IV: The Meaningfulness of God-Talk

14: Limits of Reductionism

The four orders

In parts two and three I have tried to show that there is an uncaused entity, D, which is distinct from contingent states of affairs. In the present part I assume that the arguments developed in parts two and three are sound. I do not here try to add to the proof *that* there is an uncaused entity. Instead, in the present part I try to clarify how talk about D is meaningful. However, in doing this I also try to show that what already has been established implies a good deal more about D than I have explicitly stated up to now.

The present chapter is preparatory to the next three. In the present chapter I am concerned not with D but with what is *not D*. It is important to be clear about what is not D, because everything one can say of D somehow gains its meaning from what one knows and can say about what is not D. What is not D includes everything contingent, everything which falls within the field of man's experience. I use "experience" here in a wide sense which I will clarify.

What I said of D in part two can be distinguished into three closely related points: 1) that D is *uncaused*, 2) that D *obtains*, and 3) that D *causes* contingent states of affairs to obtain. In chapter fifteen I consider how D is said to be *uncaused* and show what else can be *denied* of D. In chapter sixteen I consider how D can be said *to obtain* and show that some other metapredicables can be *affirmed* of D. In chapter seventeen I consider how D can be said *to cause* contingent states of affairs and show that some other relational predications can be made involving D.

In the fourth section of chapter seven I explained how one knows causes

and effects *in* reasoning. Such reasoning works with experience, of course, but the cause-effect relation, as Hume correctly argued, is not itself an object of unreflective observation. *In* reasoning—not prior to reasoning nor as a product of reasoning—one understands the two states of affairs, which are cause and effect of one another, precisely insofar as they are united together in a cause-effect state of affairs which includes them both. In criticizing absolute idealism and in criticizing rationalism in general I argued that reason must accept certain irreducible limits. The multiplicity of individuals and the variety of kinds, freedom of human choice and contingency as such, cannot be explained. If everything could be reduced to an intelligible unity, this would mean that there was only one something. For example, Hegel's Absolute Spirit was considered by him to be the one and only reality.

Everything there is, then, cannot be reduced to a single intelligibility. No one predicable can be affirmed of everything man knows, for, as I said in criticizing absolute idealism, there is nothing which everything is. However, many things within experience can be reduced to one or another of a small number of intelligibilities. Reasoning reduces multiplicity to unity, and reasoning is a continuous process which links cause-effect states of affairs to one another. But, as I explained in chapter seven (pages 126-132), not all cause-effect relationships are of one mode. If the states of affairs united in various cause-effect states of affairs are linked by distinct modes of causality, they cannot be reduced to a single intelligibility.

For example, many cause-effect states of affairs which are constituted by physical causality can be embraced in a more inclusive cause-effect state of affairs homogeneous with them, that is, one of physical causality; many cause-effect states of affairs which are constituted by formal causality can be embraced in a more inclusive cause-effect state of affairs homogeneous with them, that is, one of formal causality. But a system based on physical causality and a system based on formal causality can be united neither in a more inclusive *physical* cause-effect state of affairs nor in a more inclusive *formal* cause-effect state of affairs. Systematization comes to a limit. Beyond this limit one can unify only by using metaconcepts—for instance, as one does in using *cause-effect state of affairs* to think about the distinction between physical and formal cause-effect states of affairs. *Cause-effect state of affairs* is a metaconcept based on the common schema of causal reasoning; to say that something is a cause-effect state of affairs is not to describe the content of experience but only to indicate that this content is organized.

I use the word "experience" in the following way. I say that whatever man can know prior to all causal reasoning is "given in experience." Whatever can be known only in or on the basis of causal reasoning is not given in experience. *D* is not given in experience. However, many entities which are not perceived by the senses are given in experience. One's own acts of

propositional knowing, the intentions informing one's outward acts, and the meanings of words are not perceptible to the senses. But all of these are given in experience.

There are various ways of classifying the diverse kinds of entities which are given in experience. The making of such an inventory requires some principle of division. One can make an interesting and useful classification without claiming that one's principle of division is better absolutely than any other and without claiming that one can demonstrate the completeness of the inventory. Such work is descriptive; it depends upon induction. One can call the making of an inventory of everything given in experience "ontology." The remainder of this section is an attempt at such ontology, which is part of *descriptive* metaphysics.

Causal reasoning, as I have explained, provides very comprehensive intelligibilities. A distinction of modes of causality, then, can serve as a principle for ontology. What is known in causal reasoning is one state of affairs insofar as it includes other states of affairs or, to put the matter conversely, two or more states of affairs insofar as they are united in a single, more inclusive state of affairs. A unity of many, a multiplicity unified—this is called "organization" in a very wide sense of the word. The physical world is organized; logical thinking is organized; a person's life and a society are organized; artificial and symbolic entities, such as the parts of a technological system and the expressions of a language are organized. I call a whole set of entities considered insofar as they are organized an "order."

Thomas Aquinas distinguishes four orders.[1] Of the various acts of human cognition, he says, the act of reasoning is especially concerned with order. Understanding is concerned with *what* something is and with meaning; propositional knowing is concerned with *that* something obtains and with truth. Reasoning is concerned with *why,* that is, with the explanation of the unity of distinct entities which consists in the relation of one entity to another. The unity of distinct entities is order; thus it is peculiar to reason to know order.

Since reason is especially concerned with order, orders can be distinguished by the diverse ways in which reason itself is related—ordered—to its subject matter.

There is an order which reason does not bring about but only considers; this is the *physical* order studied by the natural sciences. Whether the order studied by mathematics also belongs here is a difficult question which I will not try to answer.

There is another order which reason by its own consideration introduces into its own acts; this is the *intentional* order of thought-entities studied by logic. Thomas also includes language here, but I think he is mistaken in doing so.

There is another order which reason by reflection and deliberation constitutes for possible choices; this is the *existential* order of human acts which make up personal and interpersonal life—one's own life and the life of society. This order is studied by ethics in one way, by biography and history in another way, and by some parts of psychology and social science in still another way.

Finally, there is another order which reason by invention or planning or habits of using induces in or imposes upon what is in human power; this is the *cultural* order, which includes works of art, products of manufacture, the results of engineering and technology, and also all sorts of symbols, including linguistic ones. This order is studied in various ways by many arts and applied sciences, by linguistics, criticism, and so on.

Thomas includes the relationship between contingent states of affairs and an uncaused cause in the order which reason does not bring about but only considers. I am concerned here only with entities given in experience, and thus do not include this relationship in any of the orders I distinguish. It seems to me that reason can be said to "consider" both the physical order and the metaphysical relationship of the contingent to D only if "consider" is used in different senses in the two cases. In parts two and three as a whole I discussed not only the contingent and D but also how reason is related to this metaphysical subject matter; later chapters of the present part may further clarify the nature of the metaphysical order.

Thomas does not develop to any extent the ontology implied by the metaconcept of *order*. But in chapter fifteen I will argue that no predicable which is descriptive of anything given in experience can be affirmed of D; the four orders include many—perhaps all—entities given in experience; thus it will be helpful at least to begin to unfold the ontology implied by *order*. If I did not do this, I might make clear that D is distinct from the entities included in one order—for example, the physical—but leave unclear that D is distinct from the entities included in the other orders. The following exposition of the distinction and relationship of the four orders also will be referred to at many points later in the book.

The four orders can be distinguished within a single experience; this is perhaps the best way to begin to clarify them. Suppose one goes to a lecture which presents an explanation of something. One listens to the lecture. In listening one *hears* in four diverse ways. 1) One hears sounds, which belong to the physical order. 2) One hears the explanation, which belongs to the intentional order. 3) One hears a person who wishes to communicate, to share something; his act belongs to the existential order. 4) One hears spoken language, a discourse, which belongs to the cultural order.

Hearing *sounds* is a function of the sense of hearing. Waves in the air—which a physicist studies—affect one's ears and thus one's nervous sys-

tem—in ways which the biologist and psychologist study. One hears sounds because one is an organism enmeshed in the natural world. The physical order also includes other kinds of organism, inorganic entities, and many processes and events. Entities in the natural world are neither isolated atoms nor a homogeneous mass; they make up a continuum of process but this continuum, like a language, has distinctive features which stand out. Quantity, qualities including dispositional properties, physical space and time—all these are also aspects of the physical order.

Hearing *an explanation* is a function of understanding or interpreting. Distinctions are made and examples examined. Insights are gained and affirmed as insights into extrapropositional states of affairs, and truths are unified into a systematic knowledge of the subject of the lecture. One hears an explanation only because one is a thinking subject engaged in reflective thought. One keeps such thought straight only if one is aware of its inner conditions and limits. These conditions and limits establish the order of questions to answers, of insights to experiences, of parts of propositions to one another, of propositions to other propositions, and so on. Instances or examples and classes; problems and solutions; proofs and evidence; affirmations and denials and contradictions; sciences and other systems of knowledge—all these belong to the intentional order.

Hearing a person *communicate* something is a function of cooperation, of sharing in a common life together. Parents and children at some point usually begin to experience a barrier to communication. "Children simply do not listen," says the frustrated parent; the young person says, "My parents never hear anything I try to tell them." Hearing a person depends upon a commitment to a common cause; one who hears must appreciate the value which the speaker intends to communicate. Hearing is an aspect of a personal relationship. In such a relationship persons become a community. The existential order includes virtues and vices, customs and laws, institutions and unique moments of ecstasy, offenses and reconciliations, and a great deal more.

Hearing *discourse* is a function of belonging to a form of life or to a cultural group, the group of those who use a certain set of sounds or marks to communicate explanations, to express feelings, to make promises, or to play various other language games. The set of uses which constitute a language blend into other uses which ordinarily are not thought of as linguistic. For example, geometrical constructions or laboratory demonstrations; smiles, kisses, and gifts; arrowheads, pots, machines, factories, and garbage—all these are uses of natural entities for purposes in which significance is put upon what is used by the human intention which *appropriates*—makes into human property or possession—nature and puts it at the service of man. The cultural order is the residue of past human thought and action; the existing cultural order also makes it possible that future thought and action will go on within a

human world with means already at hand. Human beings are culture makers; in a very broad sense of "symbol" one can say that in all transforming uses human beings make symbols. Some anthropologists use "symbol" as a verb and say that man is an animal who "symbols"; this expresses the role of man as *homo faber.*

The four orders are similar in that each of them is a unity made up of a multiplicity of things organized by a certain set of relationships. As Plato pointed out, "one" and "many" do not have a single meaning. "Order," which is based upon unity and multiplicity, also has many meanings. The relationships which constitute order in each of the four orders are not of the same sort as those which constitute order in the other three orders. Because reason is related to each order in a different way, the mode of causality known *in* reasoning in respect to each order is irreducibly different.

