Closing Pandora's Box: A Defence of Alvin Plantinga's Epistemology of Religious Belief

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To

Eden, Elijah, and Ezra

May the content contained within this work aid you in the development of your faith.

Autumn Priscilla

May God grant us many more years and many more adventures.

The City of Glasgow

May you flourish by the preaching of His Word and the praising of His Name.

John 14:6

Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'

ABSTRACT

CLOSING PANDORA'S BOX: A DEFENCE OF ALVIN PLANTINGA'S
EPISTEMOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF

I argue (1) that Alvin Plantinga's theory of warrant is plausible and (2) that, contrary to the

Pandora's Box objection, there are certain serious world religions that cannot successfully use

Plantinga's epistemology to demonstrate that their beliefs could be warranted in the same way

that Christian belief can be warranted. In arguing for (1), I deploy Ernest Sosa's Swampman

case to show that Plantinga's proper function condition is a necessary condition for warrant. I

then engage three objections to Plantinga's theory of warrant, each of which attempts to

demonstrate that his conditions for warrant are neither necessary nor sufficient. Having

defended the plausibility of Plantinga's theory of warrant, I present and expand his key

arguments to the effect that naturalism cannot make use of it. These arguments provide the

conceptual tools that are needed to argue for (2): that there are certain world religions that

cannot legitimately use Plantinga's theory of warrant to demonstrate that their beliefs could be

warranted in the same way that Christian belief can be warranted.

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PUBLISHED WORKS USED

Tyler Dalton McNabb, "Warranted religion: answering objections to Alvin Plantinga's epistemology," *Religious Studies* 51/4 (2015): 477-495.

Erik Baldwin and Tyler Dalton McNabb, 'An Epistemic Defeater for Islamic Belief?,' *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology* (*Routledge*) 76/4 (2015): 352-367.

Tyler Dalton McNabb, 'Defeating Naturalism: Defending and Reformulating Alvin Plantinga's Evolutionary Argument Against Naturalism,' published online May 21, 2015 in *Eleutheria*.

Chapter 1: Alvin Plantinga and his Theory of Warrant

1.0 Introduction

Alvin Plantinga is one of the most influential philosophers of our time.[1] He is widely regarded as having influenced the revival of theism in Western philosophy.[2] In light of his work, the University of Pittsburgh recently awarded Plantinga the very prestigious Nicholas Rescher Prize for Contributions to Systematic Philosophy.[3] Recognition of Plantinga's influence also extends beyond academia to the general public. *Christianity Today* calls Plantinga 'the greatest philosopher of the last century,'[4] and *Time* hails him as 'America's leading philosopher on God.'[5]

How has Plantinga become so influential within Western philosophy? Plantinga's influence has been spread through several works that are, each in their own right, historic contributions to various fields in philosophy. In the field of metaphysics, Plantinga's *The Nature of Necessity*[6] was one of the first extended works to emerge about modalities. After defending the concepts of essence and accident and exploring the concept of modality, Plantinga applies his theories about these to the ontological argument for the existence of God and to the problem of evil. Plantinga's modal ontological argument, even if deemed to be ultimately unsuccessful, has been recognized as breathing new life into a dead argument. In regard to the problem of evil, Plantinga has moved the literature from

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[1] See James Beilby, *Epistemology As Theology: An Evaluation of Alvin Plantinga's Religious Epistemology* (Hants, England: Ashgate, 2005), i.

[2] See Quinton Smith's comment on the back cover of William Lane Craig and James Porter Moreland's *The Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology* (Chichester, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).

[3] Myrana Anderson, 'Plantinga Wins Prestigious Rescher Prize,' last modified December 6, 2012, accessed October 28th, 2013, http://www.calvin.edu/news/archive/plantinga-wins-prestigious-rescher-prize.

[4] John Stackhouse, 'Mind Over Skepticism,' last modified June 11, 2001, accessed October 27, 2014, http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2001/june11/19.74.html.

[5] 'Modernizing the Case for God,' *Time*, last modified April 7, 1980, accessed June, 2016. http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,921990,00.html.

[6] Alvin Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974).

discussing the ancient logical problem of evil to a lively and fruitful discussion of the evidential problem of evil.[7]

In addition to these major contributions to metaphysics and philosophy of religion, Plantinga is responsible for significant developments in the field of epistemology; and it is in this area that his work has achieved widest acclaim. For example, Richard Foley states, '[t]his [i.e., Plantinga's work on warrant]…is one of the major accomplishments of twentieth-century epistemology.'[8] Jonathan Kvanvig agrees in praising Plantinga's work. He writes that, '[o]f sustained attempts to understand these concepts [i.e., justification, proper functionalism, internalism, and externalism] Plantinga's…work on the nature of warrant stands out...as the very best.'[9] Similarly, Laurence BonJour states, 'I have learned and will continue to learn a great deal from these tightly argued, extremely knowledgeable, and also highly entertaining volumes.'[10] Perhaps Ernest Sosa captures it best as he describes Plantinga's volumes on warrant as '[a]n important contribution which will be widely stimulating and influential for years to come.'[11]

But even granting the wide influence that Plantinga's work in epistemology has enjoyed, it is still legitimate to step back from the accolades of praise and ask if there are good reasons for thinking that he gives us a plausibly true theory of warrant. To begin to answer this question, I will give an overview of each book of Plantinga's trilogy. Due to the scope of this chapter, I will give a meaningful exposition of Plantinga's work without giving an in-depth or tedious analysis. Though I will pay special attention to the last book, *Warranted Christian Belief*, as it is the most relevant for my project. I will review popular objections to this third volume and examine how Plantinga has responded to them. The objections considered include the evidential argument from evil, the problem of religious

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[7] For the logical problem of evil, see J.L. Mackie, 'Evil and Omnipotence,' *Mind* 64, no. 254 (1955): 200-212. For the evidential problem of evil, see Daniel Howard-Snyder, *The Evidential Argument from Evil* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1996).

[8] On the back cover of Alvin Plantinga's *Warrant: The Current Debate* (New York.: Oxford University Press, 1993).

[9] Jonathan L. Kvanvig, *Warrant in Contemporary Epistemology: Essays in Honor of Plantinga's Theory of Knowledge* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1996), vii.

[10] Laurence BonJour, 'Plantinga on Knowledge and Proper Function,' in *Warrant in Contemporary Epistemology: Essays in Honor of Plantinga's Theory of Knowledge*, ed. Jonathan L. Kvanvig (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1996), 47.

[11] On the back cover of Plantinga's *Warrant: The Current Debate*, op. cit.

diversity, and the Great Pumpkin Objection. After explaining these objections and discussing how Plantinga has responded to them, I will attend to, what I call, the Pandora's Box Objection. In comparison to the above mentioned objections, the Pandora's Box Objection has received the least attention, even though, I take it, it deserves the most. I will then lay out my two-part thesis, which I will defend in the chapters that follow. My two-part thesis will pertain, first, to defending proper functionalism simpliciter and second, to responding to the Pandora's Box Objection. I begin, then, with a brief overview of the first book of the trilogy.

1.1 *Warrant: The Current Debate*

Warrant: The Current Debate can best be understood by breaking it down into three sections. The first three chapters are a critique of internalism—which, in its simplest form, is the view that in order for a subject, s, to be warranted in believing p, s must have internal access to the properties which confer warrant. The middle section is a critique of coherentism—which is the view that what grounds the warrant for a belief, p, is p's coherence with other beliefs. The last section critically engages with different reliabilist's theories—which roughly state that either s has a warranted belief, p, iff, s reliably produces belief that p, or s has a warranted belief, p, iff, s's belief that p is in the right statistical relationship with p. By arguing that such theories of warrant are implausible, Plantinga's overall goal is to pave the way for his second book, *Warrant and Proper Function*.[12] He makes this clear by declaring that his, 'ultimate aim is to come to a satisfying and accurate account of warrant.'[13]

It is important to note that what Plantinga means by warrant is: that ingredient that separates mere true belief from knowledge. I could believe that the Philadelphia 76ers will go 82-0 after only winning a few games the previous season, but unless there was a dramatic roster change, few people would dare call this belief knowledge, even if it did turn out to be true. Warrant is supposed to be that thing, which, when added, will turn mere true belief into knowledge.[14]

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[12] Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function* (New York.: Oxford University Press, 1993).

[13] Plantinga, *Warrant: The Current Debate*, op. cit., vii.

[14] Historically, justification combined with true belief was considered sufficient for knowledge. This changed in light of Gettier cases. This will be discussed further in chapter two.

In establishing, to his satisfaction, that there are no plausibly true internalist theories of warrant, Plantinga spends Chapter one giving a traditional view of internalism through examining the works of Descartes and Locke.[15] He argues that through studying the early internalists one can derive a particular consensus about what the core beliefs of traditional internalism are. Namely, that epistemic justification is entirely within one's power, that objective and subjective epistemic duties coincide, and that one cannot be mistaken if a belief is justified.[16]

After systematizing internalism through examining the works of its early proponents, Plantinga continues his discussion by dissecting Rodrick Chisholm's early version of it. Plantinga interprets Chisholm to be suggesting that at the heart of warrant is the fulfilment of one's epistemic duty; he thus holds him to be in company with Descartes and Locke.[17] Subsequent to this exposition of Chisholm's view, Plantinga attempts to show how the fulfilment of one's epistemic duty is, in fact, neither necessary nor sufficient for warrant. To establish that it is not necessary for warrant he gives a counterexample. He invites us to consider the scenario in which he nonculpably believes that there are Alpha Centaurian conquerors who dislike it when he thinks that something is red. In this scenario, he believes that they are monitoring his beliefs and that, if he believes something is red, they will engender in him all sorts of false beliefs, thus depriving him of epistemic excellency. He then trains himself very hard not to think that things are red. However, one day in London, he appears to come across so many things that are red that he becomes exhausted and tells himself that epistemic duty be hanged as he forms the belief that there are red objects in front of him. Plantinga argues that this would be tantamount to ignoring his epistemic responsibility, and yet it appears very obviously that he would indeed have warrant for believing that such things are red.[18]

In Plantinga's third chapter, he takes on what he calls post-classical Chisholmian internalism (PCCI). The thesis of PCCI is that there must be a right relationship between

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[15] Plantinga, *Warrant: The Current Debate*, op. cit., 12-14; René Descartes, 'Meditation 4,' in *Philosophical Works of Descartes*, eds. E. S. Haldane and G.R. T. Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), Vol. 1; and John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. A.C. Fraser (New York: Dover, 1959).

[16] Plantinga, *Warrant: The Current Debate*, op, cit., 19-22.

[17] Ibid., 31.

[18] Ibid., 45.

the evidence-base and the belief; a relationship that, on the whole, will display something intrinsically valuable.[19] What is that evidence-base? According to Chisholm, it should be understood as consisting of purely psychological states,[20] that is one must have internal access to those properties that confer warrant. There are a few serious problems that Plantinga sees in this internalist theory of warrant. The two that I will briefly mention pertain to the theory being unmotivated, and the theory not providing sufficient conditions for warrant.

Plantinga reiterates that classical internalism is motivated by the fact that one must do their epistemic duty, as justification is primarily a deontological requirement. Warrant in this sense is to be understood as fulfilling the rational requirements that are set out before the individual for a particular belief. However, if duty is not, in fact, involved and justification is not primarily a deontological concept, why suppose that in order to be justified one must have access to certain psychological properties? Plantinga asks: 'why lay this down as an initial constraint on locating the notion to be explained?'[21] He then points out that, '[f]or the earlier classical view, there was a clear answer: the deontological connection. But for the later post-classical view, this connection vanishes; and with it goes the reason for an epistemic internalist dimension in this view.'[22]

In addition to claiming that the post-classical view is unmotivated, Plantinga argues that this theory or such theories do not give sufficient conditions for warrant. He gives an example of a demon who, every once in a while, will randomly produce in a subject such phenomenology that normally goes with the belief that *a squirrel just ran from that tree to that tree*. He argues that if this happened in conjunction with an actual squirrel running from that tree to that tree, it would appear that the belief that *a squirrel just ran from that tree to that tree* would be both true and evident.[23] The individual would thus have internal or privileged access. However, even though the individual here would possess the needed psychological states, it wouldn't appear that the individual would have warrant as these psychological states just so happened to come about at the right time. The belief lacks a

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[19] Ibid., 51.

[20] Ibid., 50.

[21] Ibid., 54.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid., 64.

tight connection to truth. In other words, there isn't a tight connection between the belief produced from the individual's faculties and that belief being true. Plantinga takes this to be good reason for thinking that the post-classical theory of warrant does not provide sufficient conditions for warrant.

The last chapter that I will bring up in this brief overview is entitled 'Reliabilism.' Here Plantinga explains three different versions of reliabilism, namely, the views that are supported by William Alston, Fred Dretske, and Alvin Goldman. For the sake of brevity, I will only consider the versions of reliabilism that have been advanced by the latter two. Using these two different accounts as representatives, I will demonstrate why Plantinga believes that reliabilist accounts are inadequate.

Goldman's version of reliabilism, which, as I explain shortly, comes in two varieties, emphasizes that a belief needs to be produced by a reliable belief-producing mechanism, while Dretske's account focuses on the right probability relations holding. In regard to the latter, Plantinga states, '[t]he second sees warrant as a matter of probability; a person is said to know a (true) proposition A if he believes it, and if the right probability relations hold between A and its significant others.'[24]

According to Plantinga, Dretske's final account can be summarized as follows: '(D5) K knows that s is F if and only if K believes that s is F and there is a state of affairs r's being G such that (1) r's being G causes K to believe that s is F and (2) P ((s is F)/(r's being G&k)) = 1 and P ((s is F)/k)<1.'[25] Like the internalist views before it, Plantinga finds a fundamental flaw in this theory. To expose this flaw, Plantinga gives the case of the Serendipitous Lesion. An individual has a lesion that causes him to believe lots of crazy and false propositions, however, among these crazy and false beliefs there is a true belief, namely the belief that he is suffering from a brain lesion. Plantinga states, 'according to D5, it follows that K knows that he is suffering from a brain lesion. His having this lesion causes him to believe that he is thus afflicted; the probability of his suffering from a brain lesion on his background knowledge k is less than 1; but of course its probability on k & K is suffering from a brain lesion is 1.'[26] Plantinga goes on to say, '[b]ut surely K does not

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[24] Ibid., 192; Fred Drestke, *Knowledge and the Flow of Information* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

[25] Plantinga, *Warrant: The Current Debate*, op. cit., 195.

[26] Ibid., 195.

know that he is suffering from a brain lesion. He has no evidence of any kind.'[27] His belief seems lucky, as there are no clear connections between the cause of the belief and the belief being true.

In reference to Goldman's reliabilist theory, Plantinga distinguishes between two different versions—only the first of which need to concern us here. According to this version:

> (a) If S's belief in p results from a reliable cognitive process, and there is no reliable or conditionally reliable process available to S which, had it been used by S in addition to the process actually used, would have resulted in S's not believing p at t, then S's belief in p at t is justified.

> (b) If S's belief in p at t results from a belief-dependent process that is (at least) conditionally reliable, and if the beliefs (if any) on which this process operates in producing S's belief in p at t are themselves justified, then S's belief in p at t is justified.[28]

Plantinga thinks that this theory is also plagued by the Serendipitous Lesion. According to Plantinga, in this scenario you would have a reliable cognitive process, namely the brain lesion, produce the true belief that you have a brain lesion. Given that, in the scenario, there is no reliable process available to you which would have resulted in you not believing that you had a brain lesion, your belief is justified.[29] Of course, this whole incident for Plantinga seems serendipitous; and, thus, he thinks we have good reason to reject Goldman's view.[30]

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[27] Ibid.

[28] Goldman quoted in Plantinga, ibid., 198; Alvin Goldman, 'What is Justified Belief?,' in *Justification and Knowledge: New Studies in Epistemology*, ed. George Pappas (Boston: Reidel Publishing Company, 1979), 10, 13, 20.

[29] Goldman appears to be using justification synonymously with warrant.

[30] I should point out that John Greco doesn't think that this is a genuine counterexample to reliabilism simpliciter. Greco argues that the problem in this brain lesion counterexample isn't the lack of proper function that is displayed in the example, but rather the lack of cognitive integration. Greco states, '[t]he cognitive processes associated with the brain lesion are not sufficiently integrated with other of the person's cognitive dispositions so as to count as being part of cognitive character.' Thus, for Greco, in order for the brain lesion to count as a genuine counterexample, the brain lesion would need to be (a) stable in the relevant sense, and (b) well integrated with other of the person's cognitive dispositions. But why couldn't one change the scenario to where the brain lesion is integrated with other cognitive dispositions in a stable sense? One could imagine a brain lesion, that due to its location, actually acts as an aid to one's

At the heart of the failure of these internalist and reliabilist theories, according to Plantinga, is their lack of a proper function condition. With this conclusion, Plantinga believes that he has successfully laid down the groundwork for the next volume in the trilogy, to which I now turn.

1.2 *Warrant and Proper Function*

In *Warrant and Proper Function*,[31] Plantinga elaborates on the range of concepts entailed by the notion of proper function: namely, 'dysfunction,' 'design plan', 'damage,' 'normality,' and 'purpose.' These concepts are all interconnected and thus, he argues, cannot be defined independently of each other.[32] According to Plantinga, the situation is similar in modal metaphysics, where the meanings of words like 'contingency,' 'necessity,' 'possibility,' and 'entailment' are interrelated.[33] But Plantinga's point is not just about the meaning of words. For Plantinga, if the necessity of proper function can be demonstrated, the necessity of a design plan will also be demonstrated. The proper functioning of our faculties pertains to how our faculties 'ought' to operate, while the design plan is the program that explains why our faculties 'ought' to operate in a particular manner.[34] Though Plantinga initially argues that neither the notion of proper function nor that of a design plan necessarily invoke the need for an intelligent or conscious designer, by the end of the book he has established, to his own satisfaction, that there are no good naturalistic accounts of proper function.

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inductive and deductive ability, or perhaps it somehow amplifies one's memory. Even if the belief in question came about from a cognitive disposition that was integrated and stable, it would still seem implausible that the belief in question would be warranted. Moreover, it seems plausible that in order for a newly acquired faculty to produce warranted beliefs there would need to be some initial awareness that the faculty was a reliable one. But the proper functionalist, for reasons that will be looked at more closely in chapter two, thinks that proper function is required for awareness. If this is the case, then I think Plantinga's point still stands, or minimally, it is not undercut. For Greco's argument, see John Greco, *Achieving Knowledge: A Virtue-Theoretic Account of Epistemic Normativity* (New York: Cambridge Press, 2010), 152.

[31] Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function*, op. cit.

[32] Ibid., 5.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid., 21.

Before going further into the overview of the second volume of the trilogy, it would be helpful to provide a summary of Plantinga's theory of warrant in schematic form:

1) One's cognitive faculties must function properly,

2) one's cognitive environment has to be sufficiently similar to the one for which the cognitive faculties were designed,

3) the design plan that governs the production of such beliefs is aimed at producing true belief, and

4) the design plan is a good one such that there is a high statistical (or objective) probability that a belief produced under these conditions will be true.[35]

Plantinga changes the direction of the book when he applies his theory of warrant to beliefs that, though universally held and commonly understood to be warranted beliefs, have traditionally been targeted by sceptical arguments because of a lack of supporting evidence. His goal is to show that his theory of warrant has the scope as well as the power to explain how the beliefs targeted by scepticism could be warranted. If Plantinga's theory of warrant can solve the problem of scepticism and show how such beliefs are warranted more convincingly than the alternatives available, this would at least suggest that his theory is plausibly true.

Even though Plantinga interacts with beliefs about memory, the reality of the past, other minds, testimony, perception, and the uniformity of nature, my aim in this overview is simply to explain how he answers the problem of scepticism about beliefs that are obtained by means of perception and testimony.

1.3 Perception

Can we obtain knowledge from perception? Plantinga argues that we can and he does this by applying his theory of warrant. He argues that we normally come to our perceptual beliefs in a 'basic' way, that is, in a way that doesn't depend on other beliefs.[36] When we perceive that a squirrel is running in our backyard we have a particular phenomenology,

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[35] Joseph Kim, *Reformed Epistemology and the Problem of Religious Diversity: Proper Function, Epistemic Disagreement, and Christian Exclusivism* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011), 19.

[36] Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function*, op. cit., 93.

and it is in virtue of this that we form (or at least partly form) the belief that a squirrel just ran through the backyard. This belief does not come about through reflecting on certain propositions, or through having infallible beliefs; rather, perceptual beliefs are naturally produced by our cognitive faculties without requiring the mediation of propositions.[37]

Holding to this account of perceptual belief formation to be broadly correct, Plantinga develops the following key argument: If one's faculties are functioning properly in the environment for which they are meant, and they have a design plan that is aimed toward producing true beliefs, and there is a high objective probability that beliefs produced from the design plan will be true, then perceptual beliefs formed under these conditions will be warranted.[38] Plantinga does not hold that a subject has to believe or know that these conditions are in place in order to have a warranted belief; rather, as long as these conditions are in place, the subject's belief will be warranted.[39]

At the end of the chapter, Plantinga briefly entertains the possibility that one could come to hold a particular perceptual belief by cumulative means that would include inductive methods and testimony. He gives the example of a child who, upon experiencing something treely, finds out from his mother that what he perceives is called a tree. He later finds a paper mâché model that resembles a tree, and he goes on to form, by induction, the belief that he perceives a tree. However, he then finds out through testimony that trees are not made out of paper mâché. He thus finely tunes his belief in what a tree is so that the next time he experiences either a tree or a paper mâché model, he identifies it correctly. Plantinga is willing to grant all of this provided it is accepted that there is some component of perceptual belief that is basic, in the sense that he has defined, and that could only be warranted given an account of proper function along the lines that he suggests.[40]

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[37] I am aware that in contemporary cognitive science literature there exists a preference to use the term 'cognitive systems' instead of 'cognitive faculties.' Nonetheless, due to the abundance of proper functionalist literature that already uses the phrase 'cognitive faculties' it is prudent for me to continue in this tradition, given the main focus of the thesis.

[38] Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function*, op. cit., 89.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid., 101.

1.4 Testimony

Plantinga starts his section on testimony by quoting a famous passage from Thomas Reid. Reid states, '[t]he wise author of nature hath planted in the human mind a propensity to rely on human testimony before we can give a reason for doing so.'[41] Plantinga clarifies what Reid means by arguing that beliefs based on testimony are not formed by way of a clever inductive or abductive argument, rather we obtain them through a special mechanism. This is important because, if it can be established, one would have to make room in one's epistemological system for the method by which beliefs based on testimony could be warranted apart from argumentation. This would be the case for most of our beliefs which are based upon testimony; this includes beliefs about scientific theories, past results of scientific experiments, beliefs about things that happened in history, geographical locations, people's names (including your own name), and so on.[42]

One might be tempted to argue that when we accept testimony we do so because we have a reason to accept the reliability of the testimony-giver (that is the testifier). Perhaps we use our memory to think about all of the times this testimony-giver was right, or maybe we think about the reliability of other testimony-givers who at one time, were in analogous circumstances to the current testimony-giver. After doing this, we might decide if we are justified in accepting the current testimony. Plantinga argues that this isn't typically how we acquire beliefs by way of testimony, though he acknowledges that we do come to some beliefs like this.

In order to bring one's intuition to concede this point, Plantinga deploys the example of a five year old whose dad tells him that Australia is a large country and it occupies an entire continent by itself. The five year old doesn't think (normally) of past times when his dad has been reliable, rather he seems to have a natural inclination to believe his dad. Plantinga uses this example as evidence that our cognitive faculties are inclined to accept the testimony of others as soon as we develop a certain cognitive ability. This inclination to accept testimony as a source of potential knowledge seems to be a

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[41] Reid quoted in ibid., 77; Thomas Reid, *Essay on the Intellectual Powers of Man*, in *Thomas Reid's Inquiry and Essays*, eds. R. Beanblossom and K. Lehrer (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1983), VI, 5, 281-282.

[42] Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function*, op. cit., 77.

natural part of our cognitive design plan, and it is present when our faculties are functioning properly.[43]

There are two more relevant ideas that Plantinga elaborates on in this chapter. First, just because we have a natural inclination to accept testimony as a potential source of knowledge, it doesn't follow that we cannot learn to discipline this inclination in light of certain experiences. Plantinga notes that we learn not to accept the testimony of politicians who want our vote. We also discipline our inclination to accept what we hear when we are listening to a dispute and we refrain from making a decision until we have heard both sides.[44]

Second, in order to produce a warranted belief the testimony must come about through a warranted testimony cycle. For example, if someone intentionally lies to me and tells me that Santa Claus exists, even if it happened to be true (he does exist!) I wouldn't be warranted in believing that he exists. This will also save us from possible Gettier scenarios, where you have a true belief that is justified, but it lacks warrant because it is based on faulty premises.[45]

To conclude his discussion of how certain beliefs could be warranted through the proper functioning of one's faculties, Plantinga applies his view of warrant to naturalism. In doing so he paves the way to applying his theory of warrant to religious beliefs. This is where his third volume, *Warranted Christian Belief*,[46] begins. As I explain the critiques of naturalism that can be found in *Warrant as Proper Function* and *Warranted Christian Belief*, in chapter three, below, I now turn my attention to finishing the overview of the trilogy.

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[43] Ibid., 80.

[44] Ibid., 80.

[45] Ibid., 83.

[46] Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

1.5 *Warranted Christian Belief*

In *Warranted Christian Belief*, Plantinga brings us back to the argument of *Warrant: The Current Debate* by reiterating the classical picture of justification. He argues that justification, as espoused in the classical account, can best be seen in Locke's evidentialist epistemology.[47] The evidentialist that he has in mind here affirms that in order to know that God exists one must have good evidence to support one's belief that God exists. This view is made up of two even more basic epistemological tenets, namely, that one has strong doxastic responsibility and that all justified beliefs must be, or be based on, self-evident or incorrigible beliefs (that is the core thesis of classical foundationalism). The objection goes that, if these sorts of evidential requirements are needed for warrant, then Christian belief could never be warranted. Christian belief doesn't seem self-evident and, since it is not an incorrigible belief, if one lacks evidence (evidence that is based on self-evident or incorrigible beliefs) that Christianity is true, then even if Christianity were true one could never be warranted in believing it to be so.[48] This is what Plantinga terms the de jure objection.

After explaining this objection, he proceeds to give two reasons why one should reject classical foundationalism. First, he argues that classical foundationalism is self-referentially incoherent.[49] As we have seen above, the thesis of classical foundationalism is that, in order for a belief to be justified it must be either self-evident or incorrigible, or it must be properly based on other beliefs that are self-evident or incorrigible. Plantinga argues that, if this is so, belief that classical foundationalism is true must itself either be self-evident or incorrigible, or be based on beliefs that are. However, the belief that classical foundationalism is true doesn't appear to be self-evident or incorrigible, or based on beliefs that are. Classical foundationalism then is self-defeating as it fails to meet its own criteria.

Second, Plantinga argues that given classical foundationalism most of our beliefs would not be justified. He points out that there are certain central beliefs that we all appear to hold, and yet there are no good arguments for them (e.g. belief in other minds). Since he

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[47] Ibid., 82; John Locke, *Introduction to the Essay* (New York: NAL Penguin, 1974).

[48] Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, op. cit., 67-68.

[49] Ibid., 94.

holds it to be obvious that the beliefs in question are justified, he takes this to show that classical foundationalism must be false.

Having demonstrated to his own satisfaction that classical foundationalism is false, Plantinga thinks that there are all sorts of beliefs that could be considered properly basic. Though Plantinga gives some attention to how this relates to theistic belief and the concept justification, my interest here pertains to how his theory of warrant could allow for belief in the existence of God to be properly basic. It is to this that I now turn.

1.6 Warranted Theistic and Christian Belief

Plantinga does not attempt to use his theory of warrant to prove that God exists; rather he aims to show that his religious epistemology is epistemically possible, in other words, that it is consistent with what we know.[50] He argues that, if God exists, and if He has successfully constituted subject s's cognitive faculties in such a way that, when they are properly functioning in the environment for which they are meant, they would produce the belief that God exists, then s's belief that God exists could be warranted even apart from argumentation. Since belief in the existence of God wouldn't depend on arguments and would be formed through the proper function of s's cognitive faculties, s's belief should be considered properly basic.[51] He calls his model of warranted religious belief the Aquinas/Calvin model (AC model). [52] And, like Calvin before him, he calls this cognitive awareness of the existence of God the *sensus divinitatis*.[53]

Plantinga attempts to explain why some people fail to form the belief that God exists[54] by arguing that, if the Christian story is true, then something like sin has come into

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[50] Ibid., 168.

[51] Ibid., 177-179. An epistemology that endorses that belief in God could be properly basic is known as a reformed epistemology.

[52] For Thomas Aquinas, see *Summa Theologia* I, q. 2, a. 1, ad 1. For Calvin, see John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Tr. Ford Lewis Battles and ed. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 44.

[53] Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, op. cit., 170-172.

[54] It seems to me that Plantinga's epistemology is completely compatible with the fact, and actually predicts, that people will have very different views about God. All sorts of different articulations of the transcendent are to be expected, given that sin has damaged the faculty that produces belief that God exists.

the world and has damaged our belief-forming structure. Thus, while God intended that we would always perceive Him, sin has weakened (though not destroyed) our awareness to the extent that sometimes it doesn't function at all.[55]

Plantinga extends his discussion of how belief in the existence of God could be warranted to cover the much more specific case of belief in Christianity;[56] arguing that, if Christianity were true, it would likely be warranted. He does this by further articulating his extended Aquinas/Calvin model (EAC model).[57] On this model, Holy Scripture, which has both a primary author (the Holy Spirit) and numerous secondary authors (the human writers), acts as a testimony to s, in that it conveys the truth of the Gospel message. The Spirit of God then instigates (this can be seen as a form of giving a testimony) s to see that the Gospel message is true.[58] The testimony about the Gospel message can be accepted by s, in part, because the Spirit would improve on or repair any cognitive damage (damage that was the result of sin) that s would have. The result of this cognitive restoration would be s's faith that the Gospel message is true. Plantinga argues, if the EAC model were correct and God really was testifying by His Spirit to s that the Gospel message is true, and if s found herself believing that the Gospel message is true, then s's belief that the Gospel message is true could be warranted.[59]

After arguing for the epistemic possibility of his religious epistemology, Plantinga ends the trilogy by addressing possible defeaters for belief in the existence of God and in

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[55] Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, op. cit., 213.

[56] For Plantinga, the Gospel message just is the essence of the Christian religion. Thus, if belief in the Gospel message were warranted, belief in Christianity would be warranted. By Gospel message, Plantinga has in mind something like the following story: God created the cosmos and all things in it. God, specifically, had in mind bringing about human life in His image, and so He created man with free will. Instead of loving God with all of his heart, mind, and strength, man served his own needs and broke off communion with God. As a response to this, in the way of the ultimate love story, God the Son became man, born of a virgin, in order to love God the Father in the way man should have loved Him. He loved His Father to the point of suffering the consequences of the world's sins on a cross and He died. This then, pleased God the Father as by the Holy Spirit, He raised His Son from the dead, three days later. In doing this, God justified and vindicated His Son and is in the current process of reconciling all of the cosmos back into communion with Himself.

[57] Plantinga calls this the Extended Aquinas/Calvin model because he believes Aquinas and Calvin articulated something very similar in their respective works. See Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, op. cit., 251-252.

[58] Ibid., 252.

[59] Ibid., 285.

the truths of Christianity. I now turn my attention to certain objections that Plantinga deals with and consider how he and his disciples have responded to such objections.

1.7 Objections to Plantinga's Religious Epistemology

There are several well-rehearsed objections to Plantinga's epistemology. Those objections I will engage with here are: the evidential argument from evil, the problem of religious diversity, the objection that religious belief is not properly basic, and the Great Pumpkin Objection. Interacting with these objections will lead me to articulate an objection that I have termed the Pandora's Box Objection.

1.8 Evidential Argument from Evil

In 'The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism,' William Rowe argues that there is a plausible argument for atheism found in the probabilistic or evidential problem of evil. In this new version of the problem of evil, Rowe believes that he has created a defeater (to use Plantigian terms) for Christian belief. Rowe argues:

> (1) There exist instances of intense suffering which an omnipotent, omniscient being could have prevented without thereby losing some greater good or permitting some evil equally bad or worse.
>
> (2) An omniscient, wholly good being would prevent the occurrence of any intense suffering it could, unless it could not do so without thereby losing some greater good or permitting some evil equally bad or worse
>
> (3) There does not exist an omnipotent, omniscient, wholly good being.[60]

Rowe is relying on being able to make a plausible case for (1). The famous example that he gives in defence of (1) is the story of a young fawn who finds herself trapped in an intense forest fire, where she suffers extreme pain for days until she dies. Though this does not guarantee the truth of the first premise, it shows the probability of the first premise being true is extremely high.

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[60] William Rowe, 'The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism,' in *The Evidential Argument from Evil,* ed. Daniel Howard-Snyder (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1996), 1-11. First published as William Rowe, 'The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism,' *American Philosophical Quarterly* 16, no. 4 (1979): 335-341.

But does the fact that (1) could seem more likely than not act as a defeater for Christian belief? How might one respond to Rowe's argument from evil? First, according to Plantinga, most of the time true defeaters are not probabilistic. He states, '[a]nd indeed the fact is most defeaters do not proceed by way of the subject's becoming aware of probabilistic relationships.'[61] It won't come as a surprise then that Plantinga is not convinced that the evidential argument acts as a defeater for Christian belief.

If Plantinga is right, Christian belief, like generic belief in the existence of God, can be acquired in a properly basic way, analogously to the way that beliefs are arrived at by sense perception. The belief would be based on neither propositional evidence nor argument; rather, the person would in a very firm way, and with a high degree of warrant, just find herself believing that Christianity is true. If this is so, it doesn't seem obvious that an attempted probabilistic defeater would be successful. In fact, I think there are scenarios which show that this isn't the case.

Here is one such scenario: Say I am known for stealing philosophy books, in fact, there is even a picture of me, warning the clerks that I like to steal books. If, one day, the whole philosophy section of the library went missing and there were several witnesses saying they saw me steal a lot of books, the objective probability[62] that I stole the books would be very high. Nonetheless, if I had a very distinct and highly warranted memory of myself at my house during the time that the books disappeared, would I have a defeater for my belief that I was at my house when the book snatching occurred? It doesn't appear to be the case that I would. As I hold to this belief with a sufficient amount of firmness (which is partly responsible for my level of warrant being high), the probability that I stole the philosophy books wouldn't play any significant role in my doxastic process. [63] It is for a similar reason that Plantinga and his disciples think that the evidential problem of evil doesn't have to pose a threat to Christian belief.[64]

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[61] Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, op. cit., 482.

[62] By objective probability, I mean the evidential probability given the objective, sharable evidence.

[63] Along with Tyler Taber, I apply this scenario to the Problem of Divine Hiddenness, in Tyler Taber and Tyler Dalton McNabb, 'Is the Problem of Divine Hiddenness a Problem for the Reformed Epistemologist?,' *The Heythrop Journal*, forthcoming. The scenario and discussion are based on Plantinga's own work. See Alvin Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion, and Naturalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 180.

[64] It is also worth mentioning that Plantinga has other responses to the evidential problem of evil. As of recently, Plantinga seems comfortable with his Felix Culpa theodicy. This theodicy argues that God chose to actualize a world where evil exists, because He is interested in actualizing a world that contains the

1.9 The Problem of Religious Diversity

We can summarize the objection from religious diversity as follows: Even if one were to grant that religious belief could be warranted without the subject of the belief having access to the internal properties which ground the warrant for that belief, it would appear that one would not be rational in holding to any particular religious doctrine because of the vast number of other conflicting religious beliefs available. This type of argument often utilizes equal weight theory,[65] which holds that one should give equal weight to both an epistemic peer's belief and to one's own. The argument can best be illustrated in the following syllogism:

(1) It is unreasonable to hold to one's views in the face of disagreement since one would need some positive reason to privilege one's views over one's opponent['s views].

(2) No such reason is available since the disagreeing parties are epistemic peers and have access to the same evidence.

(3) Therefore, one should give equal weight to the opinion of an epistemic peer and to one's own opinion in the case of epistemic disagreement.[66]

The Plantigian, Joseph Kim, has argued that equal weight theory shouldn't be seen as a threat to Christian belief for at least three reasons.[67] First, one could accept equal weight theory but deny that followers of other religions are epistemic peers. If the Spirit of God actually repaired one subject's cognitive faculty and testified to that subject, then that subject wouldn't be in the same epistemic situation as a subject who mistakenly perceives that God has revealed Himself (and a different religion) to them. The latter subject's belief could have been a product of wish fulfilment or some cognitive malfunction.[68] This

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incarnation and atonement stories. Due to the great aesthetic value that the stories carry, he takes the set of worlds in which the incarnation and atonement take place, to be a set of worlds that should be considered a part of the best set of worlds that He could actualize. Since the story of the incarnation and atonement presupposes sin and a fallen world, Plantinga believes it is very probable that evil would exist in a world that God would create. See Alvin Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion, and Naturalism*, op. cit., 59.

[65] For equal weight theory, see Thomas Kelly, 'The Epistemic Significance of Disagreement,' in *Oxford Studies in Epistemology*, ed. John Hawthorne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[66] Kim, *Reformed Epistemology and the Problem of Religious Diversity*, op. cit., 49-50.

[67] Ibid., 46-65.

[68] Ibid., 65.

disparity between the subjects would hold even if an onlooker couldn't tell the difference between the two.

Secondly, it would further appear that if equal weight theory were true one could not have knowledge about the right conclusions to philosophical paradoxes and even common sense philosophical beliefs (this would even include philosophical beliefs about knowledge of other minds). This is because there exist epistemic peers who differ on whether such beliefs could be justified or warranted.[69] This thought can also be applied to science. Take the example of quantum mechanics: If one top scientist takes a non-realist view about the interpretation of the wave function, while his epistemic peer takes a realist view, it would follow, according to the equal weight theory, that, both of them would need to withhold belief about the correct interpretation.

Lastly, Kim sees good reason to reject equal weight theory as it would appear to be self-defeating.[70] If philosophers in one category, say category A, affirmed equal weight theory, while another category of philosophers, say category B, denied equal weight theory, it would follow that, philosophers in neither categories would be warranted in believing in equal weight theory. This is the case presuming only that they were all epistemic peers lacking any convincing reasons to privilege one belief over another. Kim believes that the reasons given here give us enough justification to reject equal weight theory and with it this version of the problem of religious diversity altogether.

1.10 Religious Beliefs are Not Properly Basic

Moving on to a related objection, Michael Tooley argues that since there is no reliable religious belief-forming faculty religious beliefs are not properly basic.[71] For Tooley, properly basic beliefs are beliefs that have attracted massive intersubjective agreement. He states:

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[69] Ibid, 54-55.

[70] Ibid., 61.

[71] This section is taken from Tyler Dalton McNabb, *Warranted Religion: Alvin Plantinga's Theory of Warrant Defended and Applied to Different World Religions* (MA Thesis, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary), 48-49.

Consider the cases where there are reliable belief-forming mechanisms – as with perception, memory, and deductive reasoning. What one finds in those cases is that there is a massive intersubjective agreement. Two observers, who are near one another and looking in roughly the same direction, will offer descriptions of what they see that agree to a striking extent, and with an enormous amount of detail.[72]

Since religious beliefs elicit a great amount of epistemic disagreement among peers, it wouldn't appear that they are produced from a reliable belief-forming faculty. How would Plantinga respond to Tooley's claims? The answer may be found in his explanation of why there is such religious diversity to begin with.[73] As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Plantinga argues that sin has damaged the religious belief-forming faculty and that it needs to be repaired by the Holy Spirit. This is not to say that sin has damaged the totality of our cognitive system in a significant way, or that our memory or perceptual faculties aren't reliable; rather, there is damage to our religious belief producing faculty.

If multiple individuals had damaged memory faculties and each individual experienced the same events for a week, it would be a safe assumption that there would be radical differences in each individual's recalling of the previous week. It would not follow, however, that the disagreement between these individuals proves that there is no reliable memory faculty, or that the memory faculty shouldn't ever be considered as a reliable means to obtain knowledge; at best, it proves that there is a damaged faculty. And if Plantinga's story is right, there would be some whose faculties would be in the process of being repaired to full optimal function.

