

Thomas Aquinas and Theistic Evolution



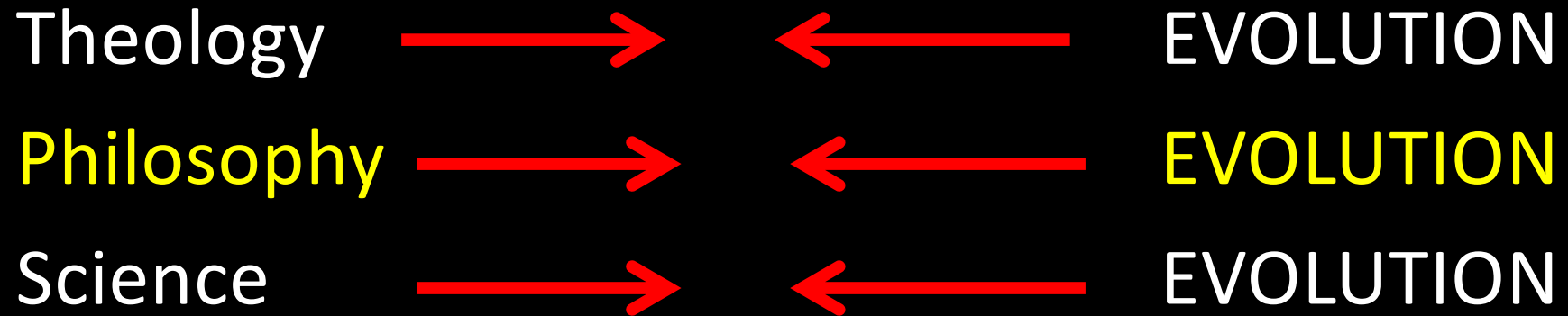
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Part I

Definitions



The problem of compatibility

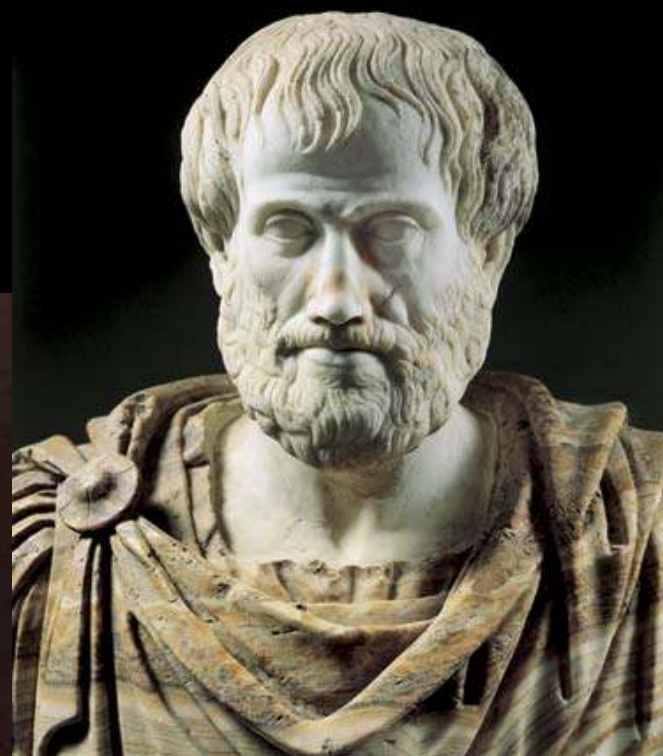


What is Philosophy?

What is Evolution?

Philosophy – love of wisdom

- Philosophia perennis
- Sana philosophia



Classical metaphysics

Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas

Evolution

=

BIOLOGICAL MACROEVOLUTION



-Cosmic

-Chemical and biochemical

-Biological

-Cultural

(evolution of languages,
laws, arts, etc.)

-Micro-evolution

(changes within genera
or families)

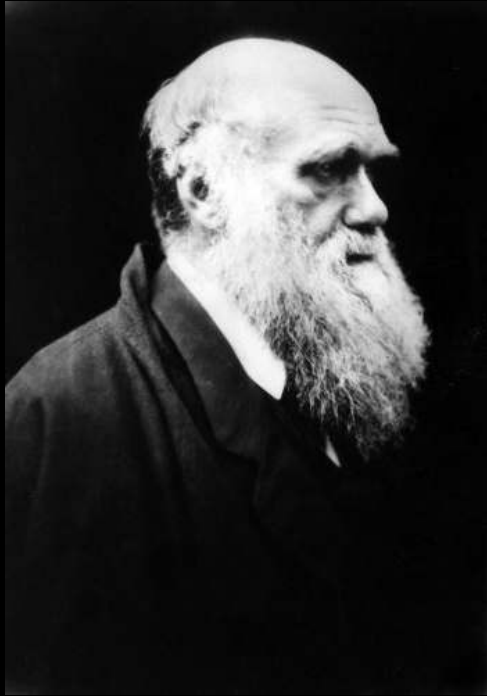
-Macro-evolution

(changes going beyond
the level of genera and
families)