An example of a relationship which constitutes physical order is the connection formulated in any scientific law—for example, that a certain force accelerates a certain mass at a certain rate. Or, a certain amplitude of sound waves brings about a certain response in the nervous system of an organism having the sense of hearing. An example of a relationship which constitutes intentional order is any law of logic—for example, that one cannot both assert and deny the same proposition or that one can gain insights into kinds by studying examples. An example of a relationship which constitutes the existential order is any of the conditions of a free choice which follow from the values presupposed by all human acts—for example, the requirement that an act be directed to something understood as a good or the requirement that one accept a person's plausible explanation of something if one sees no reason to reject it. A relationship which constitutes cultural order is exemplified by the fitness of a technique to the goal it is intended to achieve, or by the aptness of linguistic expression to communicate the explanation of a subject matter.

Relations among the orders

Each of the four orders includes in its own way what is included in the others. At the same time no one of the orders comprehends the whole reality—the very ordering principle—of any of the others.

The physical order includes the human organism. The bodily person knows, acts, symbols (makes use). Knowledge begins from sensation and experience. But human knowledge also includes the *negation* which excludes the truth of a proposition and the reasons which are sufficient to prove a given conclusion. These are not physical relations; they are not formulated in natural laws. Human acts presuppose emotions and desires, natural interests

and capacities. But human acts occur only if one has a capacity to make free choices, to shape one's personal life, and to form communities by commitments. Symboling presupposes materials and powers and goals which ultimately are natural. But symboling also presupposes inventiveness or creativity or established usages by which nature is appropriated and subdued, possessed and made to serve.

The intentional order includes reasoning in respect to all four orders; this was the fact, observed by Thomas, from which this ontology begins. But reason does not establish and cannot explain the uniqueness of the particular—for example, that this body is my body. Reason by itself does not bring about any human act; it articulates a variety of possible acts, but choice is the principle by which one possibility among others is realized. Reason plans and guides work, but culture is constructed only by human trial and error, concretely engaged with the stuff which is to be subdued.

The existential order also includes the others. One can choose to eat, to sleep, and the like. One can choose to think. One can choose to express oneself, to work. But one cannot choose his own body, nor can one choose not to die. One can choose neither that a proposition be true nor that an argument be sound. One cannot choose that a technological process succeed or that linguistic expressions mean what one wishes them to mean.

The cultural order also includes the others. Languages contain symbols for the entities of all the orders; art can serve natural needs, and it can be a way of gaining knowledge and a help in improving personal communication and community. But no one can do any symboling if there is not a natural world with given properties and possibilities, or if he lacks insight into the manner in which what is given can be transformed and ordered to a purpose, or if he cannot make choices and elicit the cooperation of others.

The four orders are irreducibly distinct from one another. To reduce them to a single system, reason would have to relate them all to a single principle; reason would have to be related to the various entities in all of the orders in a uniform way. Thus, any attempt to unify the four orders into a single order amounts to relating every state of affairs included in all of them to a principle located in some one of them, and to following the relationship by only one of the modes of causal reasoning. In other words, the orders are themselves related and unified, but not in only one way; each of them unifies by the special way in which it includes the states of affairs which are included in the others.

At the same time the orders really are united with one another. One finds them together in experience, and one can know that they are distinct and related. Their distinction is shown by the diverse ways in which they mutually include one another's content. But the unity is real. The entities of

each of the orders can be said to be the same as—in diverse senses of "same"—the entities of any other of the orders.

The relationships which constitute the various orders are formulated in physical laws, logical principles, existential requirements, and cultural exigencies of aptness, suitability, or the like. States of affairs complete one another in causal orders; a state of affairs lacking its complement is abnormal, absurd, unreasonable, or inadequate in some way. Thus causal reasoning articulates norms for states of affairs which are known in such reasoning to be included in larger systems. A state of affairs without its complement is not as it ought to be. As Plato held, reason's first principle is the Good—that is, the complete or perfect whole in which the incomplete or imperfect parts are completed or perfected.

However, the normativity of each of the four orders is different. I briefly indicate the differences and provide a few examples.

The normality of the physical order is conformity to natural laws. "The sun ought to be rising soon," one says, expecting this instance to fulfill the laws of a known order. Looking for purposes in natural processes is a mistake; one imports into the physical order a normativity which belongs to the existential. Conversely, to try to apply the normativity of the natural to human action is confused; an example of such confusion is the view that unjust action is simply "abnormal behavior."

The correctness of the intentional order is conformity to logical principles. "One ought not to draw a syllogistic conclusion from two negative premises," one says, pointing out that there is no principle which would render intelligible such an inferential step. One who tries to build logic on psychological laws of association mistakenly supposes that logical correctness is merely a matter of normality. If one merely described human thought, one might find that certain logically incorrect modes of thinking are normal. On the other hand, to try to apply the normativity of logical principles to one of the other orders is to regard as logically impossible deviations from other sorts of norms which nevertheless sometimes occur.

The rightness and reasonableness of the existential order is conformity to love of human values. "One ought not to discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, sex, or some other irrelevant factor" and "One ought to accept the testimony of a person whom one has no reason to think dishonest or incompetent" point out that certain ways of acting are or are not in line with values such as justice and truth. To regard violations of such norms as nothing more than mistakes, resulting from ignorance or confusion, is to suppose that wrongful acts are like errors in logic. However, one can choose to violate existential norms, because human values are many and in themselves incommensurable; one basic value can be used as mere means to some other.[2] On

the other hand, to regard the innocent mistake of a small child as if it were the violation of an existential norm is to suppose that the child could have chosen otherwise, when in fact he could not.

The aptness or adequacy of the cultural order is conformity to the implications of a particular purpose. "One ought to change oil after driving in a dust storm" and "One ought to use words which one's audience can understand" indicate what is necessary if one's purpose of keeping the engine running or of making oneself understood is to be achieved. To suppose that violations of technical, artistic, linguistic, and other rules are always undesirable is to ignore the creative dimension which must be allowed for in this order. Sometimes the only sensible thing to do is to shift one's purpose slightly, to compromise, to adapt means and ends to one another as well as possible. On the other hand, to employ the same strategy in dealing with a matter of correctness of reasoning or justice is to suppose that logical principles and existential norms are merely relative to subjective purposes. This supposition is one of the false implications of metaphysical relativism.

The distinction of the four orders from one another also helps to explain why there are diverse philosophical approaches. There is some room for a legitimate diversity of disciplines, each illuminating in a distinctive way, each focusing on a distinct order. However, when an approach centering upon one order becomes imperialistic, so that the distinctness and irreducibility of the others is denied, then an oversimplified model is projected and the misfit between the model and its subject matter generates insoluble problems.

Hegel, for example, tried to reduce nature to the intentional order. In place of the individuality and facticity which is distinctive of the natural he posited negation. The real is the rational; truth is the whole. Everything is the content of a self-referential act of Absolute Mind. Post-hegelian relativists take the cultural order as a base of operations from which to reconstruct other orders—for example, by treating them as mere projections of linguistic categories.

A naturalist such as Mill reduces logical principles to the status of generalizations from experience; a naturalist tries to explain moral and social reality in terms of psychological laws, evolution theory, and so on. Radical existentialism maintains that human freedom creates everything, beginning with its own situation. Kant tended to subordinate everything to the noumenal realm of practical reason and freedom; the inconsistency of his metaphysics follows from his existentialist project of limiting reason to make room for faith.

The various forms of reductionism cannot succeed. The stubborn irreflexivity of the human body and its unique relation to the thinking subject whose body it is argues against any form of idealism. One who denies the irreducibility of the physical order cannot give meaning to egocentric particulars, without which assertion and denial are impossible.

The indispensability of negation in the intentional order and its irreplace-ability by any sort of extralogical opposite argues against any theory that thinking is *nothing* but a physical process. "Nothing" means "*not*-anything." The word "not" can be used in some senses such that affirmation and negation can be represented by contrary physical states—for example, by positive and negative electrical charges in a computer. But "not" cannot be reduced to a physical analogue in every case. When the physicalist says that thinking is *nothing but* a physical process, he opposes everything physical to any possible nonphysical entity. The possible nonphysical entity must be in the "mind" of the physicalist if it is to be excluded, and it can be there—on his theory—only as something physical. But the physicalist does not wish to exclude this physical characteristic. He wishes to refer to what the physical is *not,* and to exclude it.

But how can one refer to what absolutely is *not?* Reference is a relation; for a physicalist it ultimately must be a physical relation; but physical relations only hold between physical states of affairs. What absolutely is *not* is not a physical state of affairs. The physicalist can shift his ground by denying the very meaningfulness of "nonphysical." However, if an expression is not empirically meaningful, neither is its contradictory. If the expression "physical" is not empirically meaningful, then the physicalist, on his own theory, cannot be saying anything about the real world.

Someone might object to this argument that one can and does refer to what is not, at least in one sense of "refer." But this objection misses the point. I maintain that the intentional order is not reducible to the physical order; therefore, I admit reference to what is not. First-level propositions do not include negation, but concepts based on the denial of first-level proposi-tions are used in second-level propositions, and in this way one makes reference to what is not.

However, a physicalist must somehow dispose of every instance of nega-tion, and he can dispose of it only *in* the physical order, since this order is the only one he admits. In *some* instances he might seem to be able to dispose of negation. However, my argument is that a physicalist cannot dispose of an instance of negation except by presupposing some other instance of it. Thus the physicalist falls into self-referential inconsistency when he says that thinking is *nothing* but a physical process; in this case the reference to negation cannot be disposed of in the physical order.

The preceding argument, of course, is only a sketch. I do not claim it to be compelling as it stands. Working in collaboration, Joseph M. Boyle, Jr., Olaf Tollefsen, and I have developed a self-referential argument for human free choice. The basis of this argument is simple, but its full development required a whole book.[3]

The argument for free choice begins by noticing that since determinism is

neither a matter of fact nor a logical truth, a determinist must give a deterministic account of the phenomena of choice; in doing so he implicitly appeals to a rationality norm of some sort. The rationality norm to which he appeals is not reducible to the physical order, since it is not merely a matter of normality; not reducible to the logical order, since one can choose to disregard it; and not reducible to the cultural order, since the determinist claims that his position is more reasonable philosophically, not merely preferable for some particular purpose. Thus, the determinist claims that one *ought* to accept determinism, and the normativity implicit in this *ought* is such that the determinist's claim implies that one can respond by making a free choice.

