

# The Systematic Unity of Value



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This lecture is an attempt to carry on an exercise in which certain fairly recent German philosophers have believed strongly, in which some Anglo-Saxon philosophers have made half-hearted essays in the fairly recent past, though hardly any Anglo-Saxon philosopher now has anything to do with it, or would even seriously consider it, but in which I, who like isolated situations, believe profoundly, and on which I shall continue to write and lecture, though I am increasingly aware of the subtle intricacy and elusiveness of the ideas and argumentations that it involves. This venture is what Husserl called the constitution of a value-cosmos—a venture he mentioned but did not himself enter upon—the setting up of an ordered system of things ultimately desirable and undesirable, but in some such way that the whole constitution represents a work of reason, that it has something mandatory, non-arbitrary and, dare we say it, absolute about it, much as there are similar absolute constitutions in such fields as tense-theory, knowledge and belief-theory, the theory of syntax and meaning and so on. The setting up of such a value-cosmos proceeds on the basic assumption that in every sphere the arbitrary, the empirical, the contingent, necessarily nests in a comprehensive framework of what is absolute, of what must obtain, of what cannot be otherwise, of what holds whatever is the case or whatever we like to choose. The absolute in this sense involves the contingent and the arbitrary, and is precisely what will hold invariantly whatever the variable content of the contingent and the arbitrary may be: it *requires* the contingent and arbitrary, just as the latter in its turn requires it. For, on the view we are espousing, one can only raise questions or make decisions of a Yes-or-No type on a background of acceptances from which an alternative 'No' is excluded. We can only learn from experience in any field, provided we already non-empirically know, with some measure of clearness, the constitution of that field, what sort of entities and arrangements it permits or does not permit, and empirical encounter can only fill in the blanks of the constitu-

tional pattern thus laid before us. In the same way, we can only plan our lives, and counsel others to plan their lives, within the fixed constitutional pattern of a set of ends and counter-ends that we cannot evade, that are pre-accepted in every acceptance or rejection. This notion of an *a priori* background to everything that is subsequently discovered or chosen must not, however, be given a merely definitional meaning, that in effect turns it into something arbitrary and contingent: it must have a regional, contentful meaning, specified by the kind of territory or enquiry or enterprise we are undertaking or ranging over. And while there are ultimately *no* conceivable alternatives to the framework, the constitution that we, or rather it, is setting up, this is only so because at a more abstract level such alternatives are quite conceivable: specific necessities nest in others that are more generic, and from the standpoint of the latter the former are in a sense synthetic, mere matters of fact. It is in fact only by the deep attempt to conceive of them, to envisage certain alternatives clearly, as the mandates of a wider, more formal necessity seem to permit, that we become aware of their engaged, contentful incoherence, an incoherence in terms of which the *a priori* rules of our region or territory first define themselves.

To talk in general terms of a value-cosmos or an emotional-practical *a priori* is, however, extremely unsatisfactory unless you have some notion of the sort of scheme that this might entail. And I shall therefore briefly unroll before you the value-cosmos sketched by Nicolai Hartmann in his forty-year old *Ethics*, a work which derived much of its inspiration from the earlier work of Max Scheler. My excuse for citing a work so old is that Hartmann's work is by no means as widely known and used as it ought to be. It has many faults of incoherence, unclearness, dogmatism and stylistic ebullience to explain its comparative neglect, but it does in some respects daringly show us what an accomplished value-cosmos would be like, and it is for this reason that I now make exemplary use of it. Also being the one systematic value-cosmology available in English, apart from my own poor efforts in *Values and Intentions*, I think it entirely justifiable to make use of it on the present occasion. Hartmann in his *Ethics* espouses the doctrine of a logic of the heart, a *logique du coeur*, a notion which had been previously put forward by Scheler and connected with certain passages in

Pascal. The heart, apparently, is an organ that can range sensitively over the whole sphere of time and existence, of the possible and the impossible, and in all its rangings it can throb responsively in the presence of certain mysterious values and disvalues, quite different from the non-valuational 'materials' in which they are embedded, or the concrete 'bearers' which exemplify them, and belonging in fact to a different order altogether, a timeless, Platonic order of self-existent axiological entities. The heart in its ranging does not, according to Hartmann, often err or miss a beat, but it is curiously narrow in its sensitiveness, so that the opening up of each new territory of value tends to inhibit its responsiveness to others. Hence we have the constant shift of the valuational focus, and the revolutionary changes from Graeco-Roman to Christian axiology, from Christian axiology to Renaissance axiology, ending up with the transvalued Nietzschean values, to which Hartmann, in company with many others, attributes an importance and a characteristic modernity that I find totally incomprehensible. Hartmann, however, does not think that any real transvaluations occur in these shifts: the heart merely opens itself to new ranges of value, and ceases to be sensitive to older ones. The old and the new are, however, alike *there* in their timeless Platonic home, and it is the special role of the philosophical heart, trained to beat more widely and strongly by a special course of Hartmannian *approfondissement*, that can set the old alongside the new, and can effect a confrontation of pagan Greece with mediaeval Christianity, and of both with Nietzschean modernity.