1.11 The Great Pumpkin Objection(s)

The most famous objection to Plantinga's religious epistemology is probably The Great Pumpkin Objection. This is the objection that states that if belief that God exists could be warranted in a properly basic way, then all sorts of beliefs (even bizarre and apparently irrational beliefs) could be warranted in a properly basic way.[74] If Christianity could be

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[72] Alvin Plantinga and Michael Tooley, *Knowledge of God* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2008), 243.

[73] Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, op. cit., 199.

[74] Ibid., 344.

properly basic, then why couldn't belief in the Great Pumpkin[75] or belief in voodoo or some other type of obviously false belief be as well?

Plantinga argues that this objection is clearly mistaken. Just because Christianity could be properly basic it doesn't follow that belief in anything and everything could be properly basic.[76] One wouldn't say that if incorrigible beliefs and self-evident beliefs could be properly basic (according to the classical foundationalist picture), then every possible belief could be properly basic. So why would one argue this way in regard to basic beliefs construed in Plantinga's sense? In classical foundationalism, what privileges incorrigible and self-evident beliefs is the fact (though there is reason to doubt this) that these beliefs are of such a kind that it is impossible to be wrong about them or, minimally, one couldn't rationally deny their truth. Since this infallibilism isn't a property of almost all of our beliefs, the classical foundationalist argues that the beliefs that have this infallibilism should be considered properly basic. Similarly, according to Plantinga's epistemology, not every belief is or could be properly basic. Only those beliefs that, given our design plan, we do not require an argument for, could be considered properly basic.

Thus, if the design plan of our faculties does not lead us to require an argument for belief in a transcendent God, but does lead us to require an argument for the existence of the Great Pumpkin or for the mystical workings of voodoo, and so on, then, on Plantinga's system, belief in the Great Pumpkin and belief in voodoo couldn't be properly basic beliefs. Perhaps these sorts of beliefs could be internally rational and one could have the right sort of epistemic response to an experience, but if the design plan (when our faculties are functioning properly and are successfully aimed at truth) does not designate these beliefs to be properly basic, these beliefs could not be properly basic. Plantinga's system inherently puts limits on what could be properly basic and, in doing so, it doesn't allow for any and all sorts of crazy beliefs to be warranted.

Now, perhaps by 'everything could be properly basic' what one has in mind isn't so much that there might not be limits on what could be properly basic in the actual world. One might have in mind that it is epistemically possible that crazy and irrational beliefs

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[75] The Great Pumpkin is a fictional character from the cartoon *Peanuts*, who is rumored to go to pumpkin patches every Halloween. Even within the show, the belief that the Great Pumpkin exists is largely seen as an irrational belief to have.

[76] Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, op. cit., 345.

(like belief in the Great Pumpkin or Voodoo) could be warranted given Plantinga's epistemology, and this is troubling in itself. In other words, for all we know, there could be something like a *sensus cucurbitatis* and, when it functions properly, it could produce warranted Pumpkinite belief. Thus, the following conditional is true: If Great Pumpkinism is true, it would likely be warranted. Plantinga calls this objection, The Son of the Great Pumpkin Objection.

There are at least two responses to this objection. First, one could argue that, in order for this conditional to be true, Great Pumpkinism would essentially need to be a slightly more elaborate version of theism. Plantinga makes this point as he states:

> But why think it likely that if Great Pumpkinism is true, there will be a sensus cucurbitatis? Why think the Great Pumpkin has created us? Why think this pumpkin would care about whether human beings know anything about it? Why think it is conscious, capable of knowledge, and the like? All the story says is that there is this very large and scary-looking pumpkin that returns to Linus' pumpkin patch every Halloween. The argument for their being a sensus cucurbitatis if Great Pumpkinism is true, has very little going for it.[77]

Plantinga goes on to point out that what one really needs in order for it to be possible that Pumpkinite belief could be warranted, is having the Great Pumpkin be a person who is capable of having knowledge, creating humans, and, who out of wanting a relationship with humans, created in them a *sensus cucurbitatis*. Plantinga fails to see how this religious belief would be radically different than belief in theism, perhaps with the exception of an additional tenet that God has an undetected interest in pumpkins.[78]

The second approach to tackling The Son of the Great Pumpkin Objection is to argue that belief in the Great Pumpkin has an obvious empirical defeater that Christianity doesn't have. One could strip away any potential warrant for believing that the Great Pumpkin exists merely by going to a pumpkin patch on Halloween and seeing that he doesn't show up.[79] There isn't an analogous sort of defeater for the serious religions that

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[77] Alvin Plantinga, 'Replies to my commenters,' in *Plantinga's Warranted Christian Belief: Critical Essays with a Reply by Alvin Plantinga*, ed. Dieter Schönecker (Boston: De Gruyter, 2015), 248.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Kim, *Reformed Epistemology and the Problem of Religious Diversity*, op. cit., 77.

exist. You can't just as easily find the body of Jesus, or without much effort, muster up evidence that Muhammad never existed. And for this reason Great Pumpkinism shouldn't be taken all that seriously.

1.12 The Pandora's Box Objection

As one can see from the objections considered above, Plantinga's theory and his application of it are quite controversial. There have been whole volumes authored by numerous top epistemologists attacking his theory of warrant,[80] his religious epistemology,[81] and his evolutionary argument against naturalism.[82] There is, however, one specific objection that Plantinga and his disciples have paid little attention to. Contra objections related to the Great Pumpkin, this objection states that, though the crazy and irrational or 'way out there' beliefs shouldn't be taken seriously as threats to Plantinga's epistemology, there are still serious religions and worldview beliefs that could be warranted in an analogous way to Christian belief, when combined with Plantinga's epistemology.[83] Thus, Plantinga is seen as having opened up something like Pandora's Box, and this is, somehow, thought to undermine his whole epistemological project.

Rose Ann Christian is an example of someone who applies Plantinga's epistemology to a non-Christian belief system. She has suggested that a follower of the Advaita Vedanta religion could adopt Plantinga's religious epistemology and thereby assert that the core belief of Advaita Vedanta was warranted.[84] She sees this as a problem, since this religion is vastly different from Christianity as it teaches that all of reality is ultimately the non-personal Brahman. Thus, it would be problematic if Plantinga's epistemology implied that the core belief of Advaita Vedanta and the core belief of Christianity could all be warranted. James Beilby makes the point that there might be

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[80] For example, see Kvanvig, *Warrant in Contemporary Epistemology*, op. cit.

[81] For example, see Dieter Schönecker, *Plantinga's Warranted Christian Belief*, op. cit.

[82] For example, see James Beilby, *Naturalism Defeated?*: *Essays on Plantinga's Evolutionary Argument Against Naturalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002).

[83] Beilby probably best articulates the objection in, *Epistemology As Theology: An Evaluation of Alvin Plantinga's Religious Epistemology*, op. cit., 131-136.

[84] Rose Ann Christian, 'Plantinga, Epistemic Permissiveness, and Metaphysical Pluralism,' *Religious Studies* 28, no. 4 (1992): 568-569.

possible objections to the worldview of Advaita Vedanta, yet one might be able to handle these potential defeaters similarly to the way Plantinga handles the potential objections for Christianity.[85] David Tien, similarly, argues that Neo-Confucianism could be warranted in the same way that Plantinga's Christianity could be. He concludes that this would be troubling for a Plantigian for it would show that the follower of Neo-Confucianism is in the same epistemic boat as the Christian.[86] Plantinga himself seems to believe that various religious traditions could use his system. He writes:

> For any such set of beliefs, couldn't we find a model under which the beliefs in question have warrant, and such that given the truth of those beliefs, there are no philosophical objections to the truth of the model? Well, probably something like that *is* true for the other theistic religions: Judaism, Islam, some forms of Hinduism, and some forms of Buddhism, some forms of American Indian religion. Perhaps these religions are like Christianity in that they are subject to no *de jure* objections that are independent of *de facto* objections.[87]

Despite this assertion of Plantinga's, I would like to challenge the claim that he has allowed a wide range of serious religious beliefs to be warranted in the same way that the Christian religion could be warranted. Since Rose Ann Christian, as we have seen, claims that an adherent of Advaita Vedanta could use Plantinga's religious epistemology, in the argument to follow I will first specifically address this religious view. I will also address: the Samkhya Hindu tradition, the Middle Way Mahayana Buddhist tradition, and Wang Yangming's Neo-Confucianism.

However, in order to get that part of the project off the ground, I must first demonstrate that Plantinga's theory of warrant is plausibly true. There would be little reason to entertain Plantinga's religious epistemological system if it were based upon an implausible theory of warrant. Thus, the purpose of this thesis is two-fold: (1) I will argue that Plantinga's theory of warrant is plausibly true; and (2) I will argue that there are

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[85] See Beilby, *Epistemology As Theology: An Evaluation of Alvin Plantinga's Religious Epistemology*, op. cit., 131.

[86] David W. Tien, 'Warranted Neo-Confucian Belief: Religious Pluralism and the Affections in the Epistemologies of Wang Yangming (1472-1529) and Alvin Plantinga,' *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 55, no. 4 (2004): 31-55. As noted in the section dealing with equal weight theory, I do not find Tien's claim to be a problem for Plantinga's claims about Christian belief being warranted.

[87] Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, op. cit., 350.

certain serious world religions that cannot use Plantinga's epistemology to demonstrate that their core belief could be warranted in the same way that Christian belief can be warranted.

In regard to establishing (1), I will first briefly reiterate Plantinga's theory of warrant. Then, I will discuss Ernest Sosa's Swampman Objection[88] which attempts to establish that proper function is not a necessary condition for warrant. I will flip Sosa's argument around and conclude that the scenario he describes actually gives us good reason for thinking that proper function is a necessary condition for warrant. Swampman is an epistemic subject who, though he can meet the criteria of various internalist and reliabilist theories of warrant, has beliefs which lack a tight connection to truth because his cognitive faculties lack a way in which they should appropriately produce any beliefs.

After demonstrating that the proper function condition is a necessary condition for warrant, I will deploy certain Gettier examples to show that the proper function condition is not a sufficient condition for warrant; this is because an appropriate epistemic environment is also required. I will then demonstrate that Plantinga's conditions of (i) having a design plan that is aimed toward producing true beliefs and (ii) having a truth-aimed design plan that has a high probability of producing true beliefs are also necessary conditions for warrant. These two conditions are necessary for warrant because there are other design plans that wouldn't bring about warrant, even if a person's faculties were functioning properly in the right epistemic environment.

To offer further support to Plantinga's theory of warrant, I will answer three main objections to it: Laurence Bonjour's Norman's Clairvoyance counterexample; Linda Zagezebski's Gettier problem; and Timothy and Lydia McGrew's argument that Plantinga's theory of warrant presupposes internalism. Discussing each of these objections will help to further define and defend Plantinga's theory of warrant. After arguing that these objections fail to destabilize Plantinga's theory, I conclude that his theory of warrant is plausibly true. This brings to competition the first part of my two-fold project.

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[88] Ernest Sosa, 'Proper Functionalism and Virtue Epistemology,' in *Warrant in Contemporary Epistemology: Essays in Honor of Plantinga's Theory of Knowledge*, ed. Jonathan L. Kvanvig (MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1996), 253-270.

Before I can robustly argue for the claim that there are certain serious world religions that cannot use Plantinga's epistemology to demonstrate that their core belief could be warranted in the same way that Christian belief can be warranted, I first need to entertain Plantinga's critiques of naturalism. I will specifically interact with the idea that naturalism cannot account for proper function. I will also engage with naturalism's failure to account for faculties that are aimed towards producing true beliefs (I will refer to this condition as the truth-aimed condition). It will be here that a crucial part of the foundation for the rest of the project is laid in place. In regard to naturalism and proper function, I will examine accounts proposed by Karen Neander, Ruth Millikan, Michael Levin, and Ernest Sosa. I will articulate how Plantinga has responded to each of these accounts and why it appears that he has successfully done so. Having demonstrated from Plantinga's work that a strictly naturalistic account of proper function is unlikely to succeed, I will move on to discuss the truth-aimed condition.

Does a naturalist have good reasons to think that, given naturalism and evolution, our cognitive faculties are aimed towards producing true beliefs? I will use Plantinga's work in order to argue that the naturalist has a defeater for thinking that their faculties are reliable. After reiterating Plantinga's thoughts on this matter, I consider Stephen Law's Wandering Nomad Objection and ask if he has given us any compelling reason to think that Plantinga's argument fails. Lastly, I will suggest how Plantinga's evolutionary critique can be improved, thereby strengthening his case against naturalism even further.

In chapter four, I turn to Hindu beliefs, interacting with both Shankara's Advaita Vedanta tradition and the dualistic Samkhya tradition. I will address each of these traditions separately and articulate their central tenets. In doing so, I will explore whether these traditions contain doctrines that can provide the resources to make use of Plantinga's theory of warrant, thus giving them an advantage over naturalistic accounts. After surveying both of these Hindu traditions, and considering their possible advantages with respect to deploying Plantinga's epistemology, I will argue that, due to their ontological commitments, they ultimately lack the preconditions needed to account for proper function and thus cannot accommodate Plantinga's theory of warrant.

In chapter five, I will interact with Mahayana Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism, assessing whether or not they contain doctrines that would allow them to be warranted via Plantinga's epistemology. In regard to the Middle Way Mahayana Buddhist tradition, I will

demonstrate that this tradition cannot account for Plantinga's theory of warrant because reality is ultimately 'empty' and 'void', and thus such things as proper function and design plans are likewise empty and void. Furthermore, given that there is no personal or conscious designer, and given that there doesn't appear to be any other doctrine that could give it an advantage over a naturalistic account of proper function, it seems to fall prey to the same critiques as previously established in chapter three. With respective to Neo-Confucianism (particularly Tien's formulation of Wang's Learning of the Mind tradition), I will argue that for technical reasons (too technical to briefly summarize here) it cannot use Plantinga's epistemology to be warranted.

By the end of chapter five, I will have argued that (1) Plantinga's theory of warrant is plausibly true; and (2) There are certain serious world religions that cannot use Plantinga's epistemology to demonstrate that their core belief could be warranted in the same way that Christian belief can be warranted. This will constitute a significant blow to the Pandora's Box Objection, as I will have demonstrated that there are limits to the range of traditions that Plantinga's epistemology can accommodate. I will further defend this conclusion in my final chapter. There I will flesh out the positive implications of the success of my thesis and briefly consider what the negative implications would have been for the broader project of Reformed epistemology had it failed.

Chapter 2: The Plausibility of Alvin Plantinga's Theory of Warrant

2.0 Introduction

In order to demonstrate the plausibility of Plantinga's theory of warrant, I will first need to reiterate it. After doing this, I will articulate each condition of his theory and explain why each is necessary for warrant. Having established as much, I will entertain three objections to Plantinga's theory. Each objection will then act as a tool to further clarify Plantinga's theory. Discussing these objections will help to elaborate how his theory is sufficient for establishing warrant. At the end of the chapter, I conclude that Plantinga's theory of warrant is plausibly true. Plantinga's theory of warrant is as follows:

> S's belief that P is warranted iff,
>
> 1) S's cognitive faculties are functioning properly,
>
> 2) S's cognitive environment is sufficiently similar to the one for which S's cognitive faculties are designed,
>
> 3) The design plan that governs the production of beliefs is aimed at producing true belief, and
>
> 4) The design plan is a good one such that there is a high statistical (or objective) probability that a belief produced under these conditions will be true.[1]

I will refer to (1) as the proper function condition, (2) as the epistemic environment condition, and (3) and (4) together as the truth-aimed condition. Presently, I will argue that condition (1) is a necessary condition for warrant. In order to argue for (1), I will first articulate Ernest Sosa's Swampman counterexample that is directed toward Plantinga's theory of warrant; I will then argue, contra Sosa, that the Swampman counterexample actually gives us good reason to affirm that proper function is a necessary condition for warrant. This is because without proper function there is no way for beliefs to have a tight

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[1] This is a paraphrase from Joseph Kim, *Reformed Epistemology and the Problem of Religious Diversity: Proper Function, Epistemic Disagreement, and Christian Exclusivism* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011), 19. I chose Kim's layout of Plantinga's theory over Plantinga's own as Kim's layout is in schematic form. For the way Plantinga originally laid out his theory, see Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function* (New York.: Oxford University Press, 1993), 46.

connection to truth,[2] which is what is needed if they are to have the right sort of connection to truth.

2.1 Sosa's Swampman

Sosa develops his Swampman counterexample[3] by first quoting Donald Davidson:

> Suppose lightning strikes a dead tree in a swamp; I am standing nearby. My body is reduced to its elements, while entirely by coincidence (and out of different molecules) the tree is turned into my physical replica. My replica, The Swampman, moves exactly as I did; according to its nature it departs the swamp, encounters and seems to recognize my friends, and appears to return their greetings in English. It moves into my houses and seems to write articles on radical interpretation. No one can tell the difference. But there *is* a difference.[4]

Sosa claims that Swampman lacks proper function, as a design plan and the correct way in which the design plan should be carried out (proper function) aren't the sort of things that can come about through random conditions. There is nothing that can give Swampman's cognitive faculties a 'proper way' which they should function. However, Sosa argues that Swampman would nonetheless have justified [warranted] beliefs, as Swampman's cognitive faculties would be reliable.[5] His cognitive faculties would be reliable insofar as they produce true beliefs and they would still produce the same true beliefs given slightly different circumstances. In addition to meeting the reliabilist's requirement, Swampman would seem to meet the internalist's requirement as he has access to those properties which

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[2] It isn't enough to have a true belief, the belief has to have a special relationship to truth; thus, by tight connection to truth, I have in mind that there needs to be a tight connection between the truthfulness of the belief in question, and why the belief is produced from one's cognitive faculties. Since the connection pertains to the truthfulness of a belief, the connection here is specifically in regard to knowledge.

[3] Ernest Sosa, 'Proper Functionalism and Virtue Epistemology,' in *Warrant in Contemporary Epistemology: Essays in Honor of Plantinga's Theory of Knowledge*, ed. Jonathan L. Kvanvig (MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1996), 258-259; Donald Davidson, 'Knowing one's own mind,' *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 60 (1987): 441-458.

[4] Ibid., 256.

[5] Ernest Sosa, 'Knowledge: 'Instrumental and Testimonial' in *The Epistemology of Testimony*, eds. Jennifer Lackey and Ernest Sosa (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 120.

confer warrant.[6] This is so since Swampman's beliefs would be identical to Davidson's beliefs and he would share Davidson's reasons for holding these beliefs. Thus, given that Swampman would meet such requirements, Sosa claims that Swampman would have warrant without proper function.

To better articulate what is at the heart of Davidson's Swampman case, Sosa also mentions the possibility that, instead of a Swampman emerging, a Swampbaby comes about via a random lightning strike. If a hunter found the Swampbaby and raised it in a normal way, it may appear that the Swampbaby would grow up knowing all sorts of things.[7] Swampbaby would go to school and form beliefs about what was being taught. Swampbaby (or Swampchild?) would come to certain conclusions, such as that Christopher Columbus sailed the ocean blue in 1492 or that $1+1=2$, and so on. Sosa argues that these Swampfamily counterexamples are incompatible with proper functionalism because proper functionalism entails that proper function is necessary for warrant, and thereby it should be impossible that someone could be warranted without it.

Does Sosa's Swampman constitute a genuine defeater for the necessity of the proper function condition? Unlike Donald Davidson, Swampman lacks a particular way in which his faculties should function. When Davidson sees an alligator running after him in the swamp area, if his faculties are functioning as they should there will be a belief produced that an alligator is running after him. If, instead of producing the belief that an alligator is running after him, his faculties produced the belief that a beautiful woman is running toward him it would appear that something is wrong with Davidson's cognitive faculties. There is a malfunction in this situation because this isn't the type of belief that the faculties should produce under these conditions.

The same couldn't be said about Swampman, however; as Swampman's cognitive faculties have no way in which they should appropriately produce beliefs under particular

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[6] This would seem to be the case given access internalism, internal state internalism, or inferential internalism. In access internalism, one merely needs to have access, or the potential to have access, to the fact that certain evidence justifies a belief that p. In regard to internal state internalism, one needs to have relevant epistemic properties that supervene on S's belief that p. And lastly, in regard to inferential internalism, one needs access to the connection between one's premises and one's conclusion. See Richard Fumerton, 'Evidentialism and Truth' in *Evidentialism and its Dicontents*, ed. Trent Dougherty (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 179-191.

[7] Ernest Sosa, 'Proper Functionalism and Virtue Epistemology,' in *Warrant in Contemporary Epistemology*, op. cit., 256.

circumstances.[8] There is no right sort or wrong sort of belief that should or shouldn't be produced from his cognitive faculties. This would be so even granting that Swampman's faculties are counterfactually reliable and/or that he has the right internal access.[9] Thus, it would appear that even if Swampman produces the belief that an alligator in the swamp is coming for him, and there does happen to be one coming for him, this would be a genuine case of cognitive luck.[10] It just so happens that his cognitive faculties produce a belief about an alligator instead of any other sort of belief (or none at all). It is not as if his faculties have been designed (whether it be by God, by evolution, or both) to produce this belief under the appropriate circumstances. And as such, putting the two epistemic subjects side by side, there would appear to be an obvious distinction between the two.[11]

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[8] See Kenneth Boyce and Alvin Plantinga, 'Proper Functionalism' in *The Continuum Companion to Epistemology*, ed. Andrew Cullison (London: Continuum, 2012), 130-131. Also see, Michael Bergmann. *Justification without Awareness* (New York: Oxford Press, 2009), 147-150.

[9] Even on an internalist model there is a need for faculties to function appropriately. According to John Greco, 'evidence is supposed to play a functional role in our cognitive activity, but to do so it must be available to the knower in some sense appropriate to that functional role.' See Greco's chapter, 'Evidentialism about Knowledge' in *Evidentialism and its Discontents*, op. cit., 169. If evidence has a function to play in our cognitive activity, I don't think the notion of proper function (broadly speaking) is far off. It seems if one lacked an appropriate way to form beliefs based on evidence or if one lacked an appropriate way to obtain evidence altogether, then warrant would be lacking.

[10] In some sense, what I am proposing (and I take it that Plantinga, Boyce, and Bergmann are as well) is a new category of epistemic luck that the epistemologist should be concerned with. In another sense, this luck is tightly linked to the luck that can be seen in certain Gettier problems where the subject produces a true belief that 'p' in virtue of having a cognitive malfunction.

[11] In the spirit of comparing epistemic agents to Swampman, suppose that there exists aliens who have created a less superior race. Perhaps these aliens have even given this race faculties and have given those faculties a design plan to work in a particular way. Let us say that a perceptual faculty is included in this group of faculties but there exists no faculty that is intended to form beliefs about the past. It seems possible that upon the perceptual faculty working in the way in which it was designed to work, perhaps in conjunction with other faculties, a new faculty could come about as an unintended result (unintended according to the original design). In this case, we will say that this is how the less superior race's memory faculty came about. For the sake of argument, let's say that their memory faculty could still reliably produce beliefs about the past while the original perceptual faculty malfunctioned. If this is so and if the beliefs produced from the memory faculty could still have a tight enough connection to truth to be warranted, then one would have an example of how proper function could be absent and yet warrant would still be achieved. There appears to be more of an intuitive pull to say that the memory faculty could produce warranted beliefs than in the Swampman case as the reliability of this memory faculty is tied into the proper function of the perceptual faculty. In response to this, a proper functionalist has at least three options: (1) Deny that this scenario is possible, (2) Argue that since the memory faculty still lacks a way in which it should appropriately produce beliefs, the beliefs it produces still aren't warranted, or (3), Argue that it isn't necessary that proper function is always present but argue that it needs to have at least been present. If one went for the latter option, they could advocate for the following: Soft Proper Functionalism: In order for S to be warranted in believing that p, S must have had or currently have properly functioning faculties. As this pertains to my thesis, being that there is still some sort of proper function condition that needs to be satisfied for the advocate of (3), the wider argument that I make in this thesis would still go through.

Davidson's belief has a tighter connection to truth than Swampman's belief, to the extent that Swampman would appear to lack warrant and thereby knowledge.[12]

Someone might find it hard to believe that a subject could have a cognitive process that continually produced mostly true beliefs, with the subject even having access to the right reasons for holding to those true beliefs, and yet have beliefs that lacked this tight connection to truth. I will give a certain scenario, that I think, taken with the Swampman counterexample, might make this possibility more obvious. After giving what I have termed the Gambling Demons Scenario, I will then briefly reiterate how the Swampman counterexample demonstrates that one could have the appropriate internal access or a reliable cognitive process and yet still lack warrant due to the absence of proper function.

2.2 The Gambling Demons Scenario

It is logically possible that there is a world where demons run around in hell looking to commit great sins and atrocities. Moreover, it is possible that in their demon common room they might have belief-forming and reason-forming slot machines with which they like to play. Perhaps these demons, who love to cause havoc, pick a handful of very unfortunate souls who, upon the demons pulling the levers on the belief-and reason-forming slot machines, will have whatever beliefs and reasons come up on the machines placed into their cognitive faculties. One individual, for example, might hold the belief that ducks have blue antlers under the earth, and the reason for this belief is that 1-dog=Noggot. However,

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[12] Kenneth Boyce and Andrew Moon have identified another argument that the proper functionalist could use to show the plausibility of the proper function condition. They argue that what underlies Swampman counterexamples is (C1), a principle that roughly states, 'If a belief B is warranted for a subject S and another subject S* comes to hold B in the same way that S came to hold B in a relevantly similar environment to the one in which S came to hold B, then B is warranted for S*.' After articulating this, the authors go on to use cognitive science to identify that children as young as four months of age, have knowledge that objects don't go out of existence when they are no longer within their sight. Given this fact, the authors go on to create a counterexample which they feel undercuts one's justification for (C1). They ultimately give a scenario where a small child named Billy, has a cognitive malfunction which leads him to believe that anything red that goes out of his sight ceases to exist. Soon after, Billy is abducted by aliens, who due to their cognitive environment (a cognitive environment where red things pop out of existence upon not being observed), normally produce the belief that red things go out of existence when they are not observed. If Billy and an alien child were together on the alien planet and both of their faculties were operating in the same sort of manner when both of them produced the belief that a red object went out of existence (when one did), it would seem one would have warrant (the alien child) and the other one wouldn't (Billy). As this situation meets (C1), it would seem that (C1) couldn't rationally be held. This being the case, the authors think that only the proper functionalist can explain why one could be warranted and the other one wouldn't. See Kenneth Boyce and Andrew Moon, 'In defense of proper functionalism: cognitive science takes on Swampman,' forthcoming in *Synthese*.

much to a not-so-lucky demon's surprise, upon pulling the levers on each of the slot machines, for one of the unfortunate souls, there comes about only beliefs that are true, along with reasons that just so happen to correspond with these true beliefs. It may fortuitously happens that all of the beliefs that were selected (supposing that the slot machines at once produced all the beliefs and reasons that the unfortunate soul will have for the rest of his/her life) come about at the right time. Thus, when the unfortunate soul forms the belief that he is walking to church, he actually is walking to church and he is accompanied with the right sort of phenomenological imagery that would correspond with such a situation.

There is something about this that would make the beliefs that our unfortunate soul (or perhaps now, the lucky soul!) holds seem to have little or no warrant as these beliefs came about by complete chance. Moreover, we have before us a clear example of how a person could have cognitive faculties that consistently produced true beliefs, and he could be aware of the right reasons for holding them, and yet not have warranted beliefs. One might say that the unfortunate soul lacks warrant (and would thus lack knowledge), not because he lacks proper function, but because he has a poor design plan. This would of course be different from the Swampman case, where the Swampman lacks a design plan altogether. What is important about this new scenario is that it illustrates how a person could produce mostly true beliefs while having access to the right reasons for holding them, and yet, still have beliefs that lacked a tight connection to truth.

I have shown two things to be plausible thus far. First, I have shown that because Swampman lacks proper function there seems to be something serendipitous about him having true beliefs, for his cognitive faculties lack a way in which they should operate and produce those beliefs. Secondly, I have shown that just because a subject's cognitive faculties consistently produced true beliefs and the subject had access to the right reasons for holding those beliefs, it does not follow that these beliefs have a tight connection to truth. Thus, even if the Swampman is consistently producing true beliefs, and even if he can articulate why his beliefs are true, it doesn't follow that his beliefs have any tight connection to truth. [13]

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[13] I am well aware that one may find the Swampman argument inadequate (maybe one rejects it because one doesn't think that it is logically or metaphysically possible, or perhaps the Swampman case leaves one's intuitions too unclear for a precise interpretation of what Swampman shows). In this case, I will refer the reader back to Plantinga's brain lesion counterexample for why the proper function condition is plausible. Though I think this counterexample to reliabilism is a good one, due to the potential of the Swampman

One might agree that it doesn't follow that, just because one has reliable cognitive faculties that, one's belief would then have the right sort of connection to truth. Yet contra proper functionalism, one might still argue that proper function isn't necessary for a tight connection to truth.[14] One might claim that as long as one's faculties track the truth one avoids accidental true beliefs. I will look at this claim by considering both Robert Nozick's traditional truth-tracking account and Sosa's Cartesian truth-tracking account. After reviewing both of these accounts, I will argue that each fails to secure a tight connection to truth in virtue both of the possibility of truth-tracking through cognitive malfunction (that is the lack of proper function) and being in the wrong type of epistemic environment. I will take this to be further evidence that the proper function condition is a necessary condition for warrant, even within the general framework of truth-tracking accounts.

2.3 Nozick's Truth-Tracking Account

Perhaps the most well-known account of truth-tracking can be found in Nozick's work. Nozick's theory of truth-tracking is a development of Fred Drestke's original account, according to which, 'S knows that p if S has a reason, R, for p, such that if p were not the case, S would not have R.'[15] In developing his counterfactual truth-tracking account, Nozick argues that, given S has a true belief that was arrived at via some method M,

> S knows p iff,
> (A) If P weren't true and S were to use M to arrive at a belief whether (or not) P, then S wouldn't believe, via M, that P.
> (B) If P were true and S were to use M to arrive at a belief whether (or not) P, then S would believe, via M, that P.[16]

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argument acting as a litmus test for other theories of warrant, I think the Swampman counterexample can be developed into something even more powerful. Thus, here, I focus on developing it.

[14] Perhaps here, the truth-tracking proponent might be interested in slightly altering the definition of having a 'tight connection to truth' from the one that was given earlier in this chapter.

[15] Fred Dretske, 'Conclusive Reasons,' *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 49, no. 1 (1971): 1-22. Reprinted in *Essays of Knowledge and Justification*, eds. George Pappas and Marshal Swain (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978).

[16] Cited in Laurence BonJour, 'Internalism and Externalism,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Epistemology*, ed. Paul Moser (New York: Oxford Press), 25; BonJour quotes from Robert Nozick, *Philosophical Explanations* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Press, 1991).

Conditions (A) and (B) can be glossed as follows in terms of possible worlds.[17]

> (A) In all the closest possible worlds in which P isn't true and S uses M to arrive at a view about P, S doesn't believe, via M, that P.
>
> (B) In all close possible worlds in which P is true and S uses M to arrive at a view about P, S believes, via M, that P.

Understanding that these conditions can be glossed in terms of possible worlds will be important soon when I entertain possible counterexamples to this truth-tracking account.

To begin to demonstrate why I believe this account fails to secure a tight connection to truth, I will introduce George Pappas and Marshall Swain's argument against the original Drestkian truth-tracking account. This will then lay the ground work for my own counterexample to Nozick's developed account. Pappas and Swain's counterexample goes as follows: S believes (justifiably so) that there is a cup on the table; however, unbeknownst to him, he is really seeing a hologram that occurs in virtue of the rays given off by the cup. It is here that the truth-tracking account fails, as S would not have the reason he does for believing p if p were not the case, and yet one would not argue that S knows that there is a cup appearing in front of him.[18] It seems that this critique could be adapted and applied to Nozick's account as well.

But perhaps one remembers that Nozick's condition (B) could be understood in a way that S would still have the same belief in close possible worlds in which p is still true. One might argue that the holographic cup counterexample would fail to be a genuine counterexample because there is another close possible world where S would no longer believe p because, in that close world, the cup and the observer are not positioned in such a way that the observer perceives the hologram of the cup. However, even if this were the case, there are still other similar counterexamples where one could change something minor about an object and that object would still replicate tricky imagery. I shall now elaborate.

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[17] Louis Pojman, *What Can We Know?: An Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge* (Australia: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2001), 51.

[18] Ibid., 85; George Pappas and Marshall Swain, 'Some Conclusive Reasons Against "Conclusive reasons",' in *Essays on Knowledge and Justification* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press: 1978).

2.4 Holographic Demons, Clairvoyant Subjects, and Epistemic Closure

Suppose that there are invisible quasi-physical demons. Perhaps, in virtue of their physical constitution, an emergent property produces a hologram of what they would look like if they were not invisible. Thus, wherever the demon goes there is a hologram of the demon that goes with it. As I am walking home one day, I see what I take to be the face of a demon outside my home and I form the belief that there is a demon's face right in front of me. It would appear that I am justified in believing this as I have the right doxastic response to the particular phenomenological imagery that I possess. Furthermore, it is true that there is a demon's face in front of me. However, I don't believe that I am seeing a demon's face because I actually see a demon's face; rather, I am merely seeing a hologram of the demon's face that comes about because of the demon's physical constitution. Since it doesn't seem that changing something small in this scenario would change my belief that there is a demon in front of me (you can't get rid of the hologram without changing a major part of the demon's constitution), and I wouldn't believe that there was a demon's face in front of me if it weren't for this tricky projection, this Holographic Demon counterexample would meet all of Nozick's requirements. Yet my belief that there is a demon's face in front of me would not constitute knowledge. The explanation that should be considered is that my cognitive faculties are not meant for environments where things often reproduce identical images of themselves through distant holograms. Thus, in this sort of case, it does not appear that Nozick's truth-tracking account will guarantee a tight connection to truth.

But the example just considered is not the only problem faced by Nozick. His account is susceptible to Laurence BonJour's Norman Clairvoyance example.[19] Here the subject, Norman, doesn't believe that he has a reliable clairvoyant faculty, but finds himself with the belief that the President is in New York. Since general externalist accounts do not require that subjects have internal access to the properties that confer warrant as long as the external conditions are in place (for Nozick it would be the truth-tracking conditions), Nozick would have to say that Norman knows that the President was in New York. This would be so even if internally Norman seems to be irrational in

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[19] BonJour points this out in 'Internalism and Externalism,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Epistemology*, op. cit., 273.

accepting this belief. Accepting that one could be internally irrational and yet still possess knowledge seems fundamentally problematic, and thus I think provides good reason to reject Nozick's account. I will come back to this objection later on in this chapter, as it has been applied to Plantinga's theory of warrant.

The last (and possibly the most serious) objection that I will briefly mention is that Nozick's view entails that the highly intuitive epistemic closure principle is false.[20] The epistemic closure principle states, 'If a subject knows that p and he knows that p entails q then the subject knows q.'[21] This principle is commonly invoked in the problem of scepticism. Typically, the non-sceptic will argue that if she knows that she is doing such and such, and if she knows that doing such and such would preclude the idea that she is being deceived by a Deceiver, it would follow that she would know that she isn't being deceived by a Deceiver.

Most of us have strong psychological intuitions that lead us to affirm the truth of this principle. Given the strength of these intuitions, why does Nozick then reject the principle? In order to be succinct, let's take Nozick's account to state: (1) If p were not true, S would not believe that p. (2) If P were true (in slightly altered circumstances), S would still believe that p.[22] This being stated, Nozick's theory predicts that closure will fail. Louis Pojman takes the following example to demonstrate this:

> Suppose I know I'm eating an apple. If I weren't eating it, I wouldn't believe I was, and if I were eating it in slightly different circumstances, I would still believe I was. Also, I know that if I'm eating an apple, I'm not being deceived by a demon. But now, let's run the tracking test on whether I'm being deceived by one. Suppose I were being deceived by a demon. If I were being so deceived, one of his deceptions, presumably, would be to make me believe I wasn't being deceived by a demon. So, if I were being deceived by a demon, I would not believe I was being deceived by one. Hence, my belief that I am not demon-deceived fails to track truth. I don't know that I'm not being deceived by a demon.[23]

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[20] I am aware that this reason might only be appealing to those who want to accept closure, but as most people would want to accept it, I think this reason is an important one to mention.

[21] Nozick, *Philosophical Explanations*, op. cit., 204.

[22] Pojman, *What Can We Know?*, op. cit., 52-53.

[23] Ibid.

To summarize the problem, I could end up believing that q (I am not being tricked by a Deceiver), but if my belief that q were false (I am actually being deceived by a Deceiver), I would still believe that q (that I wasn't being deceived by a Deceiver). Since believing q doesn't track the truth, it would follow that I wouldn't know that q. Thus, according to Nozick's own account, some beliefs that would come about via entailment would not have a tight connection to truth.

However, if an epistemological model requires that one deny such a plausible principle, then the model might not be worth accepting. Taking the need to deny epistemic closure, along with the other two counterexamples, I have established why Nozick's truth-tracking account fails to deliver what we need for a tight connection to truth.

2.5 Cartesian Truth-Tracking

Does Sosa's truth-tracking account fare any better?[24] Sosa incorporates a strong notion of safety[25] into his account as he argues that, '[o]ne tracks the truth, outright, in believing that p IFF one would believe that p iff it were so that p: i.e., would believe that p if it were so that p, and only if it were so.'[26] In an attempt to suggest a possible candidate for a proper function account, Sosa states, 'S's cognitive faculty, F, tracks the truth (and functions properly) if and only if, (1) if P were true F would produce (in S) her belief P, and (2) if F were to produce (in S) the belief that P, P would be true.'[27] This Cartesian account's biggest weakness can be seen when dealing with necessary truths. If traditional Christian theology is right, God is a necessary being. If we could entertain this idea, we could say the following: (1) If the proposition God exists were true, my faculties would produce the belief that the proposition is true, and, (2) if my faculties produced the belief that the proposition that God's exists is true, then the proposition that God exists would be true.

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[24] I will deal with his modified truth-tracking proper function account in Chapter three, below.

[25] A condition that prevents true belief from counting as knowledge if it would have been believed and yet be false in a close possible world.

[26] Sosa, 'Tracking, Competence, and Knowledge,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Epistemology*, op. cit., 267.

[27] Sosa, 'Proper Functionalism and Virtue Epistemology,' in *Warrant in Contemporary Epistemology*, op. cit., 276.

(2) would be the case for any necessary truth one could think of. If something is true in all possible worlds, then of course if one's faculties produced belief in it, it would be true. Plantinga suggests, in looking at (1), that one could come to believe that God exists via a cognitive malfunction.[28] If someone could come to affirm that God exists by way of a cognitive malfunction and yet fulfil the conditions of Sosa's truth-tracking account, it would follow that Sosa's account does not secure any tight connection to truth.

Sosa seems to recognize that an account based solely on safety won't be a sufficient account of knowledge because, as he states, '[a]fter all, any belief in a necessary truth will be automatically as safe as could be. Not easily will one hold such a belief while it is false, since not possibly could one hold it while it was false.'[29] Sosa's solution to this problem is to implement a virtue epistemology in addition to his hard safety principle.[30] According to John Greco, 'the central idea of virtue epistemology is that, Gettier problems aside, knowledge is true belief which results from one's cognitive virtues', where 'a cognitive virtue … is an ability [or "cognitive faculty"] to arrive at truths in a particular field, and to avoid believing falsehoods in that field, under the relevant conditions.'[31] Similarly, in 'Post Script to Proper Function and Virtue Epistemology,' Sosa argues that in order to have warrant something very much like an ability, power or capacity needs to be included.[32] By ability, power, and capacity, Sosa has in mind the faculties of perception, memory, introspection, and reason.[33] Moreover, despite formulating the Swampman counterexample, Sosa seems to end up endorsing (or at least comes close to endorsing) that such faculties need to be functioning properly. Sosa does this by stating the following:

> Consider now such an ability, power or capacity to accomplish a desirable sort of thing. Necessarily allied to that is the notion of 'function,' i.e. of performing a 'function,' a special distinctive activity that is desirable or at least desired. And the

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[28] Plantinga, 'Respondeo,' in *Warrant in Contemporary Epistemology*, op. cit., 370.

[29] Sosa, 'Tracking, Competence, and Knowledge,' in *The Oxford Handbook of* Epistemology, op. cit., 275.

[30] Ibid.