One who denies the irreducibility of the cultural order deprives himself of language, without which he cannot communicate and defend his position. A linguistic sign can be developed creatively; hence language is more than a natural, behavioral phenomenon. Language is distinct from logic, because in using language one always does more and less than one intends; logic orders intentional entities just to the extent that one is aware of the conditions of propositional knowing. Language resists arbitrary choice; one can decide whether one wishes to speak and what one wishes to say, but one cannot by *fiat* make an expression do a job for which it is inadequate.

This outline of an ontology of the four orders could be filled out at considerable length; the arguments in respect to irreducibility, as I already mentioned, are merely sketched here to give the reader some idea of the way in which the distinction of the orders can be defended.

15: What the Uncaused Entity Is Not

The principle of negation

States of affairs pertaining to the various orders obtain in different ways.

Physical states of affairs obtain only if certain entities exist or events occur or processes go on in the natural world. One attempts to verify a proposition picking out a physical state of affairs by making an observation of the right kind and at the right place and time to gather evidence that the state of affairs obtains if it does.

Intentional states of affairs obtain only if intelligibilities are conceived, propositions are entertained, or reasonings are carried out. In other words, the obtaining of intentional states of affairs is contingent upon acts of thinking. Even a formally true proposition is not entertained and asserted simply by being the proposition which it is; rather, a formally true proposition which *is understood* is known to be true if it *is entertained.* The necessity of a formal truth is conditional; there is no formal truth if there is no proposition which is formally true, and there is no such proposition unless someone entertains it.

Existential states of affairs obtain only if choices are made. Human acts depend upon choices and upon habits which are established by commitments and maintained by one's willingness to keep these commitments. Societies depend upon personal communication and cooperation. Complex institutions may seem to have a life of their own, and in a certain sense they do, but they originate in choices—perhaps many choices which are not consciously coordinated. Moreover, institutions are only sustained by continuing willingness to live with them.

Cultural states of affairs obtain only if persons have purposes which they attempt to realize by making use of something which is available.

No matter how a state of affairs pertaining to one of the four orders obtains, it is contingent. Every state of affairs included in any of the four orders might or might not obtain. It follows that one can understand the predicables in propositions picking out any state of affairs pertaining to one of the four orders without thereby knowing that any particular state of affairs obtains. I use "F" as a symbol for any such predicable. If one entertains a proposition that something is F, one might happen to know that the state of affairs which the proposition picks out obtains—for example, if the proposition is self-referentially necessary. Still, one knows that the state of affairs is contingent; the state of affairs might or might not obtain.

The uncaused entity (D) is a state of affairs included in that which is the uncaused cause (Dc) of the obtaining of other states of affairs. Dc is contingent although D is not. When throughout the present chapter I say "contingent state of affairs" and "contingent proposition," I do not include Dc and the proposition Xc—that an uncaused cause causes other states of affairs to obtain. How "causes" is said of Dc will be considered in chapter seventeen.

Many states of affairs in each of the four orders are included in wider states of affairs. In all such cases, if one knows that the state of affairs obtains and the proposition is true, one can still ask, "Why is anything F?" An answer to this question is provided by causal reasoning of an appropriate mode. The state of affairs about which one asks is understood, along with its complement, in a wider, cause-effect state of affairs.

The states of affairs which are constitutive of the four orders cannot be reduced to a single order by any intelligibilities based directly upon what is given in experience. The modes of causality appropriate to the diverse orders reach a limit when causal reasoning uncovers constitutive states of affairs. In one sense, states of affairs which constitute the four orders are not caused— that is, they are not caused in the way in which anything within an order is caused. For example, if space and time are basic conditions of physical entities, then there is no physical explanation of the spatiotemporal character of nature, although *space* and *time* are involved in causal reasoning about any state of affairs included in the physical order. The same will be true of the constitutive principles of each of the orders.

However, as I showed in the first section of chapter five and in my criticism of absolute idealism in chapter eleven, even if there were a proposition which picked out a state of affairs constitutive of an order which included *all* contingent states of affairs, such a proposition would be contingent. I also use "F" to symbolize any predicable in any proposition picking

out a constitutive state of affairs. Since such a state of affairs remains contingent, one can ask, "Why is this F?"

As I argued in part two, this question is only answered by positing an uncaused entity which requires nothing to obtain except to be the state of affairs which it is. Whatever D is in itself—that is, apart from the relation of contingent states of affairs to it—one could not know the truth of a proposition picking out D and still ask, "Why is this true; why is D such-and-such?" Thus, if one knew what D is in itself—that is, if one knew D directly, not as the term of a relation which something else has to it—one would know any proposition picking out D to be necessarily true and one would know that any predicable which applies to D could not apply to it for any reason other than D's being what it is.

If one forms a proposition that D is F, one cannot know that the proposition is true merely by considering what it means. F is an intelligibility which can be used in contingent propositions; it could not be used in contingent propositions if states of affairs in which something is F obtain simply because something is F. A proposition that D is F, if known to be true, would be knowledge of what D is in itself. However, what D is in itself is all that D requires to obtain, while whatever is F requires something besides F to obtain. Therefore, a proposition that D is F cannot be true.

"F" stands for any predicable which can be applied to anything in a proposition picking out a state of affairs within any of the four orders or constitutive of them; no proposition of the form D *is* F can be true. Thus one must deny any statement which describes D positively in language used for describing anything involved in the four orders, unless this language is used in a sense different from its usual one. Moreover, if the four orders do not include all contingent states of affairs, any predicables in propositions picking out other contingent states of affairs—whether within other orders or constitutive of them—likewise can be applied to D only in false propositions.

Another way of reaching this conclusion is as follows. In the argument in the final section of chapter four I concluded both that there is a necessary entity, D, and a necessary truth, X. X is a proposition picking out the state of affairs which D is. I have said nothing thus far about the content of X, except insofar as D has been characterized through the argument as a necessary entity which is an uncaused cause of contingent states of affairs. If one could formulate a proposition picking out D in which the predicable would be an intelligibility of D in itself—not a relational or other metapredicable—one could not understand the proposition without knowing that the state of affairs it picks out obtains. One can understand propositions in which predicables derived from experience are applied without knowing that the states of affairs such propositions pick out obtain. Thus, the proposition X, as

a necessary truth picking out D, neither can be replaced with nor can be supplemented by any proposition formed with predicables which also can be applied in propositions picking out contingent states of affairs.

The point can be put more briefly as follows. Whatever D is in itself, it requires nothing to obtain other than to be what it is. Whatever anything contingent is, it does not obtain by being what it is. Therefore, whatever D is in itself, it cannot be what anything contingent is. Hence, whatever anything contingent is, D is not.

Someone might suggest that while D cannot be characterized by any single predicable also applicable to a contingent entity, a sufficient set of such predicables might provide an adequate characterization of D. This is the rationalistic position which Kant criticizes. The rationalists suppose that a most real being, an *ens realissimum,* would be a sum total of perfections. But one cannot derive necessity from any combination of perfections belonging to contingent entities. Hegel tries to do so and fails.

One argument I propose against absolute idealism in chapter eleven (pages 202-203) is that if such a philosophy were true, one could not understand it without knowing it to be true. Hegel, in effect, proposes his philosophy as a replacement for proposition X. The fact that one can understand the metaphysics of Absolute Spirit without knowing it to be true conclusively shows that it is false. Similarly, inasmuch as D could not be understood without being known to obtain necessarily—if D were known in itself, not merely by the relations of other things to it—it is impossible to describe D in itself by using predicables which do not apply necessarily to that to which they do apply.

What D is not

Any proposition which cannot be affirmed as true must be denied. Thus, in speaking of D all of the expressions which cannot be used to say what D is—since they signify predicables which can be used in picking out contingent states of affairs—should be used in saying what D *is not.* In this use these expressions keep precisely the same meaning they have when they are used to express contingent propositions which are true.

Thus D is not a body, nor is it matter or energy, nor does it evolve or change in any way, nor is it spatial or temporal. D is not numerically one, it has no size or shape, it is neither a whole nor a part. D has no sensible properties, no dispositions or capacities such as are found in natural things. In the precise sense in which entities in the world can be self-identical, equal, like, above, or outside, D is none of these. D is not doing anything; it is not undergoing anything.

As mentioned already, it must be kept in mind that all of these negative predications are made in such a way that the expression used to say what D is not is used in exactly the same sense in which it would be used to say what something contingent is.

Moreover, the exclusion of any predicable does not mean that its contrary can be applied to D. This point is not easy to keep in mind consistently, because normally if one says of something that it is not F, one supposes and often suggests that it is G.

Such a supposition is one obstacle to an initial grasp of the irreducible distinction of the four orders. For example, naive naturalism results from the difficulty of overcoming the common-sense view that to be is to-be-out-there-now, an entity in nature. It is less naive, but equally erroneous, to suppose that the negation of physical characteristics in respect to D implies that D should be characterized in a positive way by what applies to entities in one of the other orders—for example, the existential.

Thus, if D does not change, it does not follow that D is standing still, fixed, inert, or rigid. If D is not a substance, it is no more a process or an event. However, if D is not a body, it does not follow that D is a mind. If D is not an individual, it is not a class. If D is not above or outside, this does not mean it is the ground of being or that it is immanent in everything as power or life. Furthermore, D does not know, love, act justly, or become angry as human persons do; still, one should not infer that D is ignorant or lacking knowledge as something subhuman lacks it, nor that D lacks love as a stone lacks it, nor that D is unjust or immoral or amoral, nor that D lacks feeling and concern.

None of these negations should be taken as indicating that D itself is a mere idea, nor that it is a negation, nor that it is a logical entity of any sort—all these also fall within experience. The exclusion of these, at the same time, does not mean that D is unintelligible, or false, or irrational. D is not an action, a community, or an institution; but this does not mean that D is an omission, an autonomous individual, or something spontaneous and lawless. D is not a symbol, a tool, or a product; but neither is it useless, pointless, or raw material.

There is a sense in which a human person knows in experience of himself what it is to be a subject, a moral person, a creative principle; D is none of these, nor any of their contraries which come to mind.

Someone might object that if one cannot affirm of D some of the contrary opposites of predicables which are denied of it, then one has no knowledge of D at all. To say of something that it is *nonred* is informative if one means that it is some other color. But to say, simply as a contradictory opposite of something's being red, that *whatever it is,* it is *not* red is altogether uninform-

ative. One does not know whether what is being talked about is the virtue of justice, the number two, or the assertion of a proposition. None of these is red. Something of which one knows only that any proposition which tries to describe it is false is an unknown entity.

