

**INFINITE MINDS: A PHILOSOPHICAL COSMOLOGY.** By John Leslie. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. Pp. x + 234. Hardback, \$77.00, ISBN 0199248923; paperback, \$29.95, ISBN 0199248931

Somehow this book is less than the sum of its parts. That is, though almost every page bursts with fascinating details about matters as diverse as quantum-fluctuation and Cantorian paradoxes of infinite cardinality there never emerges from these parts an obviously coherent whole or consistent theme. Nevertheless, there is a core idea to be discerned. Leslie's central thesis is that there is a kind of force or "principle" of "ethical needfulness" which can be "creatively effective" in that states of affairs which are intrinsically "ethically needful" will come to obtain simply in virtue of having this property. One would hope for more precise accounts of these terms in light of the fact that Leslie has been engaged on this research project for most of four decades now. Still, by repeated attacks on the explanatory power of logical necessity—which is accepted by many mainstream philosophers—he lessens the attentive reader's skepticism about the possibility of such sui generis principles. He attempts to support his central thesis by means of an explanatory argument in reference to three data: 1. The existence of something rather than nothing; 2. The order of the cosmos; 3. The apparent "fine-tuning" of the universe to allow for/produce intelligent life. He considers objections to the inherent plausibility of what he calls the Platonic Creation Story as well as alternative explanations of the data he treats. With respect to the first datum he is surprisingly effective at contrasting his explanation favorable with standard theism, but with regard to the third he seems to lean more heavily on the notions of intention and agency which are much more plausibly connected to a person than a force.

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