[31] This quote from Greco is cited in 'Proper Functionalism' by Boyce and Plantinga in *The Continuum Companion to Epistemology*, op. cit., 134; John Greco, 'Virtues and Vices of Virtue Epistemology,' *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 23, no. 3 (1993): 413-432.

[32] Sosa, 'Proper Functionalism and Virtue Epistemology,' in *Warrant in Contemporary Epistemology*, op. cit., 273.

[33] 'Virtue Epistemology,' Jason Baehr, *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, last modified August 28, 2004, accessed October 24, 2014, http://www.iep.utm.edu/virtueep/.

notion of 'functioning properly' is not far to seek. In none of that, however, do I see a need to import any notion of design, either theological or merely teleological.[34]

For Sosa, cognitive virtues are intimately related to the notions of function and proper function. This would especially seem to be the case given that cognitive virtues either are cognitive faculties or come about from cognitive faculties, which of course can function properly or malfunction. Thus, according to Kenneth Boyce and Alvin Plantinga, 'the relevant notion of a cognitive faculty required by the virtue epistemologist presupposes the notion of cognitive proper function.'[35] However, if the virtue reliabilist is not willing to acknowledge as much, they would once again be faced with the problem of Swampman, as it could be said that, though Swampman has cognitive virtues, his beliefs would still lack a tight connection to truth via lacking a way in which his cognitive virtues should appropriately produce those beliefs. In conclusion, if anything, Sosa's account actually accentuates the need for proper function, and does not constitute in itself an objection to it. According to both of the truth-tracking accounts considered then, one's cognitive faculties can track the truth and yet because there is a lack of cognitive proper function and an inappropriate environment,[36] a tight connection to truth is not secured.

2.6 Epistemic Environment Condition

Having now established (1) of Plantinga's theory, I will move on to demonstrating the plausibility of (2). In order to demonstrate that one could have proper function and yet not have warrant due to the lack of a right epistemic environment, it will be important to discuss the Gettier cases. The possibility of Gettier scenarios will be my main argument for (2). After I establish how Gettier helps demonstrate the necessity of (2) for warrant, I will move on to demonstrating both (3) and (4) collectively.

In the early 1960s Edmund Gettier published a three-page paper demonstrating how the classical tripartite analysis of knowledge failed in certain counterexamples.[37] One of

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[34] Sosa, 'Proper Functionalism and Virtue Epistemology,' in *Warrant in Contemporary Epistemology*, op. cit., 273.

[35] Boyce and Plantinga. 'Proper Functionalism' in *The Continuum Companion to Epistemology*, op. cit., 135.

[36] As I will argue, I take the right epistemic environment to guarantee safety.

[37] Edmund Gettier, 'Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?,' *Analysis* 23 (1963): 121-123.

the examples that Gettier used was that of Smith and Jones. Smith and Jones have applied for a job and Smith has strong evidence for the belief d: 'Jones is the man who will get the job, and Jones has 10 coins in his pocket.' Proposition d entails e: 'The man who will get the job has ten coins in his pocket.' However, little did Smith know, Jones would not be getting the job; however, the man who would get the job has 10 coins in his pocket – namely himself. Thus, even though d is false, e, which is entailed by d, is true. Though Smith is justified in his assertion of e and e is true, it would be far-reaching to say Smith knew e. Thus, the traditional view of true, justified belief as knowledge is lacking.

More counterexamples like those espoused in Gettier's original paper have proliferated. All of these counterexamples to the traditional view of knowledge have been dubbed Gettier cases. One of the most famous examples of these can be seen in Carl Ginet's Wisconsinites example.[38]

In this example, a man named Henry is driving in the country side of Wisconsin. Henry would generally expect to see barns, yarn, tractors, and other things that are associated with this type of environment. However, unlike the normal environment to which Henry is accustomed, he unknowingly finds himself in a town where certain Wisconsinites have erected dozens of barn facades alongside a real barn. Moreover, Henry just so happens to go near a real barn in the midst of the dozens of fake barns, and he forms the belief that there is a barn in front of him. Henry appears to be justified in believing it is a barn and, indeed, it is a barn; however, in virtue of all the fake barns around it, one would be hard-pressed to say this judgement constitutes actual knowledge.

Keith Lehrer proposes another counterexample to the tripartite view of knowledge. In this example, Smith has a Ford but, unbeknownst to him, a meteorite shower occurs and destroys his car; however, he had previously entered in a raffle to win a car and again, unbeknownst to him, he has simultaneously won a Ford. Thus, Smith has true and justified belief about having a Ford – but, again, he would lack knowledge that he has one.[39]

How do these Gettier examples demonstrate that proper function is not a sufficient condition for warrant? In regard to the case of the barn facades, one could postulate that

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[38] Alvin Goldman credits the example to Carl Ginet in Alvin Goldman, *Philosophy Meets the Cognitive and Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 102.

[39] Keith Lehrer, 'Knowledge, Truth, and Evidence,' *Analysis* 25, no. 5 (1965): 168-175.

there is an individual who has faculties functioning properly and those faculties produce the true belief that a barn is in front of them. But because the individual could have just as easily walked in any other direction and would then have run into a barn façade, it is only by chance that this belief is true. Since the proper function condition is in place, it follows one could have proper function and yet not have warrant. Thus, there needs to be something added to the proper function condition.

Similarly, in the Smith has a Ford case, one could postulate that Smith's faculties are functioning appropriately. Smith isn't experiencing any cognitive malfunction and he appears to be acting epistemically responsibly in accordance with his cognitive design plan. However, Smith lacks warrant for his belief that he owns a Ford. An environment where your Ford is destroyed by a random meteorite and yet you simultaneously win a Ford from a contest, is not the type of environment in which your faculties are meant to operate. As with barn façade example, the particular environment that one is in can bring about accidental true beliefs. What these Gettier examples demonstrate is that the environment in which one's cognitive faculties operate, needs to be one for which they have been designed.

The epistemic environment condition should be seen as guaranteeing safety. Roughly speaking, as we have seen, it is a condition that prevents true belief from counting as knowledge if it would have been believed and yet been false in a close possible world. All of this being so, I think (2) seems to be a plausible condition. I will now move on to arguing for the plausibility of (3) and (4).

2.7 The Truth-Aimed Condition

In addition to having cognitive faculties that are functioning properly and being in an environment for which the faculties were designed, Plantinga argues that the design plan would need to be one that is aimed at producing true beliefs. Moreover, it would need to be a good one in that there is a high objective probability that the belief or beliefs produced under these conditions would be true.

In regard to (3), take the example of a malevolent deity who out of boredom creates human beings whose design plan is to produce all sorts of crazy beliefs. In addition

to this, the malevolent deity creates an environment that will encourage their design plan to produce all sorts of crazy beliefs. If we granted that the discussed conditions of warrant were in place when an unfortunate soul produced the crazy belief that he was created by a malevolent deity to produce crazy beliefs, would this be enough for the unfortunate soul to be warranted? This is unlikely, as there is still something serendipitous about his belief which is due primarily to the design plan not being aimed toward truth

Consider another example. For argument's sake, let us say that Freud was on to something about projecting beliefs in order to fulfil internal needs and desires. If a man happened to produce the belief that a strange woman would ask him to marry her in the next hour (and this came about by way of having a cognitive design plan aimed at producing beliefs related to desire or wish fulfilment), and it just so happened that a strange woman asked him to marry her within that hour, we would have a case of epistemic luck, not warrant. This is so even if he has properly functioning faculties that are in the appropriate epistemic environment.

Though I will argue for this in detail in the next chapter, it is also worth mentioning now that it seems possible that the design plan of our faculties could be to produce beliefs that aid in survival and reproduction. If the tenets of naturalism and neo-Darwinian evolution are right, then this would be the design plan of human faculties. However, as I will demonstrate in the next chapter, this type of design plan could lead to us believing all sorts of false things. As long as the belief leads to the Darwinian requirement being met, the truth of the belief takes the back seat in importance.

Finally, in regard to (4), not only would there be a need for a design plan that is aimed at producing true beliefs, but it needs to be a design plan that has a high probability of producing true beliefs. It is possible that we were created by an incompetent designer, and though he had good intentions and aimed man's faculties towards producing true beliefs, the poor design of those faculties would lead to man's faculties rarely achieving the intended goal of arriving at true beliefs. It is not enough to have a faculty achieve its goal every once in a while. Rather, the design plan must consistently yield true beliefs. If it only succeeded every one hundred tries, it would make any true belief produced somewhat of an accident. This would, again, strip away the possibility for a subject to obtain warrant and thus establishes the necessity of (4) for warrant.

I have now argued that each condition in Plantinga's theory of warrant seems necessary. However, there are now three objections that I will entertain. Addressing each of these objections will allow me to further clarify and modify Plantinga's theory of warrant. I will first engage Linda Zagzebski's argument that Plantinga's theory of warrant is not sufficient because it falls prey to certain Gettier examples. I will then interact once again with Laurence BonJour's Norman Clairvoyance counterexample. Lastly, I will tackle Timothy and Lydia McGrew's argument that Plantinga's warrant-as-proper function account must steal from an internalist account in order to formulate defeaters. By the end of the chapter, I will have defended a fully robust, sufficient, and plausible theory of warrant.

2.8 Plantinga's Theory Getterized?

Linda Zagzebski has argued that Plantinga's conditions are not sufficient for warrant. Similar to how Plantinga uses Gettier to demonstrate that internalist and reliabilist theories are not sufficient for warrant, Zagzebski gives a Gettier example of her own to demonstrate that the same could be said about Plantinga's theory. Zagzebski describes the background of the Gettier situation that she has in mind as follows,

> Scenario: Suppose that Mary has very good eyesight, but it is not perfect. It is good enough to allow her to identify her husband sitting in his usual chair in the living room from a distance of fifteen feet in somewhat dim light. She has made such an identification in these circumstances many times. Each time her faculties have been working properly and the environment has been appropriate for the faculties. There is nothing at all unusual about either her faculties or the environment in these cases. Of course, her faculties may not be functioning perfectly, but they are functioning well enough that if she's goes on to form the belief **My husband is sitting in the living room**, that belief has enough warrant to constitute knowledge when true and we can assume that it is almost always true.[40]

Zagzebski then elaborates on how a Gettier situation could arise out of this scenario:

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[40] Linda Zagzebski, *Virtues of the Mind: An Inquiry into the Nature of Virtue and the Ethical Foundations of Knowledge* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 285-286.

Suppose Mary simply misidentifies the chair-sitter who is, we'll suppose, her husband's brother, who looks very much like him. Her faculties may be working as well as they normally do when the belief is true and when we do not hesitate to say it is warranted in a degree sufficient for knowledge. It is not a question of their suddenly becoming defective, or at any rate, more defective than usual, nor is there a mismatch between her faculties and the environment. No one is trying to surprise or fool her or anything like that. Her husband and his brother may not even know she is in the house, so the normal environment has not been doctored as it is in the fake barn case.[41]

According to Zagzebski, this scenario could also include Mary's husband being on the other side of the room when Mary forms the belief that her husband is in the living room. Of course what she sees is her husband's look-alike brother, nonetheless her husband is in the living room. Zagzebski argues that this is a belief that was produced from properly functioning faculties that were in the environment for which they were designed and the faculties had a design plan that was aimed toward producing true beliefs. Thus, on Plantinga's theory, Mary should have warranted, true belief. However, there is still an accidental element in this scenario for her belief was brought about by her seeing her husband's brother and not her husband. It would then appear that Plantinga's theory has been Getterized which then leaves room for the possibility of another theory of warrant.

I will now give two reasons to think Zagzebski's argument fails. The first can be found in a further clarification of condition (2) of Plantinga's theory. Plantinga has addressed a similar problem in *Warranted Christian Belief*. Plantinga's example includes Peter and Paul, the look-alike brothers. Plantinga states, 'I am not aware that Paul's look-alike brother Peter is staying at his house; if I'm across the street, take a quick look, and form the belief that Paul is emerging from his house, I don't know that it's Paul, even if in fact it is (it could just as well have been Peter emerging); again, if Peter hadn't been in the neighbourhood, I would have known.'[42]

How does Plantinga respond to his own counterexample? Plantinga argues that the problem with this situation is that of an untrustworthy and misleading mini-environment.

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[41] Ibid.

[42] Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 157.

Not only is there a need for a maxi-environment (an environment containing things like air, light, presence of visible objects, etc.), but within that maxi-environment there needs to be a mini-environment that correlates with the design plan as well. An environment that is misleading (even a mini-environment) with respect to exercising one's cognitive ability will cause the faculties to fail in producing warranted beliefs. He calls this elaboration of the environment condition the Resolution Condition. Plantinga points this out when he states,

What must then be added to the other conditions of warrant is the resolution condition:

(RC) A belief B produced by an exercise E of cognitive powers has warrant sufficient for knowledge only if MBE (the minienvironment with respect to B and E) is favorable for E.[43]

In concluding my first response to Zagzebski's counterexample, though the maxi-environment in the Mary scenario is fine, the mini-environment is not. The mini-environment in which Mary found herself is not one for which her faculties were designed. Her faculties were not designed for dimly lit rooms where certain persons who look like her husband pop into the room expectantly.

Not only do I think Zagzebski's counterexample could be successfully addressed by clarifying condition (2) of Plantinga's theory of warrant, but I think there is an additional response that could be given. For Plantinga, our faculties have a design plan that requires that certain conditions be met for certain beliefs to be warranted. As mentioned in the first chapter, it could be that the design plan does not require arguments for the belief in the existence of God or the belief in other minds to be warranted. Moreover, it might be that the design plan does require certain arguments for other beliefs, such as the belief in the correct theory of warrant. Going back to the relevant problem, it could be the case that in certain scenarios (such as the one described by Zagzebski) our design plan includes an additional requirement, perhaps a requirement akin to a proposed Gettier solution. Plantinga's theory then could use any of the proposed solutions to the Gettier problem to support his theory of warrant, depending of course on the design plan requirements. This

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[43] Ibid., 159.

would even include Zagzebski's own virtue condition as found in her work *Virtues of the Mind*.[44]

To help clarify what I mean, let us take one of the earliest proposed solutions to the Gettier problem, the No-False belief condition. This condition states that belief p could not be caused by or be based on a false belief.[45] Now, going back to Zagzebski's proposed Gettier case, it would be easy for the proper functionalist to respond. The proper functionalist could just invoke the idea that the design plan could require that the belief in question not be based on a false belief; and thus, Mary doesn't know that her husband is in the room because her belief that her husband is in the room is based on of seeing his brother. Perhaps, there might be unwanted consequences for each Gettier requirement that one incorporates into the design plan, but the cost benefit analysis of this would need to be done case by case. For now, it is only important for me explain how Plantinga's theory of warrant shouldn't automatically be considered insufficient if one needs to add an anti-Gettier requirement to the design plan. I have now used Zagzebski's Mary Gettier counterexample as a means to further articulate condition (2) in Plantinga's theory of warrant. I will now move on to using Bonjour's counterexample to add an additional condition to Plantinga's theory.

2.9 BonJour, Norman, and Clairvoyance

In *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge*,[46] Laurence BonJour presents a basic objection to a general version of externalism, which he later applies to Plantinga's theory of warrant.[47] As explained earlier in this chapter, the goal of BonJour's objection is to demonstrate that one could have all of the external conditions in place (and thus have the externalist requirements satisfied), but yet be charged with internal irrationality. Recall that BonJour sets up his counterexample as follows:

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[44] Zagzebski, *Virtues of the Mind*, op. cit., 298.

[45] Pojman, *What Can We Know?*, op. cit., 83.

[46] Laurence Bonjour, *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985).

[47] BonJour, 'Plantinga on Knowledge and Proper Function' in *Warrant in Contemporary Epistemology*, op. cit., 58-59.

Norman, under certain conditions which usually obtain, is a completely reliable clairvoyant with respect to certain kinds of subject matter. He possesses no evidence or reasons of any kind for or against the general possibility of such a cognitive power or for or against the thesis that he possesses it. One day Norman comes to believe that the President is in New York City, though he has no evidence either for or against this belief. In fact the belief is true and results from his clairvoyant power under circumstances in which it is completely reliable.[48]

Since Norman does not believe that he has any reason to trust this belief, it would appear that Norman is irrational in believing that the President is in New York.[49] Thus, due to Norman's lack of subjective rationality, Norman would not have warrant for his belief even though the external conditions for warrant are there.

Depending on the externalist system one is advocating, I believe this could be a strong objection. If one is espousing an externalist system that contains little to no requirement for epistemic responsibility, like Nozick's account that was earlier given, I believe this objection stands. However, this objection would not stand if the externalist system being espoused included a no-reflective defeater clause.[50] If Norman did not fulfil his epistemic responsibility or if he did and then realized he had no reason to trust this faculty (which seems to be the case here), the externalist could agree with the internalist and say that Norman is not warranted in his belief. On the other hand if upon reflection, Norman did find himself believing that this belief came from a properly functioning cognitive faculty, then Norman could be warranted in his clairvoyant belief. All of this comes down to whether Norman was epistemically responsible in his reflection of possible defeaters for his belief and if he had a correct doxastic response that came about in virtue this reflection. Since Plantinga eventually includes this no-reflective defeater clause in his theory of warrant, Bonjour's objection is not relevant to Plantinga's theory.[51] Having dealt

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[48] Ibid.

[49] This part of the section can also be found in Tyler Dalton McNabb, *Warranted Religion: Alvin Plantinga's Theory of Warrant Defended and Applied to Different World Religions* (MA Thesis, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary), 47.

[50] By a no-reflective defeater clause, I mean that one is warranted in believing that p if upon reflection one doesn't see that there is a defeater for their belief that p.

[51] James Beilby, *Epistemology as Theology: An Evaluation of Alvin Plantinga's Religious Epistemology* (Hants, England: Ashgate, 2005), 169.

with the first two objections, I will now add a supplementary condition that is tied to the
first condition of Plantinga's theory of warrant:

> (1.2) As the design plan requires, one must give an appropriate reflection for the
> possibility of defeaters.

Plantinga's theory of warrant should now look something like the following:

S's belief that P is warranted iff,

> (1) S's cognitive faculties are functioning properly,
>
> (1.2) S has given appropriate reflection for the possibility of defeaters,
>
> (2) S's cognitive environment (both the maxi-environment and mini-environment)
> is sufficiently similar to the one which the cognitive faculties were designed,
>
> (3) the design plan that governs the production of such beliefs is aimed at
> producing true belief,
>
> (4) the design plan is a good one such that there is a high statistical (or objective)
> probability that the belief produced under these conditions will be true.

I have used the first two objections to better clarify and articulate the necessary and jointly
sufficient conditions for warrant. I will now tackle the final objection to Plantinga's theory,
namely, the charge that proper functionalism is incoherent because it presupposes
internalism. This last objection will allow me to further elucidate the relationship between
warrant-as-proper function and internalism. After I tackle this objection, I will have
established the first part of my thesis.

2.10 Warrant-as-Proper Function and its Need to Presuppose Internalism

In *Internalism and Epistemology*, the McGrews argue that in order for Plantinga to use
counterevidence and formulate defeaters he must use internalist conceptions of rationality
and counterevidence to which he has no claim.[52] The McGrews' argument has two steps.
In the first step they bring up the distinction between metalevel beliefs and object level

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[52] Timothy and Lydia McGrew, *Internalism and Epistemology: The Architecture of Reason* (London:
Routledge, 2007), 89.

beliefs. For the McGrews, an object level belief is a belief that is not about the epistemic status of one's own belief or the epistemic status of another subject's belief.[53] When one asks questions related to the epistemic status of an individual such as 'Is S warranted in believing p at t?' one is concerned with the metalevel. A metalevel belief then, just is a belief about the epistemic status of one's own belief or the epistemic status of another subject's belief. The McGrews argue that Plantinga's system has a problem as it cannot demonstrate why a belief is justified at the metalevel. Furthermore, the McGrews argue that if internal rationality (which is at least partly defined by their metalevel principles) is not required, then there would be no way to avoid metalevel epistemic regress or circularity. In regard to this, they state:

> Yet even there [metalevel circularity] may arise. Within Plantinga's own system, for example, the proposition "God exists" may be held as "properly basic" without any premises. If one were to defend the claim that one is justified (or, in Plantingian terms, "warranted") in holding it, using Plantinga's own theory, one would state, inter alia, that God has designed us to have non-inferred spontaneous beliefs in His existence.[54]

Plantinga seems to admit that his system would entail epistemic circularity and he seems fine with it.[55]According to the McGrews, fellow Reformed epistemologist William Alston, likewise claims that having metalevel circularity is harmless. According to Alston:

> Surprisingly enough, [epistemic circularity] does not prevent our using such arguments to show that sense perception is reliable. … Nor, pari passu, does it prevent us from being justified in believing sense perception to be reliable by virtue of basing that belief on the premises of a simple track record argument. At least this will be the case if there are no "higher level" requirements for being justified…such as being justified in supposing the practice that yields the belief to be a reliable one, or being justified in supposing the ground on which the belief is based to be an adequate one.[56]

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[53] Ibid., 57.

[54] Ibid., 66.

[55] Ibid., 75.

[56] Ibid., 71; William Alston, *The Reliability of Sense Perception* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1993), 16.

Thus, for Plantinga and Alston, there are no good reasons to accept that one must be justified at the metalevel in any significant sense. It is likely that an externalist would want to reject metalevel requirements, regarding them as strictly internalist requirements of no concern to an externalist.[57] While the McGrews reject that one has to know that they know (KK theory) in order for a belief to be justified or warranted, they do advocate other additional conditions that need to be met at the metalevel. In regard to justification the McGrews advocate the Modal Principle:

> MP: If it is in principle impossible to show decisively that S's belief that p is justified, then S is not justified in believing that p.[58]

The McGrews argue that if one wants to use the term warrant instead of justification, then they would invoke the Strong Modal Principle which states the following:

> SMP: For any term E intended to indicate positive epistemic status, if it can be the case for some belief p that Ep while it is not in principle possible to show decisively that Ep, then E is not in fact a type of positive epistemic status.[59]

With this, the McGrews believe that they have established both that Plantinga's epistemology must endorse metalevel circularity and what the correct metalevel principles are which avoid such circularity. Having the first step of their argument completed they proceed with the second step. According to the McGrews, accepting something like metalevel regress has consequences. For, if one were to reject KK, MP or SMP, how could one formulate defeaters? Plantinga wants to formulate defeaters for the Great Pumpkin or for believing in other things like naturalism, but given his theory of warrant, how could he do this successfully? Even if there is a defeater that invokes the irrationality of the belief that the subject holds, the subject could still be warranted because internal rationality isn't a necessary condition for warrant, at least, insofar as it is defined by something like the McGrews' metalevel principles. It seems that Plantinga and his disciples must steal from the internalist's view that there are metalevel requirements in order to be consistent when

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[57] Timothy and Lydia McGrew, *Internalism and Epistemology: The Architecture of Reason*, op. cit., 77.

[58] Ibid., 73.

[59] Ibid., 74.

formulating defeaters for beliefs. Since Plantinga's theory of warrant doesn't give one any way to separate the epistemic sheep from the goats the McGrews conclude that it isn't an acceptable theory of warrant.[60] This would be so as an acceptable theory of warrant would include an epistemological system that would allow one to formulate internal defeaters consistently and thereby avoid this dilemma.

2.11 Clarifying Internal Irrationality and the Design Plan

But must those who advocate Plantinga's theory of warrant steal from an internalist's view when it comes to developing defeaters? If one's system implied not being able to formulate defeaters for beliefs, I could see why this theory of warrant would not be an acceptable one; however, I think the advocate of Plantinga's theory of warrant can avoid the McGrews' criticisms in at least two ways.

Given that the McGrews are classical foundationalists, I assume that for them for a subject to be internally rational is for the subject to meet the traditional internalist requirements, which include internalist metalevel requirements. Moreover, I assume that internal rationality would mean that one would have to have all of their beliefs properly based upon incorrigible or self-evident beliefs. If this is what the McGrews mean by internally rational, then I agree with Plantinga that internal rationality in this sense is not necessary for warrant. However, if all it means to be internally rational is something like the subject having a correct doxastic response (which, for Plantinga, as previously mentioned, would include reflecting for defeaters as prescribed by the design plan)[61] to certain phenomenological imagery, then it would appear that the proper functionalist could endorse the necessity of some type of internal rationality.[62] In fact, the proper functionalist could even construe phenomenological imagery as evidence and thus consider herself to be an evidentialist. Defeaters could then be formulated to demonstrate how a subject doesn't

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[60] Ibid., 88.

[61] See Beilby, *Epistemology As Theology*, op. cit., 169.

[62] Here, I take phenomenological imagery to be synonymous or at least closely related to what is more commonly referred to in epistemology as 'seemings.' By 'correct doxastic response,' I just have in mind that a belief should be formed in an appropriate way as a response to the specific phenomenology one has; and forming the right sort of belief from the corresponding stimuli should be taken as a necessary condition (and perhaps sufficient in some cases) for internal rationality. If one has a particular experience that something is redly, the right sort of internal response would be to form the belief that something is redly.

appear to be giving the correct doxastic response. Having said this, it is important to point out that this being the case, given Plantinga's design plan requirement for having to reflect for defeaters, one could not hold to a belief derived by proper function and either refuse to reflect for defeaters or refuse to make an appropriate doxastic response in light of a defeater.

Furthermore, just because the design plan doesn't require a subject to always meet certain internalist requirements, such as having arguments for their beliefs, it doesn't follow that something like a propositional argument or certain propositional evidence isn't required for *some* beliefs.[63] Again, perhaps the design plan doesn't stipulate these sorts of internal requirements for beliefs such as the belief in other minds or memory-related beliefs, but it seems likely that it would require certain internalist conditions for things like the correct theory of warrant, high level scientific theories, or certain metaphysical beliefs, such as the belief in naturalism. If the design plan did require these sorts of internal requirements for beliefs such as the belief in naturalism, then it would appear that Plantinga isn't being inconsistent when it comes to formulating defeaters that demonstrate the subjective irrationality of naturalism. Presumably then, the proper functionalist could actually advocate something very close to the McGrews' modal principle:

> Proper Functionalist MP: If it is in principle impossible to show decisively that S's belief that p is justified, then S is not justified in believing that p, insofar as the design plan requires such a requirement be met for S's belief that p.

2.12 Objections and Replies

Perhaps the McGrews would argue in response that their modal principles are analytic truths, and if one wanted to incorporate their principles in an ad hoc manner, that is in a way that was contingent upon the design plan of one's cognitive faculties, it would be analogous to an individual saying something like 1+1=2 only when it is a sunny day in Dallas. To treat an analytic truth as if it were contingent in this way would rob it of its analytic status and render it absurd. Even if the McGews pushed the proper functionalist to

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[63] I take it that externalism just is the denial of internalism. That is to say, if one denies that all beliefs need to meet some access requirement in order to be warranted, then one is espousing a variation of externalism. If this is the case, then Plantinga's proper functionalism should still be considered as an externalist system, as he denies that such access is required for certain beliefs (e.g. belief in other minds).

see that this would be the case if the their modal principles were analytic truths, if the proper functionalist thinks about and understands their modal principles and yet comes away unconvinced that such principles are analytic truths, it would seem to me that the McGrews would have to do more in order to motivate the proper functionalist to abandon her project. The McGrews could not simply declare that the principles are analytic and yet give no positive reason for the proper functionalist to affirm this. At best, such an approach is asserting a groundless statement, and at worst, their argument could be accused of circular reasoning. If the proper functionalist, after considering such principles, is left unconvinced of their analyticity, she is in her epistemic right in rejecting that such principles are analytic truths. Moreover, if this is the case, and such principles aren't analytic truths, the proper functionalist could incorporate them into her own proper functionalist framework.

If the McGrews grant this, there is at least one more thing they could say in response to the proper functionalist who attempts to incorporate their modal principles into a proper functionalist framework. The McGrews could argue that I have not actually proven that their objection fails; I have only shown that it is epistemically possible that their objection fails. This is because I only argue that it is possible that the design plan of our cognitive faculties stipulates that metalevel requirements be met for beliefs like the belief in the Great Pumpkin or the belief in naturalism. It is still possible, however, that our design plan doesn't stipulate such metalevel requirements in order for such beliefs to be warranted. And given that this is the case, I have failed to show that Plantinga doesn't need to steal from the internalist's view, rather I have merely shown that it is only epistemically possible that she doesn't need to steal from the internalist's view.

Though I think this last point is fair, I don't see how this constitutes an objection. The whole externalist project is named in conditional terms and those who are sympathetic to it aren't likely to feel the need to know that we know what the design plan actually is in order to formulate defeaters towards particular beliefs produced from a subject's cognitive faculties. The externalist is likely to accede to the need to formulate a defeater for the belief that 'p', if she thinks that 'p' isn't part of the human design plan. And the externalist could rest assured, knowing that if the design plan does stipulate certain metalevel requirements, that her defeater would strip away such warrant for any subject who affirms 'p.' Now, I suppose the McGrews would not be OK with this. Their internalist intuitions would leave them thinking that this should provide good reason for one to reject proper

functionalism altogether. But why should the proper functionalist think that this is the case? Her intuitions are fine with the conditional nature of how one knows that 'p,' and because of this, I don't see any reason why an already convinced proper functionalist would see the need to jump ship and abandon the project of proper functionalism. And with this stated, I don't see the McGrews' objection as posing a major problem for proper functionalists.

In summary of this section, I have argued that Plantinga is not inconsistent in formulating defeaters for two reasons. First, I have argued that, under Plantinga's epistemology, all beliefs must be formed with some degree of internal rationality. This is so as the design plan requires an appropriate doxastic response to certain phenomenological imagery; an appropriate doxastic response that would even include one making the appropriate reflection for defeaters. And one could not hold to a belief derived by proper function and either refuse to reflect on defeaters or refuse to make an appropriate doxastic response in light of a defeater. Second, I argued that one could incorporate certain metalevel principles (even the McGrews' own metalevel principles) into Plantinga's proper functionalism. This, of course, would not work for all beliefs. Nonetheless, it seems epistemically possible that the design plan of our cognitive faculties could require their metalevel principle (or one like it) for certain beliefs. If it did so, Plantinga would be within his rights in directing defeaters towards those beliefs that do need to meet metalevel requirements. Given what I have established here, it is clear that it is not the case that Plantinga must use internalist conceptions of rationality and counterevidence to which he has no claim, rather, certain internalist conceptions of rationality could legitimately be appropriated to the proper functionalist's framework.

2.13 Conclusion

The arguments considered have shown no good reason to reject Alvin Plantinga's theory of warrant. As established in Chapter one, if this theory is correct, it would have certain important implications for the epistemology of religion. In the upcoming chapters of this thesis, I will explore those implications. Before doing this, however, I will need to interact with Plantinga's claim that naturalism cannot account for either the proper function condition or the truth-aimed condition. It will be here that the foundation for my engagement with non-Christian religions will be laid.

Chapter 3: Pandora's Box: Naturalism

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I will argue that naturalism cannot use Plantinga's epistemology to be warranted.[1] Arguing for this serves two purposes. First, keeping in mind the Pandora's Box Objection, it will demonstrate that not all sorts of serious religions or worldviews could use Plantinga's religious epistemology. This is because naturalism is a serious worldview and yet it fails to predict its own warrantedness when combined with Plantinga's epistemology. Secondly, in critiquing naturalism, I will establish some of the tools that are needed to engage the religions in the next couple of chapters.

I will give two reasons why I believe that naturalism fails in providing the necessary resources to make intelligible Plantinga's proper functionalism. First, by going through naturalistic accounts of proper function that have been developed by Karen Neander, Ruth Millikan, Ernest Sosa, and Michael Levin, I will argue that naturalism cannot account for proper function. I will then articulate how Plantinga has responded to these accounts and why it seems his criticism of them is successful.

Second, even if naturalism could account for the proper function condition, the last two conditions of Plantinga's theory still couldn't be accounted for. This is because, according to the naturalist, our cognitive faculties have been developed for the purposes of producing beliefs that enable survival and reproduction and not necessarily delivering truth. As long as the content that is produced from one's cognitive faculties enables survival and reproduction, that is the Darwinian requirement, the truth value of those beliefs becomes irrelevant. If one lacked a reason to privilege one belief that leads to the Darwinian requirement being met over another possible competing belief that leads to the same Darwinian result, then it would appear that one would have a defeater for both beliefs. Arguing in this way will lead me to conclude that naturalism, even if it were true, could not be warranted.

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[1] Some of the arguments made and thus some of the material here can be found in Tyler Dalton McNabb, *Warranted Religion: Alvin Plantinga's Theory of Warrant Defended and Applied to Different World Religions* (MA Thesis, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012), 52-82.

3.1 What is Naturalism?

Before defending and furthering these arguments, it is important to provide a working definition of naturalism. There are many variations of meaning associated with the term 'naturalism.' There is a naturalism that one might invoke in an epistemological context when discussing what types of things one can know.[2] W.V. O. Quine defines naturalism in this context as characterized by the following view: '[i]t is within science itself, and not in some prior philosophy, that reality is to be identified and described.'[3] Similarly, Michael Devitt notes, '[t]here is only one way of knowing: the empirical way that is the basis of science (whatever that may be).'[4]

There is also a methodological understanding of naturalism that stipulates what methodological assumptions should guide or constrain the process of inquiry.[5] Brian Leiter for example, argues, '[n]aturalism in philosophy is always first a methodological view to the effect that philosophical theorizing should be continuous with empirical inquiry in the sciences.'[6] These epistemological and methodological understandings are distinct from a metaphysical view of naturalism which, according to David Armstrong, is 'a spatio-temporal account of the general nature of reality.'[7] W.T. Stace likewise states that, 'naturalism [is] the belief that the world is a single system of things or events every one of which is bound to every other in a network of relations and laws, and…outside this "natural order" there is nothing.'[8] Armstrong's and Stace's definitions appear to be more in line with the form of naturalism that Plantinga is arguing against. In regard to what

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[2] I was originally made aware of the following definitions in Michael Rea, *World Without Design*: *The Ontological Consequences of Naturalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002).

[3] W.V. O. Quine, *Theories of Things* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 21.

[4] Michael Devitt, 'Naturalism and the A Priori,' *Philosophical Studies* 92, no. 1/2 (1998): 45.

[5] Rea, *World Without Design*, op. cit., 64.

[6] Brian Leiter, 'Naturalism and Naturalized Jurisprudence,' in *Law: New Essays in Legal Theory*, ed. Brian Bix (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 81.

[7] David Armstrong, 'Postscript: 'Naturalism, Materialism, and First Philosophy Reconsidered,' in *Contemporary Materialism: A Reader*, eds. Paul Moser and J. D. Trout (London: Routledge, 1995), 47.

[8] Walter T. Stace, 'Naturalism and Religion,' *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 23 (1949 – 1950): 22.

Plantinga specifically has in mind, Michael Bergmann states, '[m]etaphysical naturalism is, roughly speaking, the view that there are no supernatural beings-no such beings as, for example, God or angels or ghosts.'[9] Bergmann's definition will be the working definition for this chapter.

3.2 Naturalistic Attempts at Proper Function

In Chapter two, above, I argued that one of the conditions for warrant was that of proper function. It is not enough to have a reliable process of belief formation or internal access to the properties which confer warrant, as these things fail in securing a tight connection to truth. I argued that the Swampman case demonstrated this. To recap, Swampman's faculties could be reliable and he could have the right internal access and yet, because there is no way in which his faculties should operate, he would lack a way in which he should form his beliefs appropriately. It wouldn't be as if his faculties should produce such and such belief under such and such circumstance, rather his faculties just so happen to produce such and such belief under such and such circumstance. Thus, I concluded that the Swampman scenario gives us the ultimate Gettier problem, as well as a good reason to think that proper function is a necessary condition for warrant.

If proper function is needed for warrant, could naturalism supply those preconditions that are required to make proper function intelligible? Plantinga points out that the naturalistic accounts of proper function that are put forward by various people aren't really even accounts of proper function at all, but are merely similar accounts (nearby notions of it) that invoke evolution and natural selection.[10] I will now give two such accounts of proper function (or nearby accounts of proper function) that have been defended by naturalists. Each of these either depends on or at least is complimented by contemporary evolutionary theory. I will then outline two further naturalistic accounts, ones that do not depend on evolutionary theory in any significant way.

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[9] Michael Bergmann, 'Common Sense Naturalism,' in *Naturalism Defeated? Essays on Plantinga's Evolutionary Argument Against Naturalism,* ed. James Beilby (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), 61.

[10] Alvin Plantinga and Michael Tooley, *Knowledge of God* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2008), 22.

3.3 Non-Theistic Evolutionary Accounts of Proper Function

Take, for example, Karen Neander's account of proper function: 'It is the proper function of an item X of an organism O to do that which items of X's type did to contribute to the inclusive fitness of O's ancestors, and which caused the genotype, of which X is the phenotypic expression, to be selected by natural selection.'[11] Essentially, when something is properly functioning, say one's heart, it is contributing to one's survival as that organ did in the case of one's ancestors.

Another very popular account of proper function that is related to Neander's account is advanced by Ruth Millikan's work:

> Putting things very roughly, for an item *A* to have function *F* as a 'proper function', it is necessary (and close to sufficient) that one of these two conditions should hold (1) *A* originated as a 'reproduction' (to give one example, as a copy, or a copy of a copy) of some prior item or items that, due in part to possession of the properties reproduced, have actually performed *F* in the past, and *A* exists because (causally historically because) of this or these performances. (2) *A* originated as the product of some prior device that, given its circumstances, had performance of *F* as a proper function and that, under those circumstances, normally causes *F* to be performed by *means* of producing an item like *A*. Items that fall under condition (2) have 'derived proper functions', functions derived from the devices that produce them.[12]

These naturalistic accounts of proper function will not work. They have in common one key thing – namely, a need for no originals. This would be a problem if there were logical possibilities where there were originals and yet there was still proper function. Consider, for example, the story of Adam and Eve (or something very much like it). Does it present a scenario that is logically possible? If so, such accounts as those proposed by Neander and Millikan will not work, for Adam and Eve's hearts would be properly functioning and yet they would lack ancestors, or prior copies. Plantinga points this out when he states, '[w]hether or not God directly and immediately created Adam and Eve, clearly he could

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[11] Karen Neander, 'Functions as Selected Effects: The Conceptual Analyst's Defense,' *Philosophy of Science* 58, no. 2 (1991): 174.

[12] Ruth Millikan, 'In Defense of Proper Functions,' *Philosophy of Science* 56 (1989): 288-289.

have – and if he had, they would have had no ancestors.'[13] Similarly, would the first ever computer be properly functioning if indeed it lacked predecessors? It is obvious that it would. One will not be able to use accounts that depend on natural selection in order to give the jointly necessary and sufficient conditions of proper function as long as first copies, originals, and God are logical possibilities.[14]

Furthermore, in regard to these evolutionary accounts, not only do such conditions seem unnecessary (given the logical possibility of Adam and Eve), but, as Plantinga has pointed out, such conditions do not appear to be sufficient either. Plantinga gives the example of a Hitler-like madman, who in order to fulfill his Nietzschean plan to play God orders his minions to enable a genetic mutation in selected non-Aryan victims; a mutation that will greatly hinder their visual system and add a certain amount of pain when they open their eyes.[15] The Nietzschean regime then decides to start killing off the non-Ayran non-mutants. In doing so, the genetic mutation that hinders the visual system and causes discomfort actually saves the non-Aryan mutants from perishing. If one looks to some generations later, we can see the criteria of these evolutionary accounts being met. The later generations of non-Aryans mutants have visual systems that aided in their previous generation's survival and that continues to aid them currently in survival. But should one really consider that the non-Aryan mutants have a visual system that is properly functioning? Plantinga answers no to this question and takes it as reason to reject accounts such as Neander's and Millikan's all together.[16]

Contrary to Plantinga's intuition, Peter Graham has argued that the non-Aryan mutants actually have two design plans.[17] They have their original design plan of how their

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[13] Plantinga and Tooley, *Knowledge of God*, op. cit., 24.

[14] Peter Graham has argued that S gets function F from its history. He thinks natural selection, an organism's metabolism, and a trial-and-error process are all ways in which S's history gives S a function. Similar to Neander's and Millikan's accounts, Graham's account seems to fall prey to the Adam and Eve counterexample, as Adam's cognitive faculties and/or his heart lacks a relevant history, and yet each of these things possesses proper function. See Peter Graham, 'Functions, Warrant, and History,' in *Naturalizing Epistemic Virtue*, eds. Fairweather, A. and O. Flanagan (Cambridge Press), forthcoming. Also, see Peter Graham, 'Intelligent Design and Selective History: Two Source of Purpose and Plan,' in *Oxford Studies in Philosophy of Religion Volume 3*, ed. Jonathan Kvanvig (Oxford: Oxford Press, 2011), 67-88.

