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Values, God, and the Problem About Why There is Anything at All

I

It seems to me that human history and moral experience as well as reasonable metaphysical speculation suggest that our universe is best understood as a place in which there are objective values, dimly perceived and imperfectly instantiated, but struggling nonetheless for existence. In some sense these values are always with us; but, in some other sense, they have no genuine existence until they inform the world. The most likely account of them associates at least some of the values with conceptions of order, love, and beauty and contrasts them, as Plato would have done, with chaos, violence, and meaninglessness.

It is possible, I believe, to develop a dialectical theory which provides an internally coherent account of the situation, given that there is anything at all or given that a Hegelian or quasi-Hegelian account of the relations between nothingness and pure being holds. Again, traditional theism helps make sense of the tension between values and reality.¹ But though both these theories account for the apparent value properties of the universe, the one in terms of the dialectical development of order and the other by reference to the activities of the deity, neither, as John Leslie has pointed out, answers the question of why there is something rather than nothing at all—at least if one adopts a radical sense of “nothingness” that makes “nothingness” a logically independent notion in the sense that (a) the possibility of nothingness does not entail the existence of anything what-

ever and (b) the possibility of nothingness is compatible with the existence of anything whatever.² Hence neither theism nor the dialectical alternative by itself, is complete. In any case, the sundering of value and existence at the beginning would make the appearance of value *itself* seem fortuitous. The alternative, it would seem, is to build values into the scheme from the beginning, indeed to hold that, in some sense, they are primary. Hence John Leslie in *Value & Existence* argues that “the universe exists because it ought to” or, a little less directly, that “some set of ethical needs is creatively powerful”.³

Evidently, however, for any state of being just considered in and of itself, we could always ask, as children rightly ask of God: “What is the explanation for *that*?” Interestingly, though, it appears that we cannot ask the same questions about values. It is not appropriate in the same way to ask “What is the cause of goodness?” if what one expects is the same sort of answer one would expect if one were to ask about the cause of some good *thing* or other—say a well-made doughnut or a play by William Shakespeare. Thus, if goodness is the cause of being, we shall at least have broken a certain chain of actual or potential causal explanations. It is important to be clear about this.

One must, however difficult it may seem, stick with the domain of reality in which these advantages hold. We cannot try to explain how it is that values come to be effective in the world if what we mean by this is some account which would introduce new matters of ordinary fact into discourse. This, as J. L. Mackie has noticed, is the strength as well, perhaps, as the possible weakness of Leslie’s theory.⁴ The strength is that insistence on sticking to value explanations *does* create a kind of logical shift in any claim to explanation, thus breaking the demand for an infinite regress. The possible weakness is that something more seems to be demanded and also refused.

But Leslie is intentionally careful. He does not even (quite) want to shift from value explanations to logical ones. There is, he says, an important sense in which it is not true that any ethical requirements, *as such*, necessitate existence.⁵ The insistence is that, in the commonest sense of “logical,” the relation is not one of logical necessity. For logical necessity in this sense is a kind of conceptual necessity. And, if it were merely the case that value concepts necessitated the existence of the world, the explanation of the world would be conceptual or “logical” and the theory would be quite different in kind. In addition, if ethical requirements *necessitated* in a purely logical way a kind of existence capable of filling their demands, then

a world which met those requirements would seem to be required as a kind of *fait accompli*, immediately. Such a world might or might not have the contents of the present world around us, but it would have one organizing feature which the present world does not seem to have. Such a world would exist all at once and timelessly.

