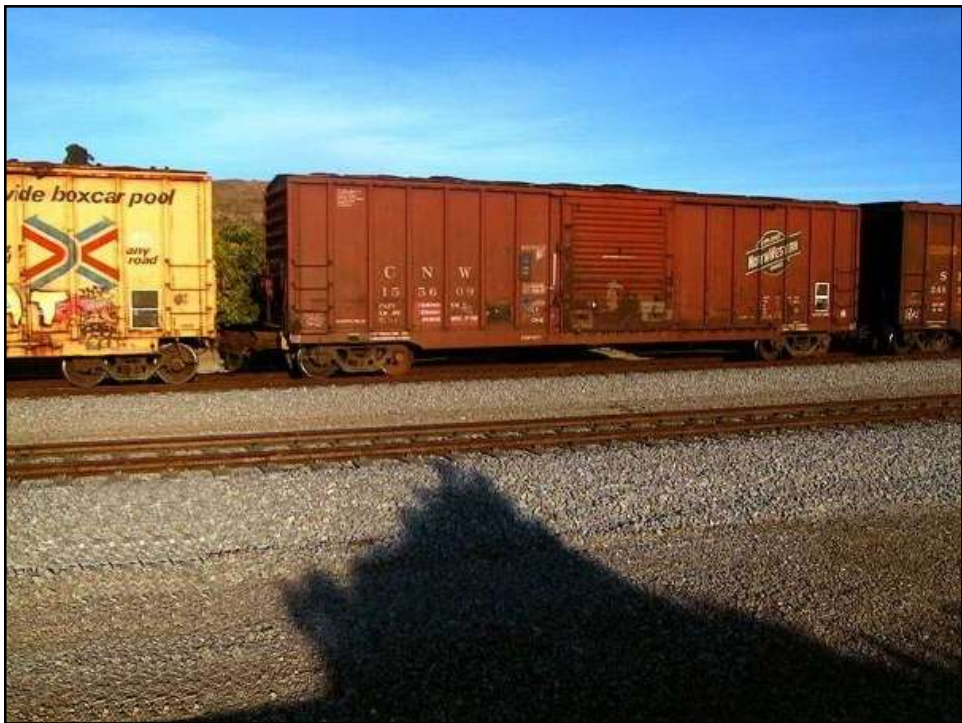


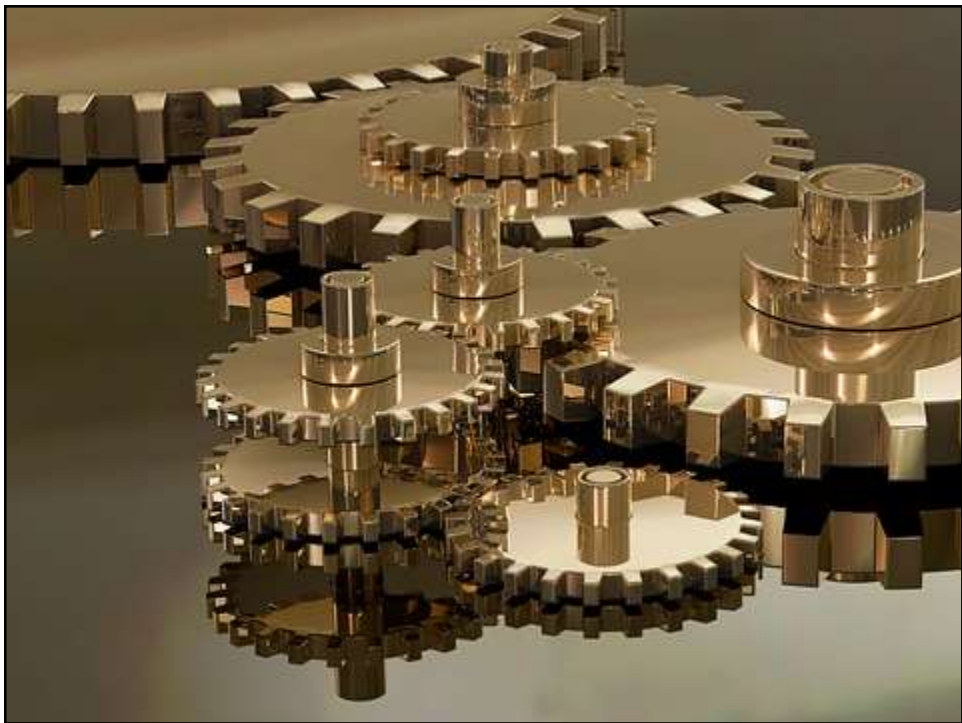


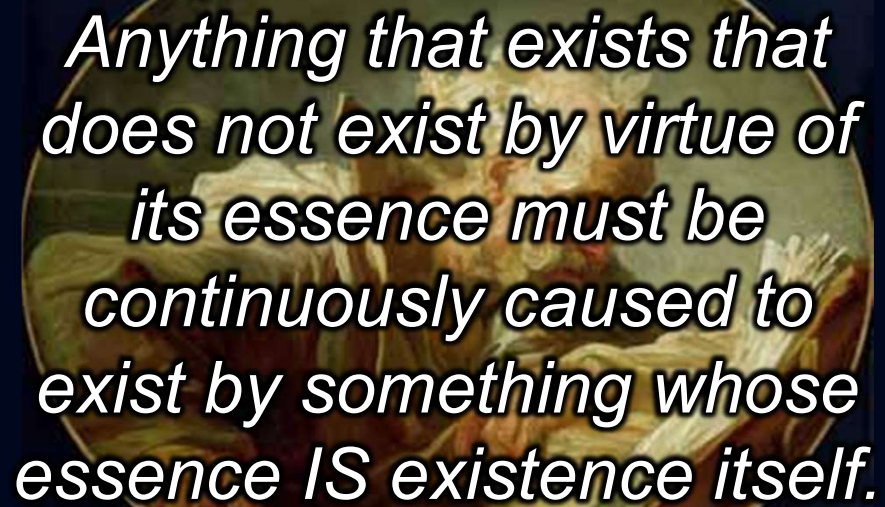
"It is accidental to this particular man as generator to be generated by another man; for he generates as a man, and not as the son of another man."