Hartmann has many further original doctrines regarding the world of values and disvalues which the heart explores and maps: all such values have attaching to them an ideal ought-to-beness or *Seinsollen*, which becomes a positive ought-to-beness when the values in question are unrealized in the world of particular existence, an ought-to-beness which is experienced as a positive tension, an urge, to realize the value in the world of existence and becoming. Apparently men and their hearts and muscles are the one channel through which the world of values and disvalues influences the world of existence: Hartmann rejects any teleology of the 'good' operating over the unconscious field of nature, and speaks therefore of the 'demiurgic nature of man' as the one link between the 'irreal' world of values and

the realm of reality. Hartmann has further logical excitements connected with his doctrine of ought-to-beness, excitements that will not recommend him to modal logicians. In an ought, he maintains, we have a case of a must, a necessity which, by a logical miracle, has broken loose from its close connection with the actual and the possible, so that what ought to be, *must* be so, even if it is not so, and even if it is impossible that it should be so. It is here that we get Hartmann's extremely illuminating and acceptable doctrine of the antinomic character of the realm of value: there are values lying in opposed directions, e.g., those of innocence and sophistication, which are such that they cannot be combined, and yet it remains a mandatory requirement that they *should* be combined, that we should by some means become innocent sophisticates or sophisticated innocents. We are in fact involved in *guilt* whichever of the horns of the dilemma before us we may embrace. I find this doctrine extremely interesting, true to our value-experience and not at all logically incoherent. Our value-experience is that all choice and existence involves a sacrifice of some value or other, and yet that such a sacrifice is authentically regrettable, that it should not be. There is nothing self-contradictory in the eternal *requirement* of something whose full realization would involve self-contradiction, and contradictions therefore have a meaningful role in evaluative and also in religious discourse that they do not have in the discourse of science. The inimitable perfection of God, the absolute Good, lies arguably in the fact that He represents an ideal, a value-limit, that nothing creaturely, nothing instancial could *possibly* embody.

If we now turn from these general features of structure to the actual content of the heart's responses, Hartmann has much that is interesting to tell us. He believes in an axiological space in which there are several dimensions, so that not every value is comparable with every other in respect of height or preferability: aesthetic values, e.g., are neither higher nor lower than those of science or morality. He believes also in unfilled gaps or distances in the value-continuum as remarkable and surprising as the gaps between the prime numbers. And he believes that certain values are built upon others as their presuppositions. Thus he propounds as a theorem the sensible doctrine that moral values always presuppose other lower classes of value, and that it is only by trying to realize something that is not a

case of moral good, such as freedom from pain or from baseless inequality or insecurity, that one can be morally good. His most interesting articulations are, first, into a lowest order of what may be called logical or categorial values which are all antinomic: they occur in opposed pairs, and it is never possible fully to realize both members of each such pair, though compromises and adjustments among them are possible. There is a value of fixed necessity and a value of variable contingency, a value in the realization of values and a value in their permanent non-realization, a value in universal uniformity and a value in divergent individuality, a value in simplicity and a value in complexity, and so on. All this may seem banal, but its banality is not due to recognition by philosophers. From these categorial values Hartmann advances to values which represent as it were the foothills of moral value: the value of being alive, of being conscious, or being purposively active and efficient, of being able to withstand and suffer, of foresight, of having the opportunities for moral development represented by the situation, by language, by social intercourse, as well as by such Aristotelian goods as wealth, power, reputation etc. Hartmann then proceeds to examine moral values, the values of the dedicated will, and here he sets the noble, the pure and the rich alongside of the merely good, and then takes us through a splendid gallery of the aretaics of Classical Greece, of Catholic Christianity and finally of modern Nietzscheanism. Throughout this wonderful and ingenious phenomenology one is amazed at the wealth and variety of valuational stances and questions, especially when one considers the hopeless poverty and emptiness of our recent ethics and meta-ethics: to go to Hartmann from the latter is like penetrating to the treasure-laden tomb of Tutankhamen after living in the impoverished huts of Egyptian fellahin. One is also amazed at the general persuasiveness, or at least the deep discussability, of all the points put forth by Hartmann. It may not be easy to see *how* the heart-logic is operating, but that it does and can operate, and with its own genuine *rationale*, is what no one can think doubtful.