Despite Leslie's caution, J. L. Mackie in *The Miracle of Theism*, and several critics in the learned journals, have marshalled a variety of assaults on this position.⁶ Each makes different points, but, collectively, they insist that Leslie's general principle is inherently doubtful (i. e., there is no good reason to support it), especially in the light of the grounds for modern scientific naturalism. They also insist that any abstraction is unlikely to be a "cause," and "goodness" is not better than many another abstraction for *this purpose*. For some of them there is a serious difficulty about any theory which even hints that this is the best of all possible worlds. For others there is a problem of indifference arising from the fact that many worlds must be equally good and that no *principle* of goodness could therefore choose between them. Mackie, above all, insists that the whole notion of objective value is untenable. Mackie, however, really wanted, above all, to insist that we have no reason to believe in the existence of objective values and, therefore, no reason to entertain the value hypothesis about existence.⁷ He begins his work on ethics with the sentence "There are no objective values."⁸ Chiefly, in fact, he believes like Hume that values have their explanations in natural passions and preferences. But he does believe that we do talk about values and that we need to explain that talk.

II

Mackie also thinks that there are at least short-range explanations which apply to limited classes of things. And what he especially thinks is that there are explanations—Humean ones—for the tendency to use value expressions. This line of explanation would simply assert that there are natural passions which generate natural preferences, and that value terms are somewhat misleading attempts to describe elements in this sequence.

The claim is that this mistake is made systematically, and that our tendency to talk about values as well as all the really meaningful content of the resultant talk can be understood in terms of it. Mackie must render plausible all the appropriate segments and occasions of such talk. His case will fail if his explanation is plausible for some but not all such occasions and forms of discourse. He is therefore involved, at the very least, with a

principle of explanation which will have to be generalized over a rather wide area. Even a Humean who thinks that tomorrow need not be very much like today is committed to a principle of minimal tidiness—for tomorrow must be enough like today to count as tomorrow or the question could not be raised meaningfully at all.

Still, there must be in the universe a minimal order which will allow us to talk about the question of what orders do or do not hold in it, enough to make us believe that stability lasts long enough to enable the reader to read this sentence through and to know what it means. And this principle must hold everywhere and at all times where rational discourse is in play.

There are many general principles which might hold in the universe. But one or more of them actually will hold if the principle of minimal tidiness holds. It is admittedly difficult to tell which one or ones will hold. Can we then plead, in a kind of Popperian way, that any principle has some claim on our belief if (a) it would provide the necessary order, (b) it is not internally incoherent, and (c) it is not falsified, though it might be, by empirical facts to which we have access?

If we could proceed in this way we could argue that the most likely candidate to sustain the principle of minimal tidiness to which Mackie is committed is a value principle. For we could claim that it is more general than any obvious rival. And we could hold that, if human history showed a complete absence of intelligible concern with objective value, we would regard it as falsified.

But this claim might be sapped by the fact there are many general principles which might order a universe, and while any non-ontological principle that explains all ontological principles is, indeed, more general than any purely ontological principle, there may be other candidates for this office and, in any case, generality and the admission of possible falsifying incidents are not the only tests.

We have already seen that, in addition to value principles, there are epistemological and ontological principles and that the epistemological principles sometimes entail ontological principles, as the principle of minimal tidiness entails some ontological order in the world. A stronger or more fully formulated epistemological principle might entail some more specific ontological principle. For instance, though McTaggart states his principle of determining correspondence in ontological terms, the principle arises, I think, from the epistemological claim that every term which enters into discourse and serves to denote some entity or other must be associated with what he calls sufficient and exclusive descriptions; and it

must also be capable of infinite specification.⁹ This seems to entail a world in which (a) every describable state or event is precisely determinate and (b) every state or event has one and only one place in a natural order.

Might we, then, somehow answer the question: "Why should there be anything at all?" without reference to values? McTaggart's principle of determining correspondence, if we could, in fact, state its properties, might, for instance, make us see how all the parts of reality are bound together into a single whole and how they are so bound by logical necessity. But is it a confusion to suggest that for something necessarily to be *what* it is is the same as for it necessarily to *be*? Is it still reasonable that things might be what they are or be *nothing*? If being nothing is simply lacking order, as Plato may have thought, or lacking determinateness as Hegel thought, then McTaggart's principle might tell us why there is anything at all. But this is where the value question may be crucial. For we could imagine a universe which was bound by an ordering principle like McTaggart's and yet had, in some reasonable sense, nothing at all in it. Suppose all its members were logical entities all of whose properties were purely logical. If some being could destroy all of our universe except for logical entities, we would think he was tricking us if he said, "Don't worry, everything necessary will be left for you." Really to *be*, perhaps, involves more than describability. It involves values or, at least, candidacy for value. A merely possible state of affairs has no value unless it is considered a candidate on which actuality is more or less likely to be bestowed. But once it comes into being in the sense of becoming more than possible, the question of its value to itself and to the whole becomes inevitable.