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

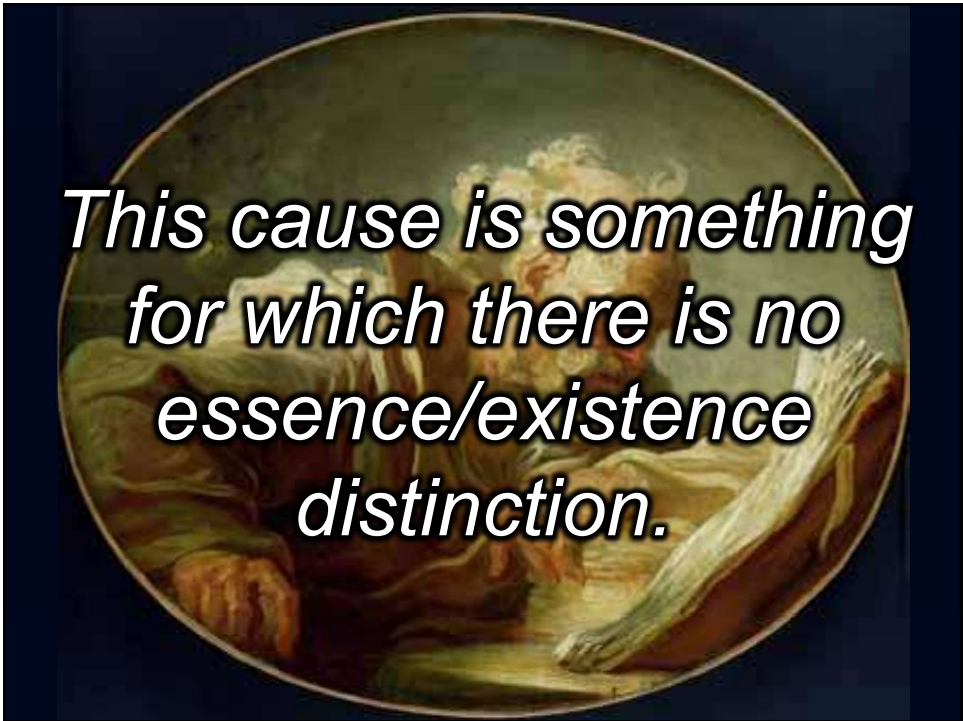