In one sense this objection is correct. The denial of all the propositions of the form *D is F* does not provide any positive description of *D*. But in another sense the objection is mistaken. Since one must deny every proposition which applies to *D* any predicable applicable to a contingent entity, a conjunction of all these negative statements forms a description of *D* which distinguishes *D* from each and every entity given in experience. However little one knows of *D*, one knows that it is not like anything contingent. *D* is something wholly diverse from all the entities with which man is familiar.

This conclusion is relevant to the new theism. The new theism has arisen at least partially because of dissatisfaction with traditional views which did not include a complete statement of what *D* is not. If one says that *D* is changeless and fails to add a negation of the contraries of "changing," one suggests that *D* is static and inert. If one says that *D* is not a particular, limited entity and fails to add a negation of the contraries of particularity and limitation, one suggests that *D* is abstract and indefinite. If one says that *D* is not affected by man's sufferings and stops with this negation, one strongly suggests that *D* is cold and unconcerned about evil.

One must negate of *D* *everything* descriptive of entities given in experience. One must not reserve a certain set of descriptive predicables, thinking that *D* is like contingent entities in a few respects, which can be included in a minimum description of *D*. Any such minimum description is not only inadequate to *D*—which is what is usually admitted—but is altogether false of *D*.

Kant imagines that although one cannot speak of God theoretically, it is possible to speak accurately of him in the language of practical reason. This position is erroneous. Descriptive language drawn from the existential order is no more adequate for talking about God than is descriptive language drawn from the physical order. Both languages are suited for talk about what is not *D*. What is not *D* need not obtain. *D* is a necessary being. Much contemporary theology follows Kant's lead and attempts to translate talk about God into existential language. But this language only appears to be better suited for discourse about God. In reality, an existential description of a necessary entity is informative only if it is either negative or relational—that is, if it indicates how other things are related to *D*.

Finally, metapredicables such as *obtains* and *causes* are usually limited, so that they signify the obtaining or causing appropriate to one or another of the four orders. *D* does not obtain and does not cause in any mode in which any contingent entity obtains or causes. To the extent that "exists" suggests

one or another mode of contingent obtaining, one ought not to say that D exists.

In other words, if D is God, then God does not exist, unless "exist" is used in a sense quite distinct from the senses it has when one speaks of objects existing in the physical world, of human persons existing through freedom, and so on. Those who believe in the reality of God yet say that God does not exist seem to me to be making this point. However, if they go on to claim that one should say that God is present or that he is eternal instead of saying that he exists, they offer a suggestion which easily creates further confusion. An uncaused entity is no more present than absent, no more everlasting than evanescent. Of course, "eternal" not only means everlasting; it also means "nontemporal." In the latter sense D is eternal, for D is neither past, present, nor future. Yet D is not timeless as truth and love are timeless.

16: What Can Be Affirmed of the Uncaused Entity

An uncaused entity obtains

The argument of the preceding chapter shows that no expression can be used in an affirmation about *D* in the same sense in which it is used in a descriptive statement about a contingent entity. All too often, attempts to talk about *D*—God, a first principle of reality, or whatever—stop short of a full statement of what must be denied of *D* for fear that a complete way of negation would leave nothing whatever to talk about. However, only a thorough-going way of negation compels one to make clear how one can affirm anything of *D*.

One can correctly affirm something of *D* if the expression one uses takes on a special sense, one proper to *D*. Expressions which can be used in affirmations about *D* take on a special sense because their meaning shifts to accommodate what *D* is. But what is *D*? No positive description of it is possible. How can the meaning of expressions used to make affirmations about *D* shift to accommodate what *D* is if one does not know what *D* is?

What *D* is in itself—that is, apart from the relations of contingent states of affairs to *D*—is unknown. But the conjunction of all the negative statements one can make about *D* does provide a definite description of *D*. *D* is not bodily, not mental, not changing, not static, and so on—in short, not-like-anything-within-experience. This description distinguishes *D* from everything contingent, allows one to refer to *D*, and serves in place of a proper name of *D*. Thus, there is something to which expressions used in affirmations about *D* can and must conform—not to what *D* is in itself, but to what *D* is *not*.

Sometimes *D* is said to be the "wholly other," the "transcendent," and

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"the holy." Such expressions might be proposed as ones suited for use in affirmations about *D*. If "wholly other" means that *D cannot* be said to be whatever contingent entities are said to be, this expression is appropriate, but nothing is affirmed.

The same is true of "transcendent" if it is used to mean that *D* is *not* given in experience and *cannot* be described in the language used to describe experienced entities. "Holy" has a richer meaning than the other expressions, but part of what it seems to mean is the otherness of *D*. That is said to be "holy" which is set apart from immediate concerns centering upon experienced entities. Thus "holy" also can express what *D* is not.

However, "wholly other," "transcendent," and "holy" are expressions which can be used in *affirmations* about contingent entities. If one uses these expressions in affirmations about *D* in the same sense as they are used in affirmations about contingent entities, then the propositions involving *D* expressed by such affirmations should be denied. It is a mistake to suppose that some special set of expressions, even ones used in religious contexts, can be used to give a minimum description of *D*. Man is wholly other than the rest of creation; what is unknown is transcendent to understanding; the sacred dimension of human existence is holy. Using these expressions as they are used in the preceding statements, *D* is not wholly other, is not transcendent, and is not holy.

No linguistic expression which signifies a predicable which cannot be applied to *D* in a true proposition can take on a sense suited to making an affirmation about *D* merely by shifting its meaning to accommodate what *D* is not. Such a shift in meaning would be total; nothing of the original meaning would remain. For example, if one says that the entity which is not-like-anything-within-experience is a body, either the word "body" loses its meaning altogether or else it takes on a sense in some other way than by shifting its meaning to fit that of which it is said.

However, metapredicables do not have meaning in the same way predicables do, and so metapredicables can take on sense by shifting to accommodate that to which they are applied. Metapredicables do not provide any descriptive content for propositions picking out states of affairs within experience. Hence, expressions signifying metapredicables need not wholly lose their meaning if one uses them in affirmations about *D*. *Obtains* and *causes* are metapredicables; the former a nonrelational and the latter a relational metaconcept. In this chapter I consider only nonrelational metapredicables. I consider the relational type in chapter seventeen, for these not only raise special problems but also open up additional possibilities for forming true propositions referring to *D*.

I explained above (pages 241 and 246) that the meaning of "obtains" partly depends upon that of which it is said. Physical states of affairs obtain if

something exists or happens in the world; the obtaining of the intentional is in something *being thought;* the obtaining of the existential is in something *being chosen;* the obtaining of the cultural is in something *being used.*

However, the meaning of "obtains" is not reducible to any or all of the various modes in which states of affairs belonging to each of the orders obtain. As I explained in chapter nine (pages 177-179), the obtaining of states of affairs which do obtain is a factor—distinct from what they are—by which propositions which pick them out are made to be true. Of course, a state of affairs can obtain without being picked out by any proposition; if a proposition did pick it out, its obtaining would make the proposition true.

Thus obtaining is a counterpart of truth, but obtaining must not be confused with truth. One can say that a state of affairs which obtains *holds true,* but "true" in this case does not refer to propositional knowledge; "holds true" simply means "obtains." The obtaining of states of affairs is not experienced; one knows obtaining *in* propositional knowing, when one posits as other than one's knowing the state of affairs picked out by the proposition which one affirms.

Thus when one says that an entity which is not-like-anything-within-experience obtains, "obtains" takes on meaning from that to which it is applied by shifting its sense to accommodate what D is. The description of D by way of negation does not evacuate the sense of the metapredicable *obtains,* because this metaconcept is not directly based upon the content of experience. The way of negation denies of D all the properties which one normally thinks of as conditions for the obtaining of something, because one *normally* thinks of contingent entities which only obtain in one or another of the orders. But these conditions are alternatives to one another. Physical entities, for example, exist somewhere and at some time; propositions and negations do not. Thus, the conditions which must be satisfied for any contingent state of affairs to obtain do not wholly determine what *obtains* signifies.

Still, if one is to say meaningfully that D obtains, one must be in a position to posit the content of a true proposition which refers to D. One gets into this position precisely by a reasoning process, since D is not given in experience. The argument proposed in part two is such a reasoning process. Therefore, the very meaning of "obtains" used in affirmations about the uncaused cause (Dc) and the uncaused entity (D) depends upon and emerges from the argument.

The argument proposed in part two begins from the obtaining of states of affairs which are given in experience. These are contingent; they also have contingent causes. Contingent causes are themselves caused. It is possible and reasonable to ask why these cause-effect states of affairs obtain and to expect an answer which does not simply raise the same question once more. At this point the argument concludes to Dc, which requires nothing to obtain except

what is included in itself, and to *D,* which requires nothing to obtain except to be the state of affairs which it is.

All of the propositions in the argument up to the conclusion have meanings which were clarified either in the second section of chapter four or in the second section of chapter five. However, prior to the conclusion of the argument "obtains" is not used in the precise sense in which it is used in the conclusion. How can a new meaning be generated *in* an argument?

This objection might seem formidable, even insurmountable. Critics of reasoning toward God often implicitly assume or explicitly state that reasoning does not generate any knowledge which could not in principle be achieved without reasoning. If reason is as limited as such critics suppose, no meaning which one did not have at the beginning of an argument could emerge from the argument—except, perhaps, to the extent that meanings might be divided or combined without being transformed. This view of reasoning belongs to empiricism and to critical philosophy; I criticized it in the fourth section of chapter seven, where I explained how one knows causes *in* reasoning.

Hegel and metaphysical relativism accept an opposite assumption—that reasoning can transform every meaning. My criticism of these positions in chapters eleven and thirteen indicates that reason must accept limits; not everything can be reduced to unity, since some incompatible positive intelligibilities cannot be wholly preserved in the synthesis of a higher view.

When the argument of part two reaches the conclusion that an uncaused cause (Dc) obtains, the words in which the conclusion is expressed already have been used in the argument. "Cause," "not caused," and "obtains" are not new words, but "obtains" and "cause" do have new senses, because they are being used in a peculiar context—the context of the argument and of "not caused." The way of negation further clarifies this context by making clear that D not only is not caused but also is not-like-anything-within-experience. Thus, the word "obtains" takes on new meaning, which emerges from the argument, when it is used to affirm that an uncaused cause obtains.

One ought not to be surprised that when expressions are combined in a new way, they mutually modify one another's meanings. The meaning of at least some expressions is a function of their use in particular contexts. Words constantly gain new meanings in this way. If they did not, language would be much poorer than it is. English would lack "genes," "quanta," "infinite numbers," "no-fault insurance," "superego," "astronauts," "fem-lib movement," and so on. In reasoning one knows causes; language is extended to express what one learns in reasoning, just as it is extended to express what one learns by experience.