But, even apart from the fact that values may be an inevitable feature of being, nothing could explain the whole as a whole unless it met three conditions:

(a) It must itself have *some* ontological status—for if it did not have any such status, it would not seem likely to enable us to render any account of existence, reality, being, or whatever.

(b) It must not be, as such, a literal part or feature or distinguishable dimension of the whole. For, if it were such a part or feature, then, if it explained the rest, we could still ask what explained it.

(c) It must account for the whole at least in the sense of giving an account of its overall structure and direction.

This is a demanding, puzzling, and potentially contradictory set of requirements. But there is a plausible candidate for the office: the value of the whole. For though it may be genuinely an element in the story, it is not

a part or an element of the whole. Values in general are like this. The question: "Which part of Smith is his goodness?" (which is not the question: "Which part of Smith is good?") is a kind of nonsense. There seems no candidate but value for the explanatory office we seek to fill, and the office seems a necessary one.

If we do reject value as an explanation for what there is, we ought to be suspicious of all attempts at general reductionism of the kind proposed by Mackie, whether it is the reductionism of values of which we have been speaking, or the "naturalistic" reductionism to which he inclines generally. For if we reject this argument, then we must conclude that either (a) the universe is a single inexplicable whole in and of which nothing whatever can be said without falsification (for to say that it has any property is to divide it in some way) or (b) the universe has a set of parts containing two or more radical individuals. With respect to those parts, the universe is just what it is. Radical individuality precludes final explanation.

I think few people would now believe that the problem of individuality was this simple. Gestalt phenomena supervene, and in any case the numbers and kinds of impressions one can discern seem to depend only on the fixity and quality of one's attention. Perception is inextricably bound up with intention as well and our beloved impressions, even graduated into sense data, and their cousins, *sensa*, seem unlikely to serve as individuals.

In addition, things seem to be composed of properties which are instances of universals of rather widespread application. The individuality of particular things seems constantly in peril. How can we be sure that this electron is the one which was here a moment ago or even know with any certainty that the jackknife in my pocket is the one I have always had? Philosophers argue violently even over the identity of works of art. We can, as Carnap once urged, follow the space-time paths of physical objects, but physicists have found these paths to be somewhat odd for at least some fundamental particles and, in any case, the paths intersect and interact.

Yet one who thinks that the universe consists of irreducible individuals must make some stab at saying what they are and how they come about. The predicament is the one which the veterinarian faces when he confronts the dog and its worms. Why don't we say that the dog and its worms are all one organism, like the man and his white blood cells? There are no absolute biological criteria. Many parasites cannot survive without their hosts any more than blood cells can survive without their client.

The reason, in practice, that we distinguish the dog from its worms is that there is a conflict. If the worms succeed, it will go badly with the dog

and vice versa. It is here that our teleology comes into play—not in explaining how the worms work, but in explaining that the worm is an organism of its own.

Is not the world of organisms like this in general? The rabbit is just as dependent on the grass supply as on its stomach; but, though we might talk about the rabbit-and-environment as a single organism, we talk, in fact, about rabbits and grass plants as distinct. For, again, they have their separate aims and they collide. The grass does not fulfill its normal path of development in the rabbit's stomach. Certainly, there are many other things that we can say. Genetics suggests that the difference between the dog and the worm is in the information encoded in the structures of genes and chromosomes. Dogs and worms, in addition, have very different plausible places in the evolutionary tree. Rabbits and grass plants are, no doubt, still more distinct in genetic composition and evolutionary place. Thus sometimes we insist, indeed, on talk about rabbit-and-environment. But again, when we do, it is because there is some value which we want to champion.

