V: Existential Objections to God

18: Human Freedom Is Compatible with Creatureliness

Two problems distinguished

In this part I examine several problems which are probably more important to anyone who is not a philosopher or theologian than are the more technical problems considered in parts two, three, and four. As I mentioned in chapter thirteen, many post-hegelian thinkers brush aside theoretical arguments about the existence of a creator. Instead of theoretical objections to an argument that an uncaused cause exists they propose existential objections to God. These objections are important, because they tend to block a consideration on their merits of the theoretical issues and because they pose major obstacles in the way of persons who seek God.

The following seem to me to be the most important existential objections to God. First, if God exists, how can man be free? Second, how can one make sense of the evil in the world if there is a good, wise, and omnipotent God? Third, doesn't human concern with God and religion distract men from their real, earthly concerns? Fourth, does not the supposition that there is an eternal and all-perfect being detract from the meaningfulness of finite process, development, and progress? The present chapter deals with the first of these problems. The other three will be treated in the next three chapters.

To some extent these questions present a challenge to the reality of the uncaused cause which, through the preceding argument, has been characterized as a personal entity who knows, chooses, and creates. These questions pose an additional challenge if the personal creator is believed to have all the characteristics attributed to him by traditional Jewish and Christian faith. I wish to keep these two challenges as distinct as possible.

Of the four problems the questions about human freedom and about the presence of evil in creation are the most difficult. Of these two problems the question about freedom can be considered independently of the question about evil, but not vice versa. Thus, the problem of the compatibility between man's action being free and its being within the scope of the creator's uncaused causing takes first place.

The word "freedom" is used in several senses; a distinction among them is essential to this problem. The general schema for meanings of the word "freedom" includes as elements someone's acting, the action, and someone or something else which could be in opposition to the action, but which in fact is not in opposition to it. The meanings of the word "freedom" are filled out by diverse ways in which the opposing factor is specified, both as to what it is and as to how it could oppose the action.

Thus, one sort of possible opposing factor is a physical force or constraint imposed upon the action from without. One who is raped does not have intercourse freely; one who is tied up cannot move freely. A quite different sort of possible opposing factor is regularity and routine, whatever is established beforehand—the dead hand of the past. One who lacks originality cannot create freely; what works according to a set formula leaves no room for the free emergence of novelty. Still another sort of possible opposing factor is an obstacle to the fulfillment of a norm, a block to being and doing as one ought. In Freud's psychology a neurotic is not free; in St. Paul's theology a sinner is freed from sin only by the grace of God.

The three senses of "freedom" already distinguished, as well as the two senses to be distinguished in the next paragraph, all enter into the meaning of "freedom" as it is applied in political and social contexts. Political and social freedom is not so much a special mode of freedom as a complex of other sorts of freedom mixed in varying proportions and applied to groups of persons instead of to individual persons.

The two sorts of freedom most relevant to the present problem are freedom to do as one pleases and freedom of choice. Freedom to do as one pleases excludes the subjection of a person and his action to the demands of another; freedom to do as one pleases means that one is not blocked by the authority or by the power of another person from acting in accord with his own desires. An obedient child is not free to do as he pleases; a rebelling adolescent demands precisely this freedom. Free choice is a very different matter, although it often is confused with freedom to do as one pleases. Free choice excludes the complete determination of a person's action by antecedent factors. One has free choice only if he deliberates about possibilities genuinely open to him, chooses to realize one of these possibilities, but—all the antecedent and concomitant conditions other than his very choice remaining the same—could also have realized some other possibility.

Human free choice and freedom to do as one pleases both seem to some people to be incompatible with the existence of a creator.

If one's choice and all its causal conditions are caused by an uncaused cause, how can one choose otherwise? Does it make sense to say that the creator causes a person's freely doing what he chooses to do, as well as *all* the causal conditions of that choice? In other words, can God cause one to make a choice, and still have it be the case that there was a genuine alternative open to one? If the answer is negative, then either there is no uncaused cause or there is no human free choice.

Traditionally, the problem of divine causality and human free choice was the chief problem in reconciling the reality of a creator with human freedom. Contemporary philosophy is less concerned about free choice. Many contemporary philosophers are content to allow that human actions are altogether determined by heredity and environment, by nature and nurture. But few contemporary philosophers are content to accept the idea that man is not the supreme *mode* of being if not *the* supreme being. Very many contemporary philosophers who are proponents of various forms of metaphysical relativism maintain that all meaning and all value arise from human thought and decision. For them God is unacceptable because they feel that he restricts man, makes the human person into a slave or, at least, into a permanent underling. If God is Father, man is infant; since man has come of age, Father must retire. Humility, traditionally regarded as a virtue, has become a vice. One sees this transformation not only in Nietzsche's forceful attack on the "slave morality," as he calls traditional Christian morality, but in almost all nontheistic post-hegelian philosophy.

The two problems must be considered separately. I first consider the traditional problem about the compatibility between divine causality and free choice, then the contemporary problem about the compatibility between divine authority in giving meaning and establishing values, and human freedom to do as one pleases.

Divine causality and free choice

One argument for fatalism is that since propositions about the future are true or false now, the future already is settled. Part of the plausibility of this view arises from a tendency to confuse "true" in an objective sense with "known to be true." No doubt any proposition about the future is either true or false at present; the state of affairs it picks out, which includes temporal specifications, obtains or not. But not all propositions about the future are known to be true at present. Moreover, if some future events depend upon factors which are really at present indeterminant—for example, the free

choices of persons—then no one could know at present whether propositions about such events are true or not.

One way to introduce the problem of the creator's causality and human free choice is to pose a dilemma. Either the creator knows all possibilities and which of them will be actualized, and then the future already is settled, and there is no room for free choice; or the creator lacks knowledge about some possibilities and the conditions which will or will not actualize them, but then the creator somehow is dependent and is not an uncaused cause.

A more popular way of putting the question is, "If God knows beforehand what a person is going to do, and if God's knowledge cannot be mistaken, then how can the person choose freely?" One answer to this question is that the time reference (beforehand) characterizes entities within experience, but must be excluded from God in the way of negation, and applies to God if at all only by way of relational predication. Thus, for God man's action is not future. God knows all things at all times without his knowledge being conditioned by time.

Still, how can God's knowledge of one's action be eternally and infallibly true and one's action at the same time be free without God's knowledge being conditioned by what he knows? This question can be answered in part by explaining that God does not know what is so by seeing that conditions sufficient to bring about a state of affairs are given; rather, he knows in the mode of practical knowledge. Thus, God does not know things because they are so; they are so because he knows and causes them. God's knowledge is not caused; he remains an uncaused cause.

This answer is compatible with the position that there is an uncaused cause, but this answer merges the problem of divine knowledge and human freedom into the problem of reconciling human freedom with a universally efficacious creative causality.

It is worth noting that the difficulty which must be resolved originated within Judeo-Christian thought. Outside this religious tradition no one developed any very clear conception of human free choice. The notion of freedom of choice for human persons is related closely to the conception of God as a free creator, of man as made in God's image, and of God confronting man with the Covenant or the Gospel, and demanding that man freely respond by a commitment of faith or by a rejection. Thus, paradoxical as it may seem, the doctrines of free choice and universal divine causality tend to go together historically.

Another point is that the alternative metaphysical approaches considered in part three do not offer plausible theories which would save human free choice. Both Hume and Hegel exclude human free choice; they insist that human persons are really free, but in senses of "free" such that every human choice is completely determined by factors extrinsic to the choice itself. Kant

tries to defend free choice for the human person, but he does so by cutting human free causality away from the natural world, and attributing to the human person in his transempirical reality an initiative which is wholly unconditioned. Kant speaks as though the human person is distinct from God, but Kant never invokes God as an ultimate principle of the reality of human free acts. Causality of one thing by another is limited by Kant to the empirical world. Some who now hold that human persons are free assume that if human freedom is to be real, it must exclude all other causal conditions—such is the position of Sartre, whose concept of human freedom is influenced by Kant.

The traditional Jewish and Christian conception of human free choice did not hold that a free act is uncaused. The position rather was that an act is done by free choice if a person could have done otherwise under the very same set of conditions with the sole exception of the choice of the act itself. In this conception the choice makes a difference between which of two or more possibilities is realized, but one can only choose among antecedently shaped possibilities, and all such possible actions are conditioned by factors other than one's choice. This conception of free choice conforms to the Jewish and Christian belief that man is not a creator, that man is limited, that his causality always is situated in a given context over which he has no control, and that human action really occurs in the natural world, is subject to its physical order, but also makes a real impact there. In other words, traditional religious thought regarded the physical order as not wholly deterministic; nature was considered to be loose-textured enough to allow events which are not determined *wholly* by natural causes.

A common solution to the problem which has won acceptance even with many Christians is that human acts, to the extent that they are free, escape from being caused by God. But this solution will not do; the creator's causing of what is caused by human free acts cannot itself be caused by human free choice. If the transcendence of the creator—the fact that he is altogether uncaused—is to be maintained, then no cause of his action can be admitted. If any cause is admitted, then the creator is included in the contingent order of things; in other words, the ultimate principle of intelligibility becomes immanent. This outcome is unacceptable, because it is radically incoherent. Divine transcendence must be maintained; the creative act of an uncaused cause can in no way depend upon human free choice.

The only possible solution to the difficulty begins by recalling that one cannot understand what the creator's action is in itself. If one says that the creator causes x, and assumes that "causes" is to be taken here in any sense which one understands on an empirical basis—that is, in any sense appropriate to any other mode of causality—then x could not be replaced by "someone to make a free choice." Almost inevitably, when one says that the creator causes

x, one imports into the meaning of "causes" some property of some other causality, for example, of causality through freedom. But there is no justification for doing this; the way of negation, which underlies the relational predication by which one calls the uncaused cause "creator," excludes the importation of any such property. Once one sees that "causes" in "the creator causes someone to make a free choice" says nothing about *what* this causality—which in reality is identical with the creator—is in itself, then one also sees that the assertion in question is not and *cannot* be incoherent.

The whole ground for predicating causality of the uncaused entity is the need of the experienced world for a principle transcending itself. Free choice follows upon deliberation, and deliberation depends upon knowing what a choice would be like before one makes it. Thus, the very conception of a free choice involves a real distinction between what might have been chosen and what actually is chosen. At the same time the very conception of free choice implies that no proportionate, immanent principle can account for the fact that one alternative actually is freely chosen. The very fact of free choice therefore requires the reality of a condition which can account for the *obtaining* of the free choice, without detracting from the freedom of the choice. Within experience there is no causality which can fulfill this requirement.

This conclusion explains why the doctrines of human free choice and of divine creative causality are parts of one perspective, and why the denial of creative causality entails either the denial of human freedom or the affirmation for the human person of a causality which is really creative. If God is thought not to exist, the human person either must be reduced to the status of a function within the whole organism of the universe or must be granted the status of an uncaused cause of his own free choices. No post-hegelian philosophy which excludes God can regard man both as superior to the natural world and as subordinate to a still higher principle of meaning and value.

As to the creator's own being, his causing a person to make choice *A* and his causing a person to make choice *B* (an alternative to *A*) make no difference to him in himself. If this difference made a difference to the creator, then he would be a caused cause. The only reason there is for saying that the creator causes someone to make one free choice or another is that one knows from experience that someone has in fact made one free choice or another. Thus, while it is correct to say, "John makes free choice *A* because the creator causes John to make free choice *A*," this relationship does not warrant an argument from the attributes of the creator to the characteristics of the choice. One must say that the creator infallibly knows what he knows and that his causality always effects what he freely chooses to cause. But these affirmations concerning the creator cannot be made conditions of his

effects by way of the relational predications concerning the creator, for the relational predicates acquire their meaning *from what is related to the uncaused cause,* not from anything affirmed of the creator in himself.

This point may become clearer by reflection upon an effect other than a free act—for example, Fido chases a rabbit at a certain time. Since the cause of all the causes of this event is the creator, one can say that the creator *at this time* causes Fido to chase the rabbit. The tense of the relational predicate applied to the creator must shift with the event; thus, the next day: "The creator caused Fido to chase a rabbit yesterday." But the temporal specification cannot characterize the creator in himself. Therefore, one cannot argue: "Since the creator is timeless, and his causality is not really distinct in him from his reality, he causes timelessly; cause and effect are correlative, and therefore the effect is likewise timeless." As soon as "cause" is said of the creator as a relational predicate, it is false to say that the creator causes timelessly.

