

# Principle of Proportionate Causality

## Introduction

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# Overview

## ① A Neo-Scholastic view

Threefold division

Two groups of two division

## ② Virtually in the cause

Claiming to possess a power

Locating a real power

Distinguishing a kind of power

## ③ Totality of the cause

## ④ Hierarchy of causes?

## ⑤ Summary

# CLASSICAL THEISM AND THE NATURE OF GOD

Edward Feser

## I. Introduction

- A. Classical theism versus theistic personalism
- B. Some key proofs of God's existence in classical theism
  - 1. The Aristotelian proof (God as pure actuality)
  - 2. The Thomistic proof (God as subsistent being itself)

## II. Understanding the divine nature: Some key background principles

- A. Principle of proportionate causality ←
- B. *Agere sequitur esse*
- C. The analogy of being

## A Neo-Scholastic view

## Threefold division

An effect is found in its cause ...

Formally	directly possessing it
Virtually	'possessing it through the totality of the causes'
Eminently	making (creating) it

# Formal



# Virtual



Eminent



## Two groups of two division

An effect is found in its cause ...

Formally	directly possessing it
Virtually	'the perfection may be produced by a thing'

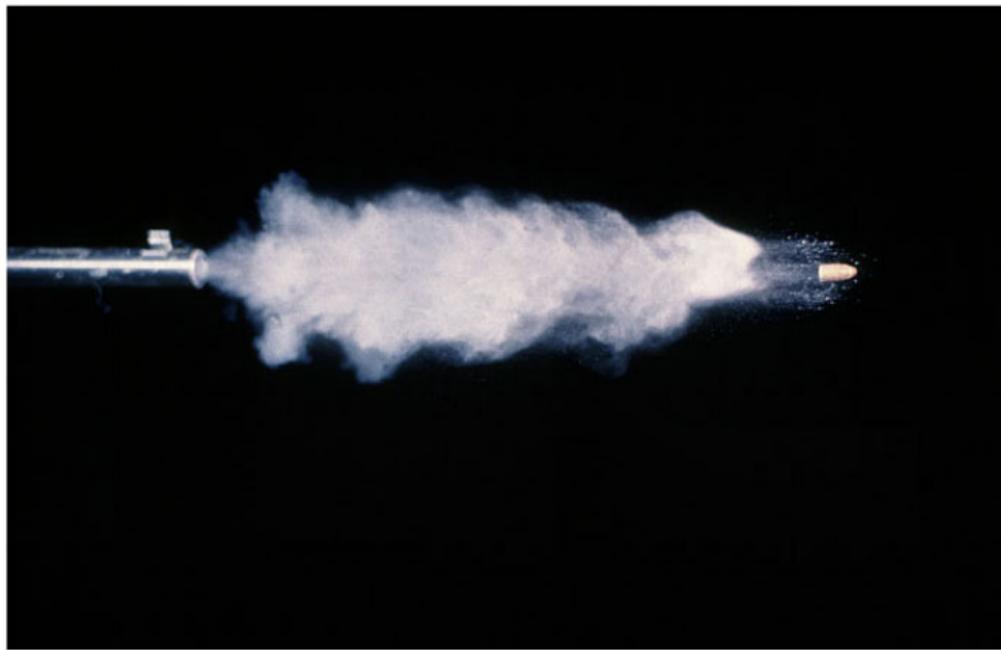
... or in a way which is ...

Formally eminent	possessed formally by a creative power
Virtually eminent	possessed virtually by a creative power

