

2. THE NEXT STEP

The philosopher is one who makes distinctions. In the last lesson we discovered two distinctions :

1. that in every material thing there are ultimately two components, one influence that determines the thing to be what it is, namely form, and the other that plays the complementary part of being determined, namely matter ; and
2. that the things existing throughout the world are adequately divided into those that man makes, the artificial, and those that are found, the natural.

Has anyone thought of anything that could not be in one or other of these two categories ? If you do, please let me know.

Before the artificial thing existed in the real, it existed (so to speak) first in the builder's head. But how could this be ? You can't get the table, the dress, into your head. But you can get *the form* of it into your head. In fact, it starts in your head. This is the more important of the two components because it is this which, eventually, makes the table to be a table, the dress to be a dress. So the form in my head is somehow real even though it is not material. Something can be real but not material. We give this peculiar reality of the form in our heads the name 'ideal'. And when we impose this form on the materials (apt or fitting materials, that is) it moves from the ideal order to the real. Those two words, *ideal* and *real*, derive respectively from a Greek word (*idéîn*, form) and a Latin word (*res, rem*, a thing). The desk, the dress, is moved from being an idea, something in mind, and becomes something real, part of reality.

The marvellous point about forms (or ideas) is that they can be in your head without matter's limitations.

Now, apart from form and matter there are a couple of further influences necessary before the table, or the dress, comes into existence. The most obvious one is the carpenter, or seamstress ; in other words, the maker. We call this influence the Efficient cause from two Latin words, the preposition *ex-*, meaning 'out of', and the verb *facere*, to make.

Let us note a couple of points in passing. A dog, a horse or a cow, cannot *make* anything, save in a diminished sense. Only beings with intellect make things. Hence my comment that all making starts in your head. I say 'in your head', but what I mean is 'in your mind or intellect'. Dogs, horses and cows don't have intellects. Intellect entails the power *to order* and making is precisely *putting order into* something material so that it will serve you, such as a table or a dress.

The second point is that man is not strictly a creator. We may say of Catie that she 'created' her dress—if she made it up out of her own head—but we are using 'create' in a secondary sense. Only God creates, brings something into existence where before there was nothing. This is creation *simpliciter*, simply speaking. Man is a creator only *secundum quid*, in a secondary fashion.

But there is yet one cause more for us to uncover, and it is the most important of all. For without *this* cause, the other three will never come into operation. It is *the end*, the purpose or reason why in the first place the maker should make the table, the dress. End has a number of meanings but for us it is both the beginning and the end ! For it is the first thing in the mind (first in intention)

and, after all the work is done, it is the last thing that appears, the finished table or dress, (last in execution). We give this cause the technical name *Final* cause.

Let us now lay out the four schematically to assist our understanding :

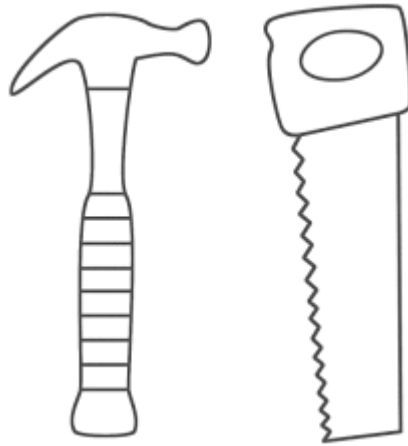
	[Formal	— which causes <i>by determining</i>
	[
	[
	[Material	— which causes <i>by being determined</i>
	[
Causes of	[
the table	[
are :	[Efficient	— which causes <i>by making</i>
	[
	[
	[Final	— which causes <i>by being desired</i>

But note that two of the four causes, the Formal and Material, stay *in* the effect, while the other two, Efficient and Final, once they have completed their functions, cease to be relevant. The carpenter or the seamstress may go off to some other place and the table or the dress will not cease to be. Likewise, the end or purpose for which they were made may cease to operate in the mind of the maker but the table and the dress will not suffer. So, a further schema will assist :

		[Formal
		[or
	[<i>Intrinsic</i>	[
	[and then	[
	[they are :	[Material
Causes are either :	[
	[
	[or	[Efficient
	[<i>Extrinsic</i> , and	[or
	[then, either :	[
		[
		[Final

But there is a further distinction that we should note especially because a great deal of confusion results from the inability to observe it. We say that the carpenter, John Paul, is the efficient cause of the table, or Catie of the dress, but why should we not allow that the hammer, the saw and the plane were also efficient causes of the table ? Or that the needle and the sewing machine were not also efficient causes of the dress ? And so they are, but qualifiedly. John Paul and Catie were the *Principal* Efficient causes ; the hammer, the saw and the plane, and the needle and the sewing machine were *Instrumental* Efficient causes.

	[Principal
Efficient cause is	[or
either :	[
	[Instrumental



Tools are efficient causes, but only *instrumental* efficient causes.

But there is something else to note about these two causes.

Picture to yourself John Pat running across the field chasing the soccer ball. The sun is behind him so his shadow is in front of him. Now which is first, John Pat or his shadow? The answer depends on the order you are considering.

In the order *of movement*, the shadow is first

In the chronological order, the order *of time*, they are together, neither is first.

In the ontological order, the order *of reality*, John Pat is first. Why?

Because, John Pat can exist without his shadow, but his shadow cannot exist without John Pat. His shadow depends on John Pat but John Pat does not depend on his shadow.

Now consider the two Efficient causes. Which is prior in the order of reality? The Principal cause can operate without the Instrumental causes but the Instrumental causes cannot operate without the Principal. *Ergo*, the Principal cause is prior in the ontological order.

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Now, let us look not at artificial things but at the things of nature. They, too, are composed of form and of matter. Their forms determine *what* they are. Water, air, trees, dogs, cats, sheep, cows—each is determined to be what it is by its specific form imposed on matter much as the form of table or of dress is imposed on apt materials to produce the table and the dress. And just as the table and the dress are made by an intellect acting (whom we may refer to technically as 'their authors'), so the things of nature are made by an intellectual Author. We are a long way from proving the existence of God, but no one faced with the evidence and admitting it honestly can deny that the things of nature demand a maker any less than he can deny that things of human art demand a maker.

One final point before we end. There is something remarkable about matter, something which has its parallel at the other end of the natural universe, as we will see when we come to deal with light and its proper substance. Ask yourself whether you have ever seen matter simply as matter, unmixed with with some form?

No one ever has. Matter cannot exist except blended with some material form.