If one recognizes the general difficulties of speaking about creative causality, which cannot be spoken of in the same way as any causality *within* human experience, then one feels less difficulty about human free choice. How can a creature be other than the creator, yet wholly caused by the creator? How can a creature be what it is in itself in any respect if all that it is in every respect is caused by the creative act of the uncaused cause? The mysteriousness of such creative causality is not limited to special instances of it—for example, the causing of free choices.

Nor should it be supposed that the creator's causality of free choices must impose upon them alien conditions. The uncaused cause is no more outside things—alien from them—than within things. Moreover, there is no imposition upon that which does not resist. Since the creator is the cause of all causes, creative causality presupposes nothing; nothing does not resist.

To sum up. Relational predicates said of the creator do not describe what he is in himself. All one knows by way of relational predication is that whatever the creator is, he is what he must be to account for the fact that he is the term of the relationship to him of the entities which require him as cause. Thus, since everything, including temporal events and free acts, requires the creator as transcendent cause, one knows that he has what it takes to be such a cause. Whatever is characteristic of entities within the orders of human experience—in other words, whatever could be incompatible with the facts one is trying to explain—must be denied of the creator as he is in himself.

The real mystery is not the creator's ability to cause someone to make a free choice. The real mystery is his ability creatively to cause anything at all. If the creator can cause Fido to chase a rabbit and to do it at a certain time, he can as well cause John to make choice *A* and to make it freely. Both temporality and freedom belong to the effects insofar as they are entities

distinct from the reality of the creator's causality, and this reality remains concealed by the transcendence of the creator, a transcendence made clear by the way of negation.

The seeming cogency of arguments against the compatibility between creative causality and human free choice arises, as I said above, from an almost irrepressible tendency to suppose that one understands what creative causality is in itself. It is extremely difficult to keep clear in one's mind that "cause" said of an uncaused cause is said in a unique sense. One keeps importing the idea of one thing pushing another, or of a producer and a product, or the like. These relations hold between entities bound together in one of the orders within experience. The creator *really* is transcendent. The creator is not Hegel's Absolute.

The possibility of thinking about the creator's act on the model of the human person's free choice—a possibility I explained in the final section of chapter seventeen—intensifies the temptation to suppose that one understands creative causality. Clearly, if one person chooses that another should act in a certain way, the action of the second is not free if the choice of the first is efficacious. If the creator's causality of human action is modeled closely on human free choice, it seems to follow that if the creator chooses that human persons act in certain ways, then these persons have no choice in the matter.

However, to draw this conclusion is to press the model too far. Human acts of free choice are given in experience. Being contingent, their obtaining must be explained. For one human person to make another do something is not really a matter of making the other's own choice occur—no man can cause another's free choices. Thus, in human relations one either respects another's freedom or attempts to circumvent it; one does not cause it. The creator's relation to human free choice is quite different; the creator causes the obtaining of the human person's free choice precisely as such.

Some have suggested that the relationship of the creator to the human person is somewhat like that of a dramatist to the characters in his play. However, I think that this analogy is seriously misleading. The characters do not make free choices; they are imaginary. Man's creatureliness does not detract from his reality; there is no reality to detract from apart from this creatureliness. Moreover, fictional characters can have some reality—that of the sources in experience which suggest them—even prior to the playwright's work.

Divine causality and human autonomy

If one thinks of divine causality and human choice using human free choice as the model for understanding divine causality, it is easy to see why

the two modes of causality seem to put the creator and the human person into competition. If both are choosing in somewhat the same sense with respect to the same acts, then the choices of one or the other must prevail. This way of looking at matter, even if it is recognized as a confusion when one considers the problem with respect to the obtaining of *free choice,* easily gives rise to the other, related problem of divine causality and human autonomy—man's freedom to do as he pleases.

How can a transcendent creator give meaning and establish values without infringing upon the autonomy of the human person? How can man be free to do as he pleases if he has an all-seeing and omnipotent Father standing over him? As the double formulation just offered suggests, the problem has two quite distinct forms. Only in the first form does the issue turn on the compatibility between human freedom and the creator's grounding of meaning and value. In the second form the issue rather turns upon the authority of the Judeo-Christian God and the desire of man neither to submit to that authority nor to be punished for ignoring it.

I consider the first form of the problem first. How can one reconcile creatureliness with freedom to do as one pleases?

In one conception of such freedom I think there is no solution. If one supposes that the human person is not truly free unless he creates all meanings by his own interpretations and all values by his own decisions, then the reality of a transcendent creator precludes this sort of freedom.

A human person does not create his own possibilities as a human person. One must discover these possibilities. Each person can shape his own life in many ways, but the distinction between actualizing possibilities which fulfill a human person as such and actualizing possibilities which mutilate a human person as such is not up to man. Still, the limitation indicated by this distinction is not imposed upon man by the creator, as if one could better exist without being anything at all, and could have it open to oneself to be whatever one pleased.

The creator imposes nothing upon the creature in making the creature what it is, for apart from being created, the creature is nothing at all. Fundamental moral limits—the distinction between what is good for human persons and what is destructive of human persons—follow from man's being what he is. Many specific moral obligations do follow from one's own commitments.[1] Hence, moral limits are never imposed upon a person.

Moreover, moral limits are not so much a consequence of creatureliness as of the dignity with which human creatures have been endowed by the creator. Subhuman entities can do no moral wrong. Human persons have moral boundaries because of their freedom of choice, and because of the broad field of possibility upon which that freedom opens. Man can do moral wrong only because he has it in his power to be less than he might be, to fall

short of the greater possibilities open to him. Moral limits limit man only from limiting himself to being more limited than a created person needs to be.

Post-hegelian relativists have reacted strongly against the threat of the Absolute. In rejecting the Absolute contemporary philosophy stands up for man's dignity as a person who is not merely a part of an all-encompassing whole. This stand is correct and important.

Yet the appeal of contemporary relativism partly arises from the fact that it does not wholly exclude the Absolute. Man himself—massed in totalitarian society or standing in existential isolation—becomes the sole source of meaning and value in reality.

Relativism allows one to feel that incompatible moral judgments are not necessarily contradictory; either incompatible moral judgments can both be true for those who think them so, or no moral judgment is true or false. For the relativist the difference between right and wrong is not the difference between doing what one believes is truly good and doing what one believes is truly evil. Rather, the difference between right and wrong is redefined into a difference between being "tolerant," "open," "well-adjusted," "authentic," "realistic" (in short, being a relativist) and being "fanatical," "narrow," "out-of-step," "phony," "idealistic" (in short, not being a relativist).

If I am immoral, then I limit *the* good to *my* good. Since this limitation is not in accord with reality, I must redesign reality so that what-is becomes what-is-*for-me.* To openly narrow reality—that is, to deny values most people recognize—would obviously be absurd. I hardly can present myself as a reasonable person demanding impartially that everyone accept as a criterion of meaning and value my peculiar self-limitation. If I am not careful, everyone will see that I am claiming to be the creator, and this claim will elicit a negative reaction. I therefore propose—without fully intending to act on the proposal—that everyone enjoy the same right; I suggest that reality is nothing but what is for each one of us.

The trouble is that each person is included in the reality which every other person confronts. Either there are other people, real people, and that is hell, according to Sartre's famous line in *No Exit,* or there really are no *other* people. In the latter case either everyone merges into a mass society or I emerge as Overman while everyone else sinks to the level of the human, all-too-human (which is Nietzsche's transposition of the Christian conception of the "mass of perdition"). In other words, if one holds that man is the measure of *all* things, then he must admit himself to be a nonman according to the measure others would impose, or he must decide that others are nonmen according to his criteria.

The ultimate unsatisfactoriness of a relativistic conception of human freedom to do as one pleases can be grasped by a simple thought-experiment.

Let us imagine two possible worlds, world *A* and world *B*. In both of these worlds, let us suppose, there is no suffering, no pain, no sickness, no accidents, and no death. There is no need to make a living. The ordinary problems of life are fully taken care of and one enjoys immortality.

In world *A* one can begin from scratch and have anything one wishes. One can build, furnish, and equip the whole world precisely to one's own standards and specifications. There is only one catch. In this world there can be no other real people. One would not be the measure of *all* things if there were others who could measure differently. One knows that there are no real people and can never forget it. As compensation, however, one can have robots which in all respects look and act like real people. One can have as many of these robots as one likes and can make them do anything one wishes. If one cares to engage in orgies, the robots will oblige, and will seem in all respects like real people—but one will know that they are not. If one cuts them, they bleed. If one hurts them, they react. But one knows they are only robots, that they can impose no meaning and value. Over and over and over again, forever and ever and ever, one can do just as one pleases. But one cannot die.

In world *B* one cannot begin from scratch. The world already is built, furnished, and equipped. One must accept things as they are. There are real people in this world. A good feature of world *B* is that everyone is friendly; no one wishes to harm anyone else, nor to benefit at the expense of others. People have different interests and abilities. They must work to accomplish things. But they do work together. Within limits everyone can do his own thing. But there are limits, because one has to consider the rights and interests and sensitivities of others. One has to put oneself at the service of others, in the sense that one has something to give, and must work to give it and to share it with others. One cannot die in world *B* either. But who would wish to die in such a world?

The moral is that freedom to do as one pleases is not an unqualified good. No one wishes to be exploited. No one wishes to be absorbed in the Absolute. But there is no reason I can see to suppose that the fact that human persons are created means that the creator is an exploiter. And there is good reason, already stated at length, for maintaining that the creator is not the Absolute.

This brings up the second form of the problem respecting the compatibility of human autonomy with human creatureliness. How can the freedom of the human person to do as he pleases be reconciled with the authority of a God who hands down categorical imperatives and who threatens with eternal misery those who do not fulfill them?

This question certainly is difficult. But it is a real question only if one believes traditional Judeo-Christian doctrines. If one did believe such doctrines, then he would not consider this question, or any other difficult

question raised by his faith, in abstraction from his whole religious understanding of reality.

Thinking within his religious conception of reality, an orthodox Jew or Christian would point out that God's law should be regarded as a gift rather than as a burden. The same psalm which began, "The heavens declare the glory of God," added to its meditation on creation a meditation on the law of God, according to which this law was a blessing rather than a burden.[2] Whether traditional doctrines on human dignity and on God's authority were compatible with one another is a difficult question which I am not going to consider. But they certainly seemed compatible to those who believed them.

Undoubtedly the reason was that the religious believer hoped for something beyond mere obedience to law. He looked upon the obedient acceptance of what he regarded as God's will as a means of liberation, of salvation.[3] But the reality for which he hoped was something higher. In the New Testament the Christian hope was for redemption from death and sin, for life everlasting in an eternal community of persons in some ways like world *B*.[4] Hell, as Christians understood it, was less pleasant than world *A*, but in many respects very like it.

In sum, if one does not accept traditional religious beliefs, then there is no reason for supposing that the creator gives laws or that he punishes anyone for disobeying them. If one did accept traditional religious beliefs, one presumably would take seriously the whole, not only the parts, of that set of beliefs. One would regard divine law as more precious than gold, because one would see the will of God as one's own sanctification, and one would hope for sanctification, seeing it not as something dehumanizing but as something infinitely ennobling to the human person.

Orthodox Christian faith maintained, in fact, that the relation of human persons to divine persons was to be familial. This was the import of the doctrine of the Incarnation: the Son of God, a divine person, became man so that human persons while remaining creatures might become by adoption members of God's immediate family.[5] Whether such a belief is true is beyond the scope of the present work, if not beyond the competence of philosophy, to say. A related philosophical question is what such a belief might possibly mean, if anything. I shall treat that question among others in chapter twenty-four.

19: Evil Is Real but Is Not Created

Introduction

A person touches a hot stove and experiences a painful burn. Animals, caught by other animals, suffer pain when they are wounded. An infant struggles for breath and feels as if its lungs will burst of suffocation. People starve and feel terrible hunger pangs as they do so. These are *felt* miseries. Pain is a modality of consciousness which no animal or person likes, which all animals and people fear, hate, and try as much as possible to avoid.

One's eyes are burned and one goes blind. An animal loses part of its body in a fight and survives in a mutilated condition. The struggling infant dies of suffocation. Starving people are weak and sick. These are *physical* lacks or harms. An entity is missing, or it loses, something suitable to it which it normally would have.

A person is burned by acid thrown at him for revenge. Animals are tortured and mutilated by people who enjoy doing so. People are allowed to starve while many other people give pets much food which could keep starving human beings alive. The baby is suffocated by its parents, who do not wish to take care of it, who regret that they did not have it aborted, and who decide that the fact that the infant now is a few weeks beyond birth will not prevent them from getting rid of it, as they could have done legally up to its birth. The vengeful act, the sadistic act, the negligence toward hungry fellowmen, the murder of the helpless child—these are *moral* wrongs. Such acts and omissions involve an abuse or a guilty nonuse of human freedom to choose and to act.

