

To think about anything whatever is to think about the creative process, either directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly. But to think about the creative process is to think about something that is not contingent but necessary. For were it, too, contingent, or producible, one could think about it only by thinking about the creative process by which it alone could be produced—again, either directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly.

To think about the truly ultimate, unproducible creative process, however, is to think about God, not because God simply *is* this process, but because God is its eminent or unsurpassable form and, as such, "the supreme causal factor in the world." God is not the only cause, but the supreme cause, so that "anything whatever is only superficially understood if not seen as made possible by the divine existence" (Charles Hartshorne, "John Hick on Logical and Ontological Necessity": 156). Of course, it is just as true that to think of the creative process is also to think of the world of nondivine creative processes, or causal factors, the existence of at least some of which is no less necessary than God's existence to the creative process's being what it is.

The parallels as well as the differences between this position and that of "transcendental Thomism" seem clear enough. Just as thinking about or acting with respect to any contingent being whatever presupposes a nonthematic apprehension, or, literally, "*prehension*" (*der Vorgriff*) of being as such, so thinking about or acting with respect to any contingent, i.e., producible, thing presupposes experiencing and thinking about the creative process producing it. So, too, just as God is not simply identical with being, but is rather "the absolute being," the being whose possession of being is unsurpassable, so God is not identical with the creative process but is its eminent or unsurpassable form, and so the supreme causal factor therein, other noneminent or surpassable forms of creative process, or causal factors, being of necessity also involved.