One feels, however, some reservations about admitting purely descriptive, intuitive work like Hartmann's *Ethics* into the highest reaches of philosophy. It too often merely tells us *that* something is so, it too seldom tries to show us *why* it is so. It does not, in other words, systematically consider the alterna-



tives to each assertion that it makes, nor seek to exclude them on any definite principle. I shall not attempt to enumerate all the philosophical questions raised by a successful venture of the Hartmannian type, and particularly not those connected with the cognitive role assigned to feelings, nor those connected with the Platonic self-existence so lightly asserted, nor those connected with the unique demiurgic function ascribed to man, nor those connected with the strange transformation undergone by necessity in order to emerge as that new logical creature, the ought-to-be. But what I shall ask is how Hartmann can legitimate all the poignant and fascinating things he says about antinomies of value, hierarchies of value, many dimensions and orders of value and so on. We are often disposed to assent to what he says, but we as often wonder why we are so. And how do we counter the determined relativist, the true Nietzschean who is now becoming so abundant, or, worse still, the proponent and advocate of values of the abyss, of the utterly abominable and repugnant: the values attributed to meaningless arbitrariness occurring on a sorrowful background of equal meaninglessness, the values of surrender to a dark divinity who first demands the sacrifice of one's reason and one's morals, the value of gratuitous disturbance of social patterns which tends only to further disturbance, the value attached to cruelty and absurdity loved and cherished for their own sakes? Our age has exceeded all previous ages in the richness of its perversions, and without some principle that can sort out the valid from the deviant forms, it will not be possible to carry our value-constitution very far. We have therefore no alternative but to embark on something like a transcendental deduction of the realm of truly acceptable values, a deduction which will suffice to distinguish them from their many verminous and scrofulous imitators; this deduction will not be less valuable because both its first principles and its mode of developing them, or reasoning from them, has an element of the lax and the loose, and is not strictly and trivially deductive: the various 'deductions' which Kant offers us in his various Critiques are valuable and informative precisely on account of this element of the lax and the loose. I am now about to give you a savour of my own contribution to value-theory in *Values and Intentions*, an undertaking which my friend Karl Popper rightly described as an attempt to carry

out a transcendental deduction, contentful and material and not merely formal, of the heads of value and disvalue.

I shall endeavour to construct the whole map of value and disvalue if you will grant me the  $\pi\omicron\upsilon\sigma\tau\acute{\omega}$  of a single assumption: that we are in the grip, and necessarily in the grip, of an aspiration towards what I shall call 'impersonality,' and this I shall further describe as the aspiration, framed by a particular person having quite specific interests, to rise above the specificity of his interests and the particularity of his person, and to desire that, and only that, that he could and would consistently desire, whoever he conceived himself as being, and whatever he conceived himself as desiring as a concrete, first-order object of interest. Men, I am suggesting, may harbour a curious algebraic passion to substitute for everything that is definite and constant in the objects or subjects of their practical wishes, variables most utterly unrestricted, and then to be practically guided by whatever survives the removal of everything concrete and contentful and empirically definite in their practical endeavours. And I am further suggesting that if indeed men are subject to this algebraic passion, which is perhaps what is meant in calling them rational animals, then its long-term operation will not be simply an empty formalism or a killing annihilation of their primary interests in favour of nothing in particular, but the generation of a whole system of heads of worthwhileness and counterworthwhileness which will have a necessary and authoritative and intrinsically justifiable position which no other substantially different aspiration or set of aspirations could conceivably generate. I am in short claiming not only that my aspiration will prove to have content, and not merely empty form, but that this content will be such as to generate a firm 'ought' from an 'is,' and an 'ought' that not merely expresses a demand prescribed to someone by someone, but a demand prescribed by everyone to everyone, and that not merely in some matter-of-fact fashion but in a manner which combines necessity with normativity. The aspiration in question, I am attempting to argue, is really the dominant universal present in all the cases of value and disvalue that we can with some approvable colour regard as compelling, non-arbitrary, intersubjective or what not, and that it in fact defines what it is to be the sort of value or disvalue in question. There is, from the standpoint of the aspiration in question, no mystery in the

compelling, non-arbitrary character of certain values and disvalues: they are the values and disvalues so framed and constituted as to have non-arbitrariness, intersubjectivity written into their constitution, they are in fact no more than specific embodiments or applications of non-arbitrariness. It would be as absurd to regard them as merely arbitrary and personal as it would be to regard the values and disvalues which express ordinary personal choice and preference as mandatory and universal. That we are 'in the grip' of such as aspiration means further that its operation is not merely personal and variable and contingent, but that it is an aspiration that all men, in so far as they are men, inevitably must form, and which has in itself, further, the promise and the possibility of a growing strength, so that, whatever other tendencies may grow at its side, and be in no way derivative from or subject to it, they may none the less fulfil the role of the variable material, suitable or unsuitable, which exists in its framework or upon its background. For an aspiration which projected an impeccable set of values, and yet was itself a mere chance side-issue in human nature, would not quite do the logical work required in the constitution of a realm of values and disvalues. That anything will do all the logical work required seems, however, extraordinarily dubious and requires a great deal of argument.