All of these—felt miseries, objective lacks or harms, and moral wrongs—can be called "evil." One could add to them confusions and errors of thought, failures and mistakes in cultural activities. Each of the four orders—the physical, the intentional, the existential, and the cultural—has norms which indicate the full being of entities in that order. And in each case entities can exist while falling short of the wholeness and the goodness appropriate to them. Thus there are various modes of evil.

As with the question of freedom, the problem of evil presents a challenge to one who maintains that there is a creator—an uncaused cause which causes all the other causes of every state of affairs—and that this creator is God. The challenge can be formulated in two ways. First, as a challenge to the reality of a creator, the problem of evil is how there can be a single, ultimate cause of everything given in experience, inasmuch as experience contains the radical opposition of good and evil. How could the same ultimate principle be responsible for such a fundamental discrepancy as that between these opposites? Second, as a challenge to Jewish and Christian faith, the problem of evil is how one can believe there is a loving and almighty God when one considers the evil one finds in the world.

These two distinct questions usually are mixed together in philosophical discussions. I regard this mixing as a prime source of the confusions and difficulties usually considered as "the problem of evil." Therefore, as with freedom, I shall deal with the two questions separately.

There are three unsatisfactory ways of dealing with the first question. First, one can maintain that reality, after all, does not have a single, ultimate principle. The universe is regarded as a product of two or more distinct and conflicting factors. Second, one can deny the reality of evil and maintain that it is an illusion. Third, admitting that evil is real and denying that there are many ultimate principles of reality, one can treat evil as merely relative—as a partial or lesser good.

Materialists generally accept the first solution; they deny that there is a creator and they consider evil to be the interference of the parts of the world with one another, especially the interference of accident and nature with human interests and desires. Much Eastern philosophy and religion denies the reality of evil, and this denial often leads to the position that the whole world of experience is illusory. Hegel and many post-hegelian relativists regard evil as a characteristic of parts which are taken out of the context of a larger whole to which they belong. Evil is merely immaturity, lack of full development, a stage in evolution which will be transcended.

The difficulties involved in each of these three approaches should be obvious.

The universe certainly does depend upon many and conflicting principles,

but all of these factors are caused by the creator. Any cause not caused by the creator would cause it, and then it would not be uncaused. Assuming, as I do in this part of the work, that the reality of the creator is established, the first solution is ruled out.

The notion that evil is an illusion also must be rejected. The examples given at the outset of the present chapter certainly are not of illusions in any ordinary sense of the word "illusion." Moreover, any attempt to reduce everything given in experience to illusion is bound to end in inconsistency. Thus the second solution also is ruled out.

The third fares no better, because the arguments developed against Hegel's philosophy and against post-hegelian relativism remove the foundation for regarding evil as a merely relative factor in reality. On the one hand, human knowers have no place to stand from which they would be able to view all the parts of reality as functions of an all-inclusive whole. On the other hand, the very practical interest of any relativistic philosophy depends upon some universal value which is controlling in all particular cases or situations. Problems, muddles, and so forth *always* are unsatisfactory; pragmatism, analysis, and so forth *constantly* seek to overcome these unsatisfactory—that is, evil—states of affairs.

One step toward a resolution of the first question is to distinguish between sensible evil and what is understood to be evil. Felt miseries, pain and sense suffering in animals and human beings, are repulsive. But in what sense is pain evil?

If one accepts the theory of evolution, it is clear that one must regard pain as a useful adaptation. Painful sensations are very acute; they call attention to themselves and evoke a strong emotional reaction. This emotional reaction—which is not a mere reflex—generates avoidance behavior. If one did not feel the pain of a burn, one would not be so likely to avoid hot stoves, and one might burn oneself without noticing it. As Roger Trigg remarks, one's dislike of pain leads one to regard it as an evil, but this is not to say that pain itself, apart from the attitude one has to it, is evil:

> It may well be true that dislike or distress at a pain is a necessary condition for its being judged an evil. However this may not be the only considera-tion. There are such points as the undoubted biological value of some pain. If pain did not distress us, or if we were congenitally insensitive to it, our failure to remove ourselves from pain-producing situations could injure us, perhaps fatally. It seems that our dislike of pain might even further our good sometimes.[1]

Even after the initial pain-producing stimulus is withdrawn or avoided, the continuing painful sensation has a value to the extent that it makes one favor

or protect the injured part and conditions one to avoid injuries from similar causes in the future.

It must be admitted that like any other adaptation which is generally useful, the sense of pain sometimes serves no purpose. Evolution selects what usually is of value for survival, but such selection can be wasteful and it also can leave behind structures and functions which seem to have lost their point—such as the appendix. However, it is clear—especially from the experience of the few individuals who lack normal sensitivity to pain—that pain is useful.[2]

Considering pain from the standpoint of this insight into its function, one can regard it as a useful good. But it is not understood to be good in itself. Pain is a positive reality. But as a sensation it is peculiar in that it has no content of its own. One sees color, one hears sounds, and feels warmth and hardness, but pain has no objective correlate. It is not of something else. This fact about pain helps to explain the inadequate ways previously discussed of dealing with the problem of evil, for pain tends to be regarded as the paradigm of evil.

The causes in virtue of which pain and satisfaction are felt clearly must be distinct principles, for one is as much a positive reality as the other. But the principle in virtue of which the opposites are felt is not to be confused with the principle of their being. "Being felt" and "being" without qualification are not identical, even in the case of pain. The same creator can account for the fact that states of affairs of diverse sorts *obtain*. Moreover, the fact that pain and felt satisfaction are not *of* something in the way that other perceptions are might lead to the erroneous judgment that they are illusory. However, to be real is not necessarily to be an *object* of sense experience. Finally, the evil of pain is relative, and its level of reality only is appreciated properly when it is understood from the higher viewpoint of its function in life. This superior view of pain does not eliminate its character as a perceived evil, but it does transform one's experience of pain.[3] However, not all evil is relative in the way that pain is.

One who points out that pain as such is not absolutely evil—that, in fact, it has a certain intelligible value—is in danger of being misunderstood. I am not suggesting that one should ignore the human misery caused by immoral acts and omissions. Nor am I saying that one should put up with pain or expect others to put up with it if there is a way to ease it. I merely point out that while pain is a *felt* evil, it has a function which is important biologically and perhaps in other ways for the good of animals and of human persons. Nor should anyone say that the only value of pain is that it leads one to avoid pain. It leads one to avoid damage which might easily be fatal if one were not warned and guided by pain.

Physical lacks or harms and moral wrongs are not sensed. One does not, in a literal sense, see blindness or death or negligence or murder. One grasps these only by understanding a certain standard or norm which one judges is not satisfied in a given case. Unlike pain, objective harms or lacks and moral wrongs are not sensible evils; they are understood to be evil. Understanding and judgment are concerned with the world, not merely with certain contents of experience. Thus, evils which are *understood* present the real challenge to the concept of a creator. How can the same created universe include radical opposites—understood goods and understood evils?

Some authors deny that it is necessary to clarify what evil is before dealing with the problem. The coauthors of a recent book, for example, assert that a definition of evil is irrelevant, for the problem remains the same however one defines evil, provided that one specifies what is to count as evil.[4] But the authors then go on to lump together pain and suffering, physical and mental deformity, and moral wrong. They also postulate a mystical experience of an all-powerful, all-evil god, which, they say, a theist would wish to argue against on the ground that there is much good in the world. They themselves demand the same consideration—to be allowed to argue against the existence of an all-powerful, all-good God on the ground that there is much evil in the world.[5]

This tactic seems plausible, but it is fallacious. It is fallacious, in the first place, because these authors ignore the basic distinction between sensible evil and intelligible evil.

The tactic is fallacious, in the second place, because no experience—even if it be called "mystical"—is capable of defining its own content as an extraempirical, all-powerful, all-evil god any more than any direct experience is capable of defining its immediate content as an extraempirical creator. As I pointed out in chapter three (pages 21-24), if one has no ground for maintaining that there is a transcendent reality which could be presenting itself in a particular experience, one has no ground for assuming the content of the experience to have an objective transcendent referent.

The tactic is fallacious for yet a third reason. If the coauthors had troubled to clarify the meaning of "evil," it would have become evident that evil does not need an explanation in the same way that good does. A full-fledged treatise on good and evil would take us far afield, but a brief excursion into value theory is necessary at this point.[6]

Good, evil, and creative causality

"Good" and "ought," "bad" and "ought not," are closely related. Anything is good if and only if it is as it ought to be; a person is good morally if he is

habitually disposed to do as he ought to do. People have different standards for many useful things, but a good item of any sort meets one's standards. A good argument, likewise, reaches the conclusion an argument ought to reach. Good exercise is the exercise one ought to have. Good parents care for their children as they ought to.

Some theories of value suggest that there are ideals, existing by themselves, which establish standards. This suggestion is not helpful, because it leaves unclear the relationship between good entities and these ideals, and it leaves unanswered the question why these ideals themselves are good. Other value theories make positive values (goods) relative to desires or positive interests and make negative values (disvalues or evils) relative to aversions or negative interests.

This approach merely pushes the issue back a stage, because it leaves unanswered the question: What makes the difference between the two sorts of attitude or interest? Still other value theories deny the objectivity of values altogether, and suggest that human attitudes toward things lead men to use value-language by relational predication of the objects of their thoughts and feelings. Those who take this approach do not explain why human beings have the two kinds of thoughts and feelings which differentiate the subjective psychological data. However, the values projected upon things can be distinct, relationally understood aspects of a value-free objective world only if the subjective principles are somehow distinguished.

It is interesting, and ironical, that the theory of value last mentioned finds its main supporters among philosophers who, also, are the main proponents of the view that evil in the world is incompatible with, or argues against, the reality of an all-good, all-powerful God.[7] Of course, such philosophers usually defend a subjectivist theory of value in discussing ethics, while they keep arguments regarding God and evil in a different compartment. It does not occur to them that if values are not independent of human thought and feeling, then there is a problem as to why people cannot get rid of evil by changing their thinking and altering their attitudes. If, as is obvious, this cannot be done, there must be some objective reason why it cannot—and the subjectivist theory of value collapses.[8]

An adequate account of value must begin from the fact that existing entities often are incomplete. Something is, but it is not all that it might be. *What* the something is and to what order of entities it belongs must be taken for granted in distinguishing between the extent to which it already is, and the extent to which it is still short of its full possibility. If one looks at certain works of art, one cannot tell whether they are finished or not, since one does not know what they are supposed to be. If one does not know whether a certain field is to be regarded as cultivated or not, one does not

know what standards to apply to the plants growing there—are they healthy specimens or are they obnoxious weeds?

While one has to categorize anything to be in a position to distinguish between the extent to which it already is, and the extent to which it is still open to unrealized possibilities, the distinction is not merely subjective. Nor are the unrealized possibilities mere figments of an observer's imagination. A living person can starve; a child can grow up. Both are real possibilities. As this example of possibilities—starving and growing up—suggests, I do not maintain that realizing possibilities is always good and not realizing them is always bad. Such a position would be oversimplified. A person fulfills himself as a potential murderer by committing murder as truly as a person fulfills himself as a good parent by taking care of his children.

A helpful example of the distinction between good and evil, in terms of possibilities, is health and disease. Organisms have many possibilities; an individual of any species of living entity both is what it already is, and might be what it is not yet. Fulfilling some possibilities is healthy; fulfilling others is sick. What is the difference? A healthy function realizes a possibility or set of possibilities such that the organism functioning in this way can continue to function in many other ways; a sick function realizes a possibility or set of possibilities such that an organism functioning in this way has its other possibilities blocked.

Healthy functioning is a way of living which opens the way to further and fuller living; sick functioning is a way of living which more or less seriously blocks further functioning. The limit of sickness is death—no possibilities left at all. What is good for the organism is that by which it is able to have life and to live more abundantly; what is bad for the organism is that which fulfills its possibility for reduction in functioning up to the limit of complete nonfunctioning.

Health and disease distinguish certain goods and evils in the physical order. This same schema can be used to distinguish good and evil in the other orders. In the intentional order, clarity, consistency, certitude, and explanatory power are desirable traits for an inquiry or an argument. Their opposites certainly are possible, but thought is blocked when the possibilities of confusion, inconsistency, lack of proof, and failure to explain are fulfilled. Inquiry expands under the one set of conditions; its possibilities are limited under the other set. John Dewey understood this point, and much of what he says in his logical works is a development of it. Good logic and good method make knowledge grow.