Biological macroevolution

1. **Universal Common Ancestry** - all living beings share common ancestry, i.e., if we went back in time tracing all ancestral lineages we would ultimately come to one organism who was a natural progenitor of all living beings (LUCA)
2. **Transformation of species** – one species can transform into another through natural generation
3. **Evolution is natural** – this process does not require any supernatural (direct or mediated) work of God





Part II

Philosophical **challenges** to biological macroevolution



Problem 1. No secondary causes in creation

Types of Divine action

DIRECT (IMMEDIATE)

INDIRECT/MEDIATED
(through secondary causes)

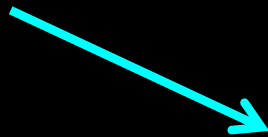
NATURAL
Secondary causes

SUPERNATURAL
Secondary causes

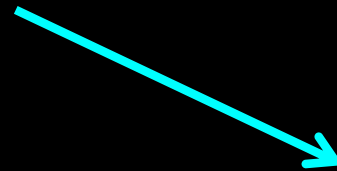
Causality in theistic evolution

Theistic evolution – God used biological macroevolution as a **secondary cause** in the creation of species

GOD

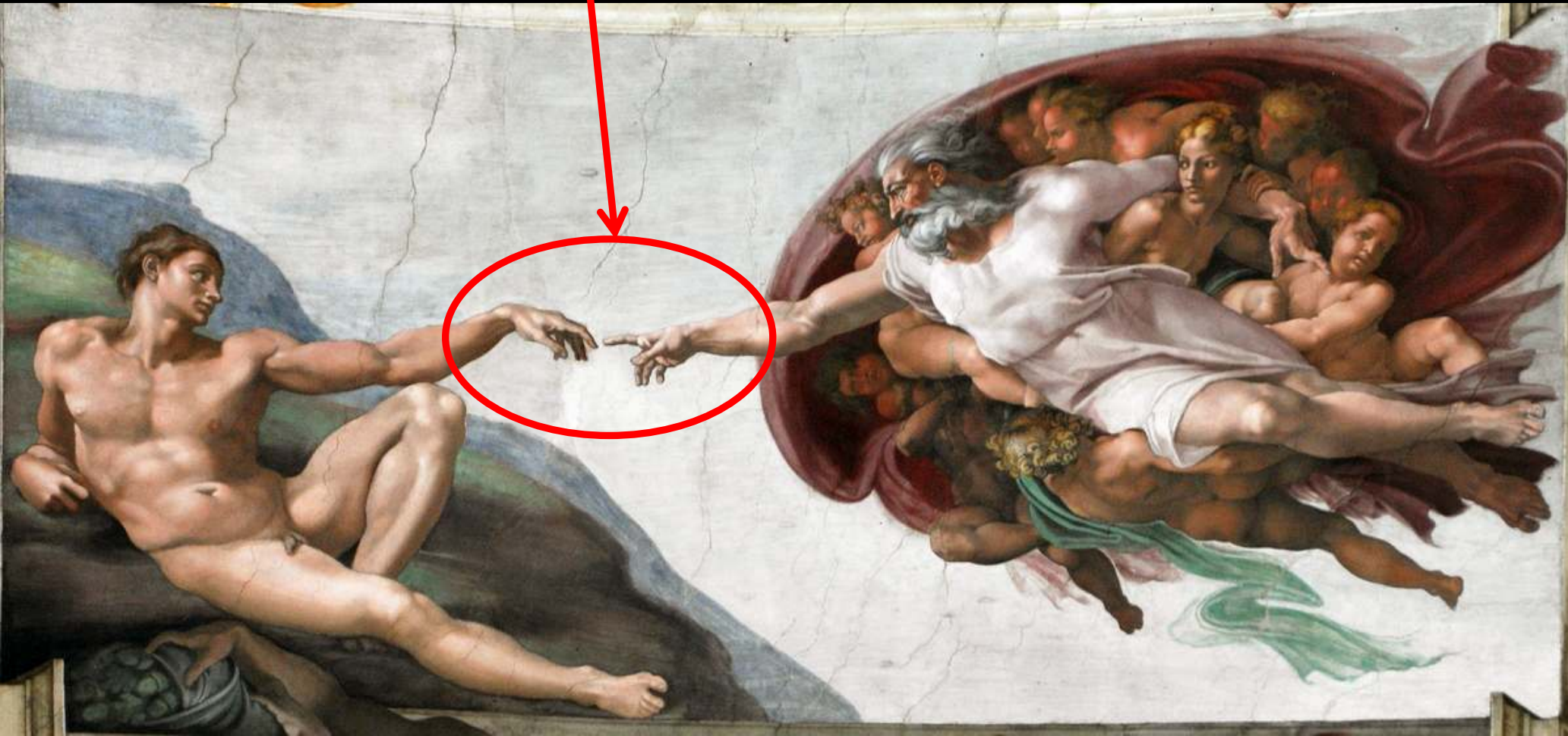


EVOLUTION = natural secondary cause



NEW SPECIES

No secondary causes in creation



Thomas Aquinas: No creature is capable of being a secondary cause in the act of creation

Problem 2. Accidental change cannot produce a new substance

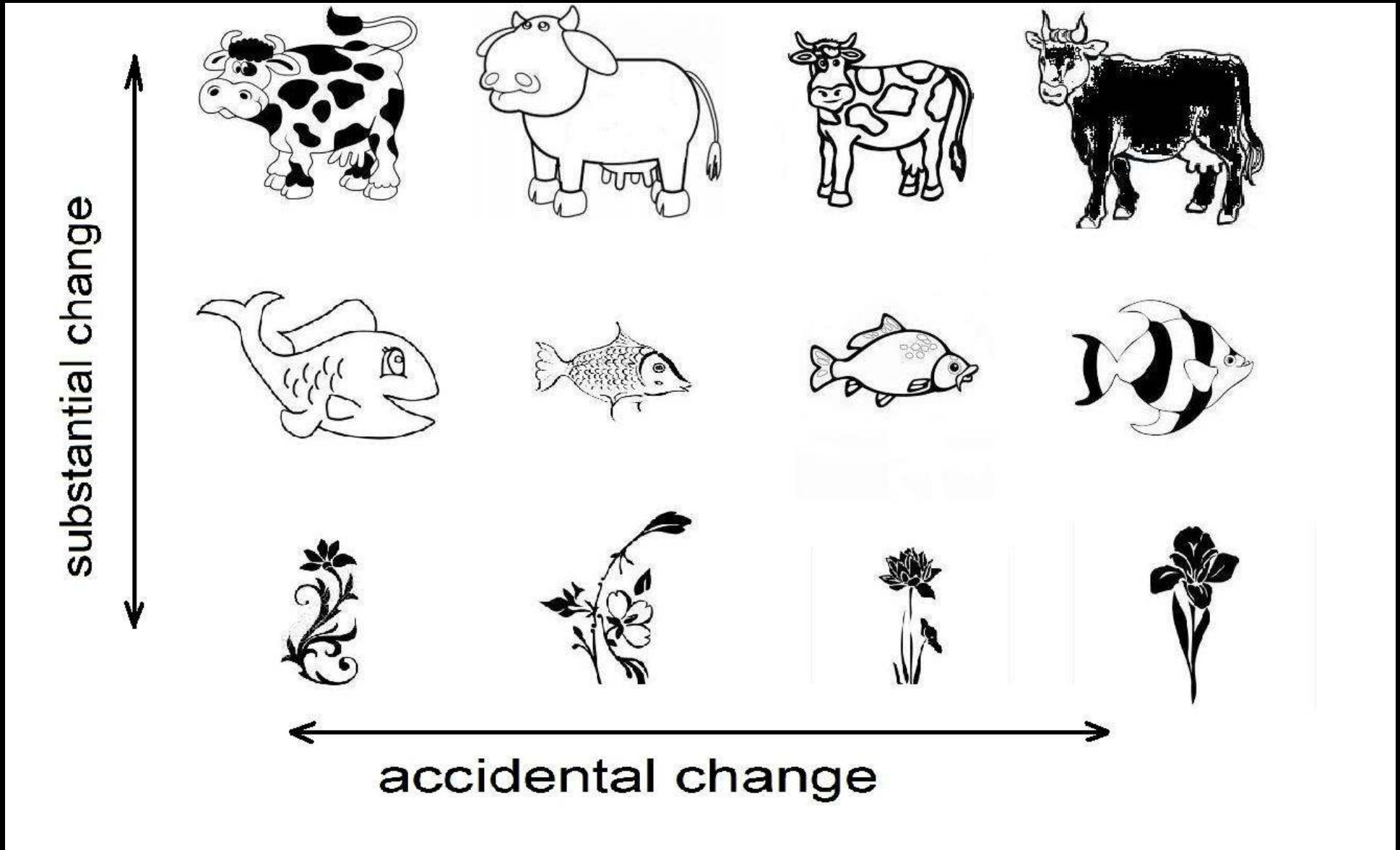
Metaphysical concepts of SUBSTANCE and ACCIDENTS