This might suggest, of course, that breaking the world up into distinct individuals is purely arbitrary. It might be that there is simply unity. G. E. Moore thought that F. H. Bradley believed the world to be such a "single fact."¹⁰ But if it is, then we cannot, indeed, talk about it. For we have no way of talking about things except by assigning some properties and withholding others; and, if no distinctions hold, then the game is up. Mackie is in as much trouble as Leslie.

If we could talk about individuals it would be because we could distinguish their values and if we could talk about them objectively, it would be by reference to objective values. Perhaps, then, Leslie wins either way. Either the world forms an explanatory unity or it consists of discrete individuals. But either way, values figure in our explanations. But it is still rather unclear just what it means to call upon values as a principle of explanation and just how it is that values could possibly function as such an explanation.

III

What is at issue here is the question of what it means to say that values determine ontology in their own right (that they necessitate *ethically* if you will); whether it is *true* to say that they do; and under what conditions we might reasonably *believe* that they do. It is very important to the argument

that ontological and value principles be seen to be connected; but the whole argument depends on their being kept separate in the relevant way. If one believes that values might just, as it were, project themselves into reality, then there is no problem. Hegel thought, when he came to move from the *Logic* to the *Philosophy of Nature* in the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, that the Absolute simply projects itself into nature; but, in a sense, the central problem with his philosophy is posed by the question: Given the world that we seem to have, how can the Absolute come to be? Perhaps the Absolute can *not be*.

The right position may be that values simply *do* structure reality. But it seems to me that the reasonable expectation is that one should say how the two realms are alike and how they are different. Then, to get them connected one should find something with, as it were, one foot in each realm. Otherwise, there seems to me an explanatory gap and if one admits explanatory gaps, the whole argument collapses.

There seem to be (at least) three distinct principles which would fill the gap while staying within the terms of the argument. One of them underlies what we might call *transcendental answers*—answers which insist on the separation of values from the rest of being in general, but we must also insist on trying to show how something can be at once outside the system and yet still influence it. We might call the principle underlying these answers the *principle of defining boundaries*. The contrasting *immanentist answers*, answers which seek to see just how values are entrenched in being in a special way, involve two distinct principles. One of them, which we might call the *principle of individuating teleology*, seeks to capitalize on just the issue raised by the second half of our dichotomy, the issue of the place of values in the individualizing of things. The other functions like Whitehead's primordial nature of God, and might be called the *principle of biased probabilities*.

Wittgenstein wrote in his *Notebooks for 1915–16* and again in the *Tractatus* that the idea of person and self seems to occur as the idea of a boundary.¹¹ I do not find myself in the world as an object. Russell also noticed that the "I" is always found at the centre of experience.¹² These boundaries and centres seem to define our worlds: "The philosophical 'I' is not the human being, not the human body or the human soul, but the metaphysical subject, the boundary (not a part) of the world."¹³

In a sense the world can be seen, as Wittgenstein suggests, as the outcome of the boundary setting. To be what it seems to be the world does not need to contain within it a thinking subject, but one does need to do something to see it in any particular way: "The thinking subject is surely mere illusion. But the willing subject exists."¹⁴

But we also know that our boundary setting *does not* set all the terms of the boundaries. So Wittgenstein also says: "That is why we have the feeling of being dependent on an alien will . . . we *are* in a certain sense dependent and what we are dependent on we can call God."¹⁵ But he adds, importantly for our purposes, "To believe in a God means to see that the facts of the world are not the end of the matter" and "Conscience is the voice of God."¹⁶ And, he says, "Good and evil only enter through the subject. And the subject is not part of the world, but a boundary of the world."¹⁷

Suppose we see the universe in these terms. Then values always express themselves in the way that the boundary is set, in the limits of being. If I will to move, my experience acquires new boundaries. My will does not manifest itself as a thing in the world. It never appears as the preferred explanation of the way in which the elements in the world fit together.