[15] Plantinga and Tooley, *Knowledge of God*, op. cit., 26.

[16] Ibid., 27.

[17] Peter Graham, 'Intelligent Design and Selective History: Two Source of Purpose and Plan,' in *Oxford Studies in Philosophy of Religion Volume*, op. cit., 67-88.

faculties should function and they have a newly acquired design plan that has come about under the scenario which Plantinga has described. Thus, for Graham, there is one sense in which the non-Aryan mutants' faculties are not functioning properly (in accordance with their original design plan) and another sense in which their faculties are functioning properly (in accordance with the newly acquired design plan). But is this plausible? It doesn't seem at all clear to me that a way in which some people's faculties ought to operate can come about solely from the refraining actions of those who decided not to kill them, just in virtue of their being victims of genetic harm which was originally brought about by those currently refraining from killing them. I think the Plantingian will rightly assert that this concession (that the non-Aryan mutants have a design plan) isn't evidence that evolutionary accounts can work but rather that they can't work.

3.4 Non-Evolutionary and Non-Theistic Accounts of Proper Function

It is important to note that non-theistic accounts of proper function do not have to hinge on evolution. I will now use two representative non-theistic and non-evolutionary accounts of proper function to illustrate how these sorts of accounts fail. The first account I will tackle is Ernest Sosa's. Before I begin interacting with his account, it worth noting that it is not necessarily an account of proper function *per se*; rather it is an account of cognitive proper function. Sosa's account states that, 'S's cognitive faculty, F, tracks the truth (and functions properly) if and only if, (1) if P were true F would produce (in S) her belief P, and (2) if F were to produce (in S) the belief that P, P would be true.'[18]

According to Sosa's account, as we explained in the previous chapter, one could have a faculty that appeared to be malfunctioning and yet it would in fact be properly functioning. Take again, the claim that religious beliefs are a result of cognitive malfunction. If God existed necessarily but our belief about him came from an unintended malfunction (and nothing else), our belief produced would still meet Sosa's truth-tracking criteria as '[a]fter all, any belief in a necessary truth will be automatically as safe as could be. Not easily will one hold such a belief while it is false, since not possibly could one hold

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[18] Ernest Sosa, 'Proper Functionalism and Virtue Epistemology,' in *Warrant in Contemporary Epistemology: Essays in Honor of Plantinga's Theory of* Knowledge, ed. Jonathan L. Kvanvig (MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1996), 276.

it while it was false.'[19] This of course seems problematic. As discussed in Chapter two, because of issues related to this, Sosa proposes that the account would also need to include the claim that S would come to believe that 'p' in a virtuous way. Thus, Sosa might argue that one wouldn't be functioning properly if one merely believed that God existed by way of this unintended cognitive process; rather, one would need that faculty to also be cognitively virtuous.

I don't think adding the virtue condition will save Sosa's account of proper function as it forces him into a dilemma. Either he emphasizes that there needs to be a cognitive virtue (that is, as discussed in the last chapter, a faculty which has a way it should and shouldn't function) which then pushes the question back as one would need to know what it means for this cognitive virtue to be functioning properly, or he could emphasize the original truth-tracking account. If he chooses the latter, in addition to the malfunction problem addressed above, a normative problem emerges. This is so as proper function invokes normative notions, such as 'ought' and 'should,' however, Sosa's account (along with truth-tracking accounts in general) is merely a description of what conditions need to be in place in order for one to obtain knowledge. Thus, this account wouldn't be going after what is at the heart of proper function, and this being so it isn't a genuine account of what it means to have cognitive proper function. For all of these reasons, Sosa's account doesn't seem tenable.

Like Sosa, Michael Levin has also developed a non-evolutionary dependent account of proper function. In developing Larry Wright's account of proper function which seeks to focus on the explanation of things or relationships rather than the advantageous effects of faculties, Levin's account goes as follows: *F* is a function of *S* if and only if "*S* is explained by its leading to *F* and is the efficient cause *S*' of *S* is explained by its leading to *S*."[20] In regard to this account, Plantinga points out:

> God could have created Adam (or Eve) directly; if he had, the function of Adam's heart would have been just what the function of our hearts is; namely to circulate the blood in a certain way. But (the second clause of) Levin's conditions isn't met

[19] Ernest Sosa, 'Tracking, Competence, and Knowledge,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Epistemology*, ed. Paul Moser (New York: Oxford Press), 275.

[20] Michael Levin, 'Plantinga on Functions and the Theory of Evolution,' *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 75, no. 1 (1997): 89.

in this case: it is not the case that, under these conditions, the efficient cause of Adam (namely God) is explained by his 'leading to' Adam's heart.[21]

If one could think of a counterexample where the efficient cause isn't explained by its 'leading to' such and such, then Levin's account does not work. Similar to the evolutionary accounts that were reviewed above, this account faces the trouble of the dreaded Hitler scenario. Plantinga states:

> Take a given mutant *m* and his visual system S, which works in that unfortunate way. The existence of S is explained by its working in that way: working in that miserable way kept *m* (or m's ancestors) from being killed by the Nazis. The efficient cause of S - whatever system it is, in human beings, that cause the existence of visual system -furthermore, is explained by its leading to S. In this case, then, the proposed necessary and sufficient condition is met; but it is not the function of *m's* visual system to cause pain and display only a uniform green visual field with a few shadowy fires project on it.[22]

With this, I think Plantinga has established two counterexamples (Adam & Eve and Hitler) that have proven successful when analyzing naturalistic proper function accounts. I think the failure of these accounts might help vindicate the intuition that proper function needs a 'proper functioner,' and/or a design plan needs a designer. The failures of these accounts do not conclusively show that no such account could work but their failures taken together with this prima facie intuition, should leave one to tentatively hold that there are no good naturalistic accounts of proper function.

Having said this, however, for the purposes of this project, I will leave open the possibility of there being religions that don't have a personal designer God (at least at the ultimate level), but nonetheless have other doctrines that might allow them to make sense of proper function in some relevant epistemic sense. This will be explored in more detail in the remaining chapters of this thesis.

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[21] Plantinga and Tooley, *Knowledge of God*, op. cit., 27-28.

[22] Ibid., 28.

3.5 Plantinga's Evolutionary Argument against Naturalism (EAAN)

Using the work of Plantinga I will now attempt to formulate and defend an argument that will apply to a traditional naturalist, that is to a naturalist who both denies the existence of God and the immaterial soul. This will be a new problem confronting the naturalist in addition to the proper function issue discussed above. Plantinga has termed the sort of argument that I will be discussing here the evolutionary argument against naturalism. If successful, the argument will demonstrate that naturalism cannot be warranted because accepting both the tenets of naturalism and evolution implies that our faculties are neither directly nor indirectly aimed at producing true beliefs, but have evolved to produce beliefs that enable survival and reproduction. Naturalism will then fail to provide the necessary resources to secure a tight connection to truth.

Let P stand for probability of, let R stand for the proposition that our cognitive faculties (and the beliefs that they produce in both basic and based ways) are reliable, and let N&E stand for naturalism and evolution. Plantinga latest version of the EAAN goes as follows:

(1) P(R/N&E) is low.

(2) Anyone who accepts N&E and sees that P(R/N&E) is low has a defeater for R.

(3) By definition, anyone who has a defeater for R has a defeater for any other belief she has, including [belief in] N&E itself.

(4) If one who accepts N&E thereby acquires a defeater for N&E, N&E is self-defeating and cannot rationally be accepted.[23]

I will first address the less controversial (2), before I turn to the all-important (1). Regarding (2), one might wonder why the belief that our cognitive faculties are reliable could not be a basic belief. Perhaps it would appear that given N&E the chances of our cognitive faculties producing mostly true beliefs would be low, but given our strong intuition that our faculties are reliable we could still be warranted in affirming R in a basic way. Michael Bergmann argues for this as follows:

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[23] Alvin Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion, and Naturalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 344-345.

Even if a naturalist believed that $P(R/N\&E)$ is low or inscrutable, this needn't give her a defeater for R. For she could have nonpropositional evidence for R that is sufficiently strong to make belief in R rational, reasonable, and warranted - even for someone whose total relevant propositional evidence, k, was such that $P(R/k)$ is low or inscrutable.[24]

How would a Plantigian respond to such an argument? It would first be helpful to concede that though one might acquire a belief in a basic way, it doesn't follow that it would be immune to defeaters (as Bergmann eloquently establishes in his own work). In order to help make this clearer, I will use beliefs obtained through the means of perception and testimony as examples. Take the case of Future Flash and Cisco as an example of the former. Flash, a metahuman who has the ability to run at warp speeds, ran so fast that he traveled back in time. As it so happened, he traveled one year back in time and he found himself in front of his friend, Cisco. Unbeknownst to Cisco that it was the Flash from his future, he formed in a basic way the belief that the Flash of the present was in front of him. However, after he formed this belief, the Flash of the present emerged. This of course caused confusion. After the Flash of the future explained what had happened, Cisco obtained a defeater for thinking that the Flash of the present was in front of him. We can conclude from this that perceptual beliefs formed in a basic way can fall victim to defeaters.

In regard to beliefs formed by way of testimony, take the example of Matt and Karen. Matt Murdock is lawyer by day and a superhero by night. He originally obtained super powers in an accident when his visual system was exposed to toxic chemicals. Wanting to hide his abilities, he proceeded to act completely blind. Matt, as Daredevil, eventually used his super powers to fight villains at night. However, fighting at night took a toll on his body to the point where his daytime co-worker, Karen, asked about his injuries. Matt told Karen that he was in a car accident and thus by way of Matt's testimony, Karen formed the belief that Matt was in a car accident. Eventually, Matt stopped lying to Karen and he told her that he was in fact the Daredevil and that those injuries that he had were not from a car accident. Karen realized that the belief she formed by way of testimony was defeated and she formed a new belief.

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[24] Bergmann, 'Common Sense Naturalism,' in *Naturalism Defeated? Essays on Plantinga's Evolutionary Argument Against Naturalism*, op. cit., 68.

In both of these cases, upon reflection on new information beliefs originally obtained in a basic manner were defeated. This is what Plantinga is trying to get across; namely, if one has a basic belief that one's cognitive faculties are reliable, but then reflects on the truths of N&E and comes to the conclusion that there is an undercutting defeater for all of one's beliefs, one would then be irrational if one continued to hold that one's cognitive faculties were reliable.[25] Now, one would indeed have to be convinced that the probability of R is low or inscrutable, where it significantly deceases one's warrant for believing R. But if that were the case one would have a defeater for one's basic belief in R, and thus would be irrational in continuing to hold to both R and N&E.

What Bergmann has shown is that this argument might be person-variable. Some individuals might be affected by this argument in such a way that their warrant is significantly decreased, even given certain non-propositional evidence. Others, however, (Bergmann?) might not be moved by this argument given their conviction that they have non-propositional evidence that 'outweighs' the propositional evidence for R being low or for S having a defeater for R. Given that this is the case, the success of Plantinga's EAAN rests on (1) being plausible. If, indeed, (1) can be demonstrated, or as I will argue, something very close to (1), Plantinga's EAAN should be seen as a good argument against naturalism.

3.6 A Reformational View on Paul

I will now defend Plantinga's evolutionary argument against naturalism by arguing for what is at the heart of (1) and then further his argument by applying it to strictly metaphysical beliefs. I will not be defending the claim that given N&E the probability of R is low, rather I will defend the claim that given N&E the probability of R is inscrutable.[26] Defending the second claim rather than the first does not significantly weaken Plantinga's conclusion, as if one lacks a reason for trusting a faculty one wouldn't be warranted in accepting any belief produced from that faculty. My discussion of the Norman's Clairvoyant case in the previous chapter establishes this point. Thus, the inscrutable nature

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[25] By undercutting defeater, I mean a defeater that doesn't directly demonstrate that something is false; rather, the defeater demonstrates that one is in an epistemic situation where one lacks warrant for believing that p.

[26] Plantinga suggests that this is an option in Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 231.

of R should be seen as sufficiently troubling to the traditional naturalist. And yet, being that I just need to establish that the probability is inscrutable rather than low, this approach will seem less controversial and thus more virtuous than Plantinga's main approach.[27]

In Plantinga's earlier works, he argued that in an orthodox Darwinian framework man's cognitive faculties are understood to produce beliefs that are not aimed directly at truth, but at survival and reproductive behavior. As Patricia Churchland puts this sort of naturalist view:

> Boiled down to essentials, a nervous system enables the organism to succeed in the four F's: feeding, fleeing, fighting and reproducing. The principal chore of nervous systems is to get the body parts where they should be in order that the organism may survive... Improvements in sensorimotor control confer an evolutionary advantage: A fancier style of representing is advantageous so long as it is geared to the organism's way of life and enhances the organism's chances of survival. Truth, whatever that is, definitely takes the hindmost.[28]

In *Warrant and Proper Function*, Plantinga outlines the following scenario to show how advantageous beliefs produced by natural selection could nonetheless also be false:

> Perhaps Paul very much *likes* the idea of being eaten, but when he sees a tiger, always runs off looking for a better prospect, because he thinks it unlikely the tiger he sees will eat him. This will get his body parts in the right place so far as survival is concerned, without involving much by way of true belief. ... Or perhaps he thinks the tiger is a large, friendly, cuddly pussycat and wants to pet it; but he also believes that the best way to pet it is to run away from it. ... Clearly there are any number of belief-cum-desire systems that equally fit a given bit of behavior.[29]

The sophomore biology major might object to this example on the grounds that in order for Paul to have a fighting chance at getting away from the tiger he would have to get his adrenaline pumping through his body. Wanting to pet a 'nice ole pussycat,' or perhaps

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[27] Rea takes a similar approach in, Rea, *World Without Design*, op. cit., 82, 84.

[28] Patricia Churchland, 'Epistemology in the Age of Neuroscience,' *Journal of Philosophy* 84, no. 10 (1987): 548-549.

[29] Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 225-226.

being manically depressed and wanting to get eaten by a bigger one, would simply not do the trick.[30] Thus, the biology major might complain that Plantinga's example fails to show how Paul might have a belief that would aid him in surviving while failing to correspond with external reality.

This line of reasoning is also articulated by Jerry Fodor, Evan Fales, and Stephen Law.[31] Their objections all centre on the belief that natural selection would select mostly true beliefs, as true beliefs would be what are needed to give the greatest chance of survival. Law's main point is somewhat different than Fodor's and Fales', as Law has in mind the idea that certain neural structures just are certain beliefs.[32] Law insists that, ultimately, given certain neural structures combined with certain desires, a subject's faculties will likely produce true beliefs that are necessary for survival and reproduction. Law formulates his objection to Plantinga into a scenario – let's call it the wandering nomad objection.[33] Law asserts the following:

> Consider a human residing in an arid environment. Suppose the only accessible
> water lies five miles to the south of him. Our human is desperately thirsty. My
> suggestion is that we can know a priori, just by reflecting on the matter, that if
> something is a belief that, solely in combination with a strong desire for water,
> typically results in such a human walking five miles to the south, then it is quite
> likely to be the belief that there's water five miles to the south (or the belief that
> there's reachable water thataway [pointing south] or whatever). It's highly unlikely
> to be the belief that there isn't any water five miles to the south (or isn't any

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[30] Is there any reason to believe that natural selection couldn't have resulted in a situation where depression pumps adrenaline and not wanting to become dinner triggers laughter? I am not sure why natural selection couldn't have gerrymandered our emotions and desires differently in regard to what biological reactions they trigger.

[31] Jerry Fodor, 'Is Science Biologically Possible?,' in *Naturalism Defeated? Essays on Plantinga's Evolutionary Argument Against Naturalism*, ed. James Beilby (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), 30-42; Evan Fales, 'Darwin's Doubt, Calvin's Calvary,' in *Naturalism Defeated? Essays on Plantinga's Evolutionary Argument Against Naturalism*, ed. James Beilby (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), 43-58.

[32] Stephen Law holds that the neural structures that are selected are selected in virtue of what behavior they will likely produce. This leads him to argue that beliefs that enable survival and reproduction are likely true beliefs. The response that I will give can grant his assumption that neural structures just are beliefs and that those beliefs are selected because of their relation to the necessary behavior that needs to be displayed.

[33] Though Law has published recently on this topic, here I refer to Stephan Law, 'Latest Version of EAAN Paper,' *Stephen Law*, last modified November, 2010, accessed October 27, 2014, http://stephenlaw.blogspot.com/2010/11/latest-version-eaan-paper-for-comments.html. For print reference see, Stephen Law, 'Naturalism, Evolution, and True Belief,' *Analysis* 72 (2012): 41-48.

reachable water thataway), or the belief that there's water five miles to the north (or thisaway [pointing north]), or the belief that there's a mountain of dung five miles to the south, or that inflation is high, or that Paris is the capital of Bolivia.[34]

Is Plantinga's attempted defeater then deflected? In *Naturalism Defeated: Essays on Plantinga's Evolutionary Argument Against Naturalism*, Plantinga takes aim at the objection that a belief that enables survival will likely be a true belief. There he appears to raise a defeater-deflector of his own by asserting that the answer is in gerrymandering the right properties. In what seems to be a rarely responded to argument, Plantinga gives several examples of this. To Fales, Plantinga writes:

> Consider the cognitive agents who think everything is created by God and whose predicates express only properties entailing being created by God. Then, by the naturalist's lights, their beliefs will be mainly false. Still, their beliefs can obviously be adaptive, that is, lead to appropriate action; all that's required is that they ascribe the right properties to the right objects. Thus, for example, if they ascribe the property of being a tiger creature to tigers, and the property of being a dangerous creature to tiger creatures, they will presumably act in appropriate ways.[35]

In a similar manner, Plantinga gives the example of a tribe who predicates the property of witch to everything[36] – meaning that what really is a fierce and dangerous tiger is given the properties of dangerous, fierce, and witch. Let F be the property of fierce and let D be the property of dangerous. Say Paul is now in a tribe that perceives and believes all sorts of things have the property of witch. Paul falsely sees a witch that has the properties F and D. Paul now perceives imminent danger, which helps meet the conditions to get his adrenaline pumping so that he can flee. As long as the right properties are in place (F&D), there seems to be no reason why the remaining content has to be true.

Perhaps one might reject this clarification, on the grounds that although Paul has one false belief, namely, that something is a witch, he still has true beliefs, namely that

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[34] Stephan Law, 'Latest Version of EAAN Paper,' op. cit..

[35] Plantinga, 'Reply to Beilby's Cohorts,' in *Naturalism Defeated?: Essays on Plantinga's Evolutionary Argument against Naturalism*, ed. James Beilby (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), 265.

[36] Ibid., 253.

something is F or something is D. In regard to predicating the property of witch to an *appletree* that is blooming, Jerry Fodor responds to Plantinga's approach:

> Still, much of what a creature believes in virtue of which it believes that *that appletree witch is blooming* (and in virtue of which the thought that *that apple tree witch* is blooming leads to behavioral successes) are perfectly straightforwardly true. For example: *that's an appletree*; *that's blooming; that's there; something is blooming; something is blooming there*, and so on indefinitely. The point is trivial enough: If a creature believes *that appletree witch is blooming*, then it presumably believes that *that's an appletree* and that *that's a witch* and that *that's blooming*. And two of these are true beliefs that the creature shares with us and that enter into explanation of its behavioral successes vis-à-vis blooming appletrees in much of the same way that the corresponding beliefs of ours enter into the explanation of our behavior success vis-à-vis blooming appletrees.[37]

Plantinga responds to Fodor as follows:

> [T]hese creatures form beliefs only of the form 'that P-witch has Q' for properties P and Q. (We may add, if we like, that they form general beliefs of the form *all (some)* P-*witches are* Q, together with propositions appropriately constructible out of these general and singular beliefs.) So the creature in question doesn't believe *that's an appletree* (though he may believe *that witch is an appletree*) or *that's blooming* (though he may believe *that witch is blooming*). Why couldn't there be creatures like that? Not, surely (as Fodor himself notes), because any such creatures would have to believe all the logical consequences (for all the obvious logical consequences) of what he believes; we ourselves do not do that.[38]

Plantinga's argument comes down to the possibility that humans could have been constituted in such a way that they form beliefs in a phenomenologically simple way. It seems biologically possible that we could have evolved in such a way that we form beliefs without ever coming to believe in any of the logical consequences that those beliefs entail.

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[37]Fodor, 'Is Science Biologically Possible?,' in *Naturalism Defeated? Essays on Plantinga's Evolutionary Argument Against Naturalism,* op. cit., 34.

[38] Plantinga, 'Reply to Beilby's Cohorts,' *Naturalism Defeated?: Essays on Plantinga's Evolutionary Argument against Naturalism* op. cit., 254.

Thus, to believe *that witchtree is blooming* does not require one to believe that *that's a tree* or *that's blooming*. If this is possible, then it seems that one could form all sorts of different false beliefs that lead to survival and reproduction. If there are different beliefs that could be formed that would equally meet the Darwinian requirement, one would have to believe that one should remain agnostic in determining the probability of R. This is so as one would lack a way to determine if one's faculties produced beliefs that both met the Darwinian requirement and reflected the external reality or if one's beliefs just met the Darwinian requirement. I will address this further in my own version of the argument, by the end of the chapter. Now, having explained how Plantinga has responded to Fales and Fodor, I will apply his response to Law's scenario.

Instead of a man who needs to know the correct location of the water, let us change the content of the scenario to a man needing a magical potion. Perhaps the nomad believes there was a demi-god who was jealous of humankind. Along with this, he believes that the demi-god cursed man and the creatures below man out of that jealousy. The curse now makes men's mouths shrivel up as the life is sucked slowly out of them. However, perhaps he also believes there is a good demi-god who countered this jealousy by giving man a special potion to sustain the life of man. The location of this magical potion is under the earth (where the demi-gods live of course) and can be seen in an abounding outflow from the earth. The nomad has several false beliefs in this revised scenario, but he is still being led by those false beliefs to meet the Darwinian requirement.

Now, one may think that this nice story might help explain how one could have lots of false beliefs, but it does not explain why the nomad forms what seem to be true beliefs that are necessary for him to hold if he is to identify the location of the magical potion and his need to consume it. Thus, like Fodor, Law could tell Plantinga that the nomad still has several true beliefs. The proponent of Plantinga's argument could then give a two-pronged response. First, the advocate of the EAAN could argue that if all of the beliefs that the nomad formed are formed in such a way that they are affirmed without reflection on any entailment (see the above discussion of Fales' view), then the nomad would still have all or mostly all false beliefs. The nomad would believe *that magical potion is over there*, or *I need that magical potion to survive*. He wouldn't need in addition to those beliefs to believe that there was *something over there* or that *I need something to survive*.

Secondly, one might argue that the proponent of the EAAN can concede that Law has demonstrated that there might be some true propositions that must be believed in order to survive and reproduce, but besides those beliefs that must be believed, all other sorts of important beliefs could be false. Perhaps she would focus on how metaphysical beliefs don't secure such a tight connection to truth on N&E, and thus she would focus her attention on naturalism's problem with metaphysical beliefs.

It remains to be seen whether Plantinga's responses will convince the sceptics. I will soon move the discussion forward by proposing a new way of looking at Paul, the friendly homo-sapiens. Before doing that I will briefly overview some evolutionary explanations that have been given by naturalists for certain metaphysical beliefs. After surveying a few of these metaphysical views and their relation to neo-Darwinian evolution, I will demonstrate how one might go about arguing for what I have suggested as the second response that the proponent of the EAAN could give to the challenge raised by Law, Fodor, and Fales.

3.7 Naturalism and its Current Endeavour in Metaphysics

I will now briefly go through different metaphysical beliefs that most humans currently hold to and which *could* have resulted from natural selection. By metaphysical belief(s), I mean a particular kind of proposition affirmed by a subject, which has traditionally been understood to be outside the spectrum of the empirical sciences and that is ultimately thought to be about what is real. Paul Churchland considers some such propositions when he raises the following questions, '[i]s our basic conception of human cognition and agency yet another myth, moderately useful in the past perhaps, yet false at its edge or core? Will a proper theory of brain function present a significantly different or incompatible portrait of human nature?'[39]

Churchland himself is 'inclined toward positive answers to all these questions.'[40] He isn't alone in questioning our basic human experience though, as Daniel Dennett states,

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[39] Paul Churchland, *The Engine of Reason, the Seat of the Soul: A Philosophical Journey into the Brain* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), 19.

[40] Ibid.

'[t]he human mind is something of a bag of tricks, cobbled together over the eons by the foresightless process of evolution by natural selection.'[41]

Attempts have been made to explain why the vast majority of the world's population has religious belief. Several naturalists such as E.O. Wilson and Michael Ruse have argued that natural selection could have produced belief in God for survival.[42] Kai Nielsen has continued this line of thinking by allowing for the possibility that the notion of personal dignity has a religious genesis.[43] Daniel Dennett seems to agree as he regards the notion of rights as being '[n]onsense on stilts.'[44]

Of course, if the notion of human dignity did indeed have an evolutionary explanation, it would seem probable that ethics would as well. Mark Linville argues that if naturalistic Darwinian evolution were true, there would be Darwinian counterfactuals. That is, moral values and obligations could have been perceived differently had the circumstances of evolution been different.[45] Linville reflects on the world that Darwin had envisioned:

> Had the circumstances of human evolution been more like those of hive bees or Galapagos boobies or wolves, then the directives of conscience may have led us to judge and behave in ways that are quite foreign to our actual moral sense. Our wolfish philosophers defend justice as inequality, and their erudite reasonings take their cue from the fund of judgments bequeathed to them by their genes. Bees and boobies graced with intellect would judge that siblicide and infanticide are morally required under certain conditions.[46]

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[41] Daniel Dennett, *Breaking the Spell: Religion As a Natural Phenomenon* (New York: Viking, 2006), 107.

[42] See Plantinga's discussion of their views in Plantinga, 'Reply to Beilby's Cohorts,' op. cit., 260.

[43] Kai Nielsen, *Ethics Without God* (London: Pemberton, 1973), 123-125.

[44] Daniel Dennett, *Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meanings of Life* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 507.

[45] Mark Linville, 'The Moral Argument,' in *The Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology,* eds. William Lane Craig and J.P. Moreland (Chichester, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 409.

[46] Ibid.

In the same manner, Michael Ruse states, '[n]ow you know that morality is an illusion put in place by your genes to make you a social cooperator.'[47]

Just as they seek to explain moral values and obligations, naturalists often attempt to explain belief in free will via natural selection. In reference to free will, Patricia Churchland states, '[i]t's like the illusion with morality. We know that moral laws are not specified by the gods. We know that they are, first of all, neurobiologically based or evolutionarily based, and, secondly, culturally based, but it's very useful for people to have the illusion that these are really true.'[48] One of the leading philosophers of mind, John Searle, admits that '[o]ur conception of physical reality simply does not allow for [libertarian] radical freedom.'[49] Searle is not as certain with regard to why evolution would have given man the illusion of alternative possibilities, for he goes on to state, '[f]or that reason, I believe, neither this discussion nor any other will ever convince us that our behavior is unfree.'[50]

Let us continue our tour of metaphysical proposals that have arrived by way of biological adaption. Dennett suggests that the problem of how meaning could be determinate in a determined and Darwinian-fashioned universe could be solved by denying any determinate meaning altogether. He states:

> Something has to give. Either you must abandon meaning rationalism -- the idea that you are, unlike the fledgling cuckoo not only having access, but in having privileged access to your meanings -- or you must abandon the naturalism that insists that you are, after all, just a product of natural selection, whose intentionality is thus derivative and hence potentially indeterminate.[51]

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[47] Michael Ruse, 'God is Dead. Long Live Morality,' last modified March 15, 2010, accessed October 26, 2014, http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/belief/2010/mar/15/morality-evolution-philosophy.

[48] Patricia and Paul Churchland, 'Patricia and Paul Churchland,' in *Conversations on Consciousness: What the Best Minds Think About the Brain, Free Will, and What It Means to Be Human*, ed. Susan Blackmore (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 62.

[49] John Searle, *Minds, Brains, and Science* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 98.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Daniel Dennett, *The Intentional Stance* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987), 313.

Lastly, I would like to point out that according to Plantinga, Michael Rea argues that materialism implies there are no real objects but that things are really propertied goo.[52] It seems to me that regardless of Rea's account of why this is, it is metaphysically possible that there are really no such things as objects (at least given how we currently understand physical objects), but that our system developed in a special way thereby allowing us to perceive 'physical objects' so that we could better organize our surroundings.

3.8 A New Perspective on Paul

On the basis of the few examples considered above, I would now like to take a new look at Paul. However, this time instead of focusing on the relationship with the tiger I propose looking at Paul from his perspective. Suppose that Paul again encounters the tiger. We can ask what false beliefs could be produced that would also lead to a right Darwinian result. In this new scenario Paul lives in a world where there are no objects, perhaps one in which there is only proportioned goo.[53] Suppose, however, that it is in this world that our minds have evolved in such a way as to perceive 'objects' in order to enhance our prospects for survival.[54] Paul finds himself eye-to-eye with a tiger and is distressed about what he should do. He believes that his free will (though he is a determined being) has brought him here and it comforts him as he goes up against the tiger. After thinking for a while, Paul decides it would be best if he were to scream for help just in case any nearby hunters were listening. Of course, his thoughts are indeterminate, just as a cuckoo bird's thoughts would be, but luckily for Paul he does not know that. Paul then makes a good conscious reflection about his situation and the moral obligation he feels to run up against the tiger so that his large family (which he has built up for religious reasons) may get away. Paul attacks the tiger in order that his offspring may live and reproduce.

These beliefs would successfully deliver the correct Darwinian output, and yet these beliefs *could* have all been false. Thus, here is an example in which our cognitive faculties *could* be producing false metaphysical beliefs, and yet these false metaphysical

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[52] Plantinga, 'Reply to Beilby's Cohorts,' *Naturalism Defeated?: Essays on Plantinga's Evolutionary Argument against Naturalism* op. cit., 261.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Perhaps even the metaphysical belief in other minds is really an illusion that natural selection has provided. Something like a Freudian theory could be true, in that in order to survive this cold and dark world our mind has projected other minds to aid in our comforting.

beliefs could in fact be aiding survival. Notice, I have not argued that natural selection did make it the case that we would believe in things like free will and moral obligations for the evolutionary reasons that were given. Nor have I claimed that the evolutionary explanations for the metaphysical beliefs that have been discussed above are orthodox views in the naturalist community. Rather, I am arguing that given N&E, it is inscrutable whether these evolutionary explanations are just as likely as any other sort of explanation as for why a subject holds to certain beliefs.

3.9 Natural Selection, Deism, and Naturalism

Now that I have established how different metaphysical beliefs could contribute to fulfilling the Darwinian requirement and yet not be true beliefs, I would like to bring attention to some more even specific metaphysical beliefs, namely belief in deism[55] and belief in naturalism. As mentioned above, there are certain evolutionary psychologists who affirm that our cognitive faculties produce belief in God as a means to survival. Perhaps believing in something like God is comforting, or perhaps believing in something transcendent to themselves helps a group's unity and community. Now, if for such reasons believing in deism aided a group in meeting the Darwinian requirement, then this belief would seem to be a candidate for what our cognitive faculties *could* produce given natural selection.

This doesn't seem the only candidate however, as perhaps naturalism could also be a belief delivered to us by natural selection. We could imagine a hypothetical scenario in which humans who were inclined to have religious beliefs and form religious rituals in light of them would have been prone to fighting among themselves about these beliefs and rituals. This division would have led to a continually decreasing population. Now, if a mutation naturally occurred in some individuals leading them to naturally believe in naturalism, that would have allowed the predisposed naturalists to have a better chance to meet the Darwinian requirement.

Thus, if both believing in deism and believing in naturalism are genuine possibilities that natural selection could have disposed people towards, there would be no

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[55] Let deism be the belief that though God exists and is responsible in some sense for our creation, he doesn't intervene and in this case, hasn't guided our cognitive faculties through the process of evolution.

way to know which of them, if either, is true. Both of these beliefs could have aided in meeting the Darwinian requirement and both would recognize certain evidence as supporting their views. When the Darwinian requirement could be met by two different and conflicting views, I fail to see how one could know *if one's cognitive faculties are aimed at* producing true metaphysical beliefs or if one's metaphysical beliefs have been produced and kept merely for the purposes of meeting the Darwinian requirement.[56]

3.10 XX Pills and Undercutting Defeaters

Perhaps one now might be tempted to run to science and reason (S&R) and argue that the empirical sciences can come to our rescue. Maybe, left without S&R, we would just have to work from unreliable intuitions that we have been hardwired to have. But with S&R we can verify in an objective way how the world really is. We can then have tangible reasons for believing that free will is an illusion or that there really are such things as objects.

This sort of thinking misses the point entirely. For on this view humans would likely have beliefs about their epistemic justification that would stem from a particular framework resulting from natural selection. This framework would be made up of impulses, intuitions, background beliefs, and moral values, which would all be subjected to particular Darwinian factors that under different circumstances could easily not have actualized. This framework would then be used to interpret and analyze all of the evidence for God's existence.

This case would then seem similar to the one of the man who takes the XX pill. For the purposes of this argument, the XX pill renders it the case that there is at least a 50 percent chance that one's cognitive faculties would permanently malfunction. Even if the man having taken the pill looked around and it appeared to him that nothing had changed, it wouldn't seem that he would have warrant for his belief that R. This would be so even if he did empirical experiments or used reason to try to prove that his cognitive faculties were in fact reliable.

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[56] In addition to these possibilities, given the right external factors, perhaps we could have been biologically constituted in such a way that we would naturally believe in god or gods, but then slowly lose that belief for belief in naturalism. Similarly, the opposite of this also seems possible. The point is, on N&E there is no way of telling if a belief came about from faculties aimed at truth or if the belief is just accepted as the result of the fulfillment of the Darwinian requirement.

3.11 The Evolutionary Argument Against Metaphysical Beliefs

It is in virtue of this that I now propose a new argument within the family of Plantinga's EAAN. Again, let N&E stand for naturalism and evolution.

(1) Given N&E, all of our metaphysical beliefs are either the direct result of being produced to meet the Darwinian requirement, they are evolutionary by-products (spandrels) of beliefs that do, or they are beliefs that are disadvantageous for our survival.

(2) Given (1) it seems possible that under different circumstances, our evolutionary makeup could have been such that we would have held different metaphysical beliefs.

(3) (2) would include all metaphysical beliefs besides those metaphysical beliefs that would be required to be held in order to meet the Darwinian requirement.

(4) Given (2) and (3), if one's cognitive faculties could have produced different metaphysical beliefs, if upon reflection one lacked a reason for giving preference to certain metaphysical beliefs over others, one would lack a way of knowing which metaphysical beliefs were true.

(5) If one lacked a way of knowing which metaphysical beliefs were true, then one would have a defeater for those metaphysical beliefs.

(6) Naturalism is a metaphysical belief that one would lack a reason for giving preference to it over another belief.

(7) Therefore, given (4) and (5), one has a defeater for belief in naturalism.

It appears to me that (1) and (2) would be espoused by anyone who adheres to N&E; thus I suspect that these premises would not be controversial. However, the main thrust of the argument would be with regard to (4) and (6).[57] If the above examples are sufficient to demonstrate its plausibility, at least in showing that (4) and (6) are more plausible than their negation, then I think the argument is a good one and can contribute to the literature that pertains to the evolutionary argument against naturalism. The advantage of this argument is that it permits the possibility of there being certain beliefs that have to be held in order for a person to survive and reproduce. However, as long as there are

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[57] Though I don't foresee (5) being too controversial, for those who don't share my intuition, see Michael Huemer, 'Moore's Paradox and the Norm of Belief,' in *Themes from G.E. Moore: New Essays in Epistemology and Ethics*, eds. Susana Nuccetelli and Gary Seay (New York: Oxford Press, 2007), 142-157.

conflicting metaphysical beliefs which could all lead a subject to meet the Darwinian requirement, the argument can still get off the ground.

3.12 Conclusion

I first argued that naturalism lacks the resources to account for proper function. I did this by interacting with certain notorious naturalistic accounts of proper function as well as Plantinga's critiques of them. I argued that since proper function is a necessary condition for warrant it would seem to follow that naturalism could not be warranted.

I then explained Plantinga's evolutionary argument against naturalism. The core of this argument rested on the claim that, given natural selection, one's cognitive faculties are not aimed at truth but at survival and reproduction. But because one can affirm all sorts of false propositions that despite being false, would still aid in survival and reproduction, one would have a defeater for the belief that one's cognitive faculties were producing true beliefs. Finally, I developed my own version of the argument by focusing exclusively on metaphysical beliefs and, within that genre especially on naturalism and deism.

I have now explained and defended Plantinga's arguments that naturalism cannot account for the proper function condition and the truth-aimed condition of his theory of warrant. The proponent of Plantinga's religious epistemology now has a response to the person who argues that naturalism could be warranted in a similar way to Christian belief. In moving on to the next chapter, I will engage Rose Ann Christian's original Pandora's Box Objection. I will there reject the claim that Shankara's Advaita Vedanta Hinduism can supply the resources to account for and thus utilize Plantinga's epistemology.

Chapter 4: Pandora's Box: Hinduism

4.0 Introduction

In Chapter one, I mentioned Rose Ann Christian's suggestion that a follower of Shankara's Advaita Vedanta tradition could adopt Plantinga's religious epistemology.[1] For Christian, this is problematic; having an epistemological system that would potentially allow a religious tradition that is vastly different from Christianity to also be warranted without the support of an argument seems to greatly weaken Plantinga's religious epistemology. Again, Beilby makes the point that there might be possible objections to such a worldview, yet one might be able to handle these potential defeaters in a similar way as Plantinga does with Christianity.[2] As mentioned, David Tien makes a similar argument that Neo-Confucianism could be warranted in the same way that Plantinga's Christianity could be warranted. Tien finds this troubling for it would show that the follower of Neo-Confucianism is in the same epistemic boat as the Christian.[3] And once more it is important to reiterate that Plantinga seems to believe that various religious traditions could use his system:

> But, you say, isn't this just a bit of logical legerdemain; are there any systems of beliefs seriously analogous to Christian belief for which these claims cannot be made? For any such set of beliefs, couldn't we find a model under which the beliefs in question have warrant, and such that given the truth of those beliefs, there are no philosophical objections to the truth of the model? Well, probably something like that *is* true for the other theistic religions: Judaism, Islam, some forms of Hinduism, and some forms of Buddhism, some forms of American Indian religion. Perhaps

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[1] Rose Ann Christian, 'Plantinga, Epistemic Permissiveness, and Metaphysical Pluralism,' *Religious Studies* 28, no. 4 (1992): 553-573.

[2] James Beilby, *Epistemology As Theology: An Evaluation of Alvin Plantinga's Religious Epistemology* (Hants, England: Ashgate, 2005), 131.

[3] David W. Tien, 'Warranted Neo-Confucian Belief: Religious Pluralism and the Affections in the Epistemologies of Wang Yangming (1472-1529) and Alvin Plantinga,' *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 55, no. 4 (2004): 31-55.

these religions are like Christianity in that they are subject to no *de jure* objections that are independent of *de facto* objections.[4]

Now, I am unsure what forms of Buddhism and Hinduism Plantinga has in mind. If by forms of Hinduism or Buddhism he has in mind those forms that espouse personal theism, I might be sympathetic to his comment. However, there are major historic philosophical forms of Hinduism that wouldn't fall into this category and I am unaware of any Buddhist tradition that would as well. It is with this stated that I would like to challenge the claim that Plantinga has allowed a wide range of serious religious beliefs to be warranted in the same way that Christian belief could be warranted.

Since the earliest formulation of this objection can be found in Christian's work, in the context of her claim that the Advaita Vedanta tradition could use Plantinga's religious epistemology, I will first address her argument. However, in order to properly address it, I will need to articulate Advaita Vedanta's core doctrinal beliefs as seen in its central thinker Shankara. This will lead us to see that Shankara endorsed a type of proper functionalism. Since Shankara endorsed something like proper functionalism, it would seem to provide even more reason to think that Plantinga's epistemology would allow the core belief of Advaita Veldanta to be warranted in a similar way as the core belief of Christianity. This will further motivate a response to Christian's original objection and provide more plausibility for it being able to account for the preconditions that are necessary to make Plantinga's theory of warrant intelligible.