# Formal



Virtual



## Formally eminent



## Virtually eminent

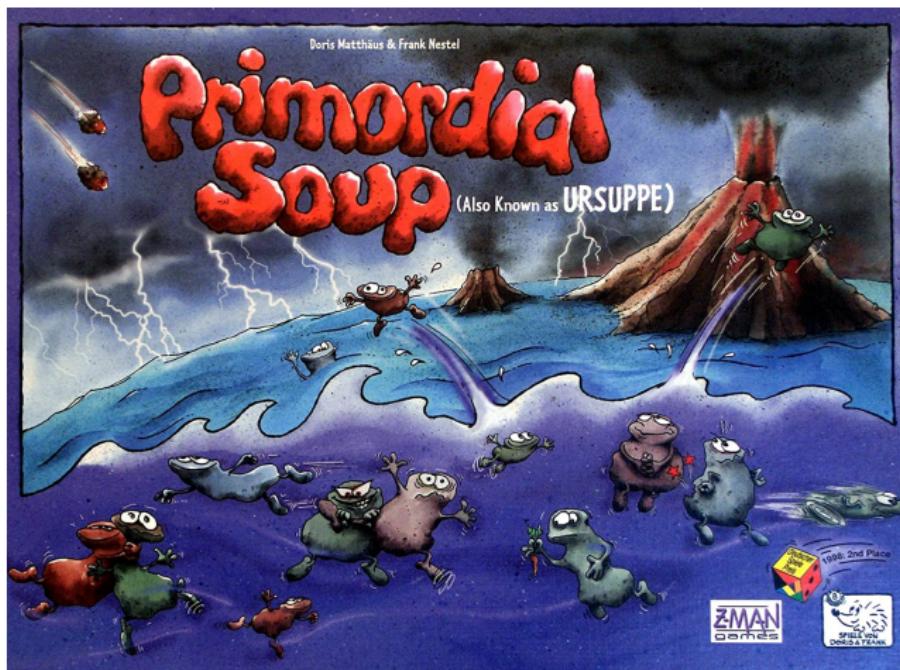


Virtually in the cause

## Claiming to possess a power



## Locating a real power



## Distinguishing a kind of power

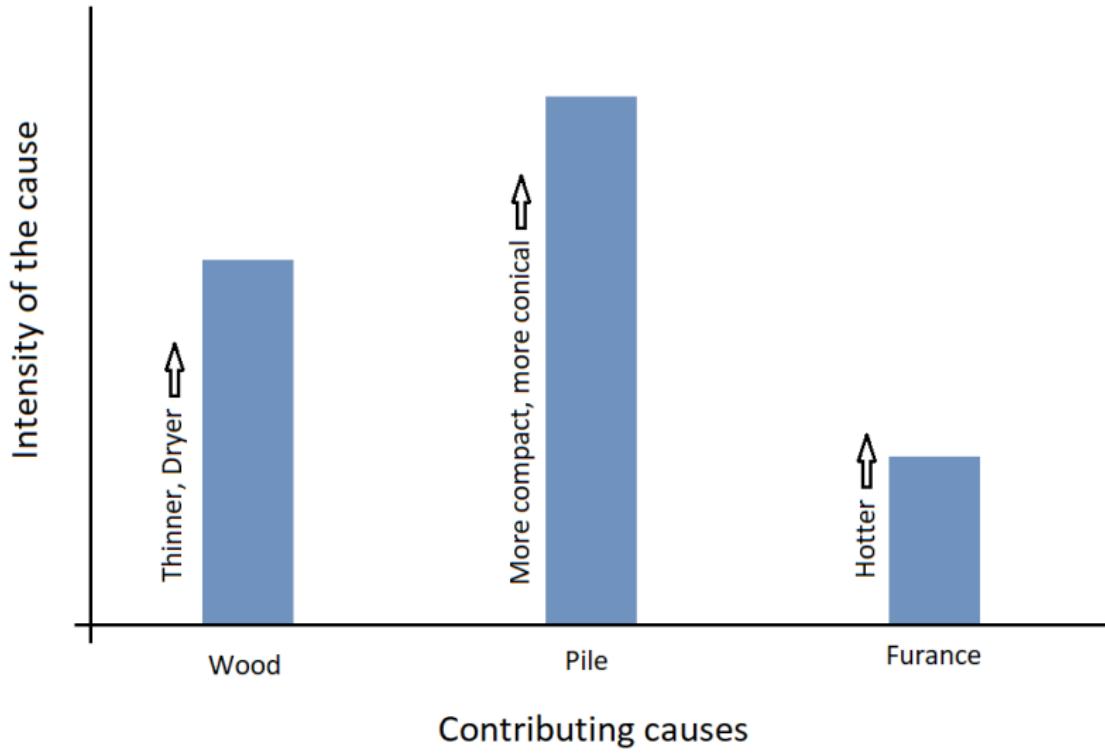


Totality of the cause

'totality operator'



## 'totality operator'



## 'totality operator'

The effect, fire, is obtained from the totality of the causes: wood, pile, and furnace.