In the cultural order—art and technology—one assumes the same sort of distinction. Originality and inventiveness are valued because they open up new areas for artistic or economic exploitation. Economy and efficiency are

valued because they make the most of resources, to preserve a greater basis for realizing further possibilities.

In chapter eighteen I briefly indicated a similar distinction between good and evil in the existential (moral) order. Immorality is the use of freedom in a self-limiting way. Morally right choices preserve the basis on which free choice can expand its work of realizing the fullness not only of the individual person but also of the person as a member of a wider human community. Morally wrong choices prefer *this* good *here-and-now for me,* and sacrifice something of the full ambit of human possibilities which could be realized in the ever-expanding life of mankind as a whole.

If this theory of value is correct, it follows that good and evil are not related to each other symmetrically. Both involve the realization of possibilities. But good is on the side of further and fuller realization; evil is on the side of delimitation. Things are not bad, however, merely by being limited. They are bad to the extent that they have possibilities which might have been realized, but which are now blocked, because a certain possibility was realized which blocks further and fuller realization. Evil is the nonfulfillment of what the entity or person might have been. The sad state of lack or wrong is compared with the entity's or person's wider possibilities which have been frustrated. Intelligible evil, in contrast with sensible evil, is mutilation or shortcoming.

As I explained in chapter fourteen (pages 237-238), the laws, principles, requirements, or rules which constitute each of the four orders are normative for entities in their respective orders. In different ways in each case an entity can be in a certain order yet not wholly be *in order* according to the constitutive principles of its order. Whatever is in an order is partial and incomplete by itself; reason points to a wider context—eventually to the order as a whole—for the complement of each entity in the order. Thus, an entity is evil to the extent that it is out of order; being out of order, an entity lacks the completeness it would receive if it were in order.

Evil thus has a negative character. It is in itself, not a positive something, but a lack of something. Yet not all lack is evil. The person who could murder another is not evil for remaining unfulfilled in this respect. Doughnuts are not evil merely because they really do have holes in them. But a person who attacks the foundation of other goods in another person by killing him does something wrong, because the choice to act in this manner narrows the scope of one's own freedom to an arbitrarily selected subset of all the possibilities a human person can wish to further. A hole in one's gas tank, which allows the gasoline to leak out, also is something missing; the lack of integrity of the metal is a privation in this case, since there ought to be metal where the hole is.

Likewise, lack of sight in a stone is a negation; blindness in a man is lack of sight, but it is a privation because the man is missing something he ought to have. Not knowing the answer to a problem is as such merely a negation; not knowing the answer to a question on a test for which one is supposed to have studied is a privation. For an infant not to have fed the hungry is only a negation; for an adult who has the means and the opportunity to feed the hungry not to do so is a privation.

To the extent that a privation is negative, that it is a lack of something, it does not obtain. What does not obtain as such does not demand any explanation. To the extent that privations do need to be explained, they can be understood either as incidental to something positive, which is good so far as it goes, or as a consequence of the causality of something which already suffers from some privation.

Thus, one animal eats and another is destroyed, or a reproductive process which has been interfered with by radiation leads to a monstrous birth. An individual pursuing a certain good violates some other as a means to his end, thus doing moral evil, or a person proceeding on a previous immoral commitment perverts his own understanding, his society's institutions, or his religion to conform with this wrong disposition. A machine wears out in doing what it was built to do, but as it loses its original perfection it spoils materials to which it is applied. In each case the initial evil is incidental to some good, and the train of consequent evils follow as privations in effects which are proportioned to the privation in their immediate principle.

As I explained in chapter seventeen (pages 264-268), the causality of the creator is according to a unique mode. Creative causality does not displace any other mode of causality. Nothing is totally dependent upon the creator if "totally dependent" excludes dependence upon other causes according to the various modes of causality which obtain among entities given in experience. The creator causes the obtaining of all contingent states of affairs, including all other cause-effect states of affairs, without interfering with the relationships within such states of affairs. As a privation, evil is explained to the extent that it needs to be and can be explained by the defects of causes within each of the orders which fail to achieve or to keep open the possibilities of completeness in their respective orders.

Thus, the answer to the first of the two questions formulated at the beginning of this chapter is clear—the question how the creator can be the ultimate cause of everything given in experience, which includes the radical opposition of good and evil. The answer is that the creator causes states of affairs which involve evil, but does not cause evil, since evil does not require a creative cause. Evil is the nonobtaining of what might have obtained and ought to have obtained but does not obtain. What does not obtain does not require a cause of its nonobtaining as such.

This conclusion can be stated in another way. Evil is a defect in any entity according to the norms of the order to which it belongs. Evil in any order can be reduced to principles within that order. States of affairs which are subject to privation do obtain, but not precisely insofar as they suffer from privation. Creative causality accounts for the obtaining of contingent states of affairs which *do obtain.* The norms of particular orders are not norms for the creature-creator relationship as such. Therefore, the creator accounts for contingent obtaining which, as such, is good. Nothing transcending a particular order is required to account for that nonobtaining which is evil. Moreover, no norms which define nonobtaining as evil transcend a particular order; the creator's causality, if subject to norms, must be under a "law" which transcends every particular order.

Each of the erroneous solutions to the problem of evil has an aspect of truth which can be fit into the preceding explanation.

First, evil does not exist by itself. It always exists in and mutilates a good. To the extent that the entity which is subject to the privation is real it remains good. But the working and effects of such an entity often are contrary to the working and effects of a perfect example of its type, which is free of privation. For example, health and disease are contraries. One thinks of disease as simply evil. In fact it has two aspects. In one aspect the organism is deprived of some of its necessary or normal conditions for full functioning. In another aspect, however, it is still alive and functioning. Disease is not pure evil; it is a way of being alive. Just and unjust people struggle with one another. Injustice as such is privation. But the unjust opponent still is a person, who has human dignity, who is acting by free choice, who is pursuing a certain good. Similarly, a misunderstanding is contrary to correct understanding, but the error itself presupposes some grasp of what one was trying to understand.

These examples indicate that evil is found in a good, and various goods and evils appear as contrary, positive realities. But the opposites here are the good without qualification and the good subject to privation. The privation as such is not *contrary* to anything. This is the reason why it is necessary to overcome evil with good; all that could be attacked and destroyed directly would be the residual good. Evil as such must be hated, but it can be overcome only if the damaged good can be restored to the integrity it has lost.

Second, some, at least, of what one considers evil is so only because of a mistake in one's perspective. In such a mistake there is a real evil, namely, misunderstanding of what is truly good and evil. But what one thinks evil need not really be so. Most people, for example, regard pain as such as an evil. The standard of judgment is emotion; one operates here at the subintellectual level. Sense perception does not grasp the privation involved in understood evil.

Intelligible evil is a real privation. Sometimes, possibly quite often, one thinks something evil when there is no real privation. One is dealing in such cases with an unreality, with the contradictory opposite of what is real and good, with something merely unreal and self-contradictory. One has an illusion that material and organic existence, with its susceptibility to pain, is evil, because one imagines one should exist with complete freedom from such conditions, perhaps even that human persons could do without bodies. Or one imagines that one should be unlimited, which is an illusion, since a creature must be limited and there is no privation in its being so. One who can imagine not being limited in certain ways erroneously judges that the mere fact of limitation is somehow a cosmic injustice, and then rebels against limits which in no way indicate privation. Insight and resignation are necessary to overcome such illusions, and the religions and philosophies of the East are not altogether wrong in teaching the need for such attitudes.

Third, many conditions which are appropriate to entities at a certain stage of development imply privation if they are not surpassed. To have the emotional makeup of a two-year-old is suitable for a two-year-old; it is a privation in an adult. Likewise, the sort of obedience or even the sort of innocence which is appropriate in a small child is unsuitable in an adult. A good technique—for example, for surgery—at one period is very poor technique when better methods are developed. There is a relativity, not in good and evil as such, but in the possibilities of entities under different conditions. Evil is privation; privation is a lack of what should be present; what absolutely cannot be given under certain conditions is no privation under those conditions.

The foregoing account of the meaning of "evil" makes clear why one could not have a mystical experience of an all-evil, all-powerful god. Since evil as such is privation, an all-evil god would be total privation. But total privation would eliminate that which is deprived.

Someone might object that the clarification of evil as privation only solves a theoretical problem. The existential question remains. The creator must bear the responsibility for knowingly and willingly bringing about states of affairs in which privation is an important feature. The creator causes the obtaining of states of affairs which are far from what they ought to be; he causes people to make free choices which lack what they should have to be morally good. Thus, the creator is somehow responsible for evil.

One wonders: "How could the creator, if he is good, bring about a state of affairs such as this world, including so many and such great evils?" The question is understandable, but it depends upon the assumption that one knows precisely what "good" said of the creator means, and that it means what it means in other cases. But the meaning of the word is not the same when it is said of the creator and of his creatures. Said of the creator, "good"

excludes moral goodness, kindness, benevolence, sensitivity to the feelings of others, and so on.

This answer may be frightening. One has no philosophical assurance that the creator is "on our side." Restricting oneself to the results attained by the argument that there is a creator, one finds little reason to admire and love him. The world obviously is beset by many evils. Of course, there are certain goods in it too. If one is not unduly pessimistic, one might feel that the creator is not to be hated, but is to be regarded with a certain wary wonder. Undoubtedly he is great. But is he not also cruel or, at least, lacking in sensitivity? No, this also is excluded by the way of negation.

It is tempting, but erroneous, to suggest that the relation between the creator's knowledge and human understanding of good and evil is like the relation between human understanding and sensibility in respect to pain and felt satisfaction. The analogy suggests that the creator grasps everything on a higher level, from which the judgments men make of evil are relativized. I do not accept this analogy because it attempts to treat the transcendence of the creator on the model of an otherness within our experience. No such immanent otherness is adequate to express the disproportion between creator and creature.

Therefore, it seems to me that the last word of metaphysics with respect to the responsibility of the creator for creation is that the creator does not cause evil as such, but does cause to obtain states of affairs which involve evil. Since the norms, if any, of creative causality are not known, it makes no sense to talk about the creator's responsibility if "responsibility" suggests shortcoming on his part. If the norms which are known—those of the various orders according to which judgments of evil are made—were applicable to the creator, then his creation might be judged evil to the extent that there are evils in the effects. But these norms are not applicable to the creator.

Evil and the God of faith

The second of the two questions which I distinguished at the beginning of this chapter is how one can believe that there is a loving and almighty God in view of the evil one finds in the world. This question is a challenge to Jewish and Christian faith. Believers did wish to say that God loves mankind much as a father loves his children. They also held that God is all-knowing and all-powerful. Thus sceptical opponents challenge believers with a dilemma. If God is all-good, he must be willing to prevent evil. If he is all-knowing, he must foresee evil and know how to prevent it. If he is all-powerful, he must be able to prevent it. Yet evil exists. Therefore, God must lack one or more of the attributes believers attribute to him.

One traditional response of believers to this dilemma is that a great deal of evil in creation, if not all of it, results from the wrongdoing of human persons and other rational creatures—devils.[9] God created such free beings, but the evil of their action was their own fault.

Sometimes this line of argument has been developed as a free-will defense of God's goodness, with the suggestion that the free choices of creatures are in no way caused by God.[10] This way of developing the argument is incompatible with Christian tradition.[11] It amounts to saying that some contingent states of affairs obtain without being dependent upon the creator. However, I think that the traditional explanation of evil in terms of the freedom of creatures can be understood without denying the universality of divine causality. As I have explained already, human free choice and the moral evil in it belong to the existential order; divine causality transcends this order. Whatever obtains, insofar as it obtains, is good; the privation in a morally evil act does not require ultimate explanation.

Still, the challenge proceeds, why does God create states of affairs in which evil is present? Jews and Christians believed that God allowed evil in creation in order to draw greater good from it. The presence of evil in creation would show lack of love on God's part only if it were shown that God ought to prevent evil and fails to do so. This point, which is implied by the conclusion of the immediately preceding section, has been further explicated in a very effective way by several recent authors, so I will not dwell upon it here.[12]

I think that it is important to point out, however, that much of the attack upon the view of believers that God allows evil for the sake of greater good proceeds on questionable assumptions. Surely, it is argued, an all-knowing and omnipotent creator could find a better way of accomplishing good than one which involves all the misery one finds in the world. For example, Edward H. Madden and Peter H. Hare confidently assert: " . . . it is clear that there are many possible universes other than the present one with much less interference and much less evil which God could have created."[13] Similarly, Terence Penelhum takes for granted that there are possible alternatives to pain which would fulfill the same function yet be preferable to it, and that God could have created one of these alternatives.[14]

But how does one know that there is a better way? If one views some evil in its immediate context, one can perhaps imagine some way in which certain relevant goods could be achieved without this evil. But no overall judgment can be made unless one has an overall comprehension of creation. What, after all, does it mean to talk about "many possible universes other than the present one?" Unless one knows perfectly how a state of affairs is related to every other state of affairs, one cannot know what difference it would make

to the remainder of the universe for any single state of affairs to be other than it is.