Before I go on to such argument I shall, however, try to elucidate various points in the formulation that I have just put forward. I wish to advert, first of all, to the use of the words 'could' and 'would' in my formulation above: to aspire to be impersonal is to aspire to desire that, and only that, that a man could and would desire, whoever he conceived himself as being, etc. The 'would' of this formula is not an expression of logical necessity, for obviously there is nothing that everyone, whatever his primary interests, would desire in this sense: many persons desire only idiosyncratic personal objects varying from case to case. Nor is it a 'would' expressive of natural law, for, apart from the objection that there are no objects of desire demanded by the laws of nature, it would in this case have no absolute force at all, nothing that would generate a system of values holding for *all* practical beings. On the other hand if one defines the aspiration as the aspiration to pursue only what a man *could* desire, whoever he conceived himself as being, one is brought to a halt by the obscurity of the word 'could.' It must

not be interpreted in an abstract formal sense, for obviously anything whatever, even stamp-collecting, *could* be pursued by everyone, and it is not clear that the laws of human nature or the structure of human society would rule out such a strange addiction. One's hesitation between 'would' and 'could' shows one, however, what one is looking for. It is the 'would' which one uses when one says that everyone who likes Michaelangelo would like Tintoretto too, and that one is always willing to exchange for a 'could very well' or 'could as well' in such a context. One is not dealing with the analytic 'would' or 'must' of formal logic, nor with the empty 'could' of formal non-contradiction, but with what we may call a near-necessity of essence, something that is very likely to be the case, but on a *priori* rather than empirical grounds. It is as I say the sort of near-necessity that he who wills the end must or could very well will the means, or that he who likes this *A* could very well like something rather like this *A*. The realm of mind is honeycombed with these near-necessities in terms of which understanding of people and their attitudes is alone possible. And we may note that, almost invariably, this 'would' or 'could' of near-necessity passes over or paraphrases itself into an 'ought' or a 'should.' The near-necessity of essence is an unfulfilled 'ought' for the man who fails to carry it out to its natural limit.

Another point that it is important to stress is that my account of impersonality is not one that makes it inimical to primary interest, in the sense of the interest in empirical objects of various sorts, the interest which is essentially such that there is no intrinsic reason why more than one person should share it. The impersonal may be such as to espouse invariant rather than contingently variable objects of interest, but its invariants always permit and in fact require contingently variable interests, which it is in fact their function to organize, and in contrast with which they alone can *be* impersonal and can exercise their function of impersonality. This requirement of first-order interests is in fact part and parcel of the appeal to whoever and whatever that occurred in our formulation, for no one would find an intrinsic appeal in emptily universal ends that bore no relation to what he concretely wanted or that even ran athwart his primary interests. The desire to be moved *only* by what one might desire whoever one conceived of oneself as being, is not a desire to be *free* from primary interest, but to pursue its goals

only as falling under, or at least not conflicting with, what one desires impersonally, and even this relative freedom is desired only *in so far* as one aspires to be impersonal, which does not preclude, and in fact requires, a rich growth of primary impulses, in the *other* segments of one's being. We may note here that even the desire to be free from all primary interests which has been so powerfully recommended by certain renunciatory philosophies and religions really presupposes primary interests: it bases itself on our first-order aversions from various concrete frustrations, and is itself nothing but a generalized aversion from frustration as such, which, rightly or wrongly, it believes to be the sole fruit of human endeavour.

It may be noted further that I have brought the word 'consistently' into my formulation, and that I have spoken of 'whoever he may conceive himself as being' rather than of 'whoever he may happen to be.' The point I am trying to make is that the impersonal goals are not the invariant ends that everyone would or could pursue, and that one consequently would or could pursue whoever one was, but that they are the ends which require that one should conceptually place oneself in every possible person's shoes, and should then frame ends that take account of and also rise above all that one might pursue in *all these conceived situations seen together*, and which would therefore have a certain ideal *collectivity* of attitude as well as the distributiveness which alone will not do the impersonal trick. The man who aspires to conduct himself impersonally, must not merely pursue ends that he might well desire whoever he was, for in this case victory over all others might be a very good candidate for impersonal honours: he must rather pursue such ends as he might pursue if he were everyone *at once*, or everyone *at the same time*, absurd as this may seem, if he entered into everyone else's predicament as intimately as his own. What we are saying is of course ordinarily phrased in the form that a man must be ready to pursue *for others* whatever he is ready to pursue for himself, but this brings into the arena a bedevilling surd which is only surmounted when the man abolishes the otherness of the other by treating the other as someone whom in some extraordinary sense he *might* be or might have been, or in other words by 'putting himself into his place.' What the individual wants impersonally therefore stands or falls with the strange procedure of disembarassing oneself of one's own indi-

viduality, and deciding what one would desire not only whoever one was but even if one was everyone. What one here does may be meaningless or impossible from the standpoint of many philosophical theories of identity, but it is certainly involved in the commonplace talk of looking at things from everyone's point of view. And in terms of this strange procedure we can understand the harmless growth of an apparently formidable infinite series: that what a man desires impersonally he not only would desire whoever he conceived himself as being, but that he would also desire it for everyone else as much as for himself, and that he would desire everyone else to desire it for everyone else, and everyone else to desire everyone else to desire it for everyone else, and so on indefinitely. The strange gambit of putting oneself into everyone else's shoes involves, it seems, that qua everyone one again puts oneself into the sum total of available shoes, and that qua everyone one goes on repeating the same process indefinitely. Each added term of the series seems to complicate the old, but in reality only makes explicit what is already there. Only such ends as can consistently survive this whole process of shoe-exchanging can be the impersonal ends we are trying to sketch. It seems ambitious to hope that something clear and positive can emerge out of processes so murky.