After exegeting the central beliefs of Advaita Vedanta Hinduism, I will argue that it lacks the resources to make intelligible both the proper function condition and the truth aimed condition. This will be due to Advaita Vedanta's ontological commitment that all of reality consists of the impersonal Brahman. Having interacted with Christian's claim about the Advaita Vedanta tradition, I will entertain the idea that Samkhya, its dualistic counterpart, could do better in accounting for the relevant preconditions. I will approach this tradition in a similar way in that I will first exegete its central claims. In my analysis of the Samkhya tradition, I will argue that it also fails to account for the proper function condition and the truth aimed condition. This is because its tradition is nearly an exact parallel to naturalism. Having surveyed these Hindu traditions, I will move on to the next

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[4] Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 350.

chapter where I survey their religious cousin, Buddhism, in order to determine if it will do better in accounting for the preconditions that are necessary to make Plantinga's theory of warrant intelligible.

4.1 A Brief Biography of Shankara

To help better understand Shankara's religious claims and beliefs, it will be important to explain the context that he lived and taught in. Shankara was likely born around the year 788 into a Namburdri Brahmin family in a place called Kaladi.[5] Early in life, Shankara showed a high aptitude for abstract thinking and soon renounced the world. Shankara at a young age began to study under Govinda (a disciple of Guadapada)[6] and he soon became famous for going from city to city reforming Hindu practices, starting monasteries, and debating famous gurus on certain metaphysical and religious epistemological claims.[7] At the heart of all of his teaching was nirguna Brahman, that is to say, Brahman without qualities.[8]

Though his debating skills were unrivalled, he is even better known for his writing. Shankara has commentaries on the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, and the Vedanta Sutras. The most influential and well known philosophical writings that are attributed to him would include the *Upadesasaharsri*, and the *Vivekachudamani*.[9] His writing gave rational thinkers a way to embrace his Hindu teachings[10] and it gave the religious a way to interpret scriptures in a consistent and philosophically sophisticated manner.[11] In summarizing the life of Shankara, Radhakrishnan states the following:

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[5] Eliot Deutschand and Rohit Dalvi, *The essential Vedanta: a new source book of Advaita Vedanta* (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2004), 161.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., 161-62.

[8] Ibid., 162.

[9] Though *Vivekachudamani* might not have be written by Shankara, it is seen an orthodox text (one that stems from and accurately represents Shankara's thought) within the Vedanta community.

[10] For both Plantinga and Shankara, religious belief is what motivates philosophy.

[11] Deutschand and Dalvi, *The essential Vedanta: a new source book of Advaita Vedanta*, op. cit., 162.

The life of Sankara makes a strong impression of contraries. He is a philosopher and a poet, a savant and a saint, a mystic and a religious reformer. Such diverse gifts did he possess that different images present themselves, if we try to recall his personality. One sees him in youth on fire with intellectual ambition a stiff and intrepid debater; another regards him as a shrewed political genius, attempting to impress upon the people a sense of unity; for a third, he is a calm philosopher engaged in the single effort to expose the contradictions of life and thought with an unmatched incisiveness; for a fourth he is the mystic who declares that we are all greater than we know.[12]

4.2 Shankara's Philosophy

Shankara bases his philosophy on the formula '[t]hat art thou.'[13] Shankara believes that Brahman is an absolute being, devoid of qualities. He has no genus and he is related to nothing.[14] Shankara makes this clear as he states, 'Brahman is the reality - the one existence, absolutely independent of human thought or idea. Because of the ignorance of our human minds, the universe seems to be composed of diverse forms. It is Brahman alone.'[15] Thus for Shankara ultimately, all that exists is the unified and absolute oneness that is Brahman. Though the Scriptures seem to indicate Brahman being personal and interacting with creation, Shankara distinguishes different layers of reality. Victoria Harrison summarizes Shankara's categories in the following way:

Layer 1: Absolute reality.

Nirguna Brahman, Qualityless Brahman, Brahman/Atman.

Layer 2: Absolute reality seen through categories imposed by human thought.

Saguna Brahman, Brahman with qualities. Creator and governor of the world and a personal god (Isvara).

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[12] S. Radhakrishnan, *The Vedanta According to Śaṁkara and Rāmānuja* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1928), 16; Paul Devanandan, *The Concept of Maya* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1950), 93.

[13] Zimmer, *Philosophies of India* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1951), 414.

[14] Devanandan, *The Concept of Maya*, op. cit., 98.

[15] Śaṅkarācārya, Prabhavananda, and Christopher Isherwood, *Shankara's Crest-Jewel of Discrimination (*Hollywood, CA: Vedanta Press, 1978), 70.

Layer 3: Conventional reality.

The material world, which includes 'empirical' selves.[16]

Christopher Isherwood makes a similar distinction within Shankara's thought as he asks, '[a]re there then two Gods - one the impersonal Brahman, the other the personal Iswara [sic.]? No-for Brahman only appears as Iswara [sic.] when viewed by the relative ignorance of Maya. Iswara has the same degree of reality as Maya has. God the Person is not the ultimate nature of Brahman.'[17]

Kant's distinction of the phenomena and noumena is somewhat analogous to Shankara's layers of reality. Given this, Kant's distinctions can shed light on what Shankara argues for. For Kant, human minds attempt to understand the noumenal realm, that is the realm in which things exists in themselves and independent of human experience; but, in doing so, human minds project only things in how they appear. The phenomenal realm exists merely as the appearance of what is most real, but this realm or layer is not the most ultimate realm or layer of existence. In the same way, Shankara argues that, because of maya human faculties are aimed towards producing conventional beliefs that don't reflect ultimate reality. Moreover, even after overcoming a sort of conventional way of perceiving the world, at the second layer of reality, human faculties still project categories onto the Divine that, at the ultimate level, lack existence. It isn't until one can stop the projection of categories that '[a]ll sense of duality is obliterated'[18] and one is illuminated in knowing the first layer of reality, namely that all is the impersonal Brahman. In Kant's terms, this layer of reality would be the noumenal realm.

Zimmer draws out the consequences of this by stating, '[o]nly knowledge (vidya) effects release (moksa) from the sheaths and bondages of nescience, and moreover this knowledge is not something to be obtained but is already present within, as the core and support of our existence.'[19] Zimmer goes on to state that realization can be attained through critical thought, following the orthodox tradition, and practicing mind-amplifying techniques of yoga.[20] Zimmer puts as a special emphasis on yoga practices within

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[16] Victoria Harrison, *Eastern Philosophy: The Basics* (London: Routledge, 2012), 58.

[17] Śaṅkarācārya, Prabhavananda, and Isherwood, op. cit., 18.

[18] Ibid., 104.

[19] Zimmer, *Philosophies of India*, op. cit., 416.

Shankara's thought as he states, '[y]ogic exercises of intensive concentration are the main implement for the realization of the truth communicated by the guru; but these cannot be undertaken by anyone who has not already prepared himself, by means of cleaning austerities and impeccable conduct, in a spirit of virtuous self-abnegation.'[21]

To summarize what has been established thus far, it is important to emphasize that in the ultimate layer of reality there is only impersonal Brahman. Moreover, though impersonal Brahman is the only thing that exists in the ultimate sense, maya creates the illusion of diversity. Human beings are trapped as their cognitive faculties consistently produce belief in diversity, including the belief in the existence of empirical self. In order for man to escape this trap, man must have the right realization that all that exists in the ultimate layer of reality is impersonal Brahman. Men can come to this right realization through dedicating their lives to the right practices, which especially includes being instructed by a guru and following through with the right mind-altering yoga techniques. Upon faithfully doing this, according to Devanandan, one, 'by the cogitation of absolute identity, finds absolute rest in the Self, consisting of bliss, then he is freed from the fear of transmigratory existence.'[22]

4.3 Advaita Vedanata and the Proper Function Condition

Having now established the central tenets of Shankara's Advaita Vedanta tradition, I will take a closer look at Shankara's epistemology. This will help further articulate Christian's claim that Advaita Vedanta could be warranted in the same way that Christian belief could be warranted. Using the work of Thomas Forsthoefel, I will come to the conclusion that Shankara's epistemology shares much in common with Plantinga's epistemology. However, I will then argue that though they share a similar epistemology, unlike Christianity, Advaita Vedanta lacks the resources to account for the preconditions that make Plantinga's epistemology intelligible.

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[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid., 417.

[22] Devanandan, *The Concept of Maya*, op. cit., 99.

Forsthoefel argues that Shankara held that what ultimately brings one to the knowledge of impersonal Brahman is introspective access. This access would be self-justifying as the subject would have immediate knowledge of Brahman.[23] Though there is a strong internalist component to Shankara's epistemology, introspective access is not sufficient. It is necessary to also have certain cultural and external mechanisms. Shankara required that the internalist component was accompanied and supported by certain external processes such as religious texts (Vedas), tradition, a guru,[24] and the mind working in the way it should.[25] Forsthoefel makes this clear when he states the following:

> It remains for Advaita, and for all traditions, I think, to establish a culture of liberation in which doctrine, value, text and interpretation weave together a coherent circuit of doxastic practices. These belief-forming mechanisms have a variety of internal checks – norms of exegesis, standards of argument, the coherence of a received tradition, and as we will see, the examples of extraordinary teachers and saints. When these mechanisms function properly, they contribute to a reliable cognitive output. And in the case of Advaita, although liberation ultimately negates constructive discourse, various cognitive inroads are nevertheless made to understand, communicate and evoke the truth and experience of Brahman. Teachings, texts, practices, and the examples of saints and gurus, thus help constitute the 'cognitive environment' of a subject. Combined with the subject's own 'properly functioning' mental equipment – in a mundane sense, but also with respect to doxastic practices of the particular culture of liberation – the cognitive outputs of these processes may enjoy prima facie justification. We see, therefore, in addition to traditional Advaita's internalism, a deeply implicated externalism in its epistemology of religious experience.[26]

Being that Shankara's epistemology endorses that certain external things (including one's mental equipment) need to be properly functioning, it would seem that Shankara should and would endorse Plantinga's proper function condition for warrant. Moreover, it also seems like having the right doxastic practices functioning properly will contribute to

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[23] Thomas Forsthoefel, *Knowing Beyond Knowledge: Epistemologies of Religious Experience in Classical and Modern Advaita* (Alderhot, England: Ashgate, 2002), 71.

[24] Ibid., 61-62.

[25] Ibid., 53.

[26] Ibid., 61-62.

the right sort of epistemic environment that a subject needs to be in, in order to have the right sort of internal access or awareness. Thus, in addition to the first condition of Plantinga's theory of warrant, Shankara would likely agree with the right epistemic environment condition. I will now move on to discuss the commonality and distinction between Shankara and Plantinga in regard to Plantinga's truth aimed condition.

4.4 Advaita Vedanta and the Truth-Aimed Condition

At some level, both Plantinga and Shankara advocate that human beliefs produced in a certain way lead one to knowledge. Plantinga's emphasis is on human cognitive proper function and on having a design plan aimed at producing true beliefs. Shankara, however, emphasizes how human beliefs and practices bring about certain effects that lead one to the right state where one can then have the appropriate internal access or awareness. For Shankara, this is especially the case in regard to conventional beliefs that don't ultimately reflect reality (such beliefs could be considered illusions). A man who thinks he sees a snake when what he really sees is a piece of rope can still die from the heart attack that the illusion helps produce. Thus, even though human cognitive faculties are aimed toward producing beliefs about things that don't exist at the ultimate layer of reality, these beliefs can still have a real impact on how humans function and gain knowledge.

Even if one granted this, wouldn't it still be obvious that Shankara's worldview fundamentally denies Plantinga's truth aimed condition, given that the truth aimed condition requires that faculties are geared towards producing true belief according to what is ultimately real? In responding to this, one might try to argue indirectly that our cognitive faculties can still be aimed toward producing true belief. One might argue that even granting that human faculties are aimed towards producing conventional beliefs that don't reflect ultimate reality, through the effects of the Vedas and gurus, our cognitive faculties could indirectly be aimed at producing true belief in Brahman. Just as the illusion of a snake can have a real effect on a man's heart, so the illusion of the Veda's and the gurus can cause the right realization. Shankara expounds classic objections:

> If we acquiesce in the doctrine of absolute unity, the ordinary means of right
> knowledge, perception, &c., become invalid because the absence of manifoldness
> deprives them of their objects; just as the idea of a man becomes invalid after the

right idea of the post (which at first had been mistaken for a man) has presented itself. Moreover, all the texts embodying injunctions and prohibitions will lose their purport if the distinction on which their validity depends does not really exist. And further, the entire body of doctrine which refers to final release will collapse, if the distinction of teacher and pupil on which it depends is not real. And if the doctrine of release is untrue, how can we maintain the truth of the absolute unity of the Self, which forms an item of that doctrine?[27]

Shankara then responds to these objections:

These objections, we reply, do not damage our position because the entire complex of phenomenal existence is considered as true as long as the knowledge of Brahman being the Self of all has not arisen; just as the phantoms of a dream are considered to be true until the sleeper wakes. For as long as a person has not reached the true knowledge of the unity of the Self, so long it does not enter his mind that the world of effects with its means and objects of the right knowledge and its results of actions is untrue; he rather, in consequence of his ignorance, looks on mere effects (such as body, offspring, wealth, &c.) as forming part of and belonging to his Self, forgetful of Brahman being in reality the Self of all. Hence, as long as true knowledge does not present itself, there is no reason why the ordinary course of secular and religious activity should not hold on undisturbed.[28]

Shankara argues that as long as one doesn't come to the knowledge that all is impersonal Brahman, the Vedas and gurus can still aid in bringing about full realization and enlightenment. The epistemic subject will be able to benefit from the utility of these conventional beliefs in the same way that a man could be affected by a heart attack from the illusion of seeing a snake. As long as real knowledge is lacking, the external conditions will still create the right sort of environment that a subject needs to become enlightened. Having addressed this, I will now argue that both the proper function condition that seems to be endorsed by the Advaita Vedanta tradition and the tradition's attempt to ground the truth aimed condition fall short of the glory of warrant.

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[27] Samkara, *Brahmasutrabhasya*, in *The essential Vedanta: a new source book of Advaita Vedanta*, eds. Eliot Deutschand and Rohit Dalvi (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2004), 230.

[28] Ibid.

4.5 The Preconditions of Warrant and Advaita Vedanta

There appears, at least at first, to be an obvious reason why the Advaita Vedanta tradition couldn't account for the preconditions that make Plantinga's theory of warrant intelligible. Namely, at the ultimate layer of reality, there are no such things as cognitive faculties that form beliefs via proper function and have a design plan. All that exists is Brahman without qualities. According to Plantinga, proper function and those things that are entailed by it, such as a design plan, would need to exist in ultimate reality; but given Advaita Vedanta's view of reality, there could be no such things.

Moreover, there is another reason to think that the Advaita Vedanta religion couldn't account for the preconditions that make proper function intelligible. Earlier in this project, I looked at well-accepted naturalistic attempts to account for proper function. I argued that these accounts and others like it fail. Plantinga thinks this is due to the missing component of a conscious and intentional designer. If Plantinga's critiques and observation about naturalistic accounts of proper function are right, it would seem to follow that Advaita Vedanta will likewise lack the resources to be able to account for the proper function condition. This is because Advaita Vedanta lacks something like a personal and intentional conscious designer at the ultimate level of reality. Brahman for Advaita Vedanta is impersonal and consists of all reality. It seems hard to see how such a view could provide the necessary resources that one would need to account for such a normative condition as proper function.

Differing from naturalism, perhaps in response to these two objections, the Advaita Vedanta proponent could argue that Plantinga's proper function condition is necessary insofar as one is referring to the second or third layer of reality; and at these layers of reality, things like faculties, design plans, and a personal God all exist in some sense. Thus, Shankara might endorse the following proper function account:

(SPF) For something to be properly functioning outside of the 1st layer of reality, that something must be fulfilling an intention given to it by an intentional agent that exists outside of it.

Though this seems to be a possible response and it surely isn't a response available to the naturalist, it wouldn't seem to be a preferable response for at least three reasons. First, this would require a drastic and fundamental change to what Plantinga intends his theory of warrant to be about. To use Advaita Vedanta terms, Plantinga's theory is intended to tell us what in 'ultimate reality' needs to be in place for a subject to have a warranted belief, and thus, introducing a theory of warrant on layers of reality, two of which that ultimately aren't real would fall short of that intention. Second, if Plantinga's theory is intended to tell us what in ultimate reality needs to be in place for a subject to have a warranted belief, the SPF account would seem to lack motivation. If, ultimately speaking, there doesn't exist proper function or a personal God to account for proper function, what would be the motive for arguing what the conditions for warrant are in the layers of reality that aren't ultimately real? Lastly, if the proponent of the Advaita Vedenta tradition were to try to use Plantinga's theory of warrant to show how their belief could be warranted, but yet the proponent also rejects that proper function exists at the ultimate layer of reality, then for the Plantingian, the consequence of rejecting the proper function condition at the ultimate layer of reality would be to reject knowledge at the ultimate layer of reality.

Moving on to the truth aimed condition: Can the advocate of Advaita Vedanta establish a way to indirectly account for this condition of warrant? As discussed earlier, one could argue that given the causal power of illusions, it would seem possible that if certain illusions function in a way that they should, the illusions might reliably help a subject produce true beliefs. In the case of Advaita Vedanta, perhaps the conventional beliefs in the Veda and the guru can still cause a person to act in such a way that it points them to the truth of reality, which is the truth of Brahman.

But would one really have a tight connection to truth given that one came to such a belief by an illusion? For Plantinga, the truth aimed condition is a part of the design plan for how cognitive faculties should operate. It would seem to follow that, if there was no such thing as proper function at the ultimate layer of reality, one couldn't account for the truth aimed condition at the ultimate layer of reality either.

Perhaps one could just deny the proper function condition and advocate that as long as these illusions or conventional beliefs reliably produce true beliefs, one would have warrant. It would seem that two things would follow from this. First, this would no longer be Plantinga's theory of warrant as the proper function condition is at the heart of his

theory. Second, if the illusions or conventional beliefs weren't designed to accomplish the goal of bringing a subject to enlightenment and it just happened to work in this way, there would appear to be a loose connection to truth.[29]

In conclusion, I first argued that Shankara's epistemology shares a lot of the same conditions with Plantinga's epistemology. I moved on to addressing if Shankara's system could account for the preconditions that make those conditions of warrant intelligible. I argued that it couldn't account for such conditions given that Advaita Vedanta's ontological commitment about ultimate reality would seem to indicate that there is no such thing as proper function or a design plan. In addition to this, it appears that the Advaita Vedanta tradition wouldn't contain any resources over naturalism, in leading one to think that it would fare better in accounting for proper function without a personal God. After arguing this, I moved on to argue that Advaita Vedanta could not account for the truth-aimed condition of Plantinga's theory. I argued that Plantinga's truth-aimed condition is part of the overall design plan of how one's faculties should function. If the truth-aimed condition can't be separated from the proper function condition, the Advaita Vedanta tradition wouldn't be able to account for this condition either. In taking these arguments in a cumulative manner, I have established good reason for thinking that Advaita Vedanta fails in accounting for the relevant preconditions that are required to make intelligible Plantinga's theory of warrant. This would mean that the core belief of the Advaita Vedanta religion could not be warranted in the same way that the core belief of Christianity can be warranted. Having now addressed this Hindu tradition, I will entertain and then reject the possibility of the Samkhya tradition being able to be warranted, given Plantinga's epistemology.

4.6 The System of Kapila

Kapila is the assumed founder of the Samkhya religion. Tradition informs us that Kapila was seen as a mystical and legendary figure. He was thought to be the incarnation of Visnu, the incarnation of Agni, and even the very son of Brahman.[30] The man Kapila likely

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[29] The Swampman example demonstrates this.

[30] Sarvepalli Radhakrishnanand and Charles A. Moore, *The Samkhya-Karika*, in *A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy*, eds. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnanand and Charles A. Moore (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957), 425.

lived before the Common Era during the seventh century.[31] This would make the Samkhya tradition one of the oldest philosophical traditions in all of Hinduism.

During Kapila's time, the contemporary cultic practice and the theological emphasis was that of trusting in ritual practices. Vedic priests performing the right animal sacrifices and doing the right rituals was part of the central paradigm makeup of pre-Kapila Vedic religion.[32] The Samkhya system challenged this paradigm by criticizing both the traditional understanding of heaven and its emphasis on cultic practices. It is important to note that though Kapila's system was a critique to such practices, it didn't hold that these practices and views were totally useless or wrong.

Samkhya contrasts sharply with Advaita Vedanta Hinduism as it actually shares much more in common with contemporary Western naturalistic philosophy. Unlike Advaita Vedanta, Samkhya is a dualistic philosophy, recognizing the existence of ultimately two substances: prakrti and purusa. Prakrti is that which is primordial matter.[33] It is the stuff that all of the world evolves from. It is unmanifested, undifferentiated, undecaying, and unconscious.[34] Harrison states, '[p]rakrti can be imagined as an inert mass of dark matter that only becomes active when purusa [consciousness] starts taking an interest in it.'[35]

Prakrti is made up of distinct infra-atomic like particles called gunas.[36] The three gunas that make up prakrti include: Sattva (light), Rajas (passion or energy), and Tamas (inertia).[37] These gunas are always in a state of flux.[38] The gunas can assemble and

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[31] Ibid.

[32] Pulinbihari Chakravarti, *Origin and Development of the Sāṃkhya System of Thought* (New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corp, 1975), 4.

[33] Harrison, *Eastern Philosophy: The Basics*, op. cit., 63.

[34] Chakravarti, *Origin and Development of the Sāṃkhya System of Thought*, op. cit., 208.

[35] Harrison, *Eastern Philosophy: The Basics*, op. cit., 63.

[36] Chakravarti, *Origin and Development of the Sāṃkhya System of Thought*, op. cit., 93; Ishvara Krishna*, The Samkhya-Karika*, in *A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy*, eds. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnanand and Charles A. Moore (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957), 431.

[37] Harrison, *Eastern Philosophy: The Basics*, op. cit., 63.

[38] Chakravarti, *Origin and Development of the Sāṃkhya System of Thought*, op. cit., 209.

connect in different ways and when they do, the gunas are called dharmas.[39] These different combinations of the gunas (dharmas) are primarily responsible for our illusions of pleasure, pain, and cognitive malfunction.[40] One could properly call these illusions maya.[41]

The other fundamental substance that exists is referred to as purusa. Purusa is pure consciousness. By consciousness, it is important to note that the claim isn't that reality is an individual or a self as one might understand consciousness in Western philosophy; rather, consciousness is thought to be something more analogous to what the Advaita Vedanta tradition understands about Brahman on the 1st layer of reality (Brahman without qualities).

Pulinbihari Chakravarti schematizes the arguments that Isvarakrsna, the name connected with the oldest work in the Samkhya tradition, and his commentators advance to establish the existence of the purusa:

(1) Since all composite bodies are for the use of some one other than themselves, so purusa exists.
(2) Since all manifestations of prakrti are objects forming different permutations and combinations of the gunas, there must be a subject, a knower of these manifestations, who should be devoid of gunas.
(3) Since there must be a presiding entity for which prakrti produces this variegated universe, that is no other but purusa.
(4) Since there must be some one to enjoy the products of prakrti which are either agreeable or disagreeable, that is none but purusa who exists for the sake of enjoying them.
(5) Since there is a tendency towards liberation, purusa must exist. [42]

(1) is supported by recognizing certain observations in scenarios like the following:

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[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid., 213.

[41] Ibid., 209.

[42] Ibid., 315.

> You look around in your bedroom and you realize that the bed exists for a body to lie in it. The sheets exist for a person to cover up with on the bed. The mosquito net exists to keep out misquotes for the person lying in the bed. Everything that we experience exists for the purpose of something else.[43]

Arguments like the ones formulated here help explain why the Samkhya advocates felt that it was rational to accept the doctrine of the pursua. Now that I have introduced the two fundamental substances that exist, according to the Samkhya system, I will move the discussion to addressing how these substances are thought to have come together.

Though Samkhya would deny that these two substances had a beginning,[44] there was a time when purusa and prakrti existed apart from one another. Thus, purusa and prakrti are not inherently connected, they are only superficially connected. It is unnatural for one to be affected by the other, but just as a transparent crystal lying close to a red flower can be contaminated, so can purusa be contaminated by prakrti.[45] Samkhya is nearly silent on the matter of what caused purusa to become contaminated with prakrti. This is seen as a sort of 'cosmic blip.'[46] Samkhya is largely an atheistic philosophy[47] and denies that God had any role in it.[48] In fact, the gods that do exist are only temporary superhumans who upon dying, go back into the cycle of rebirth.[49]

Like in contemporary Western naturalistic philosophy, there is thought to be an evolutionary process that took place when the purusa came into contact with the prakrti. And like in contemporary naturalism, this evolutionary process is not thought to be guided by any intentional being. In the Samkhya tradition, the prakrti is responsible for the cause of the universe and all causes within it, thus a postulation of the Divine would be considered useless and unwarranted.[50]

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[43] Ibid., 315.

[44] Ibid., 12.

[45] Ibid., 319.

[46] Harrison, *Eastern Philosophy: The Basics*, op. cit., 63-64.

[47] Ibid., 66.

[48] Ishvara Krishna, *The Sāṃkhya-Karika*, in *A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy*, op. cit., 442.

[49] Zimmer, *Philosophies of India*, op. cit., 298; 305.

The evolutionary process that took place, according to the Samkhya tradition, is supposed to explain why the world looks the way that it does, which would include an explanation of why people experience pain and evil. The problem with the current condition of humankind is that humans lack the ability to discriminate between the purusa and the praktri. In reality, 'the individual is not body, life, or mind, but the informing self, silent, peaceful, eternal. The self is pure spirit.'[51] The empirical self that exists is the free soul combined with evolved prakrti. The purusa has forgotten its true nature as it has become deluded with the belief that it thinks, feels, and acts.[52] According to Chakravarti, '[s]o long as this conjunction exists, it thinks itself to be one with prakrti and thereby attributes to its own self miseries and such other properties which actually belong to the latter…[t]his is where one cognizes the non-eternal as eternal and the impure as the pure. It is opposed to right knowledge.'[53]

Because one is trapped into thinking that the purusa is one with the prakrti, one needs liberation. This liberation comes by way of right knowledge. According to Zimmer, '[t]rue insight, "discriminating knowledge" (viveka), can be achieved only by bringing this mind to a state of rest.'[54] One must suppress certain activities of the mind in order for desire to disappear. The five things that need to be suppressed go as follows:

1. Right notions, derived from accurate perception (right perception, inference, and testimony)
2. Erroneous notions, derived from misapprehension
3. Fantasy or fancy
4. Sleep
5. And memory.[55]

[50] Matthew Dasti, 'Hindu Theism,' in *Routledge Companion to Theism*, eds. Charles Taliaferro, Victoria Harrison, and Stewart Goetz (New York: Routledge, 2013), 35; Ishvara Krishna, *The Sāṃkhya-Karika*, in *A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy*, op. cit., 442.

[51] Radhakrishnan and Moore, *A Source Book in Indian Philosophy*, op. cit., 425.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Chakravarti., *Origin and Development of the Sāṃkhya System of Thought*, op. cit., 319.

[54] Zimmer, *Philosophies of India*, op. cit., 287.

[55] Ibid., 287-288.

For the Samkhya tradition, in order to achieve enlightenment, our minds need to enter into a state of rest. Being that all of these activities are mental activities (mental activity still goes on while one sleeps), these things need to be suppressed. In suppressing these items, all other mental activities and desire will automatically disappear.[56] Through the appropriate practice of yoga and through the suppression of certain mental activity, one will have the capacity to rightly discriminate between the prakrti and the purusa. This will lead to the realization that there exists an ontological distinction between oneself and the prakrti. Only when this occurs, does one enter enlightenment and obtain salvation from the pain and evil in the world.

4.7 Samkhya and Warrant-As-Proper Function

Having articulated the central tenets of the Samkhya tradition, I will now argue that like the Advaita Vedanta tradition it seems to require proper function in order for one to be warranted in believing in its core doctrines. I will briefly argue this for two reasons. First, formulating Samkhya's epistemology in a more systematic way will enable a clearer interaction with it. Second, if the Samkhya tradition would endorse aspects of Plantinga's theory of warrant, it would seem to bolster the Pandora's Box Objection in that not only can the Samkhya tradition use Plantinga's epistemology to be warranted, but his epistemology is actually entailed by the Samkhya tradition. After addressing Samkhya's epistemology, I will then move on to arguing that, like naturalism, it predicts its own unwarrantedness.

4.8 Samkhya and the Proper Function Condition

Just as Advaita Vedanta requires the practice of yoga working in a certain way, that is the practice of certain mind and body techniques that enable one to get into a particular cognitive state, so Samkhya emphasizes the necessity of yoga working in a certain way in order for one to properly discriminate between the purusa and prakrti. The right practice of yoga is thus essential to the Samkhya tradition. This being the case, there appears to be a way in which yoga should be done to achieve the right goal and this would presuppose

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[56] Ibid., 288.

both a design plan for how to rightly do yoga and the actual carrying out of this plan (proper function). Moreover, as with Shankara's epistemology, when the act of yoga is functioning properly, a particular epistemic environment becomes a favorable one to produce a true belief. The design plan might even be a good one to the degree this belief is produced with a high objective probability of it being true.

Furthermore, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, one of Samkhya's traditional arguments for the purusa is that everything that we perceive to exist, exists for something else. If this is the case, it would seem that each thing has a function that is connected with its existence for something else. In the classic example that was given, the function of a bed is to let a person sleep and the function of the sheets is to keep the person sleeping warm. These items fulfilling the purpose of allowing a person to sleep or keeping a person warm would mean that these items are properly functioning according to what these items were designed to do. If this sort of argument is fundamental to the Samkhya tradition, then one would have another reason for affirming that the Samkhya tradition would likely endorse the proper function condition.

4.9 Samkhya and the Preconditions for Warrant

Having now established certain parts of Samkhya's epistemology, I will argue that Samkhya lacks the needed resources to account for the proper function condition and the truth-aimed condition. I will do this by briefly reiterating the proper function dilemma that its Western counterpart naturalism, and its related Hindu tradition Advaita Vedanta, both face. I will then move onto arguing that it likewise can't account for these conditions because of its ontological commitments.

Earlier in this chapter, I argued that Shankara failed to account for the proper function condition. I argued this for two reasons. One of those reasons emerged as a result of using Plantinga's critiques against naturalism and arguing that all of the current well-known accounts of proper function seem to fall prey to two sorts of counterexample. I argued that the reason they fall short is because proper function seems to require a designer. If this is right, then for the reasons argued, Advaita Vedanta Hinduism would likewise fail in accounting for proper function. This critique seems like it could further be extended to the Samkhya tradition as it likewise lacks a conscious and intentional designer.

Again, in this tradition, humans came about through an evolutionary process that was not guided by the gods or any other agent. Thus, Samkhya actually shares the exact reason with naturalism as to why something like proper function is not attainable. As long as there is nothing within the Samkhya tradition that will add any extra advantage in accounting for proper function compared to naturalism, I think if naturalism entails the rejection of the proper function condition, then it would follow that Samkhya would as well. This can be seen in the following syllogism:

> (1) If naturalism cannot account for the proper function condition, then the Samkhya tradition cannot account for the proper function condition.
> (2) Naturalism cannot account for proper function.
> (3) Therefore, the Samkhya tradition cannot account for the proper function condition.

4.10 Samkhya and the Truth-Aimed Condition

In the regard to the truth-aimed condition, according to Samkhya, our cognitive faculties have come about by the way of unguided evolution, which began to take place from a 'cosmic blip.' This would mean that all of our cognitive equipment has been driven from this accidental process. Regarding this, Harrison states, '[t]hey claimed, for instance, that our capacities of sense - hearing, feeling, seeing, tasting and smelling-evolved from the ego (the sense we have of being a self), which itself is an evolutionary product, once removed, from primordial matter.'[57] Now, even if one were to grant that one could have properly functioning faculties, what reason would one have to think that there is an objectively high probability that one's faculties would be producing true beliefs? What reason would one have to trust faculties that come about through an accidental and unguided process? I will now give an example of why, in most cases, one would be irrational in holding that their faculties are reliable, that is given the fact that they came about by accident. If this is so, any beliefs that are formed after realizing that one's faculties aren't reliable, could not be warranted.

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[57] Victoria Harrison, *Eastern Philosophy: The Basics*, op. cit., 63.

The Junkyard Aircraft Example goes as follows: Imagine a junkyard that contains a sufficient amount of material to create an X-15 aircraft (the world's fastest aircraft) if the material was rightly assembled. Now, imagine that all of the material that would be needed was spread about in the junkyard. If a tornado came through the junkyard and hit all of the material in such a way that what appeared to be an X-15 emerged, would one be rational in trusting the equipment of the aircraft? Is there a likely chance that the aircraft is a reliable one?

There is a strong intuition that would lead us to believe that the aircraft is not reliable. Even if it were, in fact, constructed in such a way as to be reliable, the probability of this would be so low that one wouldn't be warranted in holding to it. In the same way, I fail to see how the Samkhya advocate could show that this case would not be analogous to her own faculties. It would seem that the best the Samkhya advocate could do would be to advocate for a principle like natural selection in order to explain how faculties could be accidental products of evolution and yet trustworthy in that there is a high probability of them producing true beliefs. However, as I argued in Chapter three, this sort of solution doesn't seem promising as beliefs could fulfill a certain evolutionary requirement and yet be false.

This leads me to believe that even if one could grant that Samkhya could account for the proper function condition (and thus the design plan that is aimed at producing true belief), the Samkhya tradition would still predict its own unwarrantedness. If the advocate for Samkhya is convinced that the chances of his faculties actually being reliable is low or inscrutable, and the advocate was without any further faculty or reason that could override this low probability or inscrutability,[58] the advocate would have a defeater for his belief in the reliability of his faculties. Moreover, if there was a defeater that came about from certain inherent doctrines that belonged to the tradition, and if the defeater led to one not being able to affirm that he had reliable truth producing faculties, it would follow that the tradition is also inherently self-defeating. Let SM stand for the Samkhya tradition and let R stand for the reliability of one's cognitive faculties. One could formulate the following syllogism to express this concern:

(1) Anyone who accepts that P(R/SM) is low or inscrutable has a defeater for R.

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[58] I have in mind here that a faculty might produce non-propositional evidence which could then outweigh the propositional evidence against the reliability of one's faculties.

(2) Anyone who has a defeater for R has a defeater for any other belief she thinks she has, including her belief in the Samkhya tradition.

(3) If one who accepts the Samkhya tradition thereby acquires a defeater for the Samkhya tradition, the Samkhya tradition is self-defeating and cannot rationally be accepted.[59]

It seems that this argument hinges on it being plausible that P(R/SM) is low or inscrutable. If my argument above gives one good reason to affirm (1), it would follow that there is further reason to affirm that even if the Samkhya tradition could account for proper function, one wouldn't be warranted in believing that the truth-aimed condition could be satisfied, and thus the Samkhya tradition would still predict its own unwarrantedness (which would entail that the Samkhya advocate wouldn't be able to have his religious belief warranted by way of Plantinga's epistemology).

4.11 Possible Responses

Perhaps the advocate of the Samkhya tradition could argue that, though the process of evolution began by a cosmic blip (unintended by anyone or anything), there is a sense in which the purusa evolves with the prakrti by way of certain intelligible laws or by itself becoming in some sense an intelligent being. These possible responses could aid the Samkhya advocate in accounting for the proper function of human faculties. I am not saying that these responses fit within a traditional Samkhya view; however, I do want to raise them as possible responses that the advocate of the Samkhya tradition could give.

I don't think, however, that either of these responses would be adequate. In regard to the first, even if the purusa evolved in an intelligible law-like way, there would still be a question of explaining the teleological nature of this law-like development. If there is an intelligible way in which the purusa should evolve, the evolution that takes place has in some sense, a design plan. But what could account for this design plan? All that the advocate has done is pushed the problem back.

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[59] This is essentially Plantinga's evolutionary argument but it replaces naturalism with the Samkhya tradition.

In regard to the second response that the Samkhya advocate could give, one could say at least two things. First, purusa would just be another version of Swampman who would also lack a design plan. On this modified view, purusa would be an intelligent being who would have come about by a mere accident. And thus, the purusa (and by way of the purusa, humans) would still lack a way in which it (they) should act or produce beliefs.

Second, even if there is a conscious and intentional being that begins to emerge, that is the purusa, the evolutionary process that would take place in developing our cognitive faculties wouldn't be one that is aimed toward producing true beliefs. As addressed earlier, when the purusa and the prakrti came together, a superficial connection between these two substances developed to the point at which our faculties would produce false beliefs. Thus, according to the Samkhya tradition, humans have to perform certain techniques in order to get their faculties aimed towards producing true beliefs. But under such conditions how could the beliefs produced ever be warranted?

Let us briefly return to the example of the individual who comes to believe that he has taken the XX pill (for the sake of this example, let us say that there is a 90 percent chance of having cognitive malfunction upon taking such a pill). If someone comes up to you telling you that they have a solution to avoid the effects of taking the XX pill (after you have already taken it), even if you followed the instructions correctly, it wouldn't appear that you would be warranted in your belief about such a corrective process or be warranted in the beliefs that result from doing this process. This would be because the corrective process and the results that it achieves would be understood and obtained from faculties that you have a defeater for trusting. Moreover, if one has a defeater for one's beliefs, then one would be irrational and thus unwarranted in holding to them.

Perhaps the advocate of the Samkhya tradition would accept that human faculties are hindered to such an extent and also agrees that she has a defeater for most of her beliefs (including the beliefs that are required for the process of liberation), but she nonetheless thinks that upon coming to enlightenment through a reliable process there would be a sort of transcendent awareness of 'p' such that, when she has it she has an incorrigible belief. As glossed in contemporary truth-maker terminology, perhaps she can 'see' the relationship between the truth-maker and truth-bearer and can thus 'see' the truth of this belief. Since this apparently incorrigible belief can't be mistaken, the advocate could think

that it has a tight enough connection to truth for it to be warranted. This would be so even if it were obtained through an unwarranted system of beliefs.

I think there are two important points to be made here. First, I am not convinced that the Samkhya advocate would be willing to accept this option. The Samkhya tradition is known for being an atheistic tradition. Traditional Samkhya philosophy maintains that only prakrti is responsible for the cause of the universe and all causes within it.[60] This doesn't leave room for purusa to have the sort of role that has been described.

Second, even if one thought that this approach could be consistent with the orthodox realm Samkhya position, or the advocate was fine with substantially modifying her tradition, the core belief of the Samkhya tradition could still not be warranted in the same way that the core belief of Christianity can be warranted. This is due to the proper functionalist conditions not being sufficient for grounding warrant on this Samkhya view. Such a view is disanalogous to Plantinga's epistemology, as for a belief to be warranted on his epistemology, it isn't required that it be an infallible one. This distinction is significant enough that it would weaken the Pandora's Box Objection as one simply couldn't invoke Plantinga's epistemology in this case to warrant religious belief.

4.12 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was partly to respond to Rose Ann Christian's claim that the core belief of Advaita Vedanta Hinduism could be warranted by way of Plantinga's epistemology. After summarizing its central tenets and epistemological commitments, I argued that due to its ontological commitments Advaita Vedanta couldn't account for the required preconditions that make Plantinga's theory of warrant intelligible. This can be seen both in it not espousing an intentional and conscious designer (all is the impersonal Brahman), as well as in it denying that things like faculties, beliefs, design plans, and proper function, ultimately exist.

After responding to Christian's direct challenge, I then entertained an opposing dualistic tradition of Hinduism, that is, the Samkhya tradition. I took the critiques that I

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[60] Dasti, 'Hindu Theism,' in *Routledge Companion to Theism*, op. cit., 35.

established in chapter three against naturalism, and the critiques laid out in the earlier part of this chapter, and applied them to the Samkhya tradition. Like the Advaita Vedanta tradition, I argued that it fails in accounting for the relevant preconditions. I argued this was because on this tradition, humans came about by mere accident, not intended by the gods. With what I established in chapter three regarding naturalistic accounts of proper function, this doctrine would support the thesis that the Samkhya tradition lacks a way to account for the proper function of human faculties. Moreover, in addition to this, I argued that Samkhya suffers from the same cognitive defeater as naturalism, given its commitment to unguided evolution. Having established this much, in the following chapter, I will continue to respond to the Pandora's Box Objection by interacting with forms of Buddhist and Neo-Confucian traditions.