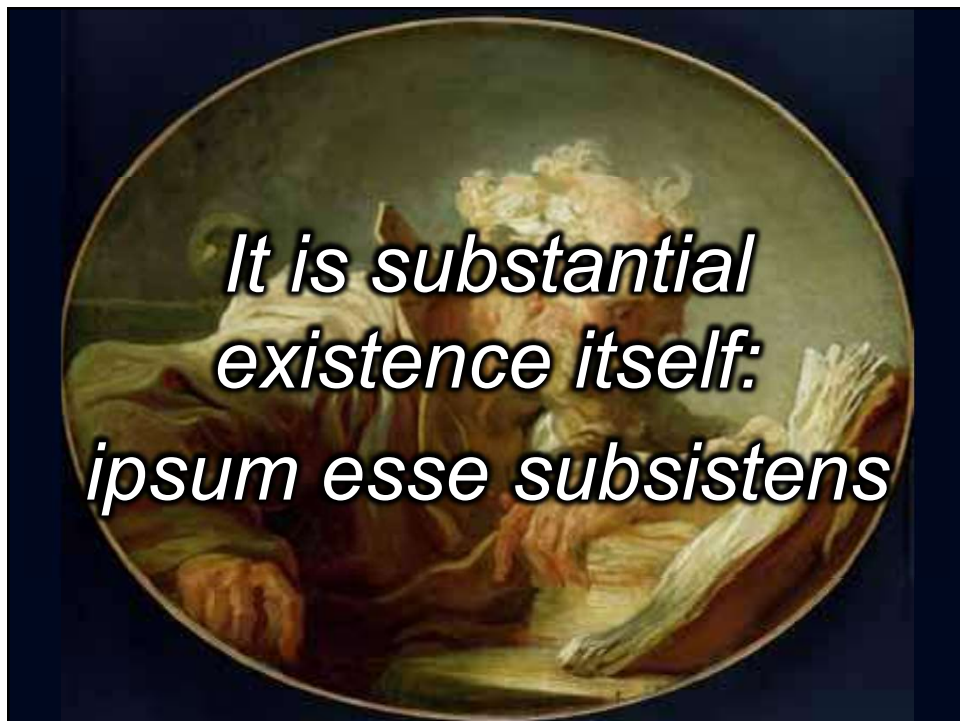
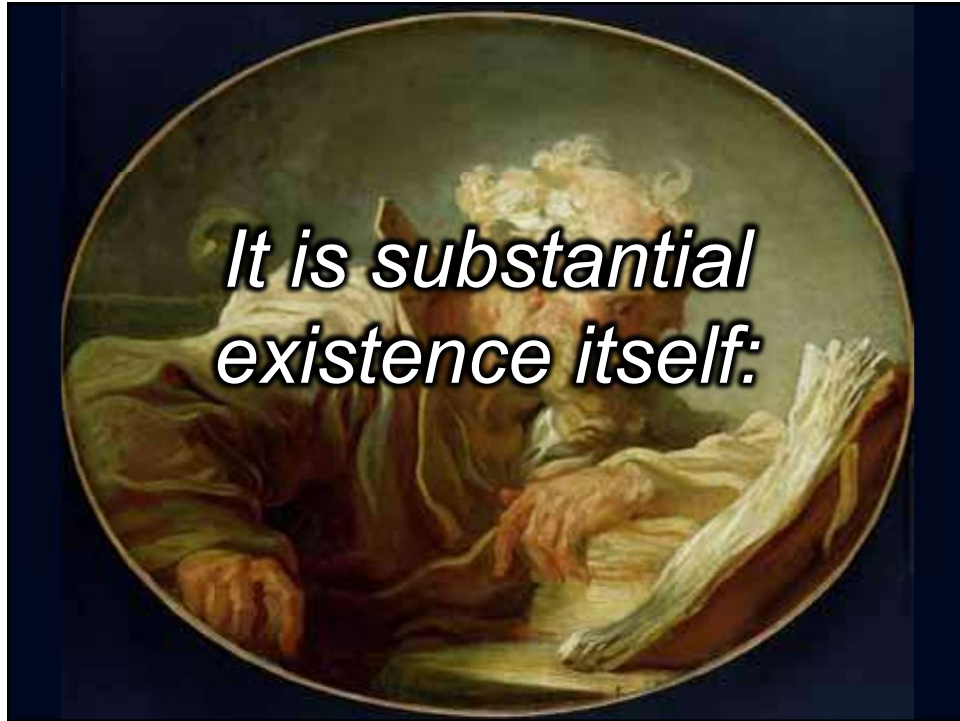


