

A Brief Glance at Creation

BBC Radio 4 is making much of the Large Hadron Collider experiment going on beneath the Alps, including the hint from dissident physicists that it may create a black hole into which we shall all vanish. On the morning of 10 September a trailer before the eight o'clock Radio 4 News told us that this is the most ambitious experiment in this history of science. (How is scientific ambition measured? the BBC salute was pop-beat accompaniment and a programme called "Physics Rocks".) The hope is, said the BBC, that the Collider may give an insight into the "big bang that created the universe" by simulating the conditions a short time after "the creation of the universe". The identical phrase, "the big bang that created the universe" was used later the same day on *The World at One*, varied by "the big bang that led to the creation of the universe". In the post-Christian age we seem to be reverting to the creation myth of Babylon. Chaos is given order, in the traditional myths by a god though now by the big bang. But chaos presupposes an already extant creation. If there is a big bang there has to be something to go bang. "Universe", in the quoted phrases, means something like "the present phase of things" or perhaps "world".

Perhaps there can be some profit in all this publicity material. It could lead us, by reflection, to a reminder of the inexplicable wonder of creation. It is hardly intelligible to talk of an *explanation* of creation, and certainly not within the reach of physics. Once anything or everything *is*, the physicists can make their particle accelerators and colliders, but that *it*, anything, everything, should be at all is not within their remit to explain. At a time when some scientifically inclined philosophers seem to think that science can explain everything, perhaps so obvious a thought is worth a moment's consideration. Creation must always be a great mystery. Unless there be revelation, what else can be said about it?

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