It is this which has always proved so confusing. It is necessary to explain that when I will to move my arm I do not will to move each muscle in turn but only to be in that position from which my arm stands in a certain relation to other events. Within the framework of my experience this entails that all the appropriate objects be in a certain relation to one another. They must have explanations which are independent of my will. Yet these explanations do not entail, as such, anything about the location of the centre of my experience.

But suppose we admit a will in Wittgenstein's sense. What could move such a will? Pure caprice? But rational expectation is not so badly met as to suggest a wholly capricious universe. One's will could not be moved by another *thing*, but only by a value. Indeed, it is only, I suppose, when our wills are moved by values that we are prepared to go so far as to say that we really did will an action. Otherwise we say we were pushed, or moved by our glands or by the janglings of our ganglia. (There are negative as well as positive values, evils as well as goods, but I suppose one who opts for evil, knowing it to be evil, thinks, paradoxically, like Milton's Satan, that it is for the best.)

The ideas of will and value seem to go together in a natural way so it makes sense to say that my will is moved by my values in a way in which it does not so easily make sense to say that the world, purely and simply, is moved by values. For we understand that a will is, also, not a thing and, if we follow Wittgenstein's suggestion, it is not *in* the world, either.

But how can this explain how something comes from nothing? It does seem that, without values, or the idea of values, the idea of will is meaningless for, as I suggested, we would not say that we willed to do

something or other if it were not a deliberate choice. A volition must not be a random action and it must not be one determined by objective states of affairs either. The only claim which seems to make sense is that our volitions are determined by values—not necessarily “our” values, but values. On the other side, it might be argued that values make no sense without volitions. For the idea of a value demands the distinction between what is and what ought to be, and yet at the same time it demands that what is valuable must be able to be. For if x is truly good it seems to follow that one should try, all other things being equal, to promote x and certainly to avoid undermining it. A value creates an obligation and, as the Kantians say, ought implies can. If, indeed, *values generate obligations*, do not obligations entail volitions? To say that there were values which obliged no one and nothing would be to say something very odd. For that is how values are made manifest and the conditions under which an entity can manifest itself are surely the same as its existence conditions. With *things* in the world it is different. Gunpowder, as Leslie reminds me, would still be gunpowder if there were nothing in the world to explode it. But values can only *be*, in the serious sense, if they succeed in constraining events. Thus it is only if values can direct volitions that it seems to make sense to talk about values.

Nothing like the above paragraph is, of course, to be found in Wittgenstein, but at least a residual idea of God seems to have always haunted him and shortly before his death, he said: “Life can educate one to a belief in God . . . life can force this concept on us.”¹⁸ And he added, a little mystifyingly, that “it [the concept of God] is similar to the concept of ‘object’.”¹⁹

He also said that “God’s essence is supposed to guarantee his existence—what this really means is that what is here at issue is not the existence of something.”²⁰ The remark about the concept of object is not so mystifying if we realize that we learn about the idea of boundaries as a natural corollary of the idea of object. The two develop together in experience and go together.

Values move the setting of the boundaries of the world and in that sense, perhaps, are its ultimate explanation. It is very important, here, to understand that, on this view, one would expect a perfectly ordinary scientific explanation for whatever activity appears in the world. For, within the boundaries acted on by the will, every event in every ordinary sense really does have an explanation appropriate to the physical system in which it is located.

A richer notion of theism—one that involves divine volitions in a fairly

ordinary sense—is probably built into the theses I have been putting forward. For the idea of boundary in our experience is one which naturally leads us on just because the boundaries of *our* experience are not wholly determined by our wills.

The most obvious alternative to any transcendental model is the *principle of individuating teleology*. To explore this principle, we must see what options there are to the conditions supposed for the volitional or transcendental solution which I discussed.

Everything in my experience, as Russell urged, radiates out from a centre from which left and right, up and down, are absolutely fixed. But that centre does not represent a physical point, a certain location in my brain. My brain is organized quite differently, with no such given centre. Indeed, it is not clear that the fact that we are conscious at all is necessitated by any physiological fact. But given that we are conscious and that the limits are what they are, we can explain changes in consciousness very often by changes in brain states.