What I must now attempt to do is to work out the main heads of a generally accepted value-cosmos from the aspiration that I have taken such trouble to state unclearly. Plainly, as has been assumed, none of the more concrete goals of human striving or liking, and none of the more specific doings or undergoings in which men take delight or from which they experience aversion, can be given any absolute value-status, no matter how important they may be to individuals. Tea-drinking, mountain-climbing, the reading of one's favourite philosopher, all fall under the ban which excludes from absolute value what some only may find interesting while others have to it a contrary attitude, or no attitude at all. They may of course reenter the sphere of the absolutely valuable under another more general description, as special cases in certain circumstances of characters having a justifiable, mandatory appeal, but as what they are described they have no such privileges. Even the objects of universal human instincts occupy the same position: the objects and acts of sex, for instance, are objects in which we as a race for the most part happen to be interested, and interested in a

primary fashion. They are not objects in which anyone would or could be interested no matter what his primary interests. There is an *ἐποχή* a general suspension of acceptance of all such objects of contingent, primary interest: only under such headings as survive the *ἐποχή* can they make their reentry into the field of absolute values. Are there such headings? And if so, what are they? Or have we, in the interests of an empty formalism expelled all positive content from the realm of value?

It is readily arguable that this is not the case at all. By a strange step into the second order, one can take satisfaction in the conformity of things to one's wants, one can, in other words, be satisfied with and want satisfaction or pleasure, as an object which *everyone* with some non-contingent naturalness must come to desire, whatever the actual content of his interests, and which we, who put ourselves into the shoes of all such interested parties, and who espouse only such ends as may be pursued by all and for all, also find interesting and satisfactory. To have what one wants, which is the basic presupposition of all pleasure and satisfaction, is no contingent object of desire or satisfaction like the tea-drinking or the mountain-climbing mentioned above; it is as it were what everyone *must* want as soon as he reflects calmly on the matter, and which, since he will want it into whoever's shoes he projects himself, he will likewise want for all and find satisfactory for all and will want all to want and find satisfactory for all, and so on indefinitely. If one wants to drink tea or climb mountains or to do other things, and does not want to be satisfied by these activities or to have any satisfaction whatsoever, plainly some special explanation is required for one's perverse and abnormal state. A man who has primary wants, but desires them all to be frustrated, is no logically impossible creature; such ascetic personalities have existed and always will exist. But the way their interests have developed is rightly considered twisted, difficult, improbable, illogical, something not natural in an *a priori* and not merely empirically inductive sense. We must at the same time avoid suggesting that there is something merely tautological, unprogressive in passing from an interest in primary empirical goals, to an interest in the satisfaction which such goals afford. It is, as Butler and others have stressed, the most immense of steps, and the one that makes man a rational agent, able to integrate and coordinate the most diverse concrete interests under the compre-

hensive rubrics of the satisfactory, the pleasant and the avoidance of their opposites. Beside this immense step the further step to being interested in the satisfactions that one might have in other people's shoes is entirely minor and inconsiderable. Egoism and altruism alike soar infinitely above the animal, and altruism is only intelligible as a transcendental, notional egoism that has shed the bonds of particularity. Problems of the adjustment of my own various and other people's interests will of course arise in the most numerous and vexatious forms, but they will not be intrinsically necessary as it would be if everyone sought to impose his particular goals and tastes upon all others. Satisfaction at least provides a currency, or set of currencies, vague no doubt in their precise exchange value, in which intra- and interpersonal practice may be adjusted. A similar intrinsic naturalness attends the interest in the process or activity of successfully progressing towards what one wants, and which is really one's goal in prospect, and not strictly separable from that goal. There would be something perverse, or very specially motivated, or supersubtle in saying that one did not care for success, or for the smoothly nearing prospect of the things one cherished and was bringing about. The will to power and the will to freedom are similarly directions of willing that are not on a par with ordinary contingent trends of personal desire: whatever one personally desires, one must tend to desire the power to achieve what one desires and the freedom from all that could hinder one in its realization. One must not, of course, ignore in one's survey the nigh-necessary second order aversion from frustration and pain: whatever anyone desires, one must impersonally desire anyone to be freed from these. I here leave aside the problem as to whether the pains of getting what one wants and the frustrations of not getting it are *ever* worth the countervailing satisfactions and pleasures: I make no pronouncement on what Buddhism calls its First Noble Truth. But even if it were a Noble Truth, it would be no more than an assessment of the overall values and disvalues of human existence: it would not make a difference to those values and disvalues themselves.