But what is the 'totality' like? A kind of averaging operator?

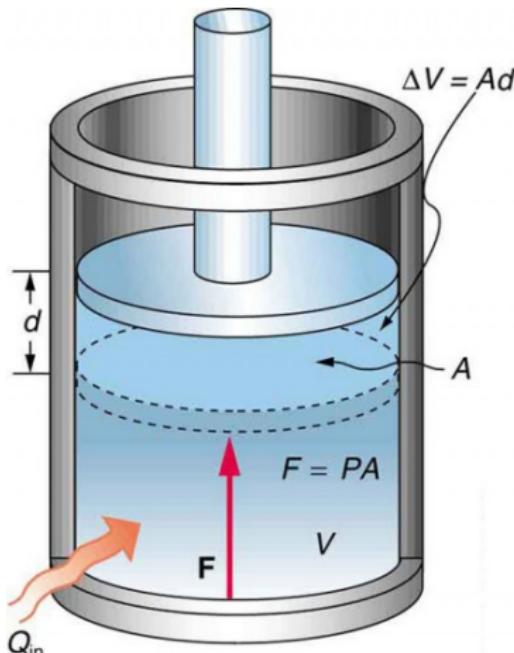
$$e = \text{mean}(c(\text{wood}), c(\text{pile}), c(\text{furnace}))$$

or

$$e = \text{mode}(c(\text{wood}), c(\text{pile}), c(\text{furnace}))$$

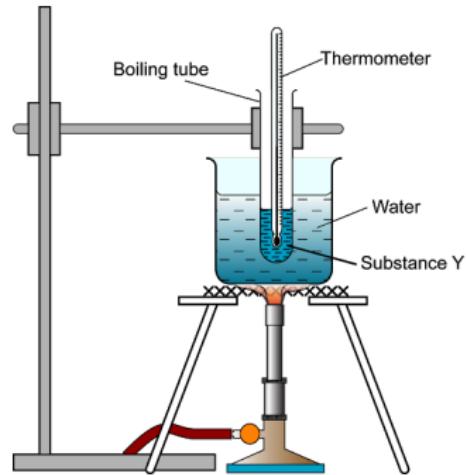
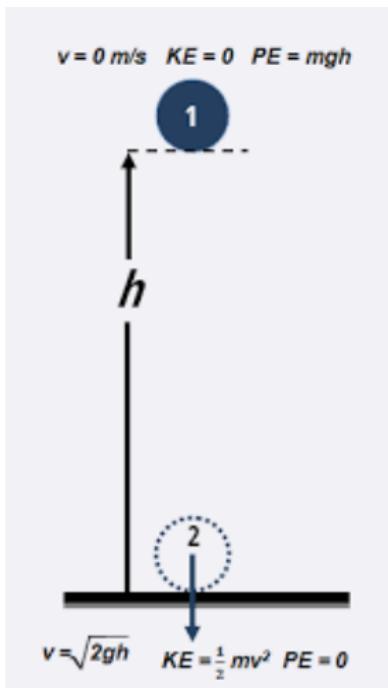
Hierarchy of causes?

## Convertible cause



$$W_{out} = Fd = PA d = P \Delta V$$

## Bounded cause



## Heterogeneity of causes



# Summary

- PPC is more than a continuity equation
- Causes of the same kind are not obvious: heat and work are not obviously homogeneous
- Causes of the different kinds have some degree of interaction: I decided to raise my hand
- 'The cause must be greater than the effect': but virtual causes seem like they could admit anything if 'greater than' is not well defined

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