Chapter 5: Closing Pandora's Box: Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism

5.0 Introduction

Having considered the Advaita Vedanta and Samkhya traditions, I will turn my attention to Nagarjuna's 'Middle Way' Buddhist tradition and Wang Yangming's Neo-Confucian tradition. I will argue that, like the two traditions of Hinduism that were addressed in the previous chapter, both the core belief of Nagarjuna's 'Middle Way' Mahayana Buddhism and the core belief of Wangming's Neo-Confucianism cannot be warranted by means of Plantinga's epistemology in the same way that core Christian belief can be. In order to articulate the different tenets that can be found within the Middle Way tradition, I will need to first articulate certain central tenets that are common to all traditions within Buddhism. Preceding this, in order to give a more clear understanding of these tenets, I will provide some brief historical background. On this basis, I will proceed to engage this tradition in examining its credentials for accounting for the preconditions that make Plantinga's theory of warrant intelligible. After engaging the Middle Way tradition, I will follow the same strategy as I engage with the claim that Wang Yangming's Neo-Confucianism can use Plantinga's epistemology to be warranted.

5.1 Buddhism 101

The historical Buddha was born in 485 B.C.E., into a small kingdom, which nowadays would be considered Nepal.[1] Prince Gautama grew up in very privileged circumstances, with some sources even stating that he had three palaces. Coming from such a privileged background, his father wanted to shelter him from the true nature of the world. Legends recount that, in his late twenties, Gautama left his palace searching for something other than material wealth. During this time, he ran across a handful of sick, ageing and dying men. Upon seeing such men, Gautama became greatly disturbed. This experience furthered his desire to know the truth about reality, in particular, the truth about suffering. He began

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[1] This section also appears in Tyler Dalton McNabb, *Warranted Religion: Alvin Plantinga's Theory of Warrant Defended and Applied to Different World Religions* (MA Thesis, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012), 94.

starving himself to the point where he would almost die; and he deprived himself of all his possessions. This seemed to be going nowhere when, finally, while sitting under a tree, he came to a realization about reality, which allowed him to be 'enlightened.' This is where he got the title Buddha, which means 'enlightened' or 'awakened one.' The Buddha's thought can be summarized in the Four-Noble Truths:

1. Life is suffering.
2. The cause of suffering is desire.
3. The cure of suffering is through overcoming desire.
4. One can overcome desire through the Eight-Fold Path.[2]

According to the Buddha, the problem with human beings is that they suffer. Human beings continue to hold onto and desire materialistic goods and ultimately non-real entities (e.g. the self), and in doing so is subjected to suffering, in this life and the ones to follow. As long as human beings continue to hold onto such things, they will continue to suffer in a vicious cycle of rebirth. However, Buddhism does teach that there is a way out of this almost never-ending cycle of suffering. The Buddhist worldview adheres to the Eight-Fold Path as the means to arrive at Nirvana and escape such a cycle. The Eight-Fold Path goes as follows:

1. Right vision – to perceive that the human experience is intolerable.
2. Right aims – not to be lost in luxury, not to exploit others, but to love them.
3. Right speech – to hold one's tongue, to be truthful.
4. Right action – to never kill, steal, or fornicate, but to do positive things that benefit others.
5. Right livelihood – to make one's living without harming others or society.
6. Right mindfulness – to abjure all evil thoughts and focus only on good thoughts.
7. Right awareness – to constantly avoid attachments to body and desires.
8. Right meditation – to adopt the elaborate mental procedures worked out by the Buddha.[3]

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[2] Huston Smith, *The World's Religions: Our Great Wisdom Traditions* (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), 101-103.

[3] Rodney Stark, *Discovering God: The Origins of the Great Religions and the Evolution of Belief* (New York: HarperOne, 2007), 240.

Once an individual is 'enlightened' by following this path he or she is finally set free and liberated from suffering.

5.2 Different Traditions of Buddhist Thought

Thus far, for the most part, all streams within the wider tradition of Buddhism share what has been discussed. However, there are important concepts that must be interpreted and explained. For example, different traditions might diverge with regard to what Nirvana is, who exactly can obtain Nirvana, and what the greatest ideal is. I will now move on to interacting with the Mahayana tradition, and particularly Nagarjuna's Middle Way tradition.

Nagarjuna, who the Mahayana tradition takes as the first teacher after Buddha, was born into a Brahmin family toward the end of the second century (C.E.).[4] Nagarjuna's Brahamanical background might explain many of the similarities that exist between certain views in both Hinduism and Buddhism. As opposed to Theravada Buddhism, the Mahayana tradition emphasizes an elaborate system of metaphysics, which the Advaita Vedanta tradition would later follow. Though all forms of classical Mahayana thought are characterized by a certain metaphysic, there exist, tensions and distinctions between various schools, at least in regard to how one should express certain metaphysical beliefs. The two main traditions that express different metaphysics in Mahayana thought are the Nagarjuna's Middle Way tradition (i.e. School of Madhyamika) and the School of Yogacara. Being that the former has received the greatest philosophical attention from the West, I will focus on it in the first half of this chapter.[5]

The Middle Way tradition arose around the 2nd century C.E. and its earliest religious texts form *The Perfection of Wisdom Sutra* (includes the famous *Diamond Sutra*).[6] The main philosophical treaties that is attributed to Nagarjuna and that was largely inspired by *The Perfection of Wisdoms* is the *Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way* (abbreviated as the MMK). Since this is seen as Nagarjuna's most important philosophical

[4] Allie Frazier, *Readings in Eastern Religious Thought* (PA: Westminster Press, 1969), 207.

[5] Nāgārjuna and Kenneth K. Inada, *Nagarjuna: A Translation of His Mūlamadhyamakakārikā with an Introductory Essay of Kenneth K. Inada* (Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1970), 3.

[6] For an anthology of Buddhist texts, see Donald Lopez, *Buddhist Scriptures* (London: Penguin), 2004.

work, in order to establish the central philosophical commitments that this tradition adheres to, I will use this work and commentators Jay Garfield, Jan Westerhoff, and Kenneth Inada to interact with the Madhyamika tradition.[7]

5.3 The Middle Way Tradition

According to Inada, the Madhyamika Creed summarizes the tradition by stating the following:

> I pay homage to the Fully Awakened One,
> the supreme teacher who has taught
> The doctrine of relational origination
> The blissful cessation of all phenomenal thought constructions.
> (Therein, every event is 'marked' by)
> Non-origination, non-extinction,
> Non-destruction, non-permanence,
> Non-identity, non-differentiation
> Non-coming (into being), non-going (out of being).[8]

One of the ways Nagarjuna reaches the last conclusion that was mentioned is by reasoning about causation in the following way:

> (1) Neither from itself,
> (2) Nor from another,
> (3) Nor from both,
> (4) Nor without a cause,
> Does anything whatever, anywhere arise.

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[7] Though the MMK is the only work that is universally recognized as being written by Nagarjuna, there are other works that he could be responsible for. These works would include *Sixty Stanzas on Reasoning*, *Seventy Stanzas on Emptiness*, *Dispeller of Objections*, *Treatise on Pulverization*, and '*Precious Garland*.' See Jan Westerhoff, *Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka: A Philosophical Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 5-6.

[8] Nāgārjuna and Inada, *Nagarjuna: A Translation of His Mūlamadhyamakakārikā with an Introductory Essay of Kenneth K. Inada*, op. cit., 37-39.

Nagarjuna was well aware of contemporary philosophical schools that endorsed each of these four options. Thus, Nagarjuna makes a conscious attempt to argue why each of these views are wrong and why this helps establish his particular metaphysic. In regard to (1), Samkhya philosophers argue that in order for there to be a cause, the effect of the cause must exist potentially in the cause.[9] If it didn't then the effect wouldn't come about from the cause necessarily and thus can be imagined to exist without that cause.[10] If the effect can exist without the cause then one might argue that the cause isn't a genuine cause. According to Garfield, this view of self-causation is supposed to be analogous to that of a seed and a sprout; in the seed there exists the potential for the sprout to come about. Upon this potential being actualized, one would have a case of self-causation.[11] There seems to be two fundamental problems with this however. First, the seed still needs to be watered in order for it to sprout, so the analogy doesn't seem to be a good one.[12] Second, if a substance already has the necessary and sufficient conditions within it, then wouldn't it be displaying the effect eternally?[13] What would cause a change in the substance?

In regard to (2), causation from another is a causation that is more familiar both within Buddhism and in contemporary Western metaphysics. This is the view of causation that has the cause and the effect as two completely independent phenomena. These distinct phenomena can be compared to parents who give life to their children.[14] When this happens, there are clearly new entities (the children) that didn't exist potentially in the cause (the parents). Westerhoff argues that this conception of causation was rejected by Nagarjuna as given his presentism, when an effect would come about, the cause literally might no longer exist. For Nagarjuna, if this is the case, how could one account for a relationship between two items when one of the items doesn't even exist? This relationship can't be accounted for by human expectation or memory, as the relationship

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[9] Presumably, they didn't have in mind the possibility of a hybrid cause/effect view like the one that will be mentioned in regard to (3).

[10] Nāgārjuna and Jay Garfield, *Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way: Nagarjuna's 'mulamadhymakakarika' with a Philosophical Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 105-106.

[11] Ibid., 106.

[12] Ibid.

[13] I take this to be what Westerhoff is getting at when he states, 'First of all this would mean that the effect would not have to be produced, since it is already present within the causal field.' See Westerhoff. *Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka: A Philosophical Introduction*, op. cit., 202.

[14] Nāgārjuna and Garfield, *Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way: Nagarjuna's 'mulamadhymakakarika' with a Philosophical Commentary*, op. cit., 106.

would then depend on the mind.[15] This of course would mean that the relationship didn't really exist in an objective sense.

Regarding (3), this view argues that effects come about through both self-causation and other outside causes. Garfield points out that one might go back to the sprout example and argue that the seed still needs to be planted, watered, and so on, in order for it to actualize the potential to sprout.[16] In this case, there still needs to be a potential to actualize the effect within the seed but the mere potential won't be enough to actualize the effect as the seed will need to have some sort of outside cause that works in conjunction with the potential. Though this might initially seem like the most plausible option, Nagarjuna seems to take it that this view isn't worth considering, given the fact that both views were already refuted separately.[17]

Lastly, in regard to (4), Nagarjuna mentions the view of no-cause. That is the view that effects can simply and spontaneously arise from nothing. Garfield suggests that arguments similar to those proposed by Sextus Empiricus, Hume, or Wittgenstein might motivate one to adhere to such a view.[18] This is likely to be seen as the least likely option for how cause and effect are related, as the nihilist position seems the least intuitive.

Nagarjuna, holding that all these options are implausible, argues that things do not arise at all. In fact, Nagarjuna's philosophy can be summarized as a philosophy of emptiness (sunyata). Harrison clarifies that by a philosophy of emptiness, Nagarjuna doesn't mean that those things that we experience either exist or that they do not exist.[19] Nagarjuna wouldn't adhere to such a strictly binary conclusion. Rather, Nagarjuna argues for a Middle Way for this and all other metaphysical problems.

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[15] Westerhoff, *Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka: A Philosophical Introduction*, op. cit., 201.

[16] Nāgārjuna and Garfield, *Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle* Way, op. cit., 106.

[17] Though Westerhoff seems to see Nagarjuna's argument against this view in a slightly different light, he acknowledges that this view is commonly dismissed for this reason within the Madhyamaka literature. Westerhoff expresses his view as he states, '[w]hat he wants to show in this context is that if we have disproved each of a set of two propositions, we do not need a further argument to disprove their conjunction, since this is entailed by the individual refutations.' Though I am not even sure if there is a significant difference between these two views, for the purposes of this project, it isn't important to demonstrate which view is right. See Westerhoff, *Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka: A Philosophical Introduction*, op. cit., 109.

[18] Nāgārjuna and Garfield, *Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way: Nagarjuna's 'mulamadhymakakarika' with a Philosophical Commentary*, op. cit., 107.

[19] Victoria Harrison, *Eastern Philosophy: The Basics* (New York, N.Y: Routledge, 2013), 98.

At the beginning of the previous chapter, I mentioned that the Advaita Vedanta tradition could be better understood by Westerners if it was interpreted through the lenses of Kantian philosophy. According to Garfield, something very similar could be said about the Middle Way tradition.[20] Using a Tibetan translation and incorporating a particular Tibetan commentarial tradition, Garfield argues that by reality being empty, Nagarjuna has in mind a level of reality that is independent of human experience, in other words the noumenal level.[21] Moreover, to use the language of Shankara, for Nagarjuna, one could also say that the first layer of reality is ultimately empty and void. And again, similar to Shankara, this doesn't mean that the phenomena that we experience do not exist on any level, as there is a conventional or phenomenal level where the phenomena that we experience do exist. Thus, reality is neither totally empty nor is it not totally empty, rather it is empty in the noumenal sense but not in the phenomenal sense. Garfield summarizes his thought:

> So from the standpoint of Madhymaika philosophy, when we ask of a phenomenon, Does it exist?, we must always pay careful attention to the sense of the world 'exist' that is at work. We might mean exist inherently, that is, in virtue of being a substance independent of attributes, in virtue of having an essence, and so forth, or we might mean exist conventionally, that is to exist dependently, to be the conventional referent of a term, but not to have any independent existence…Rather, to the degree that anything exists, it exists in the latter sense, that is, nominally, or conventionally.[22]

It is important to also point out that though I will be following Garfield in interpreting Nagarjuna in a Kantian fashion, there are other approaches to interpreting Nagarjuna. There is an approach that uses a post-Wittgensteinian framework to make more accessible Nagarjuna's critiques of his opponents. This can be done as Nagarjuna's critiques and opponents are analogous to Wittgenstein's critiques and his analytic opponents.[23] There is

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[20] Nāgārjuna and Garfield, *Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way: Nagarjuna's 'mulamadhymakakarika' with a Philosophical Commentary*, op. cit., 88-89.

[21] Garfield's interpretation is based on an Indo-Tibetan Buddhist hermeneutic and could itself be considered closely in line with the Nyingma-pa reading. See ibid., 98.

[22] Ibid., 90.

[23] In addition to this, Westerhoff points out that, for the Wittgensteinian approach, the chief concern in comparing the two traditions is in understanding 'dependent origination.' Westerhoff states, '[t]his was regarded primarily as reflecting the underlying idea of a Wittgensteinian philosophy of language according

also an approach that attempts to clarify Nagarjuna's argument by putting his work into logical notations. According to Westerhoff, this has been done by Richard Robinson.[24] In addition to these interpretations or frameworks, there is an approach that Westerhoff seems most sympathetic to, which is to not Westernize Nagarjuna and, instead, to try to read him in his own context.[25] Westerhoff thinks that this can be done due to the recent maturity that has taken place in Nagarjuna studies.[26] Westerhoff doesn't go into much detail as to why the other interpretations or frameworks aren't good besides expressing their limitations.[27] He does appear however, to be open to using such interpretations or frameworks for introducing Westerners to Nagarjuna's philosophical thought.[28] With this stated, I don't see a problem with using Garfield's favoured Kantian approach for the purposes of this project.

5.4 Enlightenment

According to Westerhoff, for Nagarjuna, human faculties are cognitively defaulted to produce belief in substances,[29] which govern our representation of the world.[30] Human faculties producing belief in substances aid in creating illusions that humans desire. This desire then causes suffering and pain.

The only way for humans to rid themselves of this suffering is to come to the right realization that all the phenomena that we encounter (including the self) are actually empty and that the desires for such phenomena are baseless on the noumenal level. This would

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to which language, and in particular the language of philosophical statements, could not be regarded as independent of the interrelated nature of conceptual thought and conventional language.' Westerhoff, *Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka: A Philosophical Introduction*, op. cit., 11. Also, see Frederick J. Streng, *Emptiness: A Study in Religious Meaning* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press,1967); Chris Gudmunsen, *Wittgenstein and Buddhism* (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1977).

[24] Westerhoff, *Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka: A Philosophical Introduction*, op. cit., 10.

[25] Ibid., 11-12.

[26] Ibid., 12.

[27] Ibid., 9-12.

[28] Ibid., 12

[29] By substances here, Westerhoff just has in mind the phenomena that we experience that lack ultimate mind-independent existence.

[30] Ibid., 50-51.

include coming to the realization that there is no ultimate difference between nirvana and the phenomenal level of reality.[31] This will then end the process of samsara (rebirth). Garfield makes this point clear by stating, '[t]o distinguish between samsara and nirvana would be to suppose that each had a nature and that they were different natures. But each is empty, and so there can be no inherent difference.'[32] Harrison states, '[e]scaping samsara (rebirth) simply requires that we stop regarding it as separate from nirvana. This realization would in fact be enlightenment as it would free the enlightened one from further rebirth.' [33] In summary, since the noumenal level of reality is empty, both samsara and nirvana are empty and coming to realize this will free the person from the conventional level of reality, and as a result, end suffering.

5.5 Nagarjuna's Epistemology

As previously mentioned, Nagarjuna argues that all that we experience exists in the conventional realm but not in the noumenal realm, all of these things are empty. His main tool of discerning this truth is through an extensive use of the reductio ad absurdum.[34] Throughout all of the *MMK*, Nagarjuna continually relies on this argumentative technique in order to establish his metaphysic. It thus appears that Nagarjuna relies on a brand of rationalism in order to reach his conclusions.

However, according to Westerhoff, Nagarjuna denies a realist way of accounting for a means and objects of knowledge.[35] Westerhoff defines what he means by a realist view by stating, '[f]or the realist, means and objects of knowledge have intrinsic characteristics, and there are invariant relations of epistemic priority, that is, cognitive procedures which are means of knowledge in all possible contexts. On this account of

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[31] Nāgārjuna and Garfield, *Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*, op. cit., 98.

[32] Ibid., 331.

[33] Harrison, *Eastern Philosophy*, op. cit., 98.

[34] Richard King argues that, '[t]he Prasangika Madhyamaka (exemplified by Candrakirti, seventh CE) argued that the truth of emptiness could be established only through the use of reductio ad absurdum (prasanga) arguments. On this view the Madhyamaka does not put forward independent arguments of its own but instead establishes internal inconsistencies in the presuppositions of others, thereby undermining their position from within.' See Richard King, *Indian Philosophy: An Introduction to Hindu and Buddhist Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 139.

[35] Westerhoff, *Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka: A Philosophical Introduction*, op. cit., 181.

epistemology it is indeed impossible to try to establish emptiness.'[36] Given Nagarjuna's ontological commitment that ultimate reality is empty, one couldn't ultimately have certain cognitive procedures that are a means to knowledge as then reality would no longer be empty.

Moreover, it seems that if Nagarjuna did endorse necessary and sufficient conditions for warrant, one could make the following objection: If ultimate reality is empty, then ultimately, there are no conditions for warrant. If there are no conditions for warrant, then one could never be warranted in actually believing that reality was empty. Thus, even if true, one could never actually be warranted in accepting the Middle Way tradition.[37]

In order to avoid this, Nagarjuna takes a similar though not identical approach to Shankara. He argues that conventional level actions can lead to the right awareness or access. Westerhoff clarifies, 'even though there are no means of knowledge that are intrinsically such, that deliver knowledge in every context, there are still cognitive procedures which function as means of knowledge in the specific context in which they are employed, regimented by certain background constraints and other pragmatic features.'[38] In summarizing the above statements, there just so happens to exist certain epistemic procedures that, if done within the right context, could act in a reliable way to bring about awareness or knowledge that all is empty.

It is interesting to inquire if these cognitive procedures have a design plan on the conventional level, in a similar way as they do on Shankara's view. Presumably, these cognitive procedures just are or would depend on cognitive faculties that, on the conventional level, still need to behave in a certain way. Though, I suppose one could just say that these cognitive procedures just so happen to function in a certain way for accidental reasons.[39] Regardless of which option the Middle Way advocate wants to argue

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[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

[39] By accidental reasons, I just mean that there is nothing behind why the procedure is reliable like a design plan. It just so happens that this procedure is reliable in obtaining such and such result but it isn't as if it should be producing such and such result. As mentioned earlier in this project, I think the Swampman counterexample demonstrates that this view falls short of securing a tight connection to truth.

for, I don't think much would really rest on if Nagarjuna does or doesn't endorse proper functionalism at the conventional level, that is, besides establishing commonality between Nagarjuna's and Plantinga's epistemology.

5.6 Warranted Middle Way?

I have now established potential commonalities with Plantinga's epistemology and Nagarjuna's epistemology in order to help both further define Nagarjuna's worldview and to help strengthen the Pandora's Box Objection. However, one may now ask if there are any reasons to believe that the Middle Way tradition could account for the preconditions that make Plantinga's theory of warrant intelligible. As I have shown in this chapter, the Middle Way tradition shares many of the same central tenets as the Advaita Vedanta tradition. Similar to the Advaita Vedanta tradition, one reason to think that the Middle Way tradition couldn't account for the proper function or truth-aimed condition is because on the noumenal level there doesn't exist design plans or faculties aimed at producing true beliefs. These things in reality are really empty and void. Moreover, in addition to this reason, since reality on this tradition is ultimately void and empty, there would be no personal God on the noumenal level to account for the proper function condition. And given the additional doctrines which I have just articulated (reality is empty), I am not aware of any reason for why this tradition would be able to account for proper function any better than naturalism or Advaita Vedanta Hinduism.

Now, like the advocate of the Advaita Vedanta tradition, in order to respond to these objections one might be tempted to formulate a proper function account that only pertains to the phenomenal realm. Consider, for example the following:

MW Proper Function: For something to be properly functioning outside of the noumenal realm, that something must be fulfilling an intention given to it by an intentional agent that exists outside of it.

This account, however, would seem to face the same dilemmas as Shankara's account as demonstrated in the previous chapter. In summary of my critiques in the last chapter, an account like this would (1) ultimately change Plantinga's theory of warrant as Plantinga's theory of warrant is intended to be a theory that applies to ultimate reality, (2) lack

motivation, and (3) fail to allow for things to be warranted via Plantinga's theory of warrant on the noumenal or ultimate level of reality.

In addition to these reasons, it is important to mention that Nagarjuna openly rejects a realist view of warrant. This is, again, the view that endorses that there are particular jointly necessary and sufficient conditions for warrant that need to be satisfied in all contexts. Nagarjuna develops his epistemology based partly off the problem that his view is self-defeating if he does take a realist epistemology. If there aren't any other ways around the self-defeating problem than rejecting a realist view, then it would appear that Nagarjuna's ontology necessitates his epistemology. This would mean that to endorse Nagarjuna's ontology one must consistently endorse his epistemology. But since Plantinga's theory of warrant is a realist view of warrant, it would appear that Nagarjuna would openly reject Plantinga's epistemology. If this is the case, then an advocate of the Middle Way tradition cannot have her belief in the core tenets of Middle Way Buddhism warranted by way of Plantinga's epistemology. Thus, the project of attempting to use Plantinga's epistemology doesn't even get off the ground for the Middle Way advocate.

Regarding the truth-aimed condition, it seems like Nagarjuna might argue in the same way as Shankara argues, in arguing that conventional beliefs can indirectly lead one to knowledge. I fail to see why he couldn't do this and why he couldn't even meet a general reliabilist requirement as well. However, similar to my critique in the above paragraph, I also fail to see how Nagarjuna's approach would fare any better than Shankara's approach, given my critique that Plantinga's truth-aimed condition is tied to the proper function condition. If proper function couldn't be accounted for, the truth-aimed condition still couldn't be accounted for. Moreover, even if one wanted to grant that Nagarjuna didn't need to exactly account for Plantinga's truth-aimed condition, but granted that generally speaking he could argue for something similar (namely that one's faculties have to reliably produce true beliefs), it would still be insufficient to secure a tight connection to truth which is needed for warrant.[40]

Finally, an argument for why the Middle Way tradition cannot account for Plantinga's theory of warrant can be summarized by the following syllogism:

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[40] See Chapter two of this thesis.

(1) If the Advaita Vedanta tradition cannot use Plantinga's theory of warrant to be warranted, then the Middle Way tradition cannot use Plantinga's theory of warrant to be warranted.

(2) The Advaita Vedanta tradition cannot use Plantinga's theory of warrant to be warranted.

(3) Therefore, the Middle Way tradition cannot use Plantinga's theory of warrant to be warranted.

As long as my work in this chapter has established enough similarities between Shankara's Hinduism and Nagarjuna's Buddhism, (1) will appear very plausible. In regard to (2), if my critiques given in the previous chapter (and summarized in this chapter) are good, then it would necessarily follow that the Middle Way tradition cannot account for the preconditions that make Plantinga's epistemology intelligible (and thus it cannot use Plantinga's epistemology to be warranted). Having now interacted with Mahayana Buddhism and in particular Nagarjuna's Middle Way tradition, I will now move this project's survey to completion by interacting with David Tien's claim that core Neo-Confucian belief can be warranted by way of Plantinga's epistemology. Before I do this, however, I will continue in the tradition of this project in first giving a historical background to Confucian religious philosophy.

5.7 Confucianism 101

Confucianism's fundamental origin lies with Kongzi, who lived around 551-479 B.C.E.[41] Little is known about his life besides the fact that he was a very educated individual and yet came from poverty.[42] Kongzi's philosophy grew out of his view of the society that he had grown up in, one that appeared degenerate to him. At the heart of Kongzi's philosophy, was the belief that wisdom or philosophy was the remedy for the society's needs.[43] Kongzi focused largely on what we now regard as ethical and political philosophy. He focused on teaching Dao or 'the Way.'[44] 'The Way' is in regard to how societies, and

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[41] Harrison, *Eastern Philosophy*, op. cit., 101.

[42] Ibid., 103.

[43] Ibid., 102.

[44] Ibid., 105.

members within them, should act. He taught that cultivating virtue (De) and acting appropriately according to the right social and ritual context was the only way to not only live the good life but also to have a flourishing society.[45] A person who would reach the highest virtuous state (ren) would be considered a well-rounded cultivated individual or what is also called a gentleman (junzi).[46] The ultimate goal is to have a society governed by gentlemen.

Toward the end of the first millennium (C.E.), Han Yu wrote an essay that cemented orthodoxy for those who continued in the thought of Kongzi, entitled *An Inquiry into the Way*. This acted as a polemic against contemporary philosophies (e.g. Daoism), in addition to arguing for the need for a sage-king.[47] There have since been several successors and traditions that have grown from this work. These traditions are categorized together under the label Neo-Confucianism. T'ang Chun-I defines Neo-Confucianism as, 'a revival of the Confucian faith in man' and as an 'acceptance of the need to face all the negative factors (of man's nature) and to find a way of…realizing the positive ideal.'[48] One important tradition within this larger Neo-Confucian tradition is the Wang Yangming tradition, or what is also known as the Learning of the Mind tradition.

5.8 Neo-Confucianism: The Metaphysics of The Learning of the Mind Tradition

Carsun Chung calls Wang the most powerful and influential person in the history of China.[49] Chung's support for this claim includes Wang's 'commanding personality,' Wang possessing a great amount of followers that existed in different geographical regions of China, and the boldness he displayed when he challenged the philosophical orthodoxy of his day.[50] Of course, above all of these reasons for being so influential was his unique philosophical tradition. I will now give Chung's summary of Wang's metaphysical

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[45] Ibid., 107.

[46] P.J. Ivanhoe and B. Van Norden, *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy (*New York: Seven Bridges Press, 2001), 2.

[47] William De Bary, *Neo-Confucian Orthodoxy and the Learning of the Mind-and-Heart* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 2.

[48] Quoted in ibid., 9.

[49] Carson Chung, 'Wang Yang-Ming's Philosophy,' *Philosophy East and West* 5 (1955): 3.

[50] Ibid., 3.

commitments, and I will follow it up by using Chung's work to elaborate more on these points. Chung summarizes Wang's philosophy by stating the following:

(1) Mind is reason. While mind is free from selfishness, it is intelligence per se, and embodies right principles, or categorical imperatives.

(2) The external world, which, according to common sense, consists of things of hard fact, is the object of consciousness. Berkeley's principle, esse est percipi, was discovered also by this Chinese thinker.

(3) While according to common sense willing and knowing are separate functions of mind, they are correlated in Wang's system. Mind's working with a directive effort is called willing. Its working in sheer distinctness or clarity is called knowing. For Wang volition is a part of cognition.

(4) Knowing is the core of reality, that is to say, reality is comprised of consciousness.

(5) The universe is an integration of which man is the mind or center. All men constitute a brotherhood. Physical objects have spiritual affinity with mind.

(6) If there were no mind or intuitive knowledge, the universe would not function.

(7) Matter or the world of nature is the material with which mind functions.[51]

According to Chung, Wang sees the world as intelligible.[52] Knowing isn't just for humans, but all animate beings and even physical objects.[53] However, for Wang, the universe is dependent on the human mind.[54] The nature of the world all depends upon human's having knowledge of the world. Moreover, the human mind needs the universe in order for it to know. Here there is a harmonious circular relationship that exists that is said to be like an ear or an eye that has no substantiality without there being noise or colors and shapes.[55] In order to understand why Wang thinks the world as we experience it isn't the way it should be, and in order to articulate Wang's solution to this fundamental problem, Wang's epistemology must be invoked. In addition to better understanding Wang's overall metaphysical views, exegeting his epistemology will allow for more critical interaction

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[51] Ibid., 3-4.

[52] Ibid., 4.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid., 6.

[55] Ibid.

with his tradition. This will be helpful as I will argue that it doesn't have the necessary criteria that is needed to account for the preconditions that make Plantinga's epistemology intelligible.

5.9 Wang Yangming's Epistemology

According to David Tien, Wang's Learning of the Mind tradition can endorse, and can be reformulated to essentially share Plantinga's epistemology.[56] Tien focuses on exegeting Wang's concepts of li (理) and liangzhi (良知).[57] For Wang, Li is a normative notion of the way things ought to be. According to Tien, when things are working according to li, things are working naturally and are not working in a deviant way.[58] I take it that the phrase 'working naturally' could be interchangeable with 'properly functioning' and the word 'deviant' could be used interchangeably with something like malfunction. In regard to the concept of liangzhi, according to Tien, it is the innate fully formed cognitive faculty that enables one to know li (or the principle).[59] For Wang, the mind is the conscious aspect of li.[60] From birth everyone has the original mind, that is to say that everything is working in accordance with li. However, according to Tien, from this point, dispositions still emerge.[61] One of those dispositions is pure knowledge. This is the aspect of the cognitive faculty that produces moral knowledge of what is right and wrong. However, as the Neo-Confucian story goes, there also exists qi (氣). Qi is the lively matter that the world is all made up of. Because qi exists in the mind, the mind becomes distorted and produces wrong moral judgments. In this way, qi acts like sin in the Christian story where it damages human faculties (which would include human moral and religious faculties). For the Neo-Confucian, this distortion can most clearly be seen in self-centre thoughts and desires. Salvation, that is unimpeded knowledge, can then only happen when we rid ourselves of such selfishness. We must reverse the distortion that has taken place as a result of the qi

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[56] David W. Tien, 'Warranted Neo-Confucian Belief: Religious Pluralism and the Affections in the Epistemologies of Wang Yangming (1472-1529) and Alvin Plantinga,' *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 55, no. 4 (2004): 35.

[57] Ibid., 31.

[58] Ibid., 32.

[59] Ibid., 35.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid., 33.

and regain optimal effectiveness by ending our selfish desires. I take it that Confucian philosophy can then aid in helping this need. Having now briefly used Tien's work to outline Wang's epistemology and thus, the rest of Wang's metaphysical view, I will explain Tien's argument that Wang can share Plantinga's epistemology.

5.10 Warranted Neo-Confucianism?

After Tien articulates this much, he moves on to explicitly demonstrate how Plantinga and Wang share the proper function model for warrant.[62] He argues for this by first asserting that, given that liangzhi is utilized, one has a properly functioning faculty.[63] Moreover, since the mind is the conscious aspect of li (li is again the principle of how things should be), Tien thinks that liangzhi (the faculty of the mind) is aimed toward producing true beliefs.[64] Given that qi is suppressed, it should become obvious that there does appear to be a favourable epistemic environment that also emerges. Tien takes all of this as good reason to affirm that core Neo-Confucian belief could be warranted the same way that core Christian belief can be warranted. This being said, I think Tien is mistaken for one very important reason. Though he does a great job at comparing and showing the similarities between Wang's epistemology and Plantinga's, he seems to miss Plantinga's point about there being a need for a conscious, intentional, and intelligent designer in order to account for the proper function of faculties. Though we have a way for how liangzhi should function (it should function in accordance with li), we don't have an answer from Tien as to what ultimately makes it the case that liangzhi should function in a particular way. For the Christian theist, she can say that her faculties should function in a particular way and that way is determined by the design plan of her faculties. However, in order to make sense of having a design plan, she would need to ultimately invoke God. The question that Tien fails to answer then, is what makes li intelligible? What gives the design plan associated with li, its telos[65] or design? It doesn't seem that an impersonal principle could be invoked

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[62] Ibid., 35.

[63] Ibid., 35-36.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Perhaps one might accuse me of using telos in such a way that reflects Western understanding, when really I should understand the term in an Eastern context. Maybe within an Eastern context the Neo-Confucian claim about li being a normative principle might become more plausible. This might be so, but given that Tien has in mind Plantinga's conception of a design plan (which presupposes a Western understanding of telos), for the sake of his interpretation of Wang, a Western understanding should be accepted.

to explain a design plan; nor does it seem that one could merely appeal to the nature of things to explain it.[66] Perhaps being idealists, the followers of Wang would insist on grounding li (and those things entailed by it) in one's own mind or a collective mind. In fact, according to Tien, for humans, in some since li just is the mind.[67] This of course wouldn't answer the question though as you can't explain the design plan of your mind by appealing to li which just is your mind. In summary, it isn't enough to point out that some faculty has a way in which it should function or that we can know how a faculty should function, but one must ask what ultimately made it the case that the faculty ought to operate in the appropriate manner.

The argument that has been developed throughout this project, is that something that dictates (that is a design plan) how things should operate (proper function), seems to need a conscious, intentional, and intelligent designer.[68] And though I have left room for the possibility of additional non-naturalistic religious doctrines aiding a non-personal theistic tradition in accounting for proper function, given the bare facts of Neo-Confucianism that have been given, an intelligible Neo-Confucianism account of proper function seems unlikely.

If the Neo-Confucian is willing to acknowledge Plantinga's argument that a design plan requires a conscious and intentional agent, but he refuses to acknowledge this in reference to what ultimately gives liangzhi its design plan, the Neo-Confucian needs to be wary of committing the taxi-cab fallacy in this context. This is the informal fallacy that is committed whenever one wants to advocate for a certain principle that is binding on all relevant things, except for an area of one's arbitrary choice. It is likened to an individual who rides a taxi, but gets out whenever it is convenient. The Neo-Confucian can't advocate for a principle that there always needs to be a conscious, intentional, and intelligent designer in the context of accounting for proper function, except when it comes to accounting for liangzhi's design plan.

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[66] I engage with an Aristotelian or Thomistic approach of using natures to ground proper function in Appendix two. My argument there could be used here to support my claim.

[67] David W. Tien, 'Warranted Neo-Confucian Belief: Religious Pluralism and the Affections in the Epistemologies of Wang Yangming (1472-1529) and Alvin Plantinga,' *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 55, no. 4 (2004): 32.

[68] For a discussion on additional preconditions to Plantinga's epistemology, see Appendix two of this thesis. There I argue that in addition to needing a personal God to account for the proper function of cognitive faculties, the character of that God needs to be compatible with Plantinga's truth-aimed condition.

Perhaps the Neo-Confucian might accuse the Christian of committing the same fallacy regarding God's faculties, and if the Christian can do it then the Neo-Confucian can also do it. This would then still put the Neo-Confucian in the same epistemic position as the Christian. There is a problem however, with advocating this response. A person who articulates this response doesn't understand classical Christian theism. For classical Christian theists, God doesn't possess faculties, rather faculties are just something analogous or approximate to what God has (presumably, something that doesn't have to have an intellect behind it). So though it may be said that God has something like faculties in order for humans to have a better understanding of what God is like, the Christian can still deny that God's faculties need to be functioning properly as God doesn't actually have such faculties. But given Wang's take that liangzhi is a faculty, the Neo-Confucian can't say the same. In this case, there is a genuine faculty and there is a genuine design plan, but as stated earlier, the problem arises when one asks how it is the case that there is a design plan. If this is the case, and given that there don't seem to be any additional doctrines within this tradition that might help this tradition in accounting for this, I fail to see how, without a conscious, intentional, and intelligent designer, one could make sense of liangzhi's design plan. It seems that Tien, though having made some interesting points, has merely moved the debate from discussing accounts of proper function to making sense of li. For this reason, I think one is only left with the option of seeing Tien's Neo-Confucian account as missing the mark.

5.11 Conclusion

I began this chapter by arguing that Nagarjuna's Middle Way tradition couldn't account for the relevant preconditions that make Plantinga's proper functionalism intelligible. I argued this by reiterating and applying my critiques that pertained to the Advaita Vedanta tradition to the Middle Way tradition. In addition to this, I argued that an attempt to use Plantinga's epistemology to warrant the Middle Way tradition isn't likely to even get off the ground as it doesn't seem likely that one could get away from needing to endorse a non-realist approach to epistemology. After engaging with this Buddhist tradition, I interacted with Wang's Neo-Confucianism. In particular, I interacted with Tien's claim that Wang's Neo-Confucianism can both be glossed in proper functionalist terms and can use Plantinga's

epistemology to be warranted. I argued that Tien has failed to recognize the problem with Neo-Confucianism in accounting for Plantinga's design plan requirements.

Chapter 6: The Implications of the Success and Failure of Closing Pandora's Box

6.0 Introduction

At the beginning of this project, I introduced and summarized Plantinga's trilogy on warrant. I then brought up several objections (which included The Problem of Evil, The Problem of Religious Diversity, and The Great Pumpkin Objection) to his epistemology, and discussed several responses given by Plantinga and his disciples. After this, I introduced the Pandora's Box Objection and stated that it hadn't received the sort of attention that it deserved. This is an objection that has been given by Rose Ann Christian, James Beilby, David Tien, and others, as they argue that Plantinga's religious epistemology is greatly weakened by the fact that all sorts of serious (contra Great Pumpkin) and diverse religions could use his epistemology to be warranted in the same way that Christian belief can be warranted.

After I articulated this objection, I clarified that my project would have a two-fold purpose. I stated that in order to provide motivation for answering The Pandora's Box Objection, I would first need to argue that (1) Plantinga's theory of warrant is plausibly true. This would then lead me to argue that (2) there are certain serious world religions that cannot use Plantinga's epistemology to demonstrate that their core belief could be warranted in the same way that Christian belief can be warranted.

I then quickly moved to the next chapter to defend my first point. I introduced The Swampman counterexample that was originally given by Sosa in regard to Plantinga's theory of warrant. This counterexample attempts to demonstrate that Plantinga's proper function condition is not a necessary condition for warrant. I, however, used Swampman in order to demonstrate contra Sosa that the proper function condition is a necessary condition for warrant. After establishing this much, I fleshed out the rest of Plantinga's conditions for warrant by way of answering contemporary objections that are directed toward them.

In chapter three, I established the ground work for arguing for the second part of my thesis. I needed to introduce Plantinga's arguments against naturalism as they relate to

his theory of warrant. In doing so, I summarized Plantinga's critiques of naturalistic accounts of proper function and I defended and reformulated his evolutionary argument against naturalism.

Moving on from establishing the necessary tools and framework that I needed for the rest of the thesis, in Chapter four, I critiqued two Brahmanical (Hindu) traditions. In regard to the Advaita Vedanta tradition, I argued that due to its commitment to radical monism and there not existing such things as proper function or faculties at the ultimate level of reality, it wouldn't be able to use Plantinga's epistemology. As for the Samkhya tradition, I paralleled it to naturalism and argued that it couldn't account for the proper function condition or the truth-aimed condition for the same reasons that naturalism couldn't account for such conditions.

In chapter five, I interacted with Nagarjuna's Mahayana Buddhism along with Tien's interpretation of Wang's Neo-Confucianism. I argued, as in the previous chapter, that both of these religions failed to account for the necessary preconditions that are needed to make Plantinga's theory of warrant intelligible. In regard to Mahayana Buddhism, I argued that the same ontological commitments (an anti-realist view of reality) that plagued Advaita Vedanta Hinduism, also plagued it. In regard to Neo-Confucianism, I argued that it failed to make intelligible li's design plan, which would preclude it from accounting for Plantinga's prescribed preconditions of warrant.