From the impersonal desire for satisfaction and freedom from frustration for everyone, one necessarily and naturally goes on, in avoiding internal discrepancy, to those ideals of justice and fairness, which involve no more than a viable accom-



modation of satisfactions and freedom from frustration for everyone, an accommodation which necessarily involves many arbitrary, conventional and institutional features. I shall not develop the *a priori* case for justice, nor dwell on the arbitrary element in its precise application. The demand for justice does not, however, become less of an absolute demand because the precise manner of its implementation is anything but absolute: for particular would-be just dispensations we may not care, but there is a plain absurdity in saying that one has no taste for justice as such. In so far as one considers and considers together, what one would feel whoever one was, one quite necessarily cares for it: it is precisely what shoe-changing both lives on and fosters. Last item of all in the present enumeration, an impersonal interest in the just accommodation of interest logically leads to an impersonal interest in the action and will of all persons concerned to implement such an accommodation, an action and will only abstractly separable from the accommodations that they effect. We have the interest in justice as a virtue, a virtue which, taken in a wide sense, as Aristotle says, comprehends all the moral virtues. You will pardon me if, in a condensed exposition, I go no further in the analysis of virtue or moral good. The whole system of varied objectives we have mentioned are all 'deducible,' in a more or less cogent, if not formally necessary manner, from the aspiration towards impersonality understood as I have understood it.

We may, in parenthesis, briefly indicate the possibility of dealing with such values as those of dedicated love, the pursuit of truth, and the pursuit of the well-formed and successfully expressive which we also call the beautiful. In all these cases we have an analogue of the impersonality which rises above the specificity and particularity of personal interest, though here there is a rising above a specificity and a particularity which is not concerned with persons or their interests. In dedicated love there is a rising above *any* particularity and specificity which does not tend to the preservation and defence of what we dedicatedly love, and which, in its limited fashion, but with intensified strength imitates absolute impersonality. In the love of truth we have impersonality directed to what is the case or to what may be the case, or to whatever is evidence for what may be the case, no matter what the content or source of one's evidence or information. In the interest in the beau-

tiful one has an interest in doing justice to an object, in bringing out its character or its internal structure in the most poignant and vivid manner, no matter what the object may be and no matter what other interest it may arouse in anyone. The analogies between justice, equiprobability and aesthetic balance are not hard to point out, and love, truth and beauty certainly demand of us a detachment from primary interest which is fundamentally similar to the detachment which occurs in the pursuit of welfare, of justice and of moral good. Being fundamentally similar, this detachment receives and deserves the impersonal love which we all give it and desire all to share with us in giving it. Aesthetic, scientific and love-experience therefore enter the sphere of the absolutely valuable since they spring from a spirit akin to the spirit which projects and constitutes the whole sphere of the absolutely valuable. You will perhaps allow me the point without further argument, that there would be something absurd in using Stevensonian persuasion in the three cases in question. To say: 'I like love, truth, beauty: pray do so too': surely this represents the apogee of the grotesque and inappropriate.

We have therefore established, as well as we can hope to establish anything on an occasion like the present, that an aspiration towards impersonality is in a position to generate a whole order of impersonal goals, of heads of value and disvalue. If we seek only to desire what could be desired whoever we might conceive of ourselves as being, and we seek to do this with comprehensiveness, consistency and indifference to content, then we shall find ourselves forced to set up all the higher order goals of happiness, freedom from frustration, power, liberty, success, justice, moral zeal, dedicated love, scientific and aesthetic detachment, which are admittedly the worthwhile things in life, as their defects and contraries are admittedly its real blemishes. We have now, however, to ask whether there is anything like a necessary drift in the direction of impersonality, so that the realm of values may have power as well as dignity, and may with some colour be regarded as the irremovable background and necessary framework of practical life. It will be noted that I *do* regard it as an important matter whether the values I have set up do or do not guide the world, or at least help to guide human endeavour: values whose non-natural status is consistent with their guiding or influencing no one or

nothing are to me totally unmeaning. There can be no meaningful ought which is not also to some extent an is, and which does not at least to some extent *tend* to be realized. Oughts and values express a criticism of what is, on a basis of what it is and what it tends to be, and a putative ought which bears no relation to the actual strivings and tendencies of a thing or a person is as unmeaning as it is, in the literal sense, impertinent.