In reasoning one knows what one could not know otherwise; one puts two and two together and comes up with something unexpected. Poetry also depends upon this fact. If words could not change in unexpected ways and take on surprising new meanings by being put into novel contexts, they

would have no poetic use. But it would be a mistake to think that only poetry generates new meanings by putting existing expressions into novel contexts. Living language in general is poetic; many expressions yield more or less easily to the pressure of reason.

Normally one does not say that anything obtains except to point out the contrast with what one supposes might have been: it might not have obtained.[1] "Obtain" cannot be used with this usual connotation in an affirmation about D. Why, then, might one not say that D does not obtain? As I explained at the end of chapter fifteen, one can say that D does not obtain if "obtain" is used in any of the senses it has in affirmations about contingent entities. D does not obtain as a physical, intentional, existential, or cultural state of affairs.

However, the context of the argument through which D is posited alters the meaning of "obtains"; the usual connotation of *obtains—might not have obtained*—is altered. I say "altered," because *might not* remains relevant as a function of the argument and of its contingent starting point. The argument might not have been thought out. If it had not been, "obtains" would not acquire the meaning which emerges from the argument. Of course, this fact bears not upon D but only upon human knowledge of D. What is more important, the argument begins from a contingent state of affairs—someone's reading a sentence. This state of affairs might not obtain. If it does not, then the conclusion of the argument remains hypothetical.

When I formulated the argument in chapter four (pages 53 and 58), I stressed this point by using a future contingent state of affairs—someone's reading a sentence tomorrow—during the course of the argument, and replacing it with a past state of affairs—someone's having written the book—only at the very end of the argument. Beginning with a possible state of affairs, the argument proceeded exactly as it would if one began with a state of affairs which does obtain. The *meaning* of the conclusion emerges from the argument in either case. But if the contingent starting point obtains, then Dc and D also are posited. The extrapropositional beginning of the argument leads to an extrapropositional state of affairs at the conclusion.

Thus the understanding of the meaning of "uncaused entity" and the assertion that there is an uncaused entity remain distinct. Although D is a necessary being, this necessity is not logical necessity, as I explained in chapter seven (pages 129-133). One can say that D *might not* obtain, provided that "might" expresses only logical possibility.

Other affirmations and some comparisons

One can make certain other affirmations about D by using expressions which take on new meaning in much the same way "obtains" does. Such

expressions, including "something," "one," "true," and "good," can be used of entities in all four orders. All of them express a contrast which is constant in schema but variable in content, depending upon that to which they are applied.

"Something" and "one" are closely related. "Something" contrasts the distinct with the merged, the part with the larger whole. "One" contrasts the undivided with the divided. Something is one considered in contrast with what it includes; one thing contrasted with another thing is something. Two somethings become one thing if they are not distinguished from each other.

The physically one is an individual; it is something since it is one of many individuals. One bee is something in a beehive which unifies the somethings within it. One mountain is something in one range, which also is a larger something.

The intentionally one is not an individual. To be sure of one thing is to know the truth of a certain proposition, if no more; to know something about a certain matter is to know one proposition or another about it, but to seek more. General understanding is something, while more adequate knowledge unites partial insights. "Something" contrasts with "everything" as particular with universal.

The one of the existential world is neither an individual nor a universal. A person does something rather than do nothing; one can't do everything. But the something one person does is a contribution to a wider cause which is accomplished in the course of a whole life or by a whole community of persons working together.

The world of culture uses "one" and "something" in yet another way. A single word is a sign, not a token; thus one can use the same word over and over. Each token is something. Again, a new invention is "quite something"; many copies of the same design are one product.

"One" and "something" can be used in affirmations about D.

Whatever can be said of anything else must—in the sense in which it is said properly of other entities—be denied of D. D is distinct from everything else man knows. For this reason D is eminently something; it is a distinct knowable entity. Apart from knowledge, D and contingent entities are not reducible to a single principle distinct from D itself, since D is uncaused. One might be tempted to say that D is part of "reality," but *reality* also is a metapredicable which shifts its meaning to conform to that to which it is applied.

"One" also can be used in affirmations about D. The description of D built up by the way of negation is definite. As I will explain in chapter seventeen, D also can be called "one" by relational predication.

What satisfies expectations is called "true." A true oasis is not a mirage. A true proposition is not false; experience verifies it, or it generates no incoher-

ence, or it opens the way to the unfolding of knowledge, or it enables one to
do things. A true husband or wife is faithful; the love for which one hopes is
not refused and one's own love is not betrayed. A true dollar bill is not
counterfeit, and a true leather binding is not cheap plastic; the true gives the
service one expects.

D also can be said to be true. D does not *appear* at all; thus D cannot
appear to be other than it is. One begins an inquiry expecting to find a
principle; D satisfies that expectation. The proposition (X) that D obtains is
necessary and cannot be false. Moreover, since D itself is necessary, it must
hold true. D cannot lack what it needs to provide what contingent entities
require to obtain. D satisifes the expectation of contingent entities; it is a true
cause.

Whatever meets the norms of its order is as it ought to be; what is as it
ought to be is called "good." As I explained in chapter fourteen (pages
237-238), normativity is closely linked to reason, to order, and to causal
necessity. To be good is to be complete, to be in order, and to be fulfilled by
whatever complement the order provides. "Good" does not have its usual
sense when it is affirmed of D; the contrast implied by "good" must be
altered. D, being unique, is its own paradigm; it cannot fail to be what it
should be. Since D requires nothing to obtain other than to be what it is, D
cannot be incomplete. The causal necessity contingent entities share in by
being in order, D does not need; it is necessary in itself.

Moreover, if one must deny all propositions attributing the perfections of
contingent entities to D, one also must exclude every imperfection—every
lack and limitation—of contingent entities from D. Thus one can say that D is
perfectly good.

It would take me too far afield if I were to compare and contrast the
preceding account of affirmations about D with various other theories of
God-talk. However, a few remarks might be helpful.

A common formulation of traditional thomism, but not of Thomas Aqui-
nas himself, is that existence belongs to God by proper proportionality:
God's existence is to God as the creature's existence is to the creature. A
common objection to this formulation is that since God and his existence are
unknown, the proportionality is uninformative. In the context of reasoning
toward Dc, however, one reaches a conclusion which makes reference to a
theoretical entity which a believer might wish to identify as God, and in this
context both "cause" and "obtains" take on new meaning. Thus, a supporter
of proper proportionality might defend his position by proceeding as I have
in the present chapter.

One of the objections to analogy of proper proportionality is that such
analogy is not clearly distinct from metaphor. Metaphor does involve shift in
meaning which is somewhat similar to that which I have been describing.

Interestingly, some recent work in philosophy of science stresses that new meanings do emerge in theoretical argument. Mary Hesse, for example, remarks that

> ... rationality consists just in the continuous adaptation of our language to our expanding world, and metaphor is one of the chief means by which this is accomplished.[2]

However, what is usually called "metaphor" arises in the stretching of the meanings of *descriptive* expressions. Therefore, metaphor is not involved in the use of the expressions with which I am concerned in the present chapter. Metapredicables are not descriptive to begin with; expressions signifying metapredicables cannot be used to indicate a way of seeing things, since ways of seeing have to do with what is describable.

Dr. Ian Ramsey develops the idea of disclosure models in discourse concerning God.[3] There are many parallels between what he says and what I have been saying, especially in respect to the relationship between the way of negation and the shift in the meaning of expressions used in making affirmations about *D*. Dr. Ramsey's theory has been criticized in respect to several points which I also consider unsatisfactory.[4] I think that his idea of disclosure models is a valuable insight, but I would wish to articulate this insight by reference to argumentation from which meaning emerges. Otherwise, the meaning of talk about God cannot be shown to be reasonably derived from ordinary langauge used to talk about experienced entities.

17: Relational Predications about the Uncaused Entity

Relational predications about experienced entities

In this chapter I try to clarify the least understood and probably the most important of the ways of speaking of the uncaused entity (D). The argument in part two arrives at D as a state of affairs included in the uncaused cause (Dc) of the obtaining of an experienced, contingent state of affairs—someone's having written a book. But the argument could begin as well from any contingent state of affairs other than Dc itself. Thus, the primary question to be answered in the present chapter is, What does it mean to say that D—by way of Dc—*causes* any and every other state of affairs? But before explaining how this relational predication can be made of D, I must try to make clear different ways in which relational predications are made of experienced entities. Also, after I explain what it means to say that D *causes*, I will indicate how this predication opens the way for others, including some in which descriptive expressions shift meaning so that they can be used in making affirmations about D.

Some relationships are based upon a real unity between two distinct entities. Each modifies the other; there is mutual dependence and neither can be thought of or spoken about without implying the other. Examples are the physical relationship between male and female, the intentional relationship between name and predicable, the existential relationship between friends, or the cultural relationship among parts of the system of objective culture—for example, lock and key, the lock-key combination and a door, the locked door and a wall, and so on. Relationships of this sort obviously are diverse in the diverse orders; in fact, these diverse relationships in part *constitute* the orders

in their diversity, since each order is a unity made up of a plurality of states of affairs related to one another.

Yet despite the diversity of such relations all are alike in one important respect. In each of these cases there are two entities which are unified in the following way. In some respect the two are very like each other; each is something by itself; they can exist apart. Male and female diversify individuals of a single organic type; each individual is a distinct organism; their births and deaths need not coincide. Similarly, one term of a proposition contains an insight distinct from the other; perhaps in the first instance one is gained apart from the other, but they are alike in being concepts. Friends must be similar in commitments; each must be a person who lives his own life, and could do so without the other. Parts of objective cultural complexes are produced or developed by similar processes; each part has its own design and character, and parts often are replaceable.

In another respect two entities related in the manner under consideration have definite differences which they can be seen to have even apart from the relationship itself. For example, a child sees that boys and girls are built differently and wonders why. For a concept to be able to be a name it must be formed in such a way that it can *stand for* what is; for a concept to be a predicable it must be able to characterize what is *such* (concepts may have both capacities, just as individuals of some species are bisexual). Those who are to be friends must differ in temperament or ability or the like; these differences allow them to give something to each other. The parts of complexes of objective culture also are different; the key, for instance, not only is shaped differently from the lock, but the key is a rigid unit, while the lock has many parts, and some parts of the lock move while others are firmly attached to one another and to the door.

The similarity and the difference together set up a situation in which the two entities can be fully themselves only to the extent that they become a single principle. Male and female organisms can exercise all of their functions only if they become a single principle of generation. Name and predicable are knowledge of that of which they are concepts only if they become elements of a proposition in which a state of affairs is known. Friends can fully develop their individual personalities only by sharing in community with each other. The lock and the key serve their purpose only by being used in the same act.