I think the possibility of alternative universes is perhaps too easily accepted because of an oversimplified conception of divine omnipotence, a conception in part propagated by believers themselves. Thomas Aquinas, for example, maintains that God can do whatever is logically possible.[15] But divine omnipotence must not be taken to mean that God can do precisely what created causes as such can do. God cannot act in a creaturely and defective way. He cannot do anything incompatible with what he has done; thus he cannot change the past. According to believers he cannot fail to keep his promises. Clearly, this last point was extremely important to believers, precisely because it is *logically possible* for God to renege.[16] According to Thomas Aquinas himself God cannot annihilate what he has freely chosen to create, since he could have no reason for changing his free decision once it is made.[17]

So far as I can see, metaphysics cannot demonstrate that the uncaused cause is omnipotent. Believers certainly held that God is omnipotent: "We believe in God, the Father almighty. . . ." But what does "omnipotent" mean here? It surely means that God can do what he has done and that he acts freely. It means that no other power exists unless it is created by God. It means that no created power can set itself in opposition to God, as an antigod which might defeat him. It means that God will fulfill his promises; there is no danger that he might try to keep his word and fail. However, so far as I can see, nothing in traditional religious faith required one to believe that God could create all sorts of possible worlds other than the one he has created. Traditional Jewish and Christian doctrine–I distinguish *doctrine* here from *theology*–was notably reserved about such speculative questions.

I suspect that a great deal of confusion in this matter arises from hidden rationalistic assumptions. Leibniz held that God needs a sufficient reason for creating, and that his reason is that this is the best of all possible worlds. As I argued in the second section of chapter five, this rationalism would eliminate contingency. If my argument in chapter seven (pages 131-133) is correct, logical possibility and necessity do not have the ultimate metaphysical status attributed to them by rationalists and empiricists alike. God's existence is not logically necessary; his necessity is more basic than mere logical necessity. There is good reason to suppose that the necessity of God's own being precludes his causing various logical possibilities, beginning with his own nonexistence.

The free-will defense and the position that God permits evil in order to draw greater good from it made sense within the Christian perspective. However, those who do not accept Christian faith point out that even if it is

logically possible that God has an adequate justification for each and every evil he allows, still this logical possibility is not a great probability. Moreover, the critics charge, if a Christian attempts to defend himself by appealing to his faith, then he is invoking a source of argument which is not acceptable in philosophy and which cannot be invoked without begging the question.

However, Christians were the ones who gave the reality of evil its sharp cutting edge, just as they were the ones who made a serious problem of the compatibility between God and human freedom. If one does not believe that God reveals himself to be one who loves human persons, to be one who hates the evil which afflicts mankind, and to be one who has taken up the human cause against this evil, then one has no reason to expect God to prevent this evil or to overcome it. Evil, surely, was a mystery for Christians; to those who only *half believe* in Christian faith, it is an unanswerable scandal.

To one who fully believed, the mystery remained but the scandal was removed.

In the first place the suffering of the innocent and the misery of the just were seen in a certain perspective.[18] Limitation of one's view to this life was incompatible with the same faith which made so acute the paradox of God's permitting evil. Suffering was considered a mysteriously necessary initiation, like the birth trauma an infant must undergo, squashed in the birth canal and pushed into a cold, overstimulating world—where life really begins.

Second, the sincerity of God was believed to have been shown by his willingness to send his only Son, who shared the least pleasant aspects of the human condition. Christians believed that God did not ask anything of mankind which he was not willing to share himself.

The question of evil, as it arose in the context of Christian faith, cannot be resolved, so far as I can see, outside that context. Within the context of faith, believers did not really think that they possessed a rational solution to the question. The book of Job taught that human explanations for evil are vain:

> I know that you can do all things,
> and that no purpose of yours can be hindered.
> I have dealt with great things that I do not understand;
> things too wonderful for me, which I cannot know. (Job 42:2-3)

To sum up. Whether possibly meaningful or not—a question still to be examined—Christian faith regarded evil as a mystery more than as a problem. Christians did not believe that evil falsifies faith; they agreed with St. Paul: "I consider the sufferings of the present to be as nothing compared with the glory to be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18). Christians did not regard the experience of evil as evidence of a lack of love on God's part; they believed that by suffering they were somehow united with Christ. For those who believed in traditional Christian doctrine the evidence of God's love was not

to be sought in the contingencies of life so much as in God's past deeds. That he gave his only Son was the essential evidence of the Father's love: "Is it possible that he who did not spare his own Son but handed him over for the sake of us all will not grant us all things besides?" (Rom. 8:32).

The argument against Christian faith based on evil began to have its effect during the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century. In the background was rationalism, which had presumed to explain God and to justify his ways, that is, to make God intelligible in philosophic terms and to show him to be a morally upright sort of individual. The favorite argument from reason for the existence of God at the time was one based upon the wonderful orderliness and design one finds in the world—for example, the complexity and beauty of the plan of the organism or of the mechanics of the heavens.[19]

I do not think that the argument from design or orderliness in nature is cogent. I do not appeal to such considerations. The whole approach, it seems to me, is based on a misleading analogy between divine creation and human making, in fine art and in technology. Not design and order in the world but the mere fact that there is a world is the ground of the argument I have proposed.

It is worth noting that anyone who rejects or doubts the reality of God because of the presence of evil in the world does not thereby mitigate or overcome this evil. Christians did not deny evil, as if possessed with blind and stupid optimism. Traditional Christian faith was very much concerned with evil; in fact, evil was one of its fundamental themes. Christians thought they had standards for recognizing evil and they hoped that they had been granted salvation—the overcoming of evil. From their religious perspective Christians would have regarded the rejection of the reality of God as a *normalization* of evil in the world, as an endorsement of its inevitability.

It may be said that the argument offered here is a fine argument, but what good are arguments against the reality of evil as it is experienced—for example, the pain of one, poor innocent child being murdered by its parents? The answer is that arguments can only meet arguments. The death of the innocent child and the hunger pangs of the millions of innocents who are starving unjustly cannot be answered by arguments. They must be answered by works of love. Father Damien answered for the evil of leprosy. If we care to, we can contribute to such a reply to evil; if we do not, then it is hypocrisy for us to talk about the inadequacy of rational and theological arguments to meet the existential reality of evil.

20: Religion Need Not Conflict with Humanistic Values

The dignity of man

Religion and humanistic values can conflict. Religious persons can be fanatical. They can be ready and willing to lie, to cheat, to torture, to kill, to disrupt valuable social institutions, to arouse hatred, to practice hypocrisy, and to motivate people by fostering unnecessary anxiety—they can be and have been ready and willing to do all these things for the sake of religion. At the same time, some humanists regard the overcoming of all religious belief as itself a humanistic value; such humanists classify all religion as superstition, illusion, or worse. Clearly, religious fanaticism cannot be reconciled with any set of humanistic values, and a humanism which defines itself in opposition to religion cannot be reconciled with religion.

Thus, admitting the possibility of conflict between religion and humanistic values, I attempt in this chapter only to show the *possibility* of their reconciliation. In other words, I try to show, against several arguments to the contrary, that religion and humanistic values are not necessarily incompatible.

What are the considerations which are thought to indicate a necessary incompatibility between religion and humanistic values? There are four main arguments. First, religion subjects man to the will of God; religion reduces the human person to the status of an instrument of divine purposes. Second, religion teaches that human nature is corrupt; the ideals of human personhood are detached from mankind and projected into an alien and transcendent being—God. Third, religion necessarily is fanatical, because it considers its peculiar interest to be identified with the Absolute; when the value at stake is infinite, everything merely finite must give way or be obliterated.

Fourth, religion evacuates meaning and importance from this present life by promising happiness and glory in a future life.

A full response to these arguments would require the statement of a complete ethical theory. Since I have articulated an ethics in another work, I refer the interested reader to that book, and limit myself here to summary replies to these arguments.[1]

In chapter eighteen (pages 284-285) I touched upon the objection that religion subjects man to the will of God. A human person, being a creature, does not have absolute freedom to do as he pleases. But such freedom is not an unqualified value. Because man does not create his own possibilities, human life has meaning and value which man does not himself invent. The value theory sketched in chapter nineteen (pages 290-293) clarifies the relationship between the givenness of human possibilities and the objectivity of moral values. Moral goodness is a manner of choosing and acting which preserves and enhances the field of possibilities in which free choice operates.

Nothing I have concluded about the creator would restrict man or require human individuals and societies to adopt particular ways of acting. The conception that the will of God is expressed in the form of a law which should be adhered to in human life derives solely from religious faith—in Western culture almost altogether from Jewish and Christian faith. Traditional religious faith maintained that the commands of God were not arbitrary decrees imposed upon man by an exploiting deity, but were a form of loving guidance, given mankind for the benefit of human life. Jews and Christians believed that God had nothing to gain from human obedience and was not really harmed by human disobedience.

This theme pervades the whole New Testament. It is particularly clear in the parables which compare God to a loving and forgiving father and in Jesus's self-characterization as "good shepherd":

> The thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy.
> I came that they might have life and have it to the full.
> I am the good shepherd;
> the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.
> The hired hand—who is no shepherd nor owner of the sheep—
> catches sight of the wolf coming and runs away,
> leaving the sheep to be snatched and scattered by the wolf.
> That is because he works for pay; he has no concern for the sheep.
> I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me
> in the same way that the Father knows me and I know the Father;
> for these sheep I will give my life. (Jn. 10:10-15)

One might resent the implication that God regards one as a sheep, but such resentment would miss the point of the analogy. The point was not the sheeplikeness of man, but the care and concern of God. Jesus is represented

here as excluding altogether any supposition that the relation of God to man was one of master to slave. The inferiority of sheep to shepherd was ruled out by comparing the mutual relation between shepherd and sheep to that between Jesus and the Father. The latter point is developed in the discourse attributed to Jesus at the Last Supper, in which he stated that he loved his disciples as the Father loved Jesus himself:

> All this I tell you that my joy may be yours
> and your joy may be complete.
> This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you.
> There is no greater love than this:
> to lay down one's life for one's friends.
> You are my friends if you do what I command you.
> I no longer speak of you as slaves,
> for a slave does not know what his master is about.
> Instead, I call you friends, since I have made known to you
> all that I heard from my Father. (Jn. 15:11-15)

The point of quoting these passages here is not to claim that what they say is true or even meaningful. The point is to show that Christians who took seriously the idea that their lives were subject to divine commands also believed that those commands were nonexploitative. Resentment against divine commands and the sense that obedience to them would be servile submission to an alien will arose when believers, having lost confidence in the integral content of their faith, remembered only its moral demands. Defective religious instruction no doubt played a part in this development, since negative commandments and the threat of eternal punishment often were stressed more heavily than the positive promise of everlasting life in a community of friendship among human and divine persons.

Some Christians have supposed that God's will defines "good"; this position is voluntarism. Those who hold it think that acts are not commanded by God because they are good for man, but acts become good for man only because they have been commanded by God. But Christians did not necessarily hold this position. Thomas Aquinas, for example, maintained that nothing offends God which is not contrary to human good. He quoted St. Paul, "Let your service be reasonable" (Rom. 12:1), in support of the position that divine law demands of man only what is rationally required. For Thomas, conformity to the divine will was required of man because divine goodness could be shared in by human persons, and a free commitment to this goodness—loving God above all things for his own sake—was regarded as the principle of the community of friendship among divine and human persons.[2] If the goodness of the creator is the source of every good, then the love of the creator's goodness—if that is possible—does not preclude but rather implies the love of every good, including one's own good and that of one's human neighbor.

The second argument—that religion teaches that human nature is corrupt and that it detaches human ideals from mankind and projects them into an alien transcendent God—also involves theological assumptions and draws them from a theological position which not all Jews and Christians share.