An alternative to this model is the one that I suggested earlier. We can consider the world as composed of irreducible individuals, as composed of individuals that take their individuality not from the correlation of subject and object, not from having a place in a field of experience, but from their own individuating natures.

But again, something outside the realm of objects is needed to determine this individuality. Otherwise we have the dog and worm problem. If they did not collide in their developmental aims, we would be more likely to think of them as a single organism.

The examples I have been using suggest that it is amongst organisms in particular that we find genuine individuals, but such organisms, as far as we know, constitute only a fraction of what there is. There are two possibilities, but one is rather odd: We could hold that the whole universe is itself such an individual and that the individuals we discern are merely sub-lunary approximations to it. The other possibility is that the parts that do not form elements of such individuals have a different ontological status from that of those that do. We have lost the sense of the ontological expressions which permeate our language—of the difference between “existence” which derives from the Latin verb *existere*, “to stand out,” and “reality” which comes from the Latin *res* and ought to mean thing-like; and of the distinction between both of these and mere entities, the background of being which may be populated with whatever we need to refer to. Certainly the number eight is an entity in this last sense, but we might

easily say that it is neither real nor an existent, meaning, of course, that it is surely not thing-like and certainly does not stand out as an individual. The highest category, the things that really exist, might be individuals in the sense required.

We can say thus that values explain why anything exists, why anything, that is, stands out from the muddle of entities as a genuine individual. *Values*, on *this* theory, do not explain *everything*. But it seems unlikely that we need to explain why the universe contains the number eight; for it is not the kind of thing which might or might not be. Values also do not explain the kinds of things which get their order from stochastic processes—the kinds of things which become orderly through waves of chance events. Now it may be that the subject matters of physics are simply stochastic processes, assemblies of chance occurrences which come to form orders, in this sense.²¹ It has even been suggested that the currently well-loved Big Bang is just such an event. But, given those things which need no explanation as a basis to work on, values explain what there is to explain in the relevant sense. We may guess, like Samuel Alexander, that values produce few of what I have been calling existents in the beginning but that such existents come into play as the system moves along. Eventually there are people. God, if he exists on this scheme, may exist, like Alexander's God, rather late.²² Though since, once he exists, he can transform time even better than we can, it may seem, *sub specie aeternitatis*, that he always existed.

Or, perhaps, one should elaborate this thesis as Bishop Pecock does in his *Reule of Crysten Religioun*. He argues that, indeed, all organisms other than human beings have their natures fixed and so find their ends in themselves. But men and women have no natural goals because they do not have natures in *this* sense. Human beings cannot therefore be individuated by reference to their own values. Since their reason takes them into the whole universe of actuality and possibility, they can be individuated only by reference to an all-transcendent value, namely God. Here below, perhaps, we are roughly and imperfectly individuated by reference to the communities to which we belong. But in fact, men can scarcely be bound by anything other than their own reason—which even governs their interpretation of Scripture. If, therefore, they exist as distinct it is because of their relation to some being capable of embracing this totality, for our own final end is nothing less than the embracing of the whole—“whanne we schule haue ful consecucioun and ful possessioun of oure afore sed eende.” For his optimism, Pecock was given the choice of burning his own books or being burnt himself, but he may have been right all the same.²³