For these reasons and more, I take it that I have established that there are all sorts of serious and diverse religious traditions that fail to be able to account for the preconditions that make Plantinga's theory of warrant intelligible. And thus I have established that there are certain serious world religions that cannot use Plantinga's epistemology to demonstrate that their core belief could be warranted in the same way that Christian belief can be warranted. With this being stated, I believe that I have answered the Pandora's Box Objection and have successfully argued for my two-fold thesis. Having argued for my thesis, I will now flesh out some of its further implications as these relate to the debate on pluralism and religious diversity. I will argue that, if I have been successful in my overall project, there is a new response to the problem of religious diversity that is available to the Plantigian. Here I will briefly suggest where further work could be done that follows from my project. I will then discuss what would have followed if my two-part project had ultimately failed. Following the outline of my thesis, I will first entertain the question: If

Plantinga's theory of warrant is not correct, would it follow that the larger thesis of reformed epistemology is false. After this, I will draw out what it would mean if all sorts of serious and diverse religions could use Plantinga's epistemology. I will. particularly, engage David Tien's and Erik Baldwin's work and their claim that other religions being able to deploy Plantinga's epistemology is troubling for the reformed epistemologist. Having addressed this much, for the rest of the chapter, I will argue that, (1*) reformed epistemology's success ultimately does not depend on proper functionalism and (2*) even if all sorts of serious and diverse world religions could use Plantinga's epistemology to be warranted, it wouldn't necessarily follow that the reformed epistemologist is without warrant for her belief.

6.1 Pluralism, Plantinga, and the Problem of Religious Disagreement

In chapter one, I used Joseph Kim's work to articulate and engage the problem of religious disagreement, at least the version that is driven by the following equal-weight theory:

(1) It is unreasonable to hold to one's views in the face of disagreement since one would need some positive reason to privilege one's views over one's opponent['s view].

(2) No such reason is available since the disagreeing parties are epistemic peers and have access to the same evidence.

(3) Therefore, one should give equal weight to the opinion of an epistemic peer and to one's own opinion in the case of epistemic disagreement.[1]

It is typically argued that those who have religious peers that differ on issues of theology should give equal weight to their peers, and, in what would often be the case, withhold their belief in their religious dogma. I stated that, typically, those within the Plantigian tradition argue against this in at least three ways. First, one could reject that (1) would act as a defeater for their belief, as one could argue that those who would disagree with their

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[1] Joseph Kim, *Reformed Epistemology and the Problem of Religious Diversity: Proper Function, Epistemic Disagreement, and Christian Exclusivism* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011), 49-50.

religious belief would actually not be epistemic peers; for if Christianity were true, their peers' (non-Christians) faculties would not be functioning properly. Secondly, one could argue in an *ad absurdum* fashion that equal-weight theory would require us to be agnostic about a whole host of beliefs that we think we have warrant for. This would include beliefs pertaining to politics, metaphysics, ethics, and even science. This in itself might act as motivation to reject equal-weight theory. Lastly, the Plantigian could reject it as it appears to be self-defeating, given the fact that there are epistemic peers who disagree about equal-weight theory.

Given the success of my argument, I think there is at least one other response that could be given by the Plantigian. If one is willing to grant that Plantinga's theory of warrant is accurate and that no such beliefs could be warranted without his specified conditions being met, then it would follow that it would be impossible for many of the religions mentioned in this project to have their core belief warranted. If there are, then, no possible circumstances in which the core beliefs of such religions could be warranted, is one really obligated to give equal-weight to these religious views? It seems that something like the following principle is right:

> If S holds belief P and P is a belief that could be warranted, then S could be within her epistemic right in holding to P over her peer's belief that P' if it is not epistemically possible that P' could be warranted.

If this principle is approximately right, then the advocate of equal-weight theory should at least refine (3) to state something like the following:

> (3*)Therefore, one should give equal weight to the opinion of an epistemic peer and to one's own opinion in the case of epistemic disagreement, unless the epistemic peer's view cannot possibly be warranted.

As seen in this project, this would reduce the amount of religious disagreement that the Plantigian would need to contend with. The number of epistemic peers in this case literally could shrink by the billions. Though this wouldn't be a complete victory for the Plantigian, surely this would be an important achievement. And thus, though it wouldn't be a robust response to the problem of religious disagreement (is there such a thing?) as there would be other religions (e.g. Judaism) that could still have their core belief warranted, it surely

could act as one of several possible responses that the Plantigian could give to the proponent of equal-weight theory.

6.2 Suggested Work for the Future

Though significant headway has been made in this project at understanding how much religious disagreement could be avoided, many questions are yet to be explored. Could classic pagan religions use Plantinga's epistemology to be warranted? What about Native American religions? Do other traditions within the Hindu tradition stand a better chance in accounting for the preconditions that are needed to make use of Plantinga's epistemology than the Advaita Vedanta and Samkhya traditions? These are just some of the outstanding questions that could be usefully pursued.

In addition to this, it could be beneficial to investigate the compatibility of other theories of warrant (given that not all epistemologists will be convinced proper functionalists) with the religions discussed here.[2] In this case, we might ask whether Advaita Vedanta Hinduism could account for the preconditions needed to make intelligible virtue reliabilism? What about Mahayana Buddhism? There is a whole sub-field in religious epistemology that could be created for the exploration of the compatibility of religions with theories of warrant. The subfield that I am proposing could be referred to as 'epistemological compatibility studies.' Of course, it might be found that some theories of warrant are given greater attention as such theories to the current date might seem more plausible than others, however; it would still appear to be a worthy enterprise to investigate all sorts of contemporaries theories, especially in light of new epistemological developments that are bound to happen. Such a detailed investigation would not only provide a more robust response to the Pandora's Box Objection, but, as briefly argued above, it could also aid in the potential massive decrease of epistemic peers by way of decreasing the amount of religions that could have their core belief warranted. Having mentioned other theories of warrant and their compatibility with religious belief, we can now explore if the broader project of reformed epistemology depends on the success of proper functionalism.

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[2] See the next section for a primer on other theories of warrant and their compatibility with reformed epistemology.

6.3 Does Reformed epistemology Rise or Fall with Proper Functionalism?

The modern day reformed epistemology project began in 1967 with Plantinga's *God and Other Minds*.[3] There Plantinga uses the traditional internalist conception of justification and argues that belief in God could be justified in an analogous way to how belief in other minds could be justified. Both belief in God and belief in other minds, for Plantinga, lack good convincing arguments, but nonetheless, they could be rationally held. This paved the way for new literature on the rationality of theism, which would include William Alston's *Perceiving God*[4] and Plantinga's later trilogy which was discussed in chapter one of this project. At the heart of reformed epistemology is the claim that belief in God (or a specific religion) could be justified or warranted without arguments. As this is the case, we can ask whether the success of reformed epistemology depends on the success of proper functionalism?

While I do think that it is important to establish proper functionalism, I by no means think that proper functionalism is the only theory of warrant or justification that is compatible with reformed epistemology. And thus, even if Plantinga's theory of warrant turns out to be false, this doesn't entail that reformed epistemology is false. In order to show this, I will first articulate two internalist conceptions of justification (classical foundationalism and phenomenal conservatism) and argue that each of these can be consistent with reformed epistemology. I will then move on to demonstrate this within the framework of a general reliabilist theory and a virtue reliabilist theory of justification and warrant. If successful, I will have demonstrated that reformed epistemology can be incorporated into several mainstream theories of justification and warrant, and thus I will have established that the reformed epistemology project should be taken seriously, even by those who aren't proper functionalists. After all of this has been established, I will briefly mention the benefits of using the proper functionalist framework over competing theories of justification or warrant in endorsing reformed epistemology.

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[3] Alvin Plantinga, *God and Other Minds: A Study of the Rational Justification of Belief in God* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967).

[4] William Alston, *Perceiving God: The Epistemology of Religious Experience* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993).

6.4 Internalism: Classical Foundationalism

At first, it might seem odd that I endorse that there could be a classical foundationalist model of reformed epistemology. Isn't this the theory of justification that Plantinga spends the first part of *Warranted Christian Belief* attacking, in order to make room for reformed epistemology?[5] Certainly, the few contemporary advocates of classical foundationalism don't think that classical foundationalism is compatible with reformed epistemology.[6] Why should one think that reformed epistemology and classical foundationalism are compatible?

First, classical foundationalism needs to be defined. I take classical foundationalism to be the epistemological theory that espouses that only beliefs that are incorrigible or self-evident can be considered properly basic beliefs. The advocate of classical foundationalism will likely endorse it because incorrigible beliefs are supposed to have the tightest connection to truth one could have. It is often said that one who has incorrigible beliefs, actually 'grasps' or 'sees' the truth of such beliefs; that is, one grasps or sees the relation between the truth-maker and truth-bearer.

It is prima facie obvious why most philosophers of religion don't think that classical foundationalism is compatible with reformed epistemology. Believing in God doesn't seem self-evident for most people. There are many naturalists in Western philosophy (in fact, most professional philosophers are naturalists) and none of them seem to think that belief in God is incorrigible or self-evident. In fact, it is safe to assume that most theists or even Christians think that belief in God isn't a belief that is incorrigible or self-evident. If belief in God isn't incorrigible or self-evident, it follows from the tenet of classical foundationalism, that belief in God isn't properly basic.

In defending Christian theism, Greg Bahnsen argues that it is the case that every human knows that the Christian God exists in a self-evident way, but that because of sin humans are generally self-deceived into thinking he doesn't exist.[7] I take it that belief in

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[5] See Alvin Plantinga, Warranted Christian Belief (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[6] See Tim and Lydia McGrew, *Internalism and epistemology: the architecture of reason* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

[7] See Greg Bahnsen, 'The Crucial Concept of Self-Deception in Presuppositional Apologetics,' *Westminster Theological Journal* LVII (1995): 1-31; Greg Bahnsen, *Van Til's Apologetic: Readings and Analysis:Phillipsburg* (N.J.: P&R Publishing, 1998).

the Christian God is something like a dispositional belief that isn't functionally accessed, and thus, it doesn't become an occurrent belief, due to sin. Bahnsen's apologetic turns into an internalist project wherein he attempts to demonstrate that humans all believe in the Christian God but that they are suppressing the truth in unrighteousness. He does this by arguing that the preconditions of intelligibility (the laws of logic, induction, ethics, and rational thought) can only be accounted for in the Christian worldview, which would seem to indicate that we all think like Christians even if we don't outwardly endorse Christian belief.[8]

It seems to me that even if Bahnsen is unsuccessful in demonstrating this, he has still given a model that would allow a proponent of classical foundationalism to consistently endorse that belief in God is properly basic. This can be seen in the following formulation:

> CFRE: Because Christianity is true, belief in God is an incorrigible belief that doesn't appear to be self-evident or incorrigible (at least as it should be) due to sin and self-deception.

The soundness of this formulation would depend on if one could prove that Christianity is true and if one could show that Christian belief entailed that all humans know God but are or can be self-deceived about believing in him. However, one could even soften this formulation to bypass needing to prove such things by endorsing the following alternative:

> CFRE^2: It is epistemically possible that belief in the Christian God is really a self-evident or incorrigible belief but it doesn't appear that it is as there exists universal self-deception.

Now I grant that most non-Christians won't be impressed with this model as this establishes a highly controversial claim based on mere epistemic possibility; however, I take it to be in the spirit of Plantinga's own project in arguing that if Christianity is true, it is probably warranted.

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[8] Greg Bahnsen, *Always Ready: Directions for Defending the Faith* (Atlanta, GA: American Vision, 1996).

6.5 Internalism: Phenomenal Conservatism

The prospects of formulating reformed epistemology on a phenomenal conservatism model, seems to be even more promising than on classical foundationalism. According to Martin Smith, phenomenal conservatism is a prominent view in epistemology that says 'if it seems to one that P is true then, in the absence of defeaters, one has justification for believing that P is true.' [9] At the heart of this theory, are seemings. Seemings are supposed to be a particular type of mental state that bears propositional content and a distinct sort of phenomenology. Upon one having a certain seeming, one is justified in making a natural doxastic response to affirm a related belief to that seeming.

If this is the case, then it is easy to imagine a scenario where it seems to S that Christianity is true, and in the absence of defeaters, S would be justified in believing in Christianity. Like on Plantinga's model, this belief could be a result of a belief-forming mechanism like the sensus divinitatis or it could be the result of accepting the testimony of God, an individual, or a community. It is important to note that two contemporary phenomenal conservatists, Trent Dougherty and Chris Tweedt, explicitly agree that one could advocate for reformed epistemology as a phenomenal conservatist. As they state, '[e]videntialists can maintain epistemic evidentialism and hold that someone can rationally believe that God exists without argument by holding to phenomenal conservatism.'[10]

However, there is one important distinction between proper functionalism and phenomenal conservatism. Plantinga's proper functionalism would enable the belief to not only be internally justified but also warranted. That is, he would allow the justified belief to become actual knowledge that the individual possesses. Presumably, the individual on phenomenal coservatism account would only have justified, true belief. But, as most epistemologists believe, this would fall short of knowledge. This doesn't appear to be a huge problem, however, as it could easily be fixed. In regard to obtaining knowledge, there are at least two different options. First, an individual might think that Gettier problems are the main obstacle between justified, true belief and knowledge. If this is the case, then one could make the following formulation:

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[9] Martin Smith, 'The epistemology of religion,' *Analysis* 74 (2014): 141.

[10] Trent Dougherty and Chris Tweetd, 'Religious Epistemology,' *Philosophy Compass*, forthcoming,

GFPCRE: If it seems to S that God exists and if S isn't aware of any defeaters for S's belief, and if the situation was Gettier free, S would know that God exists.

Moreover, in regard to the other option, one might not think that the Gettier condition is what is important, or at least wholly important. Rather, one needs (or also needs) a mechanism that produces the right sort of seeming to be a reliable mechanism. If this is the case, one could formulate the following principle:

RGFCRE: It is epistemically possible that in virtue of a reliable mechanism that produces certain seemings, S could have a justified doxastic response in believing that God exists as it seems like God exists to S; and as long as the situation is Gettier free (i.e. Gettier preventions are met), S would have knowledge that God exists.

Regardless of what principle seems more attractive to the advocate of phenomenal conservatism, it would appear that there would be ways to flesh out reformed epistemology in such a way to where belief in God, or even Christianity, could be a belief that constitutes knowledge for S. Having now addressed how reformed epistemology might be formulated on different internalist models of justification, I will now move on to demonstrating how it could be formulated on different externalist models.

6.6 Externalist Theories of Justification: Reliabilism and Virtue Reliabilism

By externalism here, I just mean the denial of internalism, which states roughly, that one must have access to the properties which confer warrant.[11] There are other internalist theories that I mention in chapter two of my project, that I won't go into detail about here but they are still worthy of being mentioned.[12] Probably the most well-known externalist account is reliabilism. For the purposes of this chapter, I will call the reliabilism that I have in mind general reliabilism. This will help make the distinction between general reliabilism and virtue reliabilism.

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[11] See Chapter two for detailed definitions of internalism and externalism.

[12] For the definitions of inferential internalism or mentalism, see Richard Fumerton, 'Evidentialism and Truth' in *Evidentialism and its Dicontents* ed. Trent Dougherty (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 179-191.

General reliabilism can be glossed in at least two different ways. First, it can be glossed to emphasize a reliable process such that it states roughly, S is justified in believing P iff S has a reliable mechanism which is responsible for S believing that P. Secondly, it could be glossed in such a way as to emphasize the evidence that S has, such that S's belief P is reliable insofar as S's evidence reliably leads S to produce P. Though one could loosen the requirements for what the jointly necessary and sufficient conditions are for what it means to have evidence, such that good evidence could be as weak as mere phenomenological imagery or seemings (which would make it more reformed epistemology friendly), for the purposes of establishing coherence with the thesis of reformed epistemology, I have more in mind the first of these types of reliabilism. It seems relatively easy to see how reformed epistemology might work on this account of justification. Without too much controversy, one could make the following formulation:

> RPRE: It is epistemically possible that S has a reliable faculty that produces in S the belief that God exists; and if such a faculty did produce belief that God exists, S could be justified in her belief that God exists.

Of course, one might say that this account falls short of knowledge because there could be a need to invoke anti-Gettier conditions or safety conditions, but there is no reason to think it couldn't be done in a similar way as I have handled the internalist accounts above.

As mentioned, above, there is a sort of reliabilism that restricts the reliable process or mechanism to cognitive virtues. By cognitive virtues, I have in mind such virtues as inductive, deductive, perceptual, and memory faculties. Like with general reliabilism, it also seems clear how one could endorse RE given virtue reliabilism. In addition to the general criteria of reliabilism, this virtue account would just have to clarify that the sensus divinitatis (that is the reliable cognitive faculty that produces belief in God) would meet the jointly necessary and sufficient conditions of what it means to be a cognitive virtue. One could make the following formulation:

> VRRE: It is epistemically possible that S has a cognitive virtue 'm' that produces in S the belief that God exists; and if this was the case, S would be justified in her belief that God exists.

Again, if one felt that this wasn't adequate for S knowing that God exists, one could formulate this in such a way as to where Gettier or safety conditions were also satisfied.

6.7 Benefits of using a Proper Functionalist Theory of Warrant

If there are all sorts of serious epistemological systems that could be considered compatible with reformed epistemology, why might an advocate of reformed epistemology defend proper functionalism? This question seems especially pertinent given that the easiest way to get a more narrow theory accepted in a community is to use broader already accepted theories which the narrower theory is based on, rather than basing the narrower theory on a more controversial broader theory. While this seems right to me, there are at least three benefits for the advocate of reformed epistemology to use a proper functionalist model, over the other models that were mentioned above. First, it best captures the needed connection to truth that a subject has to have in order to have knowledge. Though I won't go into detail here, as I have explored this at length in chapter one (the brain lesion example) and chapter two (the Swampman example), it is still worth mentioning.

Second, as established in this project, the proper functionalist has a powerful response to the Pandora's Box Objection and it might be the case that other theories of justification or warrant aren't able to respond to it with the same level of force. Third, as I have argued, if there were all sorts of religions whose core belief failed to meet the proper function condition, and if the proper function condition is a necessary condition for warrant, it might be that the core beliefs of these religions just couldn't ever be warranted. This would mean that proper functionalism could actually help predict the unwarrantedness nature of other religious and philosophical traditions. For some, this might make the project of reformed epistemology look stronger as not only could it establish the warranted nature of Christian theism, it could actually help establish the unwarrantedness of other traditions. I take all of these reasons to be good reasons for the advocate of reformed epistemology to take seriously the proper functionalist formulation of reformed epistemology.

6.8 Tien's Trouble and the Steadfast View

Having now argued that the success of reformed epistemology isn't predicated on the success of proper functionalism and that a supporter of reformed epistemology would nonetheless be advised to hold it, I will now explore the final implication of what would have been the case were my two-fold thesis to have failed. Would those members of differing religious communities have their religious beliefs defeated if everyone's religious belief was compatible with the correct theory of warrant?

This is what is indicated by Tien. Tien argues that since the Christian and the Neo-Confucian would be in the same epistemic situation, Plantinga's argument for the rationality of Christianity is greatly weakened.[13] His reason is that given that both views can be seen endorsing the same epistemology and both are able to be warranted in the same sort of way, it would follow that adherents of both of these views would lack a way to rightly determine which religion should be preferred.[14]

As mentioned in chapter one's section on religious diversity, Tien's claim isn't right. Just because the Christian lacks the internal access to demonstrate the difference between herself and her epistemic acquaintance (the Neo-Confucian), it doesn't follow that the two epistemic subjects are in the same epistemic boat. To endorse this would be to presuppose a type of internalism, which Plantinga obviously rejects. Even if both traditions endorsed the same epistemology, and both could account for the preconditions that are needed to make intelligible that epistemology, it wouldn't necessarily follow that the adherents of both are epistemic peers. In fact, as only one design plan could be successfully aimed at truth (if both design plans are conflicting as in this case), there could only be two options for what could be going on with the subjects. First, both could be malfunctioning. In which case, an argument could be made that these two subjects are epistemic peers. However, there is a second possibility, namely that one of them is functioning properly, which would then preclude the other from functioning properly (at least, functioning properly insofar as that involves functioning properly with design plan aimed at truth) and thus both wouldn't be epistemic peers. Given that one would be

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[13] David W. Tien, 'Warranted Neo-Confucian Belief: Religious Pluralism and the Affections in the Epistemologies of Wang Yangming (1472-1529) and Alvin Plantinga,' *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 55, no. 4 (2004): 38.

[14] Ibid., 37-38.

functioning properly and the other wouldn't be, there would be a significant epistemic difference between the two subjects, and this epistemic difference would be enough to ensure that the two subjects would no longer appear to be in the same epistemic boat.

Even if one wanted to advocate that both the Christian and the Neo-Confucian were in the same epistemic situation (perhaps being epistemic peers), this wouldn't automatically defeat Plantinga's project or the Christian's belief. There is a whole literature based on epistemic disagreement and getting into the details of this topic is beyond the scope of this project.[15] However, there is a view that is worth briefly mentioning. The steadfast view states that it is sometimes reasonable to believe P even in light of peer disagreement about P.[16] Besides rehashing the already discussed arguments against equal-weight theory,[17] I think the following scenario can help make this account plausible: Suppose that one day, Luke wakes up and gets out of bed. As Luke goes about his morning routine and he encounters his wife, Lynn. Lynn informs him that she doesn't really exist and that she is just a Freudian projection that comforts him in a dark and cold world and that his cognitive faculties are inadvertently letting him know this now. As Luke argues with Lynn about her existence, he leaves the house to find his neighbor, Pastor Brian. Luke seeks counsel from this morally trust-worthy pastor. However, upon Luke sharing with Brian what his fight was about, Brian informs Luke that he too is a projection of the mind; but contra the Freudian projection theory, he informs Luke that it is due to an evil demon playing tricks on him. As Luke becomes more upset he decides to drive into town where he runs into countless individuals (maybe he also runs into some who like him, affirm the existence of other minds and have no idea what is going on) who inform him that they don't really exist and are really projections caused by Freudian reasons, demonic activity, or perhaps some other reason.

Now, for argument's sake, let us say that there are no good arguments justifying belief in other minds: at least arguments that would justify Luke in believing that there

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[15] A good place to start is David Christensen and Jennifer Lackey, *The epistemology of disagreement: new essays* (Oxford: Oxford Press, 2013).

[16] Kenneth Boyce and Allan Hazlett, 'Multi-Peer Disagreement and the Preface Paradox' (forthcoming in *Ratio*).

[17] See Chapter one of this thesis for arguments against equal-weight theory.

were other minds.[18] Since Luke is a good philosopher, under these conditions he knows that there could be different explanations or theories formed by the evidence that he has (I have in mind the experiences of perceiving other wills, emotions, and rational behavior, in other bodies that are not his own) for believing in other minds. Maybe Luke realizes that he has no further evidence that can disprove those he encounters that belong to team-evil-demon-monster hypothesis. Likewise, he also realizes that he lacks reasons to prefer his hypothesis about other minds as opposed to those that can be considered on being on team-Freudian-Projection hypothesis. Luke realizes that the phenomenological imagery that has always moved him doxastically to affirm that other minds exist hasn't changed. In fact, the phenomenological imagery that he perceives is just as clear and evident as ever before. In this case, is the phenomenological imagery that has acted as evidence his whole life no longer sufficient grounds for the rationality of his belief in other minds? Would it no longer be sufficient just because he has become aware that there exist epistemic peers with differing views, and he lacks an argument to prefer his own view over competing views? It seems right that Luke is in his epistemic right in continuing to affirm that there exist other minds, even in light of there being different viable explanations of his experience.

Now, perhaps one thinks that Luke being a good philosopher would realize that his peers are in a self-defeating position, as according to them, they are not even Luke's peers. This would then put Luke's view in a distinct category in regard to justification and thus this situation is irrelevant to defending the steadfast view. I think there are two responses to this. First, it is easy to imagine Luke being in such a frantic state that he doesn't even reason in this way. He continues to only think about the phenomenological imagery that he has and that, likewise, his family and friends have. He can't stop thinking about why they are interpreting their experience in such a way and why he is interpreting his experience in his way. Further reasons that can justify his position are just simply not thought of.

Second, if this example seems too controversial, one could just replace the dispute about the existence of other minds with disputes over the age of the earth. Maybe some of Luke's friends think that they were all just created five minutes ago with the appearance of age, while others think that the earth was created a year ago with the appearance of age. Each individual has the same empirical data but there are multiple interpretations that can explain the data just as well. In this case, is Luke no longer warranted in believing what his

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[18] I take it that it can be helpful for argument's sake, to affirm something contrary to the truth that one knows (even necessary truths) in a thought experiment, in order to experiment with and better articulate intuitions.

faculties produce, namely that he has existed alongside others for the past thirty years or that the world is a little under five billion years old? It is obvious that he is warranted in believing what his faculties produce in this situation, even in light of peer epistemic disagreement.

Lastly, even if the above scenarios failed to make the Steadfast view more plausible, it would still be fair game to ask why the advocate of the steadfast view should be convinced of the opposing conciliatory view (that is, the view that rejects that there are some cases where S is rational in accepting 'P' in the case of genuine epistemic peer disagreement). It isn't as if the conciliatory view should be considered the default view. According to Christensen, what separates conciliatory view advocates from steadfast view advocates is accepting something like the independence principle.[19]

> *Independence*: In evaluating the epistemic credentials of another person's belief about P, in order to determine how (if at all) to modify one's own belief about p, one should do so in a way that is independent of the reasoning behind one's own initial belief about p.[20]

Christensen states that one is supposed to be compelled to accept this principle as it is needed to avoid dogmatism or blatant question begging.

> The motivation behind the principle is obvious: it's intended to prevent blatantly question-begging dismissals of the evidence provided by the disagreement of the others. It attempts to capture what would be wrong with a P-believer saying, for example, "Well, so and so disagrees with me about p. But since P is true, she's wrong about p. So however reliable she may generally be, I needn't take her disagreement about p as any reason at all to change my belief."[21]

But if God did exist and Christians did have reliable or properly functioning faculties and their epistemic peers did not have such faculties, then the reformed epistemologist, who

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[19] David Christensen, 'Disagreement as Evidence: The Epistemology of Controversy,' *Philosophy Compass* 4, no. 5 (2009): 758.

[20] Ibid., 758.

[21] David Christensen, '*Disagreement, Question-Begging and Epistemic Self-Criticism,*' *Philosophers Imprint* 11, no. 6 (2011): 2.

has a high degree of warrant for her beliefs, might have a good reason to not be bothered by evidence that is advocated by another. If this were the case, then the reformed epistemologist shouldn't be compelled to accept the conciliatory view. I will attempt to make this more plausible in the following section.

6.9 Objective Probability and Religious Diversity

Perhaps I have misunderstood Tien and what he is really getting at is that the advocate of Plantinga's religious epistemology, upon reflection, has a defeater for believing that the Holy Spirit has testified to her. This might be because the subject has become aware that there exist other subjects who adhere to contradictory religious claims; and due to epistemological commitments, there is no way to up the probability that her view is the right one. Perhaps the other subjects even testify that they share the same type of phenomenological imagery as the Christian, when they go about forming their respective doxastic responses. If this is what Tien is getting at, then he would be espousing the same sort of argument that Erik Baldwin has defended.[22] Baldwin tries to flesh this worry out into a scenario where several individuals (who are all proper functionalists) are rolling a die and each individual sees a different number come up on the die. As each individual is trustworthy, it would seem that each individual must come to the conclusion that most of them are experiencing some sort of cognitive malfunction. But if this is the case, then each individual must realize that there is a low objective probability[23] for their faculties being the faculties that are still properly functioning (presuming that one of them has faculties that are working properly); and thus, each individual would have a defeater for trusting their faculties.[24] And if each person were to realize that they had a defeater for the belief that their religious belief forming faculties were reliable, each individual would be internally irrationally if they continued to affirm their religious beliefs. As the Plantigian affirms that internal rationality is required for warrant, the Plantigian couldn't have a warranted belief under these conditions.

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[22] See Eric Baldwin, 'Could the Extended Aquinas/Calvin model Defeat Basic Christian Belief?' *Philosophia Christi* 8, no. 2 (2006). Also, it is important to note that through personal correspondence with Erik Baldwin, I have recently learned that he no longer thinks that the probabilistic argument that he gives here is a good one. Erik Baldwin, personal message, August 25, 2014.

[23] By objective probability, I mean the evidential probability given the objective, sharable evidence.

[24] Baldwin, 'Could the Extended Aquinas/Calvin model Defeat Basic Christian Belief?' op. cit., 392.

If this is what really is behind Tien's objection, I am still unconvinced that his objection (or Baldwin's objection) is a troubling one for the Christian who endorses Plantinga's epistemology. Even if a subject becomes aware that the objective probability of her faculties functioning properly in regard to her Christian belief is low, it doesn't follow that this constitutes a defeater for her belief. Different degrees of warrant require different responses to potential defeaters (this includes defeaters which are based on probability). There may be cases where one should be unmoved in responding to potential defeaters (one shouldn't react to them at all), as opposed to other cases where one would rationally be required to move doxastically.

Recall the scenario that I discuss in Chapter two above:

Say I am known for stealing philosophy books, in fact, there is even a picture of me, warning the clerks that I like to steal books. If, one day, the whole philosophy section of the library went missing and there were several witnesses saying they saw me steal a lot of books, the objective probability that I stole the books would be very high. Nonetheless, if I had a very distinct and highly warranted memory of myself at my house during the time that the books disappeared, would I have a defeater for my belief that I was at my house when the book snatching occurred? It doesn't appear to be the case that I would. As I hold to this belief with a sufficient amount of firmness (which is partly responsible for my level of warrant being high), the probability that I stole the philosophy books wouldn't play any significant role in my doxastic process.

As shown, there are clearly cases where the objective probability for a belief being false is high and yet it can be warranted due to the high degree of warrant the belief has for a subject. As mentioned, the level of warrant depends on how firmly one holds to that belief. Firmness in this context is at least partly determined by the subjective probability one has for the belief being true. This means that, unlike objective probability, subjective probability is related to the design plan's requirements for doxastic formation. One could argue that in the case of the missing books, given the non-propositional evidence for my belief that I wasn't stealing the books, the subjective probability for my belief being true isn't low and this is why my belief isn't defeated. If this is the case, it would follow that the low objective probability that Baldwin's die case tries to establish isn't directly relevant to one's doxastic formation. For Baldwin's case, it might just be that one of the

subjects is designed to produce the right belief about the die and, due to the subject having a high degree of warrant for her belief (which is due partly to the high subjective probability that she has for the belief being true), even despite diverse opinions from her peers, she would be internally rational (and rational in accordance with proper function) in continuing to affirm the right number that's on the die. The same story could be told for the Christian Plantigian. It just might be that the Spirit's combined repairment of the sensus divinitatis and testimony to a subject, assures that the subjective probability will be high or at least high enough for one to rationality continue to hold to Christian belief, even in light of a low objective probability that one's religious faculties are functioning properly

6.10 Final Conclusion

In this final chapter, after summarizing the previous chapters of this project, I concluded that I had successfully argued for my thesis. I then proceeded to examine some positive implications of the success of my thesis. I argued that one could use the information provided in my thesis to formulate a new Plantigian response to the problem of religious disagreement. I then briefly suggested areas where my work could be extended.

After looking at positive implications for the success of my thesis, I turned to explicating what the contrary-to-fact failure of my two-part thesis would mean for the overall project of reformed epistemology. I first argued that even if Plantinga's theory of warrant is shown to be false, the project of reformed epistemology could still be seen as successful. Lastly, I looked at what it would mean if there was no robust response to the Pandora's Box Objection or a robust way to decrease the force of the problem of religious diversity. I argued that at least for the reformed epistemologist, the project of reformed epistemology isn't significantly hindered by the lack of robust responses. Nonetheless, for the reasons mentioned in this project, I take it that my work will not only significantly add to the literature pertaining to the Pandora's Box Objection, but also to the literature pertaining to reformed epistemology, proper functionalism, and the problem of religious disagreement.

Appendix 1: A Defeater for Islamic Belief

A1.0 Introduction

All of the religions surveyed have lacked one important thing, belief in the existence of a personal God. This has proven to be detrimental in each religion's attempt to account for and utilize Plantinga's epistemology. But what about those religions that do endorse the classical theistic conception of God; would they fare any better? For example, Islam is very similar to Christianity in that there exists a good God who is responsible for creating all of life, so wouldn't it be able to account for and utilize Plantinga's epistemology in the same way that Christianity can? In this appendix, I will argue that though Islam is compatible with the proper function condition that is espoused by Plantinga, due to philosophical doctrines that have been espoused within mainstream Islamic traditions, there exists metalevel requirements which would prevent the core belief of Islam from being able to be warranted in the same way that the core belief of Christianity can be. After establishing this, I will move on to engage Islam and its compatibility with the truth-aimed condition. I will argue that due to certain Qur'anic passages, there is a subjective epistemic defeater for some Muslims. I now turn to surveying the Islamic tradition.

A1.1 Islam 101

Islam teaches that humans are all born Muslims.[1] However, due to sin, there exists a need to correct human thinking about the nature of God and about how humans should act. Islam teaches that God has given this correction by giving people prophets. Islam explicitly endorses that the general story of the Old Testament is a fallible record of God giving humans such prophets. In addition to this, Islam also endorses that this calling back to God also includes the raising up of Jesus of Nazareth as a prophet to the world. Though these people of the book (that is Jews and Christians) are seen as once having God's Word in pure form (that is through having the Law and the Gospel), through time and different

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[1] Until specified, the following is an excerpt (formatted to appropriately fit this thesis) from Erik Baldwin and Tyler Dalton McNabb, 'An Epistemic Defeater for Islamic Belief?' *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology* (2015): 352-367. Specifically, this excerpt can rightly be attributed to my own work.

disputes, the Word has now become corrupted (2:75-79). Such corruption has perverted the faith of Islam or what is true Abrahamic monotheism.

In part, Islamic theology differs substantially with both Jewish and Christian theologies with respect to each theology's view of the person of Jesus of Nazareth. In Judaism, Jesus at best was a good faithful rabbi who had followers who badly misunderstood him. In regard to Islam however, Jesus was a prophet, the messiah (*al-Maseeh*), who was born of a virgin and anointed the blind so that they could see, whom God raised up to bring back His people from sin.

If Judaism has too low of a view of Jesus, Christianity has too high a view of him. Nowhere can this be seen more than in regard to the nature of Jesus. Though Christianity endorses monotheism, it also teaches that as the second person of the Trinity, Jesus has both a divine and a human nature. Furthermore, it is in his human nature that Jesus suffered on the cross the consequences of the world's sins. In addition to this, Christianity teaches that this act of love pleased God to the point where God justified and vindicated Christ by raising him from the dead. Islam denies all of this: Jesus was created (3:59), not God in the flesh (19:34-35), he was merely a messenger from God (4:171), he did not die a cursed death (4:157), and he was not raised from the dead but taken bodily into heaven (3:55). In fact, Islam teaches that Jesus will come back condemning those who worshipped him. (4:156-159)

Thus for Islam, the major sects of the Abrahamic religions have clearly gone astray from God's original intention. This being the case, God needed to restore the truth about Himself and about how His followers should act. Islam teaches that in God's timing, God sent the Prophet Muhammad (*circa* 570-632) to the world. From his encounters with the angel Gabriel, Muhammad was reportedly given the Qur'an, which was used to make the needed corrections to contemporary Jewish and Christian theologies. The pure faith of Islam can be summarized by Surah 112 which states, 'Say: He is Allah, He is one! Allah, the Eternally Besought of all! He begetteth not, nor was He begotten. And there is none comparable unto Him.'[2]

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[2] Unless otherwise noted, all of the Qur'an verses that follow are from Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall, English translation of Holy Quran taken from http://www.sacred-texts.com/isl/pick/

The Qur'an endorses most of the traditional attributes of God that both Judaism and Christianity endorse. In Islam, these attributes are considered the 99 names of God. The merciful, the loving one, the creator, the all-knowing, the all-powerful, the forgiver, and the judge are all names or attributes attributed to God.

There are however, some differences between the conception of God in the Jewish and Christian scriptures and in the Qur'an. In Old and New Testaments, God makes man in His image and it is presumed that He has created man's faculties to produce true beliefs that reflect the world around him. In Islam however, though God is still truth and though God still commands humans to be truthful, we are also told that God did not make man in His image and we are also told that He is the greatest deceiver or schemer. (3:54) Moreover, the New Testament portrays God as a God who loves sinners, even those who habitually oppose Him. In fact, He loves His enemies so much that He died a cursed death for them. (John 3:16 and Galatians 3:12-13) In contrast, however, the Qur'an teaches that God does not love the sinner as much as He can and in fact, it never once even affirms His love for them in any way. In addition to this, we learn that God's love isn't unconditional and it is based upon human efforts and performances.[3]

It is worth mentioning however, that just because God doesn't love sinners (at least in the same sort of way as the God of the New Testament does), it doesn't follow that He isn't merciful toward them. The Qur'an many times offers over and over again for sinners to stop doing what they are doing and to get right with Him. Islamic theology offers a path to God through the five pillars of Islam. These pillars go as follows:

(1) The Confession: In order to become a Muslim, one must say the following: There is no god but God and Muhammad is the messenger of God.
(2) Prayer: In Islam, Muslims are commanded to pray five times a day (dawn, noon, afternoon, evening, and night).
(3) Alms Giving: Muslims are commanded to give out of their own income.
(4) Fasting: Muslims are commanded to fast during the month of Ramadan.

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[3] See 3:31.

(5) The Pilgrimage: Muslims are commanded to make a journey to Mecca and walk around the Kaaba seven times.[4]

Though there seems to be obvious similarities between the Old and New Testament conception of God with the Islamic conception of God, there does seem to be some significant differences as well. Having now established both commonalities and dissimilarities between Islam and Christianity, I will begin my engagement with Islam and Plantinga's proper function condition.

A1.2 Islam and Proper Function

It is important to first note that according to Islamic theology humans are endowed with a cognitive faculty or process called *qalb*, which, like the *sensus divinitatis*, is a faculty of spiritual perception the proper function of which is to naturally produce belief in Allah. On the nature and function of *qalb*, Mohamed Yasien writes, 'Through the organ of the heart, its faculty of intellect, and the guidance of revelation, man is able to attain all levels of perception, even the knowledge of God in a direct and immediate way.'[5] He writes that untainted or original human nature, or *fitrah*, is such that everyone is naturally inclined towards goodness and towards belief in the oneness (*tawhid*) of God, and it is the social environment that causes an individual's *qalb* to malfunction or otherwise deviate from this state.[6] This natural correspondence between human nature and Islam is the reason why in Muslim theology all humans are born Muslims. Baldwin points out that just as in the Plantingian Christian story, belief in God can be overcome by external factors. In fact, Baldwin has argued that according to Islamic philosophy, Allah's design plan for human faculties is to produce doubts.[7] The doubts are meant to lead subjects to reflect on their justificatory status of their belief in Islam. The hope is that upon reflecting on one's

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[4] For more on the Five Pillars, see Mualuna Muhammad Ali, *The Religion of Islam: A Comprehensive Discussion of the Sources, Principles, and Practices of Islam* (Columbus: Amaddiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam, 1990), 99-101, 263-442; Abdullah Saeed, *Islamic Thought: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2006), 3.

[5] Mohamed Yasien, *Fitrah: The Islamic Conception of Human Nature* (London: Ta-Ha Publishers, 1996), 97.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Erik Baldwin, 'On the Prospects of an Islamic Externalist Account of Warrant,' in *Classic Issues in Islamic Philosophy and Theology Today*, Eds. A.T. Tymieniecka and Nazif Muhtaroglu (Dordrecht: Springer, 2010), 19-41.

justificatory status, one will accept the invitation of the Qur'an and test it.[8] And since Allah has provided sufficient light through the Qur'an and through creation, the individual who seeks further evidence for Islam will eventually overcome these doubts and come to have robust knowledge of God and His Prophet. Baldwin thinks the early al-Ghazālī offers a good summary of this view when states, 'It was about this light that Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, 'God created the creatures in darkness, and then sprinkled upon them some of His light.'' From that light must be sought an intuitive understanding of things Divine. That light at certain times gushes from the spring of Divine generosity.'[9]

Baldwin's points can also be seen as consistent with the experience that the Prophet Muhammad himself went through. In one particular instance, Muhammad was unsure how to interpret a Messenger coming to him. He lacked confidence that this Messenger intended good for him. Nonetheless, we are told that Muhammad was encouraged by his wife's reasons for why he should trust the Messenger; this in turn led to a deeper relationship between Allah and His Prophet.[10]

If Baldwin is right, it would follow that unlike in the Christian story, the design plan according to Allah's will, isn't such that (reflective) Muslims won't have any doubts about the truth of Islamic belief or that those doubts can be overcome without making use of arguments or propositional evidence at some point or other. That is, warranted Islamic belief involves having what one might call genuine or robust knowledge, a degree of knowledge which requires that a Muslim be able to give an answer for how he/she knows that God exists and/or that Quran is trust worthy.[11] This of course doesn't mean that the

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[8] See 4:82 and 10:38 as examples of such an invitation.