Obviously, the philosophical argument I have developed in respect to the creator does not indicate that human nature is corrupt. The theory of value I have outlined excludes the possible meaningfulness of "total depravity," since evil is a privation of good in a state of affairs which remains good, insofar as it obtains at all. The mere fact that a human person is created does not make him evil. Being caused is not itself evil in a creature, since there is no alternative to it except nonbeing. Hegelianism, which identified evil and falsity with partiality and which identified goodness and truth with wholeness, nurtured the view that the objectification of the Absolute in a natural world was itself an evil which must be overcome. But Hegel's transposition of traditional religious doctrines altered the distinction Jews and Christians made between the creation and the fall.[3]

The conception of the creator which emerges from the argument I have presented differs greatly from Hegel's conception of the Absolute. One of the most important differences is that the creator is not dialectically related to creatures as the hegelian Absolute is related to particulars. Hegel's Absolute is whole, real, good, and true; the particulars, taken in themselves, are only parts, appearances, evil, and false.

Further, it should be clear that the creator is not a composite of perfections abstracted from human personality and absolutized. Kant and Hegel worked from the rationalistic concept of the divine as a sum of perfections; Feuerbach considers the personality of God to be

> . . . the means by which man converts the qualities of his own nature into the qualities of another being—of a being external to himself. The personality of God is nothing else than the projected personality of man.[4]

Feuerbach's point has been echoed by Marx, Freud, Dewey, Sartre, and many others. This point is not well taken in reference to the creator, the definite description of which is gathered from the way of negation. This description by negation underlies all affirmative and relational predication concerning the uncaused cause. Clearly, then, the creator has none of the qualities of man's own nature.

Whether the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation might be meaningful is a question still to be considered. However that question is resolved, one must admit that traditional Christian doctrine did not present God as a superhuman personality formed of absolutized human perfections. Anthropomorphic language was used by Christians about God, but the anthropomorphism also was cancelled out by insistence upon the mysteriousness of God in

himself. The Incarnation of the Word was believed to climax God's self-revelation. In Jesus, God was believed to have made himself present to mankind, not by forcing human persons to give up their proper nature, but by himself accepting the conditions of human nature. The alienation, if any, was thought of as on God's side, not on man's; the Word of God was believed to have "emptied himself" in assuming human nature and suffering a humiliating death (Phil. 2:5-8).

Feuerbach, working out of the background of Hegel's thought and from a version of Christianity in which man's sinfulness was stressed, assumed that whatever religion attributes to God, it must take away from man: "To enrich God, man must become poor; that God may be all, man must be nothing."[5] God's holiness must be compensated for by denigrating human nature, by treating it as corrupt.

Not all Christians accepted the idea of man's total corruption. True, Christians believed that the Godlikeness of mankind was damaged by man's sin, but most Christians also believed that human nature remained good, and that it was really redeemed by Christ. Thomas Aquinas repeatedly asserted that grace—the Christian life—presupposes and builds upon nature.[6] He maintained that the fulfillment proper to human nature would be included within man's supernatural destiny.[7] He also held that the principles of human morality are formed by reason on the basis of the innate propensities of the human person.[8] This same view was articulated by Vatican Council II:

> He who is "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15), is Himself the perfect man. To the sons of Adam He restores the divine likeness which had been disfigured from the first sin onward. Since human nature as he assumed it was not annulled, [note omitted] by that very fact it has been raised up to a divine dignity in our respect too. For by His incarnation the Son of God has united Himself in some fashion with every man. He worked with human hands, He thought with a human mind, acted by human choice, [note omitted] and loved with a human heart.[9]

Once more, I do not claim that this Christian doctrine is true or even meaningful. I only point out that Feuerbach's position is not verified in respect to every theistic conception of the relationship between God and human values.

Fanaticism and otherworldliness

The third argument for the position that religion and humanistic values are necessarily incompatible is that religion is necessarily fanatical. Feuerbach also put this argument clearly:

> Faith left to itself necessarily exalts itself above the laws of natural morality. The doctrine of faith is the doctrine of duty towards God,—the highest duty of faith. By how much God is higher than man, by so much higher are duties to God than duties towards man; and duties towards God necessarily come into collision with common human duties. God is not only believed in, conceived as the universal being, the Father of men, as Love:—such faith is the faith of love;—he is also represented as a personal being, a being by himself. And so far as God is regarded as separate from man, as an individual being, so far are duties to God separated from duties to man:—faith is, in the religious sentiment, separated from morality, from love.[10]

Feuerbach goes on to cite the doctrine that faith alone justifies, and to argue that faith demands in its service immoral—that is, unloving and intolerant—acts of coercion and persecution.

Once more the hegelian residue causes part of the difficulty. The conception of the creator which emerges from the argument in part two does not allow one to suppose that he is an individual being separated from and a rival to man, as Feuerbach assumes the God of faith must be. Yet I do not think Christians and Jews would deny the possibility of identifying what I call "the creator" with what they mean by "God." Moreover, in opposing justification by faith and the good works of love to each other, Feuerbach treated as essential to Christianity a theological position peculiar to a certain group of Christians.[11]

St. Paul, who teaches the importance of faith (Rm. 3-7), also teaches the primacy of love (1 Cor. 13:13). And love, throughout the New Testament, is said to manifest itself not in doing good to God—it was assumed that God does not need anything—but by doing good to one's neighbor.

Religious fanaticism, of course, is a historical fact. Immoral means were used to further religious ends, and those who used such immoral means thought they were justified in doing so because of the absolute importance of the end. This is the reality to which Feuerbach and others refer when they assume that faith must make demands incompatible with morality.

It is important to notice, however, that not all fanaticism has been religious. The wars of the twentieth century have been ideological conflicts, but the basis of the hatred is humanistic ideology—Marxist, liberal, Nazi, and so on—not religious faith. The justification of mass murder for the sake of a cause—one cannot make an omelet without breaking eggs—depends only incidentally upon the specific content of that cause. This point is important, for it indicates that the principle of fanaticism is wider than the content of religious faith.

One might argue that religion is especially prone to fanaticism inasmuch as religion is directly concerned with God, and the importance of God is

believed by religious persons to transcend every human value. I admit that this view has been taken by some persons, and it supplies a premise on which one can argue that acts otherwise immoral can be justified by their religious purpose. But I think that this view is confused.

Religion is extremely important to the religious person, but religion is not identical with God himself. A religious person should regard religion as itself a *human* good, a good which is created and which is realized in human persons. If there were no created persons, there would be no religion, since religion is the relation of harmony or friendship between created persons and God. This harmony or friendship does not add anything to the creator; he is an uncaused cause. Therefore, religion is *man's* relation to God.

According to traditional Jewish and Christian doctrine the right religious relation of man to God was inseparable from the right relation of human persons to one another, and from a harmonious inner relationship of the person in himself. Inner integrity was believed to be necessary for sincerity of life, and both were regarded as inseparable from love of neighbor, which was considered essential to love of God. Moreover, respect for such human goods as life itself, justice, and faithful marital love was considered essential to the carrying out of love of one's neighbor.

The fact is that Jews and Christians did not regard religion as the sole human good. Both Jews and Christians believed that the religious commitment itself is a free choice on man's part. Freedom in choosing a good implies its nonabsoluteness, for if one believed that one good included everything of value in another, then it would be impossible to choose the second in preference to the first. Thus the belief that religious commitment is a free choice implied that the religious good is not absolute, that it is only one good among others, that other goods in some respects include aspects of human value which are not present in the religious good itself.

Of course, once a person made a religious commitment, he did not see religion as one particular good among others. The religious orientation shaped life as a whole, animating and harmonizing all particular goods. For the devout Jew or Christian a religious concern was the most basic concern of life, yet it was not exclusive of other human concerns. It endorsed other values and sanctified them. An inclusivistic attitude was compatible with traditional theism precisely because God was conceived of as a creator who had made all things good, and man was believed to be made in the image of God and appointed ruler of creation:

> You have made him little less than the angels,
> and crowned him with glory and honor.
> You have given him rule over the works of your hands,
> putting all things under his feet. (Ps. 8:6-7)

Jews and Christians believed that God's creative love does not displace but makes a place for every mode of causality within creation; similarly, they believed that man's love for God does not displace but makes a place for every human love which is not mutilated by evil.

Morality, from a Jewish and Christian theistic perspective, did not mean loving God instead of loving creatures. Morality for traditional theism was based on love of God, but it also meant loving *every creature as a creature,* loving no creature as if it were God. Theists thought that every other good must be understood as a reflection and participation of divine goodness. Thus, God was loved in every love which was open to the whole ambit of created goods. Moral evil, in a theistic perspective, precisely consisted in a disordered affection by which a person closed himself against some human good, by foreshortening love to treat some other finite good as if it were God. Such a disordered affection did not detract from the goodness of God in himself, but Jews and Christians believed that it did offend God by detracting from the full value he wished man to place on created goods other than the one sinfully idolized. Thus, theistic morality could regard fanaticism of any sort, including religious fanaticism, as a sin. Religious fanaticism is a form of idolatry in which the created good of religion is wrongly exalted to the position of divinity.

If this position is correct, then the notion that religion necessarily leads to fanaticism and the denigration of secular values is mistaken. The historical facts are not in question. But a theist could argue that only by referring all human goods to their transcendent principle—God—can they be understood in their full dignity, which is nevertheless finite. Moreover, Jews and Christians believed that confidence in divine providence is necessary if man is to overcome the temptation to use humanly destructive means in a desperate effort to save himself.

A Jew or a Christian could argue that without trust in God, secular humanism tends to oscillate between selfish noninvolvement (rationalized as individual freedom) and obsessive commitment.[12] Either everything is merely finite, merely relative, and merely transitory—the selfish mind-set prevails—and then nothing is worth getting excited about, dedicating one's life to, or dying for; or something is transcendently valuable, absolute, the final solution to mankind's problems—ideology prevails—and then that is the only thing of importance to mankind, it is the cause in which everyone is obliged to submerge himself, and it justifies any necessary means including mass murder. The believer could argue that only hope endorsing and elevating mankind's estimate of the value of *all* human goods can call forth dedication combined with detachment—dedication to the dignity of the human person in all his aspects combined with awareness of the relativity of each aspect, including the religious itself.

The fourth argument for the necessary incompatibility between religion and humanistic values is that religion evacuates the meaning and value from this present life by promising happiness and glory in a future life—"pie in the sky when you die." Hegel made the fulfillment of the Absolute immanent in the historical process, opposing the traditional belief in a transhistorical culmination of the plan of providence. The post-hegelians have not reacted against Hegel in this matter. Rather, they have adopted his position as part of their own substitute for traditional views.

Christianity had promised mankind the possibility of sharing in divinity by adoption into the family of God; Hegel claimed that mankind shares in divinity by nature, that divinity realizes itself only in and through the human spirit. The post-hegelians hope that the human condition can be transformed to such an extent that mankind can achieve absolute perfection without this fulfillment involving any God beyond man himself. Socialistic theories proclaim the coming of the heavenly kingdom on earth; individualistic theories promise personal freedom from guilt and a life of happiness in doing as one pleases. All agree that human nature can be transformed so that mankind can achieve a level which will liberate human persons from their present, all-too-human limitations.

Obviously, nothing in the argument I have presented regarding the creator demands an otherworldly goal for human life. Moreover, it is worth noticing that Jewish faith does not stress, even if it admits, the idea that the fulfillment of this life is in a more perfect existence after death.[13] This belief and its problems are more central to Christian faith. Christian faith proclaims a kingdom which is yet to come, a consummation of history beyond history, "resurrection of the body and life everlasting."

There is no doubt that otherworldliness was essential to traditional Christian faith. In popular teaching, Christianity often was represented as holding life on earth to be a mere means to heaven. Christians, considering this world little more than a place of struggle and temptation, were tempted to apply themselves to their daily work in a lazy and mediocre way. Some of them placed little value upon originality and creativity, feeling that Christian life required only that one avoid sin and do one's duty—for example, by taking care of one's own family.

The Christian hope of everlasting life easily was used to defend injustice and to excuse the maintenance of inhuman socioeconomic conditions. It is easy for the rich to say that poverty is always with us; it is easy for individuals who are devoting their energies to improving the standard of living for themselves and their families to say that radical changes in society are unnecessary, because this life is transitory and saving one's soul is all that matters.

But such abuses do not demonstrate that Christian faith in an afterlife

necessarily undermines concern about human well-being here and now. Many Christians devoted themselves unselfishly to the poor, the sick, the imprisoned, the ignorant, and the spiritually impoverished. And the motive of this devotion was religious. Christians believed that Christ would judge each person according to his deeds, that everyone was required to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to welcome the stranger, to clothe the naked, to care for the sick, to visit those in prison (Mt. 25:34-40). By contrast, the rich were warned repeatedly in the New Testament, for example:

> As for you, you rich, weep and wail over your impending miseries. Your wealth has rotted, your fine wardrobe has grown moth-eaten, your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion shall be a testimony against you; it will devour your flesh like a fire. See what you have stored up for yourselves against the last days. Here, crying aloud, are the wages you withheld from the farmhands who harvested your fields. The shouts of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. You lived in wanton luxury on the earth; you fattened yourselves for the day of slaughter. You condemned, even killed, the just man; he does not resist you. (Jas. 5:1-6)

Such statements, and there are many of them, gave little support to those who used Christian otherworldliness as a rationalization for lack of social concern.