The third option involves what I called the *principle of biased probabilities*. I think that this is the possibility Whitehead explored and called the “original conceptual valuation” of the universe at the beginning of *Process and Reality*.²⁴ This possibility arises in this way: Any universe that is amenable to scientific enquiry has to have bias to it. Of the logically possible states of affairs, some must be, intrinsically, more likely than others. Otherwise, there is no reason to think that any principles extend beyond the assembled particulars of immediate knowledge. Indeed, if every possible state of affairs was governed by pure chance (none was more likely to happen than not to happen, and none was more likely not to happen than to happen), then all the probabilities would be one half. This would lead to the paradox which Russell noted: If the universe contained three or more original possible states of affairs, the probability that at least one of them would occur would be more than one.²⁵ The problem here is not one of a sequence of events. (Obviously, the probability that a coin will land heads never rises above one-half no matter how many times one tosses it or what the past record of coin tosses happens to be.) The problem *here* has to do with the chance that one particular possibility will occur at any given moment. If there are more than two possibilities and each has some positive probability, not more than one of them can have a probability of one-half. (One can see that one cannot have a die with six sides and also have it that the chance of each of the six sides turning up is one-half). But why should not the universe be “chancy” simply in the sense that, as with the die, it is “pure chance” which one comes up? We say the chance that any one side of the die will turn up is one-sixth because we think that the universe is so ordered that the degree of bias against any particular side of a balanced, equal-sided object is predetermined and will be maintained—that six-sided objects with the other necessary characteristics will always have a one-sixth chance of showing any given side in any particular spatial dimension. (Think what this presupposes by way of notions of space and time!)

The difficulty here is that one might not think that Whitehead’s conceptual valuation—the original conceptual valuation of the universe—had any value at all. Indeed, might it not be directed positively at evil? Suppose, however, that its cause is a value. If values in this sense are causes, can we tell, in any way, if some are more effective than others? We might call on the traditional argument that disvalues are parasitical upon values, and that all values depend on the notion of goodness in itself.

It is true that disvalues usually express a lack of something. Stupidity is a lack of intelligence; dishonesty, as Kantians think, is not so much a coherent policy as a lack of one; bad music seems to lack something which

good music has. C. E. M. Joad argued that, if we had no knowledge of good, we could not identify evil; and one can even speak of the evil of war as a want of peace.²⁶ The general thesis, perhaps, is that whether a state of affairs reflects good or evil depends upon the context. Christians regard the crucifixion as both a great evil and a great good. It is a great good because the sacrifice it embodied was integral to the overturning of the situation created by original sin. In the story, it is a necessary and good event.

If then evil occurs when something—the right ingredients or the right context—is missing, it is not something which could be efficacious in itself. Values individuate, bring about genuine existence. Evils cannot do this: The worm is evil in relation to the dog, but not in relation to itself. In order to individuate something, there must be some positive value being pursued. If we accept this, then *only*, in some sense, positive values could be instantiated.

But in relation to what are positive values positive? One answer might be in relation to individuality. But though they make possible individuation, in our world these processes are generally if not always incomplete. They must therefore take their definition from what would, if it could, individuate completely. To do this is to suppose that the universe has a bias toward the highest values and that it has not yet achieved them. Whitehead had something like this in mind when he suggested that the original conceptual valuation led on in some way to what he called the Consequent Nature of God.

Whitehead's argument is difficult, but we might connect the two "natures of God" in this way: Either the original conceptual valuation involves a principle of plenitude or it does not. If it does not, then there will be things that *could* be accommodated within limiting laws and forces of that universe but are not, in fact, so accommodated. In this case, there will be things that do not exist when there is no reason for their non-existence. Then there will be entities for which all the conditions are met even though those entities do not, in fact, occur. Thus the conceptual valuation will have created an irrational universe, one which seems to contain formal contradictions.

Hence the original conceptual valuation must be assumed to entail a principle of plenitude. But if it does, it involves the existence of a universe which includes all that could be obtained. Does that not include a being capable of making all the conscious choices possible in this universe? One might think so, though the outcome hardly seems clear. In any case, such an implicit God would still be, in this case, creatively subordinate to original conceptual valuation.

IV

The first solution—the solution in terms of *transcendent volitions*—may tackle the more recalcitrant senses of “nothing” in the question “Why is there something rather than nothing?” The *principle of individuating teleology*, by contrast, is weakest in those terms. Its strength lies in its ability to accommodate notions which have always had some attraction for human beings and yet seemed rather problematic. The *principle of biased probabilities* has attraction, obviously, in its relative simplicity and in its lack of involvement in the more mystical kinds of metaphysics.