[9] Erik Baldwin, 'On the Prospects of an Islamic Externalist Account of Warrant,' in *Classic Issues in Islamic Philosophy and Theology Today*, Eds. Tymieniecka, A-T and Nazif Muhtaroglu (Dordrecht: Springer, 2010), 30. For the original quote, see al-Ghazālī, *The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazali*, 25–26.

[10] *Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhara,* Vol. 1, Trl. by Muhammad Muhsin (Beirut: Darussalam Press, 1985).

[11] See Erik Baldwin, 'On the Prospects of an Islamic Externalist Account of Warrant,' in *Classic Issues in Islamic Philosophy and Theology Today*, op. cit., and Deborah Black, 'Certitude, Justification, and the Principles of Knowledge in Avicenna's Epistemology,' in *Interpreting Avicenna*, ed. by Peter Adamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 137-141. It is important to note that according to Baldwin, 'The Mu'tazila maintain that such knowledge [robust knowledge that comes about as the result of meeting certain metalevel requirements] is necessary if one is to be a true Muslim. Ahl al-Sunna maintains that while one is a true Muslim, to lack such knowledge is a sin. In either case, second-order awareness is necessary for an Islamic theory of knowledge of God.' There are complications, however. For Ibn Sina and al-Ghazālī, awareness of the existence of one's self as a thinking thing is immediate and epistemically basic. On the basis of reflection one can know that all created things, being contingent things, are metaphysically dependent on the existence of a necessarily existing God. Hence, on the basis of reflection

Muslim can't account for the preconditions that make Plantinga's theory of warrant intelligible; rather, unlike the Christian, the Muslim just couldn't endorse that he/she could be warranted in his/her belief, apart from *any* propositional evidence or argument.

This being the case, this would act as further evidence for my claim that there are certain serious world religions that cannot use Plantinga's epistemology to demonstrate that their core belief could be warranted in the same way that Christian belief can be warranted. Some might take this alone to be sufficient reason for thinking that Plantinga's epistemology isn't weakened by its permissiveness, at least as it relates to major Islamic traditions. For those who still have further worries that Plantinga's epistemology is too permissive, I will move on to engaging Islam in light of Plantinga's truth-aimed condition. Having established the continuity and discontinuity that exists within Islam and Plantinga's proper function condition, I will move on to our discussion of Islam and Plantinga's truth-aimed condition.[12]

A1.3 Islam, the Truth-Aimed Condition, and Undercutting Defeaters

As briefly mentioned above, several verses in the Qur'an state that God is a deceiver/schemer or even the best deceiver/schemer. The Arabic word for deceiver/schemer, *makr*, can be found in the following relevant verses:[13]

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on one's own contingent existence and upon the experience of a God recognized to be necessarily existent, one can come to see that the existence of God is as obvious as the existence of one's own self. Having attained such a position, one no longer has need of the evidence or arguments that enabled one to come to that realization; for such a one, belief in God will be basic, no longer dependent on evidence or argument. (This is similar to having used a ladder to reach the roof one no longer has need of the ladder simply to be on the roof.) Further complicating matters is that according to some Muslims, including Sufi mystics, God's existence can be as obvious as the existence of one's own self can without the mediation of reflection and argumentation. As Rumi writes, 'When the soul has been united with God, to speak of Soul (God) is to speak of this soul, and to speak of this soul means to speak of that Soul.' (Erkan Turkman and Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, *The Essence of Rumi's Masnevi, Including His Life and Work* (Konya: Enis Booksellers, 1992), 347.) For all that, whenever doubts arise about the existence of God arise (and doubts will arise so that one's faith may be made stronger, given that no one has perfected faith in this life), Muslims can and should dispense with them appropriately which, according to Islam, requires relying on evidence and argument in some way or other at some stage.

[12] This paragraph is not in Erik Baldwin and Tyler Dalton McNabb, 'An Epistemic Defeater for Islamic Belief?' op. cit.

[13] Both the verses and lexicon definitions were brought to our attention by Sahab, 'Allah the Best Deceiver,' last modified September 18, 2013, last accessed October 27, 2014, http://wikiislam.net/wiki/Allah_the_Best_Deceiver.

Surah 3:54 And they (the disbelievers) *schemed*, and Allah *schemed* (against them): and Allah is the best of *schemers*.

Surah 7:99 Are they then secure from Allah's *scheme*? None deemeth himself secure from Allah's *scheme* save folk that perish.

Surah 8:30 And when those who disbelieve *plot* against thee (O Muhammad) to wound thee fatally, or to kill thee or to drive thee forth; they plot, but Allah (also) *plotteth*; and Allah is the best of *plotters*.

Surah 13:42 And when We cause mankind to taste of mercy after some adversity which had afflicted them, behold! They have some *plot* against Our revelations. Say: Allah is more swift in *plotting*. Lo! Our messengers write down that which ye *plot*.

According to Lane's Lexicon, *makr* is used to express deceit, guile, or circumvention.[14] Similarly, Hans Wehr Dictionary defines *makr* and variations of it in the following way.[15]

Makara u (makr) to deceive, delude, cheat, dupe, gull, double-cross…[16]

Makr cunning, craftiness, slyness, wiliness, double-dealing, deception, trickery

Makra ruse, artifice, stratagem, wile, trick, ruse, dodge

Makkar and makur cunning, sly, crafty, wily, crafty person, imposter, swindler

Maker makara sly, cunning, wily.

It is obvious that *makr* carries strong negative connotations. A member of the Council of Senior Scholars and the former head of the Saudi Supreme Court, Sheik Saleh Al-Fawzan, seems to grant that it carries negative connotations as he states in his commentary the following:

This cunning added to God Almighty and ascribed to him is not like the cunning of creatures, because the cunning of creatures is blameworthy, and the cunning added to the Almighty God is praised, because the cunning of creatures means deception and misinformation, and the delivery of harm to those who do not deserve it, and

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[14] William Lane and S. Lane-Poole, *Arabic-English Lexicon*: *Volume 7* (New York: F. Ungar Publishing Company, 1955), 256.

[15] H. Wehr, and J.M. Cowan, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Spoken Language Services. 1976), 917.

[16] Arabic letters and words are not repeated.

the cunning of God Almighty it good; as it is delivered to those who deserve punishment, so it is justice and mercy.[17]

If it seems more plausible than not to translate *makr* as a word describing deception/scheming, it would seem that the Qur'an endorses that God is the greatest deceiver/schemer. If this is so, there seems to be a major problem with the Muslim who endorses the Qur'an as part of their epistemology. For how would the Muslim know that God is not deceiving or scheming him in regard to the very nature of the inspiration of the Qur'an? Why couldn't God be deceiving the faithful Muslim? Notice, the question does not pertain to whether a good God could deceive and still be just. I am granting that such actions could be seen as compatible with Perfect Being theology. The question is strictly epistemic in nature.

Perhaps the faithful Muslim might respond to this question, by saying that in the context of these verses, God is only deceiving His enemies and these texts don't give us any reason to believe that God would also deceive the faithful. Furthermore, one might add that God only deceives those who deserve it and who have attempted to deceive God. Now, it does seem right that, generally speaking, the context of such verses do reflect unbelievers and God deceiving them as a response to their evil actions. However, there is a case in the Qur'an where God directly deceives the most faithful Muhammad in order for a greater good to be actualized.[18] Surah 8:43-44 states,

When Allah showed them unto thee (O Muhammad) in thy dream as few in number, and if He had shown them to thee as many, ye (Muslims) would have faltered and would have quarreled over the affair. But Allah saved (you). Lo! He knoweth what is in the breasts (of men). And when He made you (Muslims), when ye met (them), see them with your eyes as few, and lessened you in their eyes, (it was) that Allah might conclude a thing that must be done. Unto Allah all things are brought back.

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[17] S. S. Al-Fawzan, *The Meaning of 'Allah is the Best Deceiver' and the Interpretation of Surah 8:30*, http://ar.islamway.net/fatwa/5229/معنى-قوله-تعالى-والله-خير-الماكرين, trl by Abdullah Almutairi, accessed August 29, 2015.

[18] For another example of God deceiving the innocent, see Surah 4:157. Here, God deceives the world about the crucifixion and death of Jesus.

Here one has a counterfactual case. If the Muslims would have known that there were many, they would have fought against each other and would have quarreled about the situation. However, if the Muslims were to see that the enemy was small in number, everything would go smoothly and successfully. Thus, God directly deceives Muhammad in order to actualize a certain good that He wanted.

If God boasts of being the best deceiver and one knows from the Qur'an that God puts this into practice by deceiving the faithful Muslim (so long as there is a greater good to be actualized), how would the faithful Muslim know that God isn't deceiving him about the Qur'an being the inspired word of God? Perhaps there is something that one can't grasp about why God would need to do such a thing, but merely not being able to grasp what greater good could be actualized doesn't entail that God wouldn't be deceiving the faithful about the inspired nature of the Qur'an. Let us turn what has been articulated thus far into an argument. Let (GD) stand for *God is the greatest deceiver* and let (GDF) stand for *God deceives faithful believers only in order to actualize a greater good*.

(1) Given GD and GDF, God could be deceiving faithful Muslims by not aiming their cognitive faculties successfully toward producing true beliefs for a greater good.

(2) Upon seeing that (1) could be the case, if a Muslim lacks a justified reason for thinking God is not deceiving him, the Muslim should see that the probability that his faculties are reliable (R) is inscrutable.

(3) If a Muslim sees that the probability for R is inscrutable, then he has a defeater for trusting his faculties.

(4) If the Muslim has a defeater for R, then he has an undercutting defeater for his belief that the Qur'an is the inspired Word of Allah.

(5) If one has a defeater for their belief, it cannot be warranted.

(6) The Muslim who comes to see that (1) could be the case and lacks a justified reason for thinking that God is not deceiving him has a defeater for his belief that the Qur'an is the inspired Word of Allah and that belief cannot be warranted.

A1.4 Reply

Is there a way in which the Muslim can avoid the defeater as argued for above?[19] In the Islamic tradition there are authoritative commentaries that are vital to the interpretation of Qur'anic passages. They are used to clarify theological, grammatical, semantic, and historic aspects of the Qur'an. [20] So perhaps a Muslim can run to the *tafsīr* in order to interpret Surah 8:43-44 in a different way than I have here. Perhaps, if the Muslim has good reason to think that Surah 8:43-44 should be interpreted in a different manner, the proposed defeater loses a lot of its force. So what do the *tafsīrs* say about Surah 8:43-44 and are they plausible interpretations of the text? Muhammad Asad's *tafsīr* states:

> … at the time of the actual encounter the Muslims could no longer be in doubt as to the great number of the enemy force, the phrase 'He made them appear as few in your eyes' has obviously a metaphorical meaning: it implies that, by that time, the Prophet's followers were so full of courage that the enemy appeared insignificant to them. The Quraysh, on the other hand, were so conscious of their own power and numerical superiority that the Muslims appeared but of little account to *them* – a mistake which ultimately cost them the battle and a great number of lives.[21]

Ibn 'Abbās emphasizes the reasons for why God deceives Muhammad in His dream:

> (*When Allah showed them unto thee*) O Muhammad (*in your dream*) on the Day of Badr, (*as few in number, and if He had shown them to thee as many, ye (Muslims) would have faltered*) you would have been fearful (*and would have quarreled over the affair*) over the question of war. (*But Allah saved (you)*) He decreed otherwise. (*Lo! He knoweth what is in the breasts (of men)*) what is in people's hearts. (*And when he made you (Muslims), when ye met (them)*) on the Day of Badr (*see them with your eyes as few*) such that He emboldened you vis-à-vis them, (*and lessened you in their eyes*) such that they were emboldened vis-à-vis you, (*(it was) that Allah*

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[19] What follows is a summary/paraphrase of sections from Erik Baldwin and Tyler Dalton McNabb, 'An Epistemic Defeater for Islamic Belief?,' op. cit. This section can be attributed to Erik Baldwin's work.

[20] Hussein Abdul-Raof, 'Schools of Qur'anic Exegesis: Genesis and Development,' in *Culture and Civilization in the Middle East*, in Ed. Ian Richard Netton (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 12.

[21] Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Qur'an: The Full Account of the Revealed Arabic Text Accompanied by Parallel Translation*, Trl. by Muhammad Asad. Vol. 2, (Bristol: The Book Foundation, 2003), 279.

might conclude a thing) so that Allah might give victory and the spoils of war to the
Prophet (pbuh) and his Companions and bring about death and defeat for Abu Jahl
and his host *(that must be done)* that has to be. *(Unto Allah all things)* the end
results of things *(are brought back)* in the Hereafter.[22]

Assad informs the Muslim faithful that they should interpret Surah 8:43-44 in a
metaphorical way. Muhammad and his army didn't have cognitive malfunction which was
induced by Allah Himself. Rather, the text is meant to be taken as metaphor. Muhammad
and his army were so inspired and united that what was before them seemed like only a
small obstacle. And according to Abbās, as far as the dream goes, God did deceive
Muhammad by giving him the dream but it was for the greater good.

A Muslim who has other background beliefs and possibly other warranted beliefs,
might be rational in accepting the authoritative interpretations discussed here. If this is the
case, the Muslim would not have the discussed defeater. Suppose, however, that a faithful
and reflective Muslim *does* acquire the purported defeater as the reflective Muslim finds
such interpretations less plausible than the one I propose above. This would lead to the
questioning of the role of authority that commentators play in the Islamic tradition and it
might make the Muslim ripe for the defeater that I argue for.

But there are other mental states that may be of use here, including experiences and
propositional attitudes.[23] Having a new experience or having formed a new propositional
attitude, one's doubts about Islamic belief may be undermined or overcome. And so a
Muslim may come to understand that God may sometimes deceive Muslims without
thereby having a reason to think that their cognitive faculties are generally unreliable. To
provide further motivation for this way of dealing with the purported defeater, consider a
case that is relevantly similar to the one read in Surah 8:43-44.[24]

Imagine there remains only a group of soldiers left on your side as you try to defeat
the evil opposition in front of you. Unbeknownst to you, your general has a nefarious
deception gun and decides to use it on you and the remaining brothers in arms. This

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[22] Ibid., 233.

[23] Ibid., 155.

[24] This paragraph is taken directly from Erik Baldwin and Tyler Dalton McNabb, 'An Epistemic Defeater for
Islamic Belief?, op. cit.

deception gun alters your faculties to where you produce the belief that reinforcements are coming. This belief propels you and your fellow soldiers to act courageously and miraculously defeat the opposing enemy. After the battle, you find out that your general used a nefarious deception gun on you and that no reinforcements were ever coming. It doesn't seem, at least prima facie, that you would have a defeater for trusting your cognitive faculties for every battle that you have been in (or will be in) with your general. If you were ever plagued with doubt about trusting your faculties in light of this incident, you could put such doubts away by way of thinking of all of the times your general has led you to victory, or by thinking about all of the times he has personally been there for you in battle, or perhaps by reflecting on previous statements that he had made which just seemed true to you. In these cases, there would be non-propositional evidence that would outweigh and overcome the concerns delivered by the discussed defeater. Thus, by focusing in on the non-propositional evidence, the Muslim has another way to avoid the discussed defeater.

But, perhaps you begin to think about all of the times your general has boasted about how great he is at using the deception gun and maybe you begin to think of all of the major character flaws that your general possesses. In addition to entertaining these thoughts, maybe you begin to reflect on other times when your general has deceived the innocent. It seems plausible that, upon bringing all of this to mind, the doubts would begin to really cause you to question the reliability of your faculties. If this is so, it seems likely that some individuals who are in such a situation would end up with a defeater. As it applies to the Muslim who is convinced that Surah 8:43-44 teaches that God deceived Muhammad and his army, if the Muslim also reflects on all of the Qur'an's boasts about God being the best of all deceivers in conjunction with God's other acts of deceiving the innocent[25] and God's additional character flaws,[26] it seems plausible to think that the Muslim might gain a defeater for trusting that their faculties are reliable.

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[25] Surah 4:157 informs us that, contrary to the appearance, Jesus wasn't crucified and that he didn't die on the cross.

[26] Surah 3:31-32 informs us that God's love can be earned and is not unconditional.

A1.5 Tu quoque and Christian Belief

The third response that is available to the Muslim is to argue that the Christian has the same problem given certain relevant Biblical passages.[27] In attempting to show that Christians have an undercutting defeater for believing that their faculties are reliable, Erik Wielenberg argues[28] that the failed promise that Adam and Eve would die if they ate from the tree of knowledge,[29] God telling Abraham that he should sacrifice his son,[30] Jeremiah's declaration that God had deceived him,[31] and Jesus' statement that He wouldn't go to a feast but then in secret did, all act as evidence to show that the Christian God deceives.[32] How should the Christian Plantingian respond to this argument? If the Muslim responded in this way, it should be pointed out that he would be committing the Tu quoque fallacy. S cannot merely rebut the defeater S* formulated by way of saying that it applies to the S* as well. This simply doesn't address the issue. Now, while I don't think that these verses are troubling or at least at all as troubling as the Suras mentioned above, Biblical exegesis of all of these relevant Christian Scriptures is beyond the scope of this project. I will however, give an example of how one could respond to the verses mentioned by Wielenberg, by addressing the best candidate that Wielenberg puts forth. Jeremiah 20 states:

> O Lord, you have deceived me,
>   and I was deceived;
> you are stronger than I,
>   and you have prevailed.
> I have become a laughing-stock all the day;
>   everyone mocks me.

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[27] The rest of this appendix does not feature any material from previous co-authored published work.

[28] Erik Wielenberg, 'Divine Deception' in *Skeptical Theism: New Essays*, eds. Trent Dougherty and Justin McBrayer (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2014, 236-249.

[29] Genesis 2:17

[30] Genesis 22:2

[31] Jeremiah 20:7

[32] John 7:4

Wielenberg uses Trigg's commentary on Origen to point out how God deceived Jeremiah:

> God had a prophecy of judgment for Jeremiah to make against his own people. God knew however, that although Jeremiah would not willingly prophesy against his own people, he would have no qualms about prophesying against other people. God therefore, deceived Jeremiah. He says to him, "Take from my hand the cup of this unmixed wine, and make all the nations to whom I send you drink from it." Jeremiah understood God to be asking him to make all the other nations drink from the cup of God's wrath and punishment, without imagining that his own would be the first nation to drink from it. Having accepted the cup, he realized he had been deceived when God said, "And you shall first make Jerusalem drink from it."[33]

If this interpretation is right, then we have a similar situation as to that of Surah 8:43-44. God deceives a prophet in order to achieve a greater good that wouldn't come about if the deception didn't occur. Wielenberg briefly entertains an alternative translation from Clines and Gunn as they translate the passage as '[y]ou tried to persuade me [to be a prophet], and I was persuaded; You [i.e. your arguments] proved too strong for me, and you overpowered me.'[34] Wielenberg responds to this translation by stating the following:

> One problem with this proposal is that the "arguments" that God offers Jeremiah after Jeremiah's initial reluctance to serve as a prophet consist of (i) God repeatedly insisting that Jeremiah become a prophet and (ii) God assuring Jeremiah that it won't be so bad. Specifically, God tells Jeremiah that "I am with you to deliver you" (Jeremiah 1:8) and that "today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down" (Jeremiah 1:10). Together, these words surely leave Jeremiah (who is at this time "only a boy" [Jeremiah 1:6]) with a misleading impression of what is in store for him: predicting the destruction of his own people and consequently becoming reviled, threatened with death, and imprisoned. The best description of what God has done to Jeremiah here is not "persuasion" but rather "seduction," "enticement," or "deception."

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[33] Joseph Triggs, 'Divine Deception and the Truthfulness of Scripture,' in *Origen of Alexandria: His World and His Legacy*, eds. Charles Kannengiesser and William L. Petersen (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 154.

[34] D.J.A. Clines and D.M. Gunn, 'You Tried to Persuade Me' and 'Violence! Outrage!' in Jeremiah XX 7–8,' *Vetus Testamentum* 28: 20–7 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press), 1978, 20-27.

Does this passage then act as a problem for Christians in regard to the truth-aimed condition? I think there are several disanalogous factors that should be considered. First, the wider context within the Qur'an is God's continual pronouncement that He is the greatest deceiver. There isn't anything like this within Christian Scripture. In fact, we constantly get a picture of a God who doesn't lie.[35] Furthermore, in the case of Jeremiah, there doesn't exist deception that involves cognitive malfunction. This is different from the Prophet Muhammad's case where he and all of his men seem to have malfunctioning perceptual faculties. Lastly, there is good reason to think that Jeremiah was just lamenting to God about his situation (contra really accusing God of great deception) as God had previously told him that he would be rejected. Commentator F.B. Huey argues for this as he states:

> God had not deceived Jeremiah. He had warned him that the people would resist his words (1:8, 19; 12:5). But in his hurt and confusion, Jeremiah lashed out at God and accused him of forcing him against his will to be a prophet. "You prevailed" continues the figure of seduction (cf. Deut 22:25; 2 Sam 13:11, 14; Prov 7:13 for other examples of seduction) and is employed repeatedly by Jeremiah in these verses (20:7, 9–11). Jeremiah was deeply offended because people did not take him seriously. They laughed at him and mocked him in disbelief that God would punish them.[36]

This interpretation seems plausible, especially given similar instances within the Psalms and Job where the author lashes out to God in an analogous way.[37] If there isn't reason to think that the Christian suffers from the same problem as the Muslim does in regard to God and His deceptive nature, it would appear that this objection is moot. In any case, when arguing against this objection, the Christian has at least five options:

(1) Deny Biblical inerrancy,

(2) Show that God doesn't actually deceive in the Bible,

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[35] Numbers 21:9

[36] F.B. Huey, *Jeremiah, Lamentations* (Nashville Ten: Broadman Press, 1993), 192.

[37] For example, out of hurt and frustration Job consistently accuses God of certain things, which through the narrative, the reader knows God isn't guilty of.

(3) Argue that the deceptive cases in the Bible aren't analogous because of who is being deceived in the Qur'an (In the Qur'an God deceives both believers and unbelievers),

(4) Argue that there won't likely be an epistemic defeater formed for the Christian as unlike the Qur'an, the Bible lacks God's continual boast about His deception, other cases of deceiving the innocent, or a depiction of God having character defects,

(5) Argue that the Biblical deceptive cases aren't analogous to the Qur'anic deceptive cases because its deceptive cases are of a different kind of deception.

In responding to the charge that the Jeremiah passage gives Christians a defeater for trusting the reliability of their cognitive faculties, I took an approach that focused on (2), (4), and (5). While more could and should be said on this topic, this is beyond the scope of this appendix. As for now, I hope that I have established a brief response and an outline for how one could go about developing a more robust response to the Tu quoque objection.

A1.6 Conclusion

In this appendix, I have argued that though Islam is compatible with Plantinga's proper function condition, due to an internalist metalevel requirement, the core belief of Islam still couldn't be warranted in the same way that the core belief of Christianity can be. I then moved on to argue that Islam will also have a hard time accounting for Plantinga's truth-aimed condition due to legitimate scepticism that can be invoked through select Qur'anic passages.

Appendix 2: Catholicism and Plantigian Epistemology

A2.0 Introduction

Throughout my thesis, I have argued that there are certain serious world religions that cannot use Plantinga's epistemology to demonstrate that their core belief could be warranted in the same way that Christian belief can be warranted. This comes somewhat as a surprise given all of the attempts to incorporate Plantinga's epistemology into different religious traditions. Contrary to the advocates who I think unsuccessfully try to co-opt Plantinga's epistemology, there has been a conservative effort from some Catholic philosophers to argue that not only is Plantinga's epistemology not plausibly true, but that it is contrary to Catholic (especially its Thomistic glossing) epistemology.[1] In this appendix, I will take up their claim and argue that (1) Plantinga's overall (including his religious) epistemology is nearly indistinguishable from Aquinas' epistemology, and (2) There is a non-Thomistic viable Catholic epistemology that can be seen as version of reformed epistemology.[2] I will begin now by summarizing Plantinga's epistemology.

A2.1 Plantinga Meets Aquinas

S's belief that P is warranted iff

> (1) At the time S forms the belief that P, S's cognitive faculties are functioning properly,
> (1.2) As the design plan requires, S has given appropriate reflection to the possibility of defeaters,

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[1] See Linda Zagzebski, *Rational Faith: Catholic Responses to Reformed Epistemology* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993). In this volume, each contributor focuses on either metaepistemological tensions or theological tensions that they think Reformed epistemology either can't or at least will have a hard time resolving.

[2] By Reformed epistemology, I have in mind the thesis that one could be justified or warranted in their belief that God exists apart from argumentation.

(2) At the time S forms the belief that P, S's cognitive environment (both the maxi-environment and mini-environment) is sufficiently similar to the one which the cognitive faculties were designed,

(3) At the time S forms the belief that P, the design plan that governs the production of such beliefs is aimed at producing true belief,

(4) At the time S forms the belief that P, the design plan is a good one such that there is a high statistical (or objective) probability that the belief produced under these conditions will be true.

Summarizing the main points about Plantinga's epistemology from my thesis, Plantinga's theory of warrant is an externalist theory of warrant. This again means Plantinga denies that one always has to have access to the properties which confer warrant. Moreover, Plantinga's theory emphasizes the need for properly functioning cognitive faculties which are successfully aimed toward producing true beliefs. As long as the above conditions are in place when S believes p, S would be warranted in her belief that p. Moreover, Plantinga thinks that naturalism will fail to give an account of proper function. One ultimately needs a conscious, intelligent, and intentional designer for one's cognitive faculties to be functioning properly. In other words, Plantinga's overall epistemology requires that in all possible worlds where S knows p, theism is true. Having now briefly reiterated Plantinga's epistemology, I will now briefly articulate Aquinas' epistemology.

It is first important to note that, similar to Plantinga, Aquinas was an externalist.[3] In summarizing Aquinas' epistemology, Aquinas thought that in order for S to know p, S has to have faculties which have the particular ends of producing true belief and they must work in the successful manner for which they were designed. Stump states, '[o]n Aquinas's view, our cognitive capacities are designed by God for the express purpose of enabling us to be cognizers of the truth, as God himself is. IN particular, when we use sense and intellect as God designed them to be used in the environment suited to them, that is, in the world for which God designed human beings, then those faculties are absolutely reliable.'[4] Right away, the reader will be able to tell that both Plantinga and Aquinas share

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[3] See Eleanore Stump, 'Aquinas on the Foundations of Knowledge,' *Canadian Journal of Philosophy 21 Supplement Volume 17* (1991): 148-149. Also, see Terence Allan, The epistemology of St. Thomas Aquinas with special reference to Summa Theologiae 1a q84, unpublished, PhD thesis, University of Glasgow (1997).

[4] Eleanore Stump, 'Aquinas on the Foundations of Knowledge,' op. cit., 148-149. Also, see Thomas Aquinas [3], St Ia q. 91 a.3.

a similar epistemology. Terence Allan sees so much resemblance, that he calls Plantinga's epistemology a contemporary version of Aquinas' epistemology.[5]

A2.2 God as a Precondition

Moreover, as with Plantinga's epistemology, Aquinas' epistemology can't be made intelligible without the existence of God. In the tradition of Aquinas' Fifth Way, Feser argues that non-conscious things that have final causes or ends[6] must have an intellect outside of those final causes or ends:

> What then of the vast system of causes that constitutes the physical universe? Every one of them is directed towards a certain end or final cause. Yet almost none of them is associated with any thought, consciousness, or intellect at all; and even animals and human beings, which are conscious, are comprised in whole or in part of unconscious and unintelligent material components which themselves manifest final causality. But given what was said above, it is impossible for anything to be directed towards an end unless that end exists in an intellect which directs the thing in question towards it. It follows that the system of ends or final causes that make up the physical universe can only exist at all if there is a Supreme Intelligence or intellect outside the universe which directs things towards their ends.[7]

Thus, if our cognitive faculties have final causes or ends, we cannot account for what gives our cognitive faculties their purpose (or in Plantigian terms, design plan), without ultimately appealing to God; indirectly, then, God is still a necessary condition to make proper function intelligible. To this Feser states:

> By analogy (and it is only an analogy, and admittedly not an exact one) we might think of the relationship of the Supreme Intelligence of the Fifth Way to the system of final causes in the world as somewhat like the relationship of language users to language. The Supreme Intelligence directs things to their ends, but the system thereby created has a kind of independence insofar as it can be studied without

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[5] Terence Allan, The epistemology of St. Thomas Aquinas with special reference to Summa Theologiae 1a q84, op. cit., 140.

[6] By 'final cause' and 'end' I have in mind what the purpose or telos of the thing is.

[7] Edward Feser, *Aquinas: A Beginner's Guide* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009), 117.

reference to the Supreme Intelligence himself, just as linguists can study the structure of language without paying attention to the intentions of this or that language user.[8]

Perhaps, one thinks that Aquinas was wrong about the Fifth Way and needing to invoke God as the source of our faculties' final causes or ends. Maybe like Paul Hoffman, one thinks that something's final cause or end could just be a brute fact; that is, there is just no need to further explain why C is tied to E and not E'. C is tied to E and that is that.[9] In this case, there would be no need to appeal to theology in order to explain how a faculty has a final cause or an end.

Even if one granted that C could be tied to E without there being any need for an explanation of why it is the case that C is tied to E, one wouldn't avoid needing to invoke Aquinas' Fifth Way. For Hoffman, there is a sense in which C is aimed at E, that is in the sense that C always (or mostly) results in producing E, but this isn't the same sort of 'aimed at' that one would use to describe a faculty's purpose or design plan, which is what Aquinas and Plantinga have in mind.[10] For example, I could say that I have a faculty F and F constantly produce p, but this wouldn't be the same as saying F should produce P or F's purpose is to produce p. This being the case, the 'brute fact' proponents still haven't shown that they can capture what Aquinas and Plantinga have in mind by purpose or design plan. Having now argued that Plantinga and Aquinas essentially share the same epistemological theory, I will now move on to demonstrating that Aquinas was a Reformed epistemologist.

A2.3 Aquinas and His Reformed Epistemology

Before demonstrating that Aquinas was a Reformed epistemologist, I will first mention again, how Plantinga applies his proper functionalism to Christian belief. He argues that, if God exists, and if He has successfully constituted subject S's cognitive faculties in such

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[8] Ibid., 120.

[9] Paul Hoffman, 'Does efficient causation presuppose final causation? Aquinas vs. Early Modern Mechanism,' in *Metaphysics and the Good: Themes From the Philosophy of Robert Merrihew Adams*, ed. Samuel Newlands & Larry M. Jorgensen (Oxford University Press, 2009): 307.

[10] Feser pays special attention to biological teleology or biological final causation, which is what Plantinga and Aquinas have in mind insofar as it pertains to cognitive faculties having final causes. It is in regard to biological final causation that I think one can most clearly see that just because C always (or mostly) produces E, that it doesn't follow that there is a design plan for F to produce C to cause E. See Edward Feser, *Neo-Scholastic Essays* (Indiana: Saint Augustine Press, 2015), 37-38.

a way that, when they are properly functioning in the environment for which they are meant, they would produce the belief that God exists, then S's belief that God exists could be warranted even apart from argumentation.[11] Due to Plantinga's belief that this is what Aquinas and Calvin taught, Plantinga calls this the AC model. [12] Plantinga also develops the extended AC model. On this model, Holy Scripture, which has both a primary author (the Holy Spirit) and numerous secondary authors (the human writers), acts as a testimony to S, in that it testifies to the truth of the Gospel message. The Spirit of God then instigates S to see that the Gospel message is true.[13]

Why does Plantinga think that Aquinas endorsed Reformed epistemology? Plantinga takes the following quote to be an endorsement of it, '[t]o know in a general and confused way that God exists is implanted in us by nature.'[14] Here Plantinga sees Aquinas as endorsing something like Calvin's Sensus Divinitatis.[15] There is some confused understanding of God implanted in the human race, that when a subject's faculties successfully reach their ends, some vague belief in God could be warranted.

Is Plantinga right in interpreting Aquinas in this way? If he isn't, does it follow that Aquinas didn't endorse that belief in God could be warranted apart from argumentation? Regarding the former question, I don't think Plantinga's interprets Aquinas rightly. To explain why, it would be helpful to first look at the quote in its immediate context:

> To know that God exists in a general and confused way is implanted in us by nature, inasmuch as God is man's beatitude. For man naturally desires happiness, and what is naturally desired by man must be naturally known to him. This, however, is not to know absolutely that God exists; just as to know that someone is approaching is not the same as to know that Peter is approaching, even though it is

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[11] Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (New York: Oxford Press, 2000), 189.

[12] For Thomas Aquinas, see *Summa Theologia* I, q. 2, a. 1, ad 1. For Calvin, see John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Tr. Ford Lewis Battles and ed. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960 [originally published in 1555]), 44.

[13] Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, op. cit., 252.

[14] Summa Theologiae I, q. 2 a. 1, ad 1.

[15] It is worth noting that given Augstine's influence on Calvin, it seems very likely that Augustine played a significant role in Calvin's epistemology. For Augustine being a Reformed epistemologist, see Dewey Hoitenga, *Faith and Reason from Plato to Plantinga An Introduction to Reformed Epistemology* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1991).

Peter who is approaching; for many there are who imagine that man's perfect good which is happiness, consists in riches, and others in pleasures, and others in something else.[16]

Here, Aquinas is agreeing that belief in God stems from some sort of hard wiring (though in this case, given to us by nature), only insofar as humans have the ability and are aimed to reason to happiness, the obtaining of which leads one to the Good, who is God. God is for man, his beatitude. This of course isn't to say that man has a faculty given to him by God which when functioning properly, produces belief that God exists. Plantinga's interpretation seems even less plausible when one considers the broader context of Article 1, where Aquinas first rejects that belief in God's existence is self-evident and then answers objections to God's existence not being demonstrable.

However, this doesn't mean that Aquinas didn't endorse that belief that God exists could be warranted apart from argumentation. Aquinas argues that presenting God's existence by way of faith is superior than presenting it by way of argumentation, even in light of reason being able to tell us that God exists. In fact, for Aquinas, this faith apart from argument is considered knowledge:

This is why it was necessary that the unshakeable certitude and pure truth concerning divine things should be presented to men by faith. Beneficially, therefore, did the divine Mercy provide that it should instruct us to hold by faith even those truths that the human reason is able to investigate. In this way, all men would easily be able to have a share in the knowledge of God, and this without uncertainty and error.[17]

For Aquinas, faith could be considered knowledge, even apart from argumentation, but only by way of the Spirit's testimony working in the right epistemic environment, as Aquinas states, '[t]he believer has sufficient motive for believing, for he is moved by the authority of divine teaching confirmed by miracles and, what is more, by the inward instigation of the divine invitation.'[18] For Aquinas, the subject needs to be in an

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[16] Ibid

[17] Contra Gentiles Book I, IV: 5-6.

[18] Summa Theologiae II-II, q.2, a.9, reply to ob. 3.

environment where there are divine miracles or signs, and it is upon being in an environment where God has performed these miracles or signs to attest to the truthfulness of Divine teaching, that the Spirit testifies to the subject that these miracles do come from God and thus, confirm Divine teaching. Notice for Aquinas, the subject isn't doing abductive reasoning in trying to come up with the best explanation for the apparent miracles or signs, but rather, the subject comes into contact with the miracles or signs, and prompted by the Holy Spirit, the subject finds herself believing that that these miracles are from God and that the Divine teaching is true.

In this way, the subject isn't believing that God exists or that Jesus is the Christ by way of having access to the properties which confer the warrant for her belief. It could very well be the case that God performing M isn't the best explanation of data D. And again, the subject isn't thinking that God has performed D because of argument A. The subject merely comes into contact with M by way of a direct experience or by way of testimony, and the Spirit illuminates M for S so that S forms the belief that God is performing (or performed) 'M' and that the Divine Teaching T is true. And it is in this way that Aquinas like Plantinga, affirms that belief in God (and even Christianity) could be warranted, apart from argumentation.

A2.4 Balthasar and Reformed Epistemology

Perhaps one will not be satisfied with how I have interpreted Aquinas. Would it then follow that there aren't any viable Catholic glossings of Reformed epistemology? It wouldn't follow as Thomistic epistemology isn't essential to the Catholic Faith; thus, there could be other viable Catholic epistemologies. First and foremost, I am not convinced that Plantinga's own articulation is incompatible with Catholic theology. Moreover, even if one wanted an epistemology that was historically rooted within the Catholic tradition, there are still other epistemologies available. I will now argue that Balthasar's religious epistemology is very much in line with Plantinga's own.[19]

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[19] Another viable Catholic model of Reformed epistemology that is not discussed here, is the model proposed by Cardinal Henry Newman. According to Stephen Grimm, Newman believed that it was through our conscience that belief in God is produced in a basic way.[19]Grimm quotes Newman's *Grammar and Assent*: As then we have our initial knowledge of the universe through sense, so do we in the first instance begin to learn about its Lord and God from conscience; and, as from particular acts of that instinct, which makes experiences, mere images (as they ultimately are) upon the retina, the means of our perceiving something real beyond them, we go on to draw the general conclusion that there is a vast external world, so from the recurring instances in which conscience acts, forcing upon us importantely the mandate of a Superior, we have fresh and fresh evidence of the existence of a Sovereign Ruler, from whom those particular dictates

Balthasar, like Plantinga, wasn't optimistic about natural theology. He did however, think that through non-propositional evidence one could 'see' that Christianity is true. How would this happen? According to Balthasar, humans are designed to instantiate holiness. Because of this, unbelievers crave it. God has also setup our faculties in such a way that we will recognize the holiness displayed by a Christian as Christians share in what Balthasar calls the Christ form.[20] Such recognition might come about from seeing the Christian regularly attend mass, feed the poor, share the Good News, protect the innocent, and catechize new converts. In the case of an unbeliever, the subject will see that the Christian's holiness is 'right' and will be moved to participate in the Christ form as well.[21] Upon living a holy life in the Christ form, the subject will see that Christianity is valid/true.[22]

It seems likely that Balthasar would endorse that a subject's faculties need to be properly functioning when they enable the subject to recognize holiness and when they enable the subject to see the truth of Christianity from within the Christ form. This being the case, for Balthasar's religious epistemology, proper function would be a necessary condition for warranted religious belief. More importantly, however, notice that in line with Reformed epistemology's main thesis, one could be justified or warranted in their belief that God exists apart from argumentation. Balthasar does not appeal to any argument in order to ground the positive epistemic status of Christian or Catholic belief. Thus, given that this epistemology is thoroughly Catholic in both its content and origins, Balthasar's epistemology is an example of a Catholic epistemology that could be rightly construed as a version of Reformed epistemology.

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which we experience proceed; so that, with limitations which cannot here be made without digressing from my main subject, we may, by means of that induction from particular experiences of conscience, have as good a warrant for concluding the Ubiquitous Presence of One Supreme Master, as we have, from parallel experience of sense, for assenting to the fact of a multiform and vast world, material and mental. See Stephen Grimm, 'Cardinal Newman, Reformed Epistemologist?,' *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 75, no. 4 (2001): 497-522.

[20] Victoria Harrison, 'Human Holiness As Religious Apologia,' *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 46, no. 2 (1999): 63-82.

[21] Ibid., 70.

[22] Ibid., 64.

A2.5 Conclusion

In summary, I first referenced the work of Stump, Allan, and Feser in discussing how Plantinga and Aquinas share the same epistemology. After discussing the great similarities that exist between them, I transitioned the discussion to arguing that like Plantinga, Aquinas also thinks belief that God exists could be warranted apart from argumentation. After this much, I argued that even if I am wrong in my interpretation of Aquinas, a thorough going Reformed epistemology can be clearly found in Balthasar.

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