Because the full reality of both terms of such relationships depends upon their unity with each other, the full understanding of either depends upon a simultaneous and equal insight into the other. Up to a point one might know and refer to an entity involved in such a relationship without becoming aware of its relativity or mentioning that aspect, for there are nonrelative aspects which can be considered by themselves. But in considering any experienced

entity a point is reached at which certain characteristics which have been discovered are not wholly intelligible by themselves. Such characteristics become fully intelligible only if they are found to belong to the entity insofar as it is, or is suited to be, included in a larger unity.

The unity in diversity of that which is ordered, together with the possibility and limits of knowing the relata in distinction from one another, is the foundation for reasoning. One can and does come to know *in* rational discourse, because one grasps at once the distinctness, the disposition to one another, and also the unity of the relata. One makes new discoveries in *reasoning* because one relatum points to the other, and in cases such as those now under consideration one relatum even indicates some of the characteristics of the other.

Let us imagine that the fem-lib movement ends in the elimination of males, not only from personkind but also from all other animal species. Reproduction could be carried on by cloning—an artificial technique by which females can reproduce themselves in individuals like younger identical twins without male interference. In this gentle new world let us also imagine that the previous existence of males was stricken from every book and record, was never mentioned, and eventually was forgotten. Still, a brilliant biologist might observe that there were certain peculiar features shared by all those organisms which could reproduce only by cloning. Looking for an explanation of these features and reflecting on the facts of evolution, the biologist might be able to develop a fairly conclusive demonstration that there must at some time in the distant past have been a different type of person. The characteristics of that other type could be worked out in some degree of detail. The vanishing of the type would be something of a mystery, perhaps, but its extinction might be explained by its natural inferiority.

This bit of science fiction can be paralleled by examples in the other orders. If an anthropologist of the future—after locks are no longer necessary and their use is forgotten—were to discover a lock without discovering any key, a study of the lock could lead to a hypothesis as to what it was for, and to the prediction that very likely another item would be discovered; this item could be described with considerable accuracy. If one discovered a bundle of letters which a historically well-known person wrote to a friend about whom nothing is otherwise known, one could guess many characteristics of the friend from the letters, even if they never said anything directly about the person to whom they are written. If one knows certain properties of a concept which can serve as a predicable, one can infer properties of the concept which could serve with it in a proposition as a name. For example, if the predicable is the determination of a precise time—at 7:20 p.m. on November 23, 1963—then the name must be of a particular event; if the

predicable is a fixed measure of continuous quantity—six feet, seven inches—the name must be of an object which is more or less a solid.

Relations such as I have been describing are extrapropositional and irreducible to what is not relative in respect to both terms; in reasoning one can come to know such relations. These are points it would be unnecessary to argue were there not philosophical positions to the contrary. These positions, empiricism and critical philosophy, have been examined in chapters six to nine. But another difficulty must be noticed here. There is a natural but mistaken tendency to suppose that all relations are of the type already described—that is, mutual-dependence relations. Thus, children at a certain age seem to suppose that what they do not see is invisible; they enjoy playing peek-a-boo, some psychologists think, on the assumption that what they do not see cannot "see" them.

But, as the example of seeing suggests, not all relations involve mutual dependence. Seeing depends on what is seen; one who can see requires the visible to fully realize that capacity. But the visible does not seem to gain or lose anything by being seen. Similarly, an animal which is looking for water depends on the water which it seeks; the water *which is sought* does not depend on the animal. Again, thought as such is related to something thought about, but what is thought about is not in any respect fulfilled by this fact. Commitment to a value depends on the worth of that to which one is committed, but the value does not become worthwhile because one commits oneself to it. Even use does not necessarily transform what is used. One uses the North Star to steer by, but this means of orientation is not affected by one's use of it.

In each of these relations one term of the relationship—the functions of seeing, seeking, thinking, committing, steering a course—is relational through and through, although each of these functions or acts belongs to something, such as a human person, which is not purely relational. At the same time the other term of the relationship—the visible, the sought, the thought about, the value, the means of orientation—is not correspondingly relational through and through. As with the other relations, two entities are necessary for unity and fulfillment, but the need and the realization are on one side; the other neither needs nor is fulfilled. It must be noticed, however, that the nondependent terms of relations such as these must have certain characteristics; the visible has certain physical properties, the sought after can satisfy a need if it is found, the thought about must have what it takes to make itself known, the value must have what makes it worthy, and the means of orientation must be accessible, stable, and so on.

Relational words and concepts always work in complementary pairs. Male and female, name and predicable, friend and friend, lock and key—the

expressions are used as complements and defined together. The same is true of expressions of the other sort of relations: seeing and visible, seeking and the needed, thought and object, commitment and value, steering and guiding star. But the second set of pairs differs from the first to the extent that the two sorts of relations differ. The first set of pairs of expressions indicate mutual dependence; the second set of pairs of expressions indicate a one-sided dependence.

One must think of both terms of any relation as reciprocally related, and linguistic expressions of relations indicate as much. But the relational predicable applied to one term in relations of one-sided dependence does not indicate relativity in the nondependent term itself. If one says that a certain comet is visible, one posits a potential relation of seeing to it, and one indicates that the comet has what it takes—sufficient output of light—to be an object-term of the relation of the seeing. But the comet has that characteristic in itself; if no eye existed as yet, the comet could streak through the universe, in all respects just as it now does, but it could not be called "visible." Yet as soon as one thinks of seeing the comet one must think and say that it is "visible."

"One must think and say"—does this phrase indicate a sort of illusion? No, to be an object-term of a relationship of one-sided dependence is an aspect of the reality of such entities, but it is not anything other in them than what they would be if they were not involved in the relationship. For example, whatever the visible requires to be visible is an aspect of its reality. However, this aspect is not affected in any way by the fact that there are eyes to see.

The need for each other of the relata in a relation of one-sided dependence is not mutual. The visible, the sought, and so on are not completed and fulfilled in relationships of this sort as seeing, seeking, and so on are. Moreover, causal reasoning proceeds from the dependent side in *discovering* such relationships, although once they are discovered one can learn more about the dependent term of the relation by studying the nondependent term.

A clear distinction between the two types of relational situations and the two modes of relational predication is vital in metaphysics. The ignoring or misinterpretation of dependence in relational states of affairs is an important aspect of empiricism and critical philosophy. The assumption that all relational states of affairs involve mutual dependence is characteristic of idealistic philosophies, such as Hegel's, and also appears in all forms of contemporary relativism, with respect to the inner structure of any regions of intelligibility they admit. This is why idealism tries to save the objectivity of knowledge and value by identifying knowing and choosing with the whole of reality. This also is why all the forms of metaphysical relativism fail to save the objectivity of knowledge and value; the relativist holds that thinking and

willing both determine and are determined by what is thought and willed within some limited situation, and no two situations are really alike.

How the uncaused entity is said to "cause"

Causes is a metapredicable just as *obtains* is; hence, much of what I said in chapter sixteen with respect to *obtains* also applies to *causes*. "Obtains" does not express a descriptive predicable based on direct experience; neither does "causes." "Obtains" shifts its meaning to adapt to that of which it is said; so does "causes." The obtaining of entities in the diverse orders differs; the modes of causality constitutive of the various orders also differ. Obtaining is an extrapropositional counterpart of the knowledge of the truth of propositions; causing is an extrapropositional counterpart of the reasoning in which the order of things is known.

Neither "obtain" nor "cause" can be used in the same sense in affirmations about an uncaused cause (Dc) as they are in affirmations about other contingent states of affairs. However, the common schema of both metapredicables can be detached from the variable content. The argument developed in part two can be understood precisely as detaching the common schema and ultilizing it in an attempt to render intelligible the otherwise unintelligible obtaining of contingent states of affairs which do obtain. The second section of chapter five argues that there is a *rational* necessity, although there is no *logical* necessity, to make this extension. If the argument is sound, as I now assume, just as "obtains" emerges from the argument having taken on a new meaning, so does "causes."

Without repeating the argument of part two, I recall that the application of the causal schema rested on the following considerations. Contingent states of affairs within experience do obtain although they need not. Their obtaining is not identical with what they are; thus there is a gap of the sort which leads to a demand for explanation—that is, for finding an intelligible link which would close the gap. The obtaining of contingent states of affairs cannot be explained by saying that all such states of affairs together are self-sufficient. An explanation is possible only if there is something distinct from experienced, contingent states of affairs. It is reasonable to demand and to expect an explanation; the objections of empiricism and of critical philosophy do not show otherwise. Therefore, one must posit a factor which would explain the obtaining of contingent states of affairs. The explanatory factor must be an uncaused cause (Dc); causing what is contingent, Dc itself is contingent; however, being uncaused, Dc obtains because it includes D, a noncontingent state of affairs—a necessary entity—which obtains merely because it is the state of affairs which it is.

The application of the causal schema through the argument can be summed up either from the side of Dc or from the side of the obtaining of the contingent states of affairs which Dc is posited to explain, although the causal relation is discovered in arguing from effect to cause. One can express the relationship, considering it from the side of the effect, by saying that contingent states of affairs which do obtain rather than not require something other than themselves to obtain, and this requirement is fulfilled by Dc. Conversely, one can say that Dc satisfies what other contingent states of affairs require to obtain, assuming that other causal conditions are given—but the obtaining of the latter also must be referred to Dc.

There is some analogy between Dc's causality and that of other causes, for the schema of causality is common. There is always a danger that the analogy will be overextended. For example, physical causes bring about effects which are or involve changes, and physical causes always presuppose something to work upon. A flame heats the water in the kettle; this is a change; moreover, the flame does not heat water unless someone puts water into the kettle. Physical causes themselves also are effects. In terms of the distinction developed earlier in the present chapter physical causality is a mutual-dependence relationship. Dc does not bring about changing as such, but Dc causes contingent obtaining, which of course includes the obtaining of states of affairs involving change. Dc does not presuppose anything to work upon, for what does not obtain cannot be presupposed by the causing of its obtaining. Finally, the causality of Dc cannot involve mutual dependence or Dc itself would be caused.