It is not obvious, however, that these solutions are independent of one another, and it seems unlikely that they are incompatible. They may, indeed, imply one another. If the third solution does imply a principle of plenitude, then it seems not unlikely that such a plenitude will include a God in the traditional sense. But, if such a God exists, it seems difficult to know how He could create a world which was both rational and valuable without some principle of immanent teleology. Yet, if there are serious philosophical objections to some one of the solutions, it might well be possible to construct the others so as to effect a separation. The further expansion of these notions is an issue for another occasion.

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NOTES

1. For my own attempts at a dialectical theory see *Logic and Reality* (Atlantic Highlands, Royal Van Gorcum, Assen, and the Humanities Press, New Jersey: 1972). For some accounts of what seem to me interesting theistic arguments see “The Ontological Argument and the Concepts of Completeness and Selection,” *Review of Metaphysics* (December 1960); “Necessity and the Concept of God,” *Proceedings of the Michigan Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters* (1965); “Logic and the Concept of God,” *Proceedings of the Seventh Inter-American Congress of Philosophy*, 2 (1967); “Ideas, Causes and God,” *Sophia* (April 1980); and “Experience, Individuality and the Existence of God,” *Science et Esprit*, 36, No. 3 (1984). For a different kind of argument about metaphysics and values, see *The Rational and the Real* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962).

2. John Leslie, *Value and Existence* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979).

3. Leslie, p. 1 and p. 6.

4. J. L. Mackie, *The Miracle of Theism* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1982), pp. 231–39.

5. Leslie, see, e.g. pp. 19–20 and p. 59.

6. Mackie. See also various reviews of *Value and Existence: Philosophy* (April 1980); *Times Literary Supplement*, 4 Jan. 1980; *Philosophical Quarterly* (Oct. 1980); *Religious Studies* (March 1981); *Philosophical Review* (April 1981); *Thomist* (October 1981).

7. Mackie, pp. 237–38; “Extreme axiarchism rests essentially upon the assumption that there are objectively prescriptive values. And this assumption is false.”
8. Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong* (London: Penguin Books, 1977).
9. John McTaggart Ellis McTaggart, *The Nature of Existence* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1921), I, Ch. 11, especially Sections 101, 102.
10. G. E. Moore, *Lectures on Philosophy*, ed. Casimir Lewy (London: George Allen and Unwin, and New York: Humanities Press, 1966), p. 172.
11. Wittgenstein, *Notebooks 1914–16*, 2nd edition (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979), p. 82e. Mostafa Faghfoury and I have tried to interpret Wittgenstein in “Insight and Religion in Wittgenstein’s Philosophy,” *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 22, No. 1 (1984).
12. Bertrand Russell, *Human Knowledge, Its Scope & Limits* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1948), Part II, Ch. 4. See also Part IV, Ch. 4, pp. 263–65. For a discussion see my paper “Russell, McTaggart and ‘I,’” *Idealistic Studies* (January 1979).
13. Wittgenstein, *Notebooks*, p. 82e.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 80e.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 74e.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 74e, 75e.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 79e. See also *Tractatus*, 5.632.
18. *Culture and Value* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980), p. 86e.
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*, p. 82e.
21. See Louis J. Halle, *Out of Chaos* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977).
22. Samuel Alexander, *Space, Time, and Deity* (London: Macmillan, 1920).
23. Reynold Pecock, *Reule of Crysten Religioun, 1443*, ed. William Cabell Greet (Oxford: The University Press, for the Early English Text Society, 1927), pp. 36–46.
24. Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (London: Macmillan, 1929, and New York: Humanities Press, 1957). For various remarks on the Primordial Nature of God see pp. 46, 48, 50, 70, 73, 75, 104, 134, 160, 164, 315, and 521–33.
25. Russell, *Human Knowledge, Its Scope and Limits*, p. 374.
26. C. E. M. Joad, *God and Evil* (London: Faber and Faber, 1942).