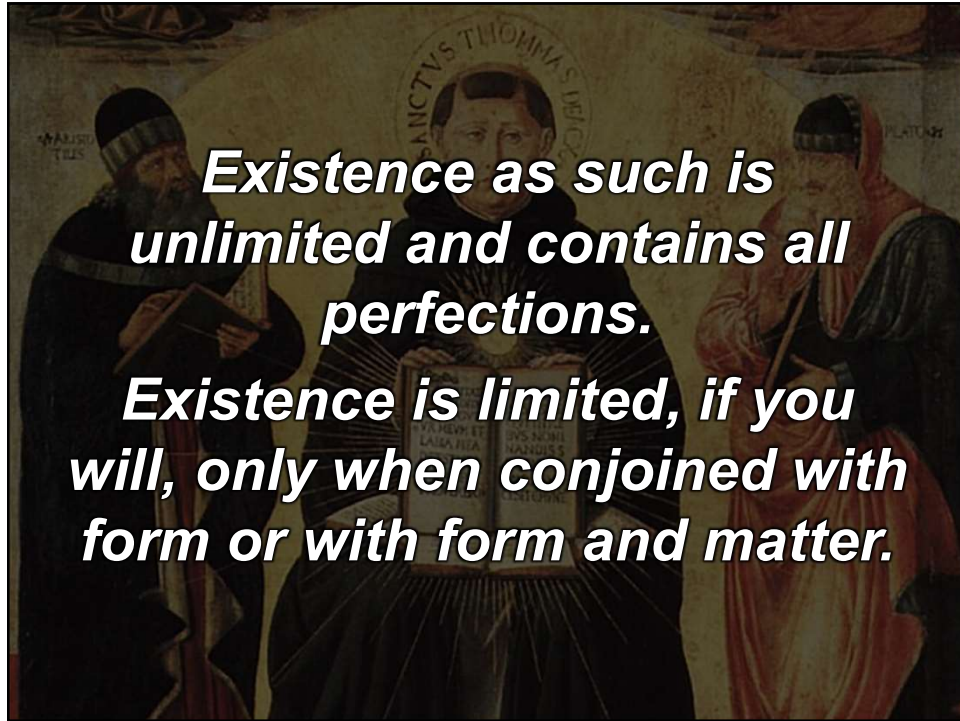


Anything that exists that does not exist by virtue of its essence must be continuously caused to exist by something whose essence IS existence itself.