One could carry out similar analyses of analogies drawn between Dc and causes according to modes other than the physical. In each case similarities projected on the basis of what is proper to any particular mode of causality are misleading with respect to Dc and must be denied of it. This is an essential part of the way of negation. The analogy between other causes and Dc only holds to the extent that the causal schema applies. Many objections against the causality of Dc proceed in one of the two following forms. Sometimes it is argued that if Dc is a cause, then it must have properties F, G, and H, where "F," "G," and "H" signify properties of causes of a certain mode; Dc cannot be admitted to have these properties; therefore Dc is not a cause. The answer is to deny that Dc must have the properties stated—for example, *being prior in time, being mutually dependent, being a merely possible value,* and so on. Sometimes it is argued—with more sophistication—that if Dc truly is a cause, it must have one of two or more disjunctive sets of properties; Dc cannot consistently have any of these sets of properties; therefore Dc is not a cause. This approach at least recognizes that there are many modes of causality, but it erroneously assumes that modes of causality are restricted *a priori.* Of course, the very fact that there are various modes of causality argues against

the *a priori* restriction of the causal schema to the modes which are recognized. The answer to arguments of this sort, which arise mainly from empiricism, is that Dc is a cause without fulfilling the criteria for being a cause in any mode of causality other than that proper to itself.

These considerations help to make clear why to affirm that Dc is a cause is not to describe Dc. But one might suppose that knowledge of the effect of Dc must make possible some description of Dc. Ordinarily one can discern some characteristics of a cause by examining its effect. But the case of Dc is different, since the effect of Dc simply is the obtaining of other contingent states of affairs. Because *obtains* is not a descriptive concept, knowing that Dc causes other states of affairs to obtain does not provide a description of Dc.

Of course, one does know that whatever Dc is like, it has what it takes to make contingent states of affairs obtain. One also knows that for Dc itself to obtain, nothing extrinsic to Dc is required. If Dc needed something else to obtain, then Dc would not be uncaused.

In chapter four (pages 56-57) I pointed out that since the obtaining of contingent states of affairs is contingent, Dc also is contingent. If Dc's causing were not contingent, then Dc's effects also would be noncontingent. Cause and effect remain correlative, or the schema of causal reasoning is altogether abandoned. I also pointed out that Dc can be uncaused only if it requires nothing not included in itself to obtain. Therefore I posited D, an uncaused entity included in Dc; D requires nothing to obtain other than to be the state of affairs which it is.

This conclusion of the argument naturally leads to the following important question: If Dc is contingent because it is the cause of contingent states of affairs, then why is D not likewise contingent, since Dc requires this included state of affairs, D, to obtain?

The solution to this problem is that Dc is contingent *only because* it is involved in cause-effect states of affairs such as that by which one comes to know Dc. As a cause of contingent obtaining, Dc must be contingent, because Dc might not have effects and without effects Dc would not be a cause. To be *what* it is in the causal relation, Dc must have something other than itself—effects. But to obtain as cause of these effects, Dc requires nothing not included in itself; otherwise it would not be uncaused. The relationship between Dc and the contingent states of affairs which Dc causes to obtain cannot be one of mutual dependence; both terms of a relationship of mutual dependence are caused as well as causing.

Dc's causing of contingent states of affairs to obtain is contingent, since there is no cause without its effects. But Dc also is uncaused. D, the necessary entity posited in Dc to account for Dc's uncaused obtaining, must not be regarded as a state of affairs distinct from Dc apart from the causal state of

affairs in which Dc is involved. If Dc and D are really distinct apart from the causal relationship, then D causes Dc, there is another causal state of affairs including both D and Dc, Dc is not uncaused, and the contingency of Dc will be transitive to D. In other words, to assume a distinction between Dc and D apart from the causal relationship in which Dc is involved would be to reject the conclusion of the argument in part two and to posit instead an infinite regress of contingent states of affairs, with no unconditional explanation of the obtaining of anything.

Therefore, D and Dc are not distinct from each other aside from the causal relationship in which Dc is involved. If D is a necessary being and Dc is an uncaused cause, the only difference between these two states of affairs is Dc's relation of causality. This relation cannot be grounded in some factor in Dc which is distinct from D. Thus, the *relation* of Dc must be grounded in some factor which is not included in Dc. This factor, however, does not make Dc mutually dependent; it adds nothing to D itself. If it did, Dc would not be an uncaused cause.

The relationship of Dc to the contingent states of affairs which Dc causes to obtain must be a one-sided dependence relation. Dc does not depend upon its effects; they depend upon it. Dc really causes these effects, just as the object of knowledge really causes one to know it. But Dc's causing is nothing in it other than D—its being as a necessary entity, just as an object's making itself known is nothing in it other than its being what it is.

In other words, the relationship between other contingent states of affairs and Dc makes all the difference to contingent states of affairs—they would not obtain but for this relation. But this relation makes no difference to what Dc is apart from the relation. Dc would not be an uncaused cause if the relation made any difference to it. D in and of itself has whatever is necessary for it to be the cause in this cause-effect relation; it acquires nothing new in being so; but considered as cause, D is Dc. D is distinct from Dc only inasmuch as contingent states of affairs require Dc; just as light is visible only inasmuch as there are eyes to see. Visibility adds nothing to light over and above what it is if there are no eyes; causing adds nothing to a necessary entity over and above what it is if there are no contingent states of affairs.

The statement that the causal relation of Dc to its effects makes no difference to what D is aside from this causal relation can be misunderstood. The expression "makes no difference" has many uses in descriptive statements about states of affairs within experience. For example, someone says, "What you want makes no difference to me." The property of *making no difference* is contingent in such cases. All such concepts, if applied to D, form propositions which must be denied. The nondependence of D upon the effects of Dc does not mean that D is unconcerned, detached, indifferent, and so forth. All these concepts also are descriptive. New theists are correct in

rejecting the mistakenly drawn descriptive conclusions of D's metaphysical nondependence; however, it is equally erroneous to use the *contrary* expressions to formulate a description of D as "involved," "concerned," "struggling alongside his creatures," and so on.

Thus, the relation of Dc to contingent states of affairs is not one of mutual dependence; the relation is a one-sided dependence of contingent states of affairs on D, which is Dc only insofar as it is the term of the relation. However, another false supposition must be avoided. The one-sided relationships given as examples in the first section of the present chapter have a property which the relationship of Dc to its contingent effects cannot have.

Ordinarily the causality of the nondependent term of a one-sided relationship is exercised simply by its being what it is, while other states of affairs change so that the nondependent cause sometimes causes and sometimes does not. Light illuminates simply by being light, while reflective objects come and go from its vicinity. What is sought after naturally has the properties for which it is sought, but changes in the conditions of an organism make these properties relevant and desirable.

Dc's causing of the obtaining of other contingent states of affairs should not be understood on this model. Aristotle's God, which is self-thinking thought moving other things by attraction, and the neo-platonic One which emanates automatically—as well as many other versions of gods and metaphysical first principles—are understood in this way. All such models imply a metaphysical dualism; the world of contingent entities or the receptacle of the emanation must exist in their own right. Dc as an uncaused cause cannot depend as cause upon whether certain states of affairs happen, because of some other cause, to obtain.

Thus, although Dc adds nothing to D except the one-sided dependence relation of contingent states of affairs on Dc, this relation is not precisely like other one-sided dependence relations. Nothing apart from Dc brings about states of affairs which then obtain or not by reference to D. If Dc's causing were dependent, it would not be an uncaused cause. Apart from their relation to D, the contingent states of affairs Dc causes are nothing; states of affairs which do not obtain cannot be brought within range of Dc's causality, as reflective objects can be brought into the light and thus be illuminated.

Consequently, the relation of Dc to the contingent states of affairs Dc causes to obtain is similar in one respect to a mutual-dependence and in another respect to a one-sided dependence relation of the familiar sort. Like the one-sided dependence relation, Dc is distinguished from D only by the relation of something else to Dc. Like the mutual dependence relation, Dc makes a difference to its effects without anything other than Dc itself making it be the case that Dc makes this difference.

However, the relationship between Dc and the contingent states of affairs

Dc causes is not the same as either of the usual types of relationship. This conclusion should not be surprising; both of these sorts of relationship are discovered in reasoning about states of affairs within experience. Moreover, both of these sorts of relationship allow one to project something about the cause from one's knowledge of the effect. One knows, at least, *how* the cause is a cause in the usual sorts of relationships. A cause in a mutual-dependence relationship realizes a capacity it has; a cause in a one-sided dependence relationship brings about effects only under conditions it has no part in causing. The way of negation requires that both of these initial descriptions must be denied of *Dc*.

Additional relational predications

The meaning of *Dc* and the assertion that *Dc* obtains emerge from the argument in part two. The argument begins from a particular, contingent state of affairs—someone's reading a sentence or writing a book. However, the peculiarities of the starting point are completely irrelevant to the argument. What is important about the starting point is that it is extrapropositional and contingent. States of affairs in all four orders are contingent. Moreover, the differences in the meaning of "obtains" at the beginning of the argument also make no difference to the outcome.

The point of the argument is to proceed from some contingent state of affairs, of whatever sort, to an uncaused cause which is a necessary being. As I have explained, the meaning of "uncaused," "obtains," and "causes" in the conclusion of the argument depends on the context of the argument. But the meaning of these expressions in the conclusion is independent of what is nonessential to the argument. Thus, no matter what the starting point, the conclusion of the argument has the same meaning. Since one refers to *D* only by way of this conclusion, the argument posits only one *Dc*, not as many uncaused causes as there are contingent states of affairs, modes of contingent obtaining, and so forth.

But "one" here is predicated relationally. "One" has many senses—for example, numerical unity—which are used in affirmations about entities given in experience. As part of the way of negation, one must deny that *D* can be called either "one" or "many" in any of the senses in which these words are used to describe empirical states of affairs.

Still, a relational predication of "one" of *D* is not insignificant. The intentional, the existential, and the cultural orders depend upon man, since intentional entities are by being thought, existential entities are by being chosen, and cultural entities are by something's being used. Man is part of nature and depends upon the rest of it. Nature itself is an order in which

nothing is altogether independent of anything else. Of course, some of the relations of physical causality are indirect and remote; moreover, perhaps there is no one relationship which pervades all of nature. However, nature is one order—the physical order.

If *Dc* causes *any* state of affairs to obtain, then *Dc* must cause all states of affairs which do obtain other than itself to obtain. If *Dc* did not cause some state of affairs to obtain, *Dc*'s causing of a state of affairs dependent on the one which *Dc* did not cause would require something distinct from *Dc* itself. In this case *Dc* would not be an uncaused cause.

Thus *Dc* is not merely the uncaused cause of the obtaining of some particular state of affairs, assuming that other conditions are given independently of *Dc*. *Dc* is the cause of the obtaining of every other state of affairs which obtains. Nothing apart from *Dc* itself is presupposed by *Dc*'s causality, or *Dc* would not be an uncaused cause. As the cause of the obtaining of *everything* other than itself, *Dc* is called "creator."