Shall we say however that the strange passion for divesting ourselves of specificity and particularity and putting ourselves not only into every actual but also every possible pair of shoes represents an inevitable, natural and centrally powerful aspect of human nature? Must conscious, reflective beings tend more and more to do just this, and must they thus become more and more subject to the overarching influence of a firmament of impersonal values and disvalues? The answer to this query is, I think, curious and paradoxical: that the aspiration towards impersonality and the value-firmament that it generates have an *empirical* strength much greater than anything that we could have reason to expect on a not too penetrating, if *a priori* examination of human existence. It can certainly be argued, as I have argued in detail in my *Values and Intentions*, that the aspiration towards impersonality has deep roots in conscious experience as such, which can be said to be always in quest of an ever widening universality, whether in theory or practice, and which can likewise be said to be always in quest, whether in theory or practice, of an objectivity which sets a bound to personal variability, and to an intersubjectivity which makes communication and social cooperation possible. The things which generate the firmament of impersonal values are no *accidents* of human existence: they are inherent in the existence of objectively directed states of mind as such and in the existence of anything that can be regarded as an explorable, discussable real world. The search for the comprehensively universal, for the compulsively objective, for the communicably intersubjective: these are the basic *nisus* of our conscious subjectivity, and of the world that constitutes itself for our thought. I am not here putting forward an idealistic theory of the world, but only of the world as responded to and given to us. What we do not, however, have in all this *a priori* rootedness, is a firm guarantee that impersonality will be pressed very far, that it will not merely result in sympathies confined to a limited group, and in

standards of worthwhileness and counterworthwhileness meant to hold only for this group. And this is what we do for the most part actually find in practice: that interests extending to anyone and everyone whatever they may desire are in general of little influence, and that there are even defences erected against them in the form of charges of emptiness, sentimentalism, exaggeration and disloyalty whenever they begin to show themselves in some strength. The whole process of divesting oneself of one's individuality and group-membership and becoming an algebraic entity concerned only with a total algebraization of interest is, moreover, so metaphysically mysterious as to arouse derision in philosophers as well as in ordinary persons, so that like Spinoza we begin to think it absurd to be concerned for the well-being of flies and other humble creatures. It would seem that all that we can predict with reliability are those tribally or racially limited values and disvalues whose great uniformity has astonished certain sociologists. What we do find, however, is the presence of a strange responsiveness in the most diverse classes of men to the total algebraizations I have mentioned and that even in the case of the childlike and unreflective. The monstrous inequity of treating even animals sometimes as they are treated in many slaughter-houses and in factory-farms is readily clear to many children, no matter how soon they may learn to dismiss it as weak sentimentality, and the moral devotion which refuses to see unpersons in blacks, lepers and other classes of the underprivileged and the unfortunate, and pursues them with burning, practical love, is another example of the same unexpected, astonishing responsiveness. Men certainly behave, with much greater frequency than is rationally predictable, as if there were something in them intrinsically and passionately transcendent of specificity and particularity, no matter how deeply and necessarily they may be immersed in either.

I may conclude this lecture by suggesting that the strange hauntingness of the impersonal value-firmament that I have sketched, and of the aspiration towards impersonality which projects it, points to an old shadow which meets us along many avenues of discourse and argument, no matter how little it may seem meaningful to modern thought. I refer to the notion of an ontological Absolute, the notion of something having that indiscerptible unity, that necessity of existence and necessary possession of essential properties, which goes together with and

totally explains the existence of all that exists finitely, contingently, empirically and separately, which is one among others, which might not have been there, which seems to stand loose and separate and apart. Absolute-theory or the theory of what uniquely, necessarily and unitively is, and what is in some sense logically responsible for whatever contingently exists or is the case, is, I believe, an indispensable philosophical enquiry, and one that puts the logical keystone on to every other philosophical enquiry, and not least on to enquiries into the impersonal values and disvalues that we have been exploring. For an Absolute has precisely that transcendence of separate individuality and one-sided empirical content, while at the same time covering and organizing all such individuality and such content, which we have found to be essential to the realm of values. An Absolute is a very strange logical object, investigated if at all only by purely logical methods. For being the sort of thing that must exist necessarily if it exists at all, it is necessarily non-existent if there is even a doubt as to its possible non-existence, while on the other hand it can only be in any way thinkable and possible if it also exists certainly and of necessity. This means that purely logical insight is the one tool through which Absolutes can be investigated, anything empirical, anything that we may or may not encounter, being rigorously excluded. It is only our deepening insight, our progressive exclusion of what seemed to be but are not genuinely alternatives, that can leave us at the last, if we are left, with a truly viable, explanatory Absolute. If some think that this means that such an Absolute can be no more than an empty thing of thought, nothing can be wider of the mark. Absolutes by their indiscernible unity and all pervasive responsibility are precisely the guarantors of those unitive, rational enterprises, whether in theory or practice, which, on assumptions of boundless logical pluralism and independence, are incapable even of an approach to justification. Absolutes and Absolute-theory are in fact justified by the justifying work that they do, and that radically empiricist and pluralist philosophies cannot possibly do. The logical impossibility and self-destroying meaninglessness of the latter are the only true proofs of an Absolute. And the difficult constitution of the realm of values and disvalues is of course above all a rational enterprise that requires such explanation and justification through an Absolute.