Deeper, perhaps, than these considerations, however, is the fact that Christian faith did not have to be understood as putting exclusive emphasis upon the future kingdom. Certainly Christians did hope in the future, and their perspective was not limited to the present life. But they also believed that the kingdom of God somehow had already begun in this world. This belief was not mentioned in much popular preaching and teaching, in which there was a tendency, going back at least to St. Augustine, to emphasize the means-end relationship between the present life and the heavenly kingdom which Christians expected would be fully realized only at the end of history.

Two quite different attitudes can be taken toward an action which is related to a future hope. A student, for example, can view his studies as a pure means to getting a job and earning money later on. But he also can take a positive attitude toward his present studies; he can see what he is doing as worthwhile in itself, while also hoping to make his work as a student a basis for later employment. If in the first case the student does not see the necessity of a course for his occupational goals, he will not wish to take it. It will seem irrelevant. If he does not think he is likely to obtain a good job by getting a college degree, he will drop out. If he knew he were going to die shortly, he certainly would not continue to be a student. In the second case a student can regard what he does while he is a student as a worthwhile part of his life. He will enjoy his studies for their own sake, and he will more likely

develop genuine interest in the subjects he studies. Even if he is not motivated by hope of a better job, he may continue his studies; he might continue to study even if he were certain he was going to die in a year or two.

These two different attitudes also can be taken toward the life of a Christian in this world. Perhaps many Christians regarded life in the world very much as does a student who has no taste for study. Such an attitude toward this life is antagonistic to any humanism. However, Christians also were able to regard this life as the beginning of the eternal life for which they hoped. In that case the hope for the future did not detract from humanistic concerns. In fact, one who felt that his present efforts would have eternal significance probably was more inclined than other people to take life seriously at every moment.

Christians were able to draft a charter for an inclusive humanism working from various aspects of St. Paul's teaching. For example, Paul commends all truth and every good (Phil. 4:8). He holds that the redemptive act of Jesus initiated the gathering together of all things in Christ and their reconciliation with the Father (Col. 1:17-22). This restoration was a work to which Christians were called to contribute; they were to work to build up the "body" of Christ (1 Cor. 12-14). All things belonged to Christians, and they to Christ, and Christ to the Father (1 Cor. 3:22-23).

This sort of humanism was endorsed by Vatican Council II: "Christ's redemptive work, while of itself directed toward the salvation of man, involves also the renewal of the whole temporal order."[14] The continuity between humanistic concerns in this world and the Christian hope for the eternal was stated by the same Council as follows:

> . . . after we have obeyed the Lord, and in His Spirit nurtured on earth the values of human dignity, brotherhood and freedom, and indeed all of the goods of our nature and fruits of our work, we will find them again, but free of stain, burnished and transfigured. This will be so when Christ hands over to the Father a kingdom eternal and universal: "a kingdom of truth and life, of holiness and grace, of justice, love, and peace" [Preface of the Feast of Christ the King]. On this earth that kingdom is already present in mystery. When the Lord returns, it will be brought into full flower.[15]

Again, the Council said: "God's plan for the world is that men should work together to restore the temporal sphere of things and to develop it unceasingly."[16]

Once more, then, the evidence indicates that religion need not eclipse the humanistic values which can be realized only by activity in the present life. However, in respect to otherworldliness I think it must be admitted that the positive appreciation of the values to be achieved in this life was a muted theme in traditional Christianity. Nevertheless, I take it that the contempo-

rary treatment of this theme by many traditional theists, exemplified by the statements of Vatican II, is sufficient to show its compatibility with traditional theistic faith. One could cite numerous parallels to the position of Vatican II in modern Jewish and Protestant teaching on the believer's responsibilities in this world, particularly in respect to social justice.

My general conclusion in this chapter, then, is that there is no necessary incompatibility between traditional Jewish and Christian religious faith and humanistic values. Conflicts have occurred, but conflict is not inevitable. The greatest sources of difficulty have been the influence on contemporary humanism of Hegel's immanentization of the Absolute, and the tendency of Christianity to regard everything short of the heavenly kingdom as mere means. But there can be a humanism which is more modest than that influenced by Hegel. There also can be a form of Christian life, compatible with traditional beliefs, which would endorse and enhance the significance of this present life, by regarding it as the beginning of eternal life, rather than as a merely disposable first stage for launching oneself out of this world.

21: Developing Creatures and a Perfect Creator

Stability is not prior to change

If there is a creator who is altogether uncaused and nondependent, how can there be real meaning and value in the development which creatures undergo? If the creator, the first principle of being, is perfect and immune from change, must not the processive aspects of creatures be regarded as defects? If the created universe must go through a long process, in which much evil is permitted for the sake of greater eventual good, would not the creator have done better to have created things in their final state?

Hegel identified the process of creation with the self-realization of the Absolute. By making this identification Hegel emphasized the importance of development. Much post-hegelian thought, which has rejected Hegel's Absolute, has kept with various amendments his insight into the importance of development. Hegel's influence is supplemented by the impact of evolution theory, which first achieved scientific status in biology, but which was quickly—and not always cautiously—extended by analogy to the whole of nature, to human life and society, and to thought and culture. Many contemporary philosophers consider development or change to be a mode of reality at least as basic and as important as perfection or stability.

The first point to be noticed is that stability and change, perfection (in the sense of completeness) and development, must be excluded from the creator. Any sort of change which man understands, any kind of process which pertains to anything in human experience, must be denied of the uncaused cause. But the way of negation also demands the exclusion from the uncaused

cause of any sort of changelessness and any form of perfected development which is a sort of changelessness or perfection of anything within human experience. Thus, the creator is not changeless in the way in which laws of nature, including the laws of evolutionary process itself, are changeless. The creator does not preclude development in the way in which true propositions preclude development. The permanence of fundamental human values—such as truth and justice—is not a permanence which can be affirmed of the creator. Human history has an open future but a closed past; what has been, cannot be undone; the past is complete and perfect. The creator is not complete and perfect as is the past.

The proposition that there is a creator is a necessary truth; this truth can never be false. Since the uncaused entity requires nothing to obtain except to be the state of affairs which it is, it cannot fail to obtain, but this fact does not mean that stability is a more basic category than change. "Stability" and "change," "development" and "perfection," mark differences within the world of experience. Empirical knowledge can be scientific only to the extent that the world is considered to be unchanging in some respects. But the necessary truth of the proposition that there is an uncaused entity does not depend upon the presupposition that the uncaused entity is immune from change. Rather the exclusion of change or development from the uncaused entity is required by a principle which also demands the exclusion from it of stability and perfection. The principle in question is that of the way of negation, which I attempted to clarify in chapter fifteen.

For a creature to be created is not for it to change. There is no "it" to undergo change antecedent—that is, logically prior—to all the causal conditions of the obtaining of any state of affairs, and the creator is the cause of all the causal conditions of every other state of affairs. The creator, as such, is the principle of created entities, in which stability and change are correlative aspects. Therefore, the creator must not be considered the static principle of created entities, as if the fact that the created universe is caused meant that it is somehow unstable and in need of a *static* principle to sustain it.[1]

That change and stability are correlative aspects of entities within experience is easily seen so far as the natural order is concerned.[2] If there were no stability in nature, there would be no order; laws of nature, or lawlike statements about the natural world, would be impossible. But the order of nature has the stability of a regular process.

The world of living things evolves; the inorganic world can be said to "evolve" in another sense of the word. Life adapts and develops more complex forms; inorganic entities seem to be degenerating into less diversified and less complex structures. Both living and nonliving things develop according to their proper laws of development; the two domains also mesh in a

manner which makes clear that the laws of the development of both domains are coordinated. The most general aspects of the natural order as a whole are stable.

One might assume that the whole process of nature comes about by chance. Chance does seem to play a role in nature, but the play of chance itself is lawlike. Moreover, what is chance in relation to some causal factors is an aspect of an orderly process in reference to a wider context. Chance has its place *in* all evolutionary processes; the evolutionary process as a whole, considered from a scientific point of view, cannot be regarded as chance. Chance as such is not intelligible; laws of nature are sought in scientific inquiry with confidence that they can be found. However greatly organisms evolve, for instance, their evolution is conservative in the sense that it is a dependable way of maintaining the peculiar reality of organic existence. Evolution sacrifices individuals to maintain their species and sacrifices species to maintain life itself. Organic life—what it is to evolve in the organic mode—is as permanent as the evolutionary process.

An analogous analysis can be made of the relationship between stability and change in the intentional, the existential, and the cultural orders. "Evolution" and other process words are not used in precisely the same sense in the diverse orders. In biology "evolve" has a definite meaning which includes organic reproduction. Organic reproduction does not belong to anything apart from the biological domain. To use the word "evolve" as if it could have a single meaning in all its uses leads to many muddles, for example, in cultural anthropology and in ethics.

To regard evolution in morality as if it were natural evolution, for instance, is to exclude the constitutive role of human reason and freedom from individual and social existence. The result is that the properties of existential norms, which are both cognitive and nonnaturalistic, become inexplicable.

Within the moral or existential order stability and process, in a sense appropriate to this order, are correlative. Free choice is a capacity of self-realization; human persons, as individuals and communities, constitute themselves and work out the possibilities open to persons in the human condition. But there is an order appropriate to this process too; it is an order which does not necessarily obtain, but which ought to obtain. Fundamentally, this order is the ordination of human acts to an ever-more-adequate fulfillment of the specific possibilities of the individual person and the human community. The possibilities in question are values such as life, truth, justice, love, and peace. If history is not understood by reference to the *possibility* of progress in realizing such values, there is no interpretative framework adequate to make sense of history, for human history is not simply a series of natural events,

but is a sequence of disasters and of fulfillments in a struggle toward goals which all men can recognize as humanly significant.

The conclusion which follows from the preceding argument is that stability and change are correlative aspects of the orders of entities within human experience. Neither of these aspects of nature, of morality, and the other orders—which in their own ways are stable unities of many entities in continuous processes—is more basic than the other. Neither aspect can be affirmed of the creator in any of the senses appropriate to entities within any of the four orders which can be distinguished within experience.

Traditional Jewish and Christian religious faith stressed the changelessness of God:

> Of old you established the earth,
> and the heavens are the work of your hands.
> They shall perish, but you remain
> though all of them grow old like a garment.
> Like clothing you change them, and they are changed,
> but you are the same, and your years have no end. (Ps. 102:26-28)

The changelessness of God also is taught in the New Testament (Jas. 1:17).

To the extent that such passages simply negate change of God they do not conflict with the conclusion for which I have argued. Such passages also present no difficulty to the extent that they emphasize the dependence of creatures on the creator. To the extent that such passages suggest that God is changeless in an immanent sense—"Your years are unending"—they could be interpreted as metaphorical expressions of the creator-creature relationship.

But Jews and Christians also had another reason for stressing God's changelessness: they believed that God is faithful and dependable. The fidelity of God was stressed throughout the Bible; traditional theists were strongly committed to the permanent truth of their faith and to the dependability of what they took to be the divine promises in which they put their hope.

My point is not that the creator is in process. Process must be denied of him; to assert that the creator is in process would be to say that he is not really uncaused after all. But any changelessness of a sort intelligible on the basis of experience also must be excluded from the creator. This exclusion prevents one from drawing mistaken conclusions about the relative priority and importance of stability and change as one finds these two modes of being in entities within experience. I think that the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, together with confusion between fidelity—which is attributed to God by relational predication within religious discourse—and metaphysical changelessness led many Christian thinkers to the conclusion that stability is

prior to, and better than, change. I do not think that this conclusion is correct nor that it was essential to traditional religious faith.

One of the insights of the new theism is the irreducible reality and importance of process. In this emphasis new theists have performed a service; the views held by traditional theism about process were too rationalistic. The assumption that change must be reduced to stability is merely a special instance of the assumption that multiplicity must be reduced to unity. Getting rid of this instance of rationalism will help to remove obstacles to theological coherence, provided that one does not fall into the trap—which the new theists unfortunately do—of asserting that the creator is himself in process.

Why is creation in process?

Once the assumption that stability is prior to and better than change is set aside, the problems stated at the beginning of this chapter resolve to the questions why the creator creates a universe at all, and why he creates this universe, which includes process.