SUBSTANCE – what a thing IS

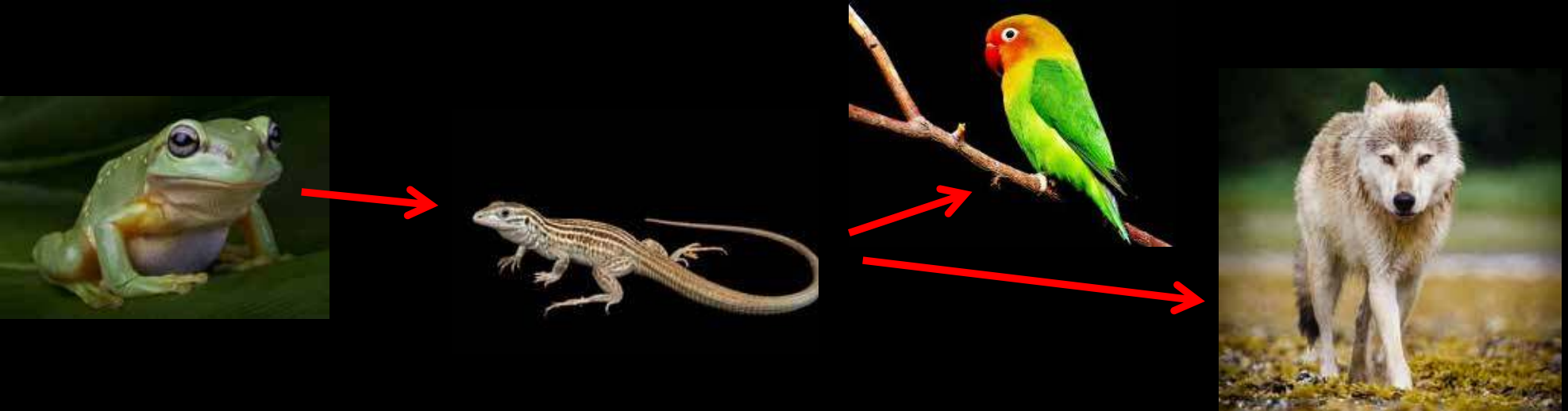


ACCIDENTS – what a thing has (its features, properties)

SUBSTANTIAL change vs. ACCIDENTAL change



Biological macroevolution postulates the substantial change (from one substance to another)



But all of the evolutionary changes are only accidental

- genetic mutations,
- environmental adaptations,
- genetic drift,

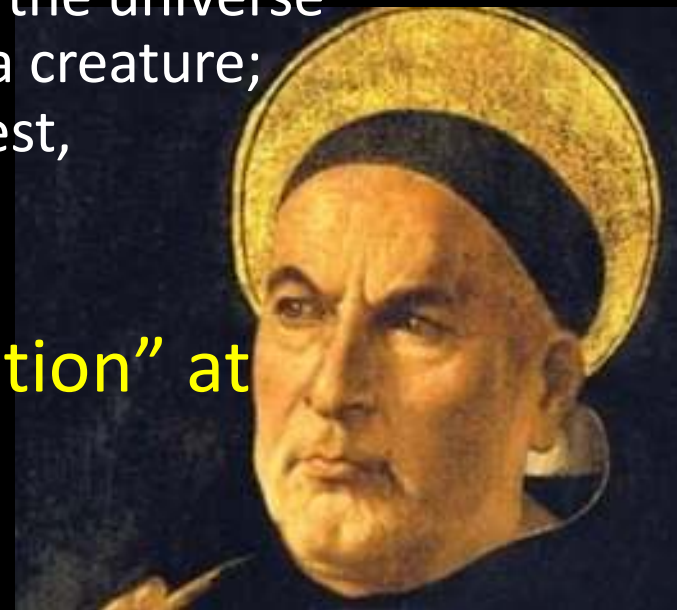
An accumulation of many accidental changes over time will never produce a single substantial change

Problem 3. Biological macroevolution excludes the order in creation

--God intended different grades of creatures (because they better reflect his glory and wisdom)

It belongs to the best agent [God] to produce an effect which is best in its entirety; but this does not mean that He makes every part of the whole the best absolutely, but in proportion to the whole; Thus, therefore, God also made the universe to be best as a whole, according to the mode of a creature; whereas He did not make each single creature best, but one better than another (S.Th. I,47,2, co)

--Things achieved their „natural perfection” at the moment of their creation



Philosophical challenges to biological macroevolution: Summary

- 1. No secondary causes in creation
- 2. An accidental change does not generate the substantial change
- 3. Creation produced an order in nature which is diminished by biological macroevolution