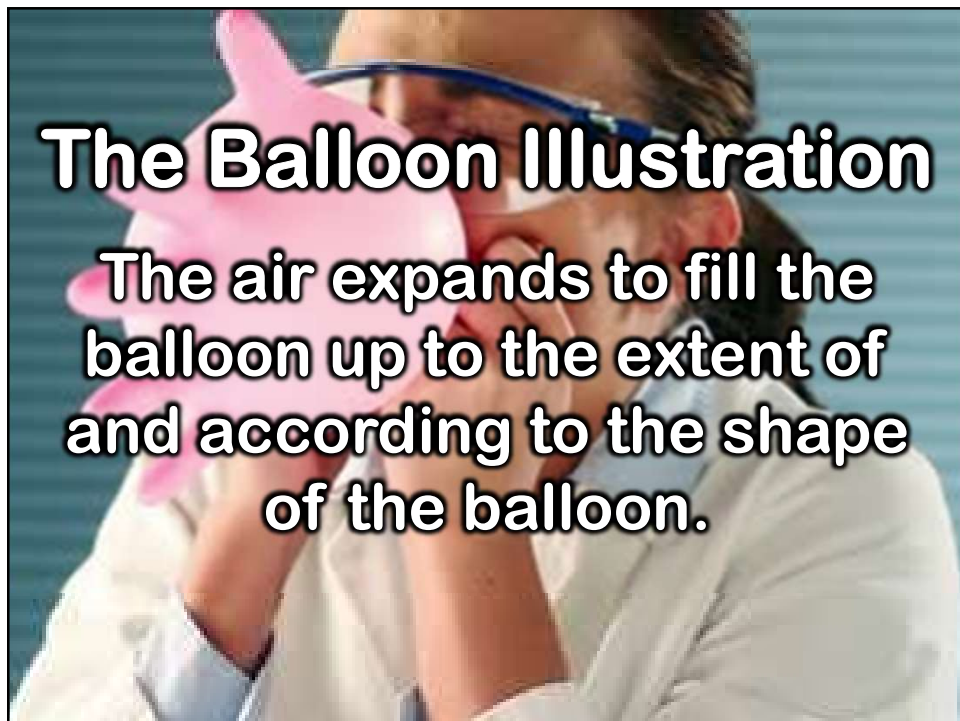
This cause is something for which there is no essence/existence distinction.





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.



The Balloon Illustration

The air expands to fill the balloon up to the extent of and according to the shape of the balloon.

A person wearing safety glasses is 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.

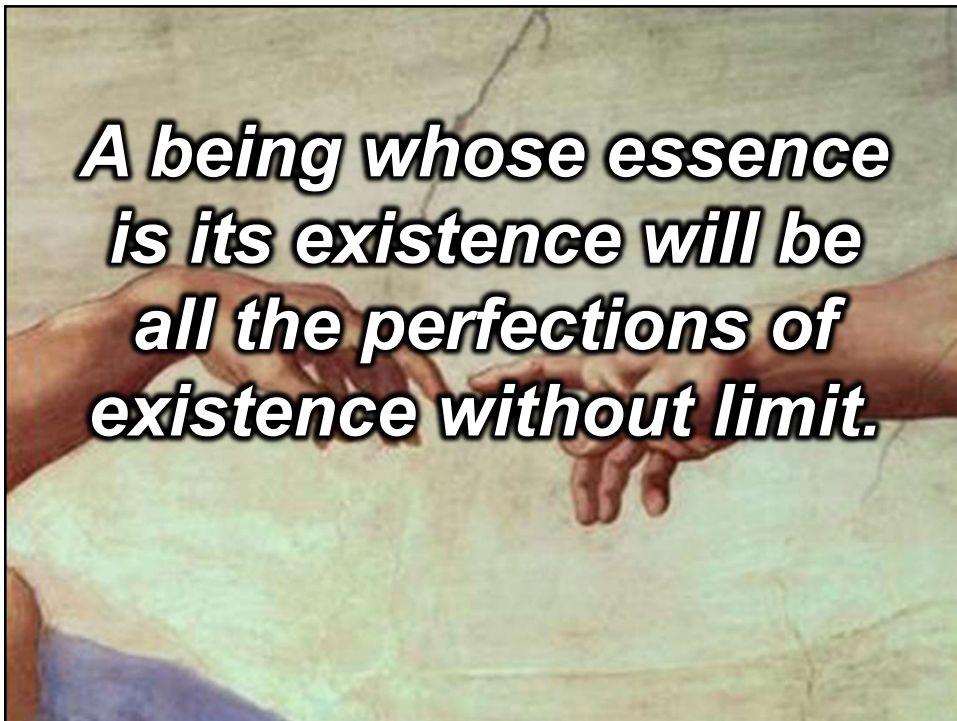
A horse contains all the perfections of existence up to the extent of and according to the limitations of the essence of horse.



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.



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

Summa Theologia I, 2, 3



Resources

Debates



