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FULLY INFORMED REASONABLE DISAGREEMENT AND TRADITION BASED

PERSPECTIVALISM

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty

of

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by

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of

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To my family and friends.

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ABSTRACT

Baldwin, Erik Daniel. Ph.D., Purdue University, August 2012. Fully Informed Reasonable Disagreement and Tradition-Based Perspectivalism. Major Professor: Paul Draper.

It seems that the following statements are pairwise consistent (any two are consistent) but form an inconsistent triad (at least one must be false):

(1)   Regarding their respective inquires into p and q, A and B assess the evidential value of the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and experiences.

(2)   A believes that p is true and q false, B believes that q is true and p false, and both A and B correctly believe that p and q are inconsistent.

(3)   A and B's beliefs about the truth-values of p and q are equally reasonable.

Here's why. Suppose that (