Any philosophical attempt to answer questions such as these must be highly speculative. Nevertheless, provided that one bears in mind the speculative character of this attempt, it is a legitimate extension of the model described at the end of chapter seventeen. The implications of the model can be drawn out; however, the language used in drawing them out cannot be tightly controlled. Therefore, while I think that what follows is meaningful, I by no means claim that its meaning is as clear and definite as is the meaning of the conclusion of the argument in part two.

Why does the creator create? The answer cannot be that he must create in order to realize his own potentiality, nor can the answer be that he creates in order to acquire anything for himself. Both of those answers are ruled out, for either of them would imply that the creator is fulfilled by his work, that he is not the uncaused cause. If the creator must create in order to be himself or if he stands to gain anything by creating, then he is caused by his creation. This is excluded.

According to the model proposed at the end of chapter seventeen the creator creates freely. Since he is uncaused, no cause whatsoever limits his freedom in creating. Since he is uncaused, he can stand to gain nothing whatsoever by creating.

Following out the implications of the model, the creator's freedom in creating and his independence of his creatures does not imply that the creative act is purposeless. The creator in creating somehow expresses himself and to some extent communicates his own goodness—*that is, his having what*

is necessary to make all *caused states of affairs obtain.* Therefore, one must say that the creator creates not to gain anything for himself, but still because of his own goodness–that is, to express himself and to share with others that by which he can cause them.

No doubt the sharing or communicating accomplished in creation is limited. No expression is total. The creator does communicate himself in creating, although the communication is short of what is expressed by it.

Sometimes Christians said that all things are created by God for his own glory. If they meant by this that God creates everything with no selfish purpose, but simply to share his own goodness, then it makes sense to speak of God's "glory" as a reason for creation. But it would be a mistake to suppose that God creates because he needs or can benefit from the admiration and praise of creatures. God does not need a cheering section.[3] If God wills that creatures admire and praise him, this could only be because it would be good for creatures to do so.

The creator need not cause anything. Everything within human experience is contingent; whatever obtains in any of the orders also might not obtain. Given the fact that the creator does create, the contingency of creatures indicates the freedom of their creator; if he had spun out the universe by some sort of natural impulse, then he would be involved in the universe. The Absolute of Hegel could not create. The world of experience bears witness to the fact that it might not be, that it is created, and thus that it need not have been created.

If one assumes, with Leibniz and others, that the created universe is the best of all possible worlds, and that the creator could not help but create what is best, then his freedom in creating is denied. If one accepts the assumption that the creator can bring about anything not contradictory in itself, then one must hold that possible worlds make up an infinite set. None of the members of this set could be a total expression of the creator; a perfect expression of the uncaused in a creature is impossible. All worlds of the infinite set would be good, each in a different way, but since the set of possibilities is infinite, none of the possible worlds could be the best. "The best of possible worlds" is nonsensical in the same way as "the largest of whole numbers."[4]

Rather than taking an *a priori* approach, one must proceed from what is in fact created if one wishes to speculate–so far as such speculation is possible–about the creator's purpose in creating. In other words, the attribution to the creator of a purpose in creating is a relational predication, which must be grounded in the way the created universe actually is found to be.

One need not claim to know all the variety and complexity of creation to be certain that all the creatures one does know or can know are somehow related to one another. The whole set forms a single order–the order of

creation—even if one cannot comprehend this order, as one can each of the four distinct orders, in a single system. Within any order the lack of order is a defect—a falling short of the paradigm of that sort of thing. If the purpose of creating is the self-expression of the creator, then no defect can be permitted by the creator in what he does create except insofar as he can bring from it something positive which would otherwise be impossible. But a defect in the order of the whole of creation could lead to no ulterior good. Thus, an avoidable defect in the order of creation as a whole is excluded. This conclusion agrees with the religious belief that divine wisdom reaches "from one end of the earth to the other, ordering all things for good" (Wis. 8:1).

In what part of the created universe is to be found the greatest good intended by the creator? In no *part* of it. The good of the whole order of creation includes whatever is positive in all of its parts. The whole of creation is that self-communication which the creator has freely chosen. The greatest good of creation, the order of creation as a whole, includes all created entities and all their relationships with one another. This is what Thomas Aquinas meant when he said that "the greatest good in things created is the perfection of the universe, consisting in the order of distinct things, for the good of the whole always has precedence over the perfection of individual parts."[5]

Within the created universe there is order. The entities of the material world which lack intelligence are used by man; such use does not detract from nature—man cannot violate natural laws—but transforms it into a world of culture. In other words, nature has possibilities which can be fulfilled only by culture-making human reason, freedom, and work. In human life particular abilities and efforts find their highest fulfillment in building and perfecting a community of all human persons, cooperating in peace and friendship, sharing in work and in enjoyment. These observations about the order within the created universe agree with traditional religious belief. Believers held that man is set over the works of creation, with a mandate to perfect and govern the physical universe (Gen. 1:28-29; Ps. 8:5-7).

A human person is not above the rest of creatures as if the human were separated from and opposed to subhuman creation. No, persons and communities possess what is less than human as property; mankind gathers up the rest of creation to fulfill human possibilities in it. In so doing, mankind rejoins the rest of the natural world by means of culture. Similarly, the human community is not greater than its individual members and their works, in the sense that the whole community is an independent totality—a totalitarian society—opposed to individual persons and their works. The whole community should gather up its members; its greatness is in its inclusion of their individuality as well as in their contribution to the completion of the whole.

Christians believed that Christ is a "body" who includes Christians; they

believed they were called to contribute themselves and their work to the building up of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:15-16). The fullness of Christ was believed to include the whole of creation. All creation suffers birth pangs, according to St. Paul, waiting for the revelation of the glory of God's children (Rm. 8:19-23). God's plan in creating, according to Paul, is to "bring everything together under Christ, as head, everything in the heavens and everything on earth" (Eph. 1:10).[6]

These considerations with respect to the purpose of creation provide the foundation for explaining why the creator chose to create a universe including process. Could the creator not have brought about the same ultimate result more simply and more directly, and thus avoided much evil present in the universe as it is? The question takes a more specific form for the believer. Can the believer reconcile the belief that human works are necessary for salvation with the belief that God does not need sinful men to accomplish the work of salvation, which traditional Christian thought considered wholly a result of grace?

Thomas Aquinas did not discuss these precise questions, but he did consider a closely related problem: Why does God not produce all created effects without their created and proportionate causes? He says that it is not

> . . . superfluous, even if God can by himself produce all natural effects, for them to be produced by certain other causes. For this is not a result of the inadequacy of divine power, but of the immensity of his goodness, whereby he has willed to communicate his likeness to things, not only so that they might exist, but also that they might be causes of other things.[7]

The greatest good in creation is the order of the whole; exclusion of causality from the created universe would remove this order. If no creature had any active role in the production of any effect, creation would lack much of the reality it has.[8] If the purpose of God in creating is self-expression, this purpose would be less fully achieved in creatures which were like God in existing, yet not like him in causing something else to be like themselves.[9]

From this point of view it seems clear that a universe which includes the prerogative of causing—the actual universe—is better than one made up of otherwise similar entities—if this is intelligible—which did not have this prerogative. If the creator had chosen to create a universe as similar as possible to what the actual universe eventually will be, but without the process this universe is going through, that other universe would have been no more nor less than the actual universe a free self-expression of the creator. But such a universe would have expressed the creator *less well.*

The creatures of that universe would not have had the character of ones who overcame, who achieved, who arrived at a goal. The real relations which make up the dynamic order of the actual created universe would have been missing. The process of the development of the created world is not a mere

means to its consummation. The process is part of the product; the outcome could not be what it will be if it were not to be the outcome of the process which is going forward. Moreover, passing time does not mean total annihilation of the past; the past lives in the present. A dialectical conception of change, like Hegel's, is valid at least for some change—that involving the intentional, the existential, and the cultural orders. Hegel's mistake of identifying the world with God does not invalidate his insight into the world.

If one supposes that one gives more credit to the creator by attributing less to creatures, one is mistaken. Thomas Aquinas points out: "To detract from the perfection of creatures is to detract from the perfection of divine power."[10]

For Hegel otherness as such is negation. However, once one rejects the rationalistic prejudice in favor of unity, one is in a position to accept the very otherness of creatures from the creator as a positive aspect of their obtaining. The self-expression of the creator does not fall short of what is to be communicated precisely because it is *other* than the creator; this otherness is an important aspect of *what is expressed.* Creation can be said to "fall short" of the creator only in the sense that for any contingent state of affairs to be, it must be in a certain mode, which precludes its also being in other positive and incompatible modes, while all lack and limitation must be denied of the creator as part of the way of negation.

If creatures express the creator precisely in being other than the creator, then the causality of creatures as distinct from the causality of the creator must be regarded as an aspect of the self-expression of the creator, not as a principle interfering with this self-expression.

When I was a small child, my parents used to buy each of us children a kite in the spring. One of my early memories is the first time I received my own kite. I took it with great satisfaction and went to my room to unwrap it. But when I had removed the wrapping, I found I had only sticks. The "wrapper" was part of the kite itself. I did not make that mistake the next year. But if one thinks that the development of the created universe by the causality of created causes is a mere means to the final product, a mere wrapping of the reality, one makes the same sort of mistake.

Thus, it is a large part of what is positive about the created universe that effects come about by way of created causes, that the eventual purpose of creation be achieved in a way which to man seems inefficient, and that seeming deviousness be admitted into the unfolding of creation. The purpose of the creator is, not simply to bring about a certain final state of things, but to bring about effects by the causality of creatures themselves, for this created causality also is valuable. The fact that eventual fulfillment is reached by such a process contributes positively to the "product." If one attends only to the outcome of the process, the creator's method seems inefficient. Thus,

one can call the principle which renders this aspect of creation intelligible "the principle of the creator's inefficiency." The creator is not inefficient as if he were incapable of getting results more easily than he does; apparently he is not interested only in results.

The act of creation can be called "playful," not in the sense that the content of creation is unimportant, but in the sense that the creator is not a laborer and creation is not a product of alienated labor. The whole of what is created, its multiplicity and change as well as its unity and stable features, its development as well as its achievement, expresses the creator. As in a play, the whole play, not merely the last scene or the falling of the final curtain, is the purpose of the playwright.

The principle of the creator's inefficiency does not imply that the creator creates evil. However, if evil is permitted only to the extent that it contributes to the whole order of creation, the value of the process helps to suggest—at least in some cases—what might be the meaning of permitted evils. As I explained in chapter nineteen, evil as such is privation; as such it does not require to be created. Still, the good which suffers privation remains good, is created, and must be worth creating for its contribution to the order of creation as a whole.

The specifically religious question of the compatibility between salvation by grace and by works perhaps also finds an answer in the principle of the creator's inefficiency. The Christian could believe that the history of salvation, from the faith of Abraham to Mary's consent to be the mother of God's Son, expressed the generosity of the Father in making men and women fellow workers in the redemption. The Christian also could believe that his own sanctification, which does not come about instantaneously, is more a matter of God's grace the more it is a matter of his own work. Moreover, the Christian could see this work, not as an arbitrary imposition or a meaningless test—as Christians sometimes regarded it—but as a beginning of the participation in divine life which Christians believed to be the purpose of redemption.

Once more I do not here assert the Christian doctrines to which I refer. Thus far I have not even claimed them to be meaningful. I only suggest that if these doctrines are meaningful, certain seeming inconsistencies are not insoluble. The next four chapters will take up the question of how religious doctrines which purport to depend upon divine revelation might be meaningful.

Conclusion to part five

Before proceeding to the consideration of this question, a last word may be in order about the problems considered in this and the preceding three chapters. These problems are serious because of their great personal implica-

tions. They touch the existential nerve. Neither believers nor unbelievers find it easy to think about such problems with open minds. Believers find in these difficulties some of the gravest threats to their faith. Unbelievers find in them some of their most plausible reasons for not believing–which also, I think, is a matter of faith.

Still, it is important to think as clearly as possible about these problems. I suspect that many people today take the worst of both worlds–that is, the worlds of faith and of unbelief. Faith presents God as a loving but demanding Father; it raises expectations of special care but creates a sense of sinfulness. Unbelief promises man freedom to shape his own universe of meaning and value, but presents him with an indifferent and cold universe. To experience evil as an outrage, to feel it necessary to resent moral law, and yet also to think oneself abandoned–"thrown"–into an indifferent and perhaps hostile universe, is to take the worst of both worlds. One ought, at least, to enjoy the advantages of one or the other consistent position.