There are two standard objections to the position that there is a creator. The first is that the conception of creation is unintelligible, since it is nonsense to talk about making things out of nothing. The second is that if the created world is really distinct from the creator, then creation does not totally depend upon the creator, while if it is not really distinct, it is not contingent.

The answer to the first objection is that in one sense the notion of creation is unintelligible, in another it is not. Creation cannot be explained; if it could, *Dc* would not be uncaused. Moreover, very often the charge of unintelligibility simply means that what is called "unintelligible" cannot be placed in some familiar category. Creation, being unique, cannot be placed in any of the other modes of causality, and so creation is not intelligible by assimilation to anything else. However, I have tried to show how "creator" is defined by reference to the argument for the uncaused cause. Assuming the clarifications I offer to be adequate, they show the reasonability of stretching language and bending linguistic rules to the extent that the argument in part two requires. If this is admitted, then "creator" also becomes intelligible through the argument. The popular expression "make something out of nothing" has not entered into any argument I have proposed. However, one can define this expression, in terms of the preceding argument, by saying that *Dc* causes all contingent states of affairs to obtain and that *Dc* requires nothing extrinsic to itself to do so except—in most cases—other states of affairs which *Dc* also causes to obtain.

One can answer the second objection by making distinctions. The created world is really distinct from the creator in the sense that the creator is necessary and the world is not. The created world is not really distinct from the creator, however, in the sense that the created world is in a relation of

one-sided dependence on the creator; this relation involves the world with the creator; and this relation is inseparable from the very obtaining of the contingent. The created world does not *totally* depend upon the creator in the sense that within creation contingent states of affairs also depend upon each other, and these dependences are not identical with the dependence of all creatures on the creator. The created world does totally depend upon the creator in the sense that no cause within creation causes unless it obtains, and nothing else obtains unless Dc causes it to obtain.

The second of the two preceding objections perhaps arises from a confusion caused by the assumption that properties of other modes of causality can be attributed to Dc.

One confusion—a very common one—is to think of creating as if it were a type of physical causality, a tremendous push given the world at the beginning. However, obtaining, which is the proper effect of Dc, is tenseless. Dc is not as such a cause of movement, although Dc causes the obtaining of physical states of affairs involving movement. The obtaining of *all* contingent states of affairs is equally dependent upon Dc; thus all physical states of affairs, insofar as they obtain contingently, depend equally and immediately upon Dc for their obtaining. Creation is not an initial push indirectly transmitted to subsequent states of the universe.

Another confusion is to think of the universality of the causality of Dc on the model of the generality of the fundamental causes in other modes of causality. One erroneously supposes that Dc causes other causes to cause as they cause one another to cause. But Dc does not cause in the way in which any cause within experience causes. Dc causes all causes of other modes to obtain, for causes of other modes are themselves contingent states of affairs. In causing causes of other modes to obtain, Dc in no way competes with the causality of these other causes. Causes within experience are intelligibly related to their effects in their own proper ways; the causality of Dc, in making these relationships obtain, cannot preempt them. If Dc did not cause the obtaining of causes and effects according to all other modes of causality, then they would not obtain. However, what is contingent and merely possible does not *lose* anything in becoming actual. When Dc causes other modes of causality to obtain in certain instances, Dc does not displace these other modes of causality, but gives them their place in reality.

A model for the uncaused cause

The argument in part two concluded that D must be posited as a theoretical entity. To say that D obtains does not fully explain the obtaining of contingent states of affairs, but the positing of D does open the way to

explanation. To refuse to posit D would be to say that contingent states of affairs obtain, ultimately, for no reason at all. The clarifications of the present part have fulfilled their purpose if they have shown that the language of the conclusion of the argument in part two is reasonably derived from ordinary language. However, these clarifications seem to move the inquiry no nearer to a positive, comprehensible explanation. In fact, the pervasive way of negation seems to block completely such an explanation.

However, I do not think the situation is as hopeless as it seems. There is something within human experience which is somewhat similar to Dc's causing—a human person making a free choice. In a free choice a person determines between alternatives in such a way that under the very same conditions he could have done otherwise. All of the conditions for the obtaining of either alternative are the same, except the choice itself. Similarly, in Dc's causing, D remains the same whether Dc causes or not. All of the conditions for contingent states of affairs either obtaining or not obtaining are the same, except for the very obtaining of contingent states of affairs which do obtain.

I do not suggest that the analogy is precise. A human person making a free choice is not an uncaused cause. Human choices are contingent upon many conditions other than the person himself; to begin with, one does not make choices if one is not alive, conscious, and so on. Moreover, human choices are self-determining; a person making a choice constitutes his own life, existentially speaking.[1]

However, there is some similarity. Insofar as human persons make choices, a whole order of entities comes to be. The person as free transcends the existential order to which his freedom gives rise. The same can be said of the person as knowing subject and as culture maker. Except in the physical order, entities are by being objects of *human acts* of thinking, choosing, using. Similarly everything given in experience is by being caused by Dc. Human choice, mysteriously creative as it is, bears some analogy to the causality of Dc, by which everything comes to be out of nothing.

To suggest this analogy is not to retract anything I have said previously. In chapter fifteen I made clear that the way of negation demands that attempts to describe D using language *in the same sense* in which it is used to describe entities within experience must be rejected. I also argued that descriptive language cannot take on meaning merely by a shift of sense adapting it to fit the negative characterization of D as something not-like-anything-within experience.

But what I now suggest is that descriptive language can take on meaning appropriate to Dc and D by a shift which is conditioned by the relational predication of *causes* of Dc. The present chapter has clarified how "causes" can be said of Dc, what "Dc causes" cannot mean inasmuch as Dc is

uncaused, and also what "*Dc* causes" cannot mean inasmuch as contingent states of affairs either obtain or not, as the case may be, wholly because *Dc* either causes them or not. All I suggest now is that a causing which is uncaused and which determines between contingent possibilities is analogous to human free choice. A pattern of metaconcepts is the locus of the similarity.

Because the similarity on which I would base an analogy is in a pattern of metaconcepts, I do not suggest that one can predicate "free" of *Dc*'s causing by the symbolic anthropomorphism admitted by Kant. As I explained in chapter nine (pages 165-166), Kant is willing to permit for practical purposes the use of descriptive language in its usual sense to help man establish a moral and religious relationship to God. Kant suggests, for example, that one might take the orderliness of the cosmos as an occasion for thinking of God *as if* he were an all-powerful and wise ruler of the universe. I do not suggest that anything in the *content* of experience is relevant to the analogy between free human action and the causality of *Dc.* Rather, I observe that there is an analogy between the two *modes* of causality, neither of which holds between states of affairs *within* any order.

This analogy does not warrant the drawing of any firm conclusions about *D.* Yet the analogy does permit one to project a hypothesis, using man as model. The model will be an analogue model. It permits talking about *D* not only practically but also theoretically. A procedure of this sort often is used in the natural sciences.[2] One can hope to dispense with a model if other, more direct knowledge becomes available; at present, however, only a model will permit description of *Dc* without contravening the way of negation.

Using man, considered as free agent, as a model for talking about *D* can lead to absurdity. But the working out of the model can be controlled to some extent by what is already established with respect to *Dc*'s causality, the relationship of *Dc* to *D,* and so forth. Implications of the model which are incompatible with anything independently established can be denied; the model is adapted to fit its new subject matter. As a step in theoretical inquiry, the proposal of such a model is justified, even though it is not at present clear whether one can find independent evidence to check the validity of the model and the deductions one can make from it.

One value of a model precisely is that a conceptual apparatus already developed in work on another subject matter is made available for use in an inquiry into a subject matter for which one has no adequate conceptual apparatus. It seems to me that much of the speculation about God's attributes in scholastic philosophy and theology can be understood as the working out of the implications of a model based on human free choice for thinking about divine causality. Here I only summarize a few of these implications.

If *Dc*'s creative causality is thought of on the model of human choice, then *Dc*'s creating is an *act*. This free, creative act presupposes that the alternatives be presented for choice in another mode than that in which they will be realized or not realized. In human free choice the alternatives are presented by being entertained as propositions. Therefore, *Dc*'s free, creative act presupposes knowledge.

However, *Dc*'s knowing and its free creative act cannot be thought of in a way which would make *Dc* a caused cause. If *Dc*'s knowing and free creative act were distinct from *D* otherwise than by the relation of what is known and caused to *Dc*, then *Dc* would be a caused cause. Therefore, *D* must be its own knowledge and freedom.

If *D* is its own knowing, *D* must know itself, since only in knowing itself can *D*, while remaining uncaused, know what is other than itself. If *D*'s knowing is identical with *D*, *D*'s knowing cannot fail to be adequate; thus *D* knows infallibly, and the truth of *D*'s infallible knowledge also is *D* itself.

Similarly, free acts presuppose a value which is not chosen. In *D*'s case this value cannot be other than *D* itself, for if the value were other, *D* would be caused in this respect. The value which is not chosen is the ultimate good to which all acts of choice are directed. Since in *D*'s case this value must be identical with *D* itself, *D* is its own ultimate good. Moreover, *D*'s love of this good cannot be distinct from *D* itself, or *D* would be caused in this respect. Therefore *D* not only is its own freedom and its own ultimate good; *D* also is love.

Dc's free act of creating cannot depend upon any purpose apart from *D* itself. An extrinsic purpose would be a cause; since *Dc* is uncaused, *Dc* must create all things for *D* itself. However, for *Dc* to create can be of no benefit to *D*; if it were, *Dc* would not be uncaused. *Dc*'s act of creating cannot be pointless. The only point seems to be in the created world, considered not as an acquisition of *D*, but rather as an outward expression or communication of the obtaining, the knowing, and the loving of *D*. A creative act which brings about an orderly result not to satisfy a need but to express oneself is an act of play. Therefore, *Dc*'s free creating is a form of play (cf. Prov. 8:30-31).

Since *D* knows, acts freely, and plays, *D* lives, since these are forms of life. Moreover, the functions which are characteristic of this life are spiritual ones; therefore *D* is a person.

The way of negation remains. The model is suggestive; it indicates a direction that further inquiry into *D* might take. However, considering the model philosophically, one cannot be certain whether the inferences are sound. The extent of isomorphism and the actual meanings of the concepts used in the model in application to *D* cannot be settled without some other access to *D*. At this point, I think, many Jews and Christians would be willing to say that *D* is a partial and inadequate concept of what they would call

"God." Such believers think they have another access to D by which to criticize the model.

In part six I shall consider the possible meaningfulness of religious claims. However, before proceeding to this topic, I consider in part five several existential objections to belief in God.