Absolutes can be, and have been, however, very variously conceived. For though there can be no alternatives to a true Absolute, there are always alternative Absolutes for us, and will be as long as we have a defective insight into the necessary and the possible and the existential and many other such categorial matters. For it is a wrong belief, and we must utterly reject it, that what is really possible or impossible or necessary or real can be settled by a mere linguistic convention, and not by an examination of the sorts of thing one has on hand, and of what being such sorts of things carries with it or does not carry with it. Absolutes have been conceived as self-diversifying media spread out in time and space, as transcendent godheads exercising unlimited optional creativity or non-creativity, as a mind or spirit scattered over a whole society of communicating intelligences, as an ideal Platonic world of forms deploying itself in a half-real world of instances, and so on. Part of the task of Absolute-theory is a discussion of all these alternatives, and of the degree to which they leave anything merely external or unmopped-up or unexplained. It is here that I shall simply affirm my belief in the superior merit of Hegelian-type Absolutes, Absolutes which can only be unitary in so far as they go as far as possible in the direction of diremption and multiplicity and apparent mutual independence, and which reveal their deep unity, and are in fact one, only in the continuous *act* of breaking down and overcoming the diremption that they have at first seemingly introduced. The natural world in space and time represents such an Absolute in its nearest approach to utter dispersion and mutual externality, that essentially impossible condition which abstract formal logic often treats as the very paradigm of the possible. This dispersed natural world gives rise to the vastly closer unity of life and mind in order to demonstrate, as it were, the impossibility of such a merely dispersed, natural being. In life, and more so in mind, mutual interpenetration and dependence take over from dispersion and seeming independence, but there is still a higher independence seemingly maintained in the atomistic separateness of the conscious person, whose pathetic, logical incapacity for true sharing has been the theme of much of the modern thought of Wittgenstein and others. The various stars in the firmament of value represent, however, the Absolute asserting its unity over the seeming dispersion of persons: the Absolute shows itself in the utter

impossibility of our living entirely unto ourselves, and in our necessary involvement with the life and inner feeling of even the most remote conscious being. It is, we may paradoxically say, because personal self-sufficiency and separateness are not and cannot be, because they are states approachable only because we can thereupon retreat from them, and utterly do away with them, that the various members of the realm of values have the firm status that they have, they they haunt us so persistently, and that they can at times overshadow the limited personal and social needs of our immediate being and environment. The sense of affirming an Absolute therefore lies, among other things, in the inexorability of the moral firmament, constructed as we have constructed it. The Absolute may not be a thing open to sensuous observation, but it remains like a grey eminence behind our otherwise incompletely intelligible postulations of absolute values. The Absolute is, however, something that we encounter along many avenues, and the avenue of values and disvalues is not necessarily the most important and most beautiful of its main vistas. It is, however, the only avenue that we have been concerned to explore this evening.

The E. H. Lindley Memorial Lectureship Fund was established in 1941 in memory of Ernest H. Lindley, Chancellor of the University of Kansas from 1920 to 1939. In February 1941 Mr. Roy Roberts, the chairman of the committee in charge, suggested in the *Graduate Magazine* that

the Chancellor should invite to the University for a lecture or a series of lectures, some outstanding national or world figure to speak on "Values of Living"—just as the late Chancellor proposed to do in his courses "The Human Situation" and "Plan for Living."

In the following June Mr. Roberts circulated a letter on behalf of the Committee, proposing in somewhat broader terms that

The income from this fund should be spent in a quest of social betterment by bringing to the University each year outstanding world leaders for a lecture or series of lectures, yet with a design so broad in its outline that in the years to come, if it is deemed wise, this living memorial could take some more desirable form.

The fund was allowed to accumulate until 1954, when Professor Richard McKeon lectured on "Human Rights and International Relations." The next lecture was given in 1959 by Professor Everett C. Hughes, and has been published by the University of Kansas School of Law as part of his book *Students' Culture and Perspectives: Lectures on Medical and General Education*. The selection of lecturers for the Lindley series has since been delegated to the Department of Philosophy. The following lectures have been published, and may be obtained from the Department at a price of fifty cents each.

1961. "The Idea of Man—An Outline of Philosophical Anthropology."  
By José Ferrater Mora, Professor of Philosophy, Bryn Mawr College.
1962. "Changes in Events and Changes in Things."  
By A. N. Prior, Professor of Philosophy, University of Manchester.
1963. "Moral Philosophy and the Analysis of Language."  
By Richard B. Brandt, Professor of Philosophy, Swarthmore College.
1964. "Human Freedom and the Self."  
By Roderick M. Chisholm, Professor of Philosophy, Brown University.
1965. "Freedom of Mind."  
By Stuart Hampshire, Professor of Philosophy, Princeton University.
1966. "Some Beliefs about Justice."  
By William K. Frankena, Professor of Philosophy, University of Michigan.
1967. "Form and Content in Ethical Theory."  
By Wilfrid Sellars, Professor of Philosophy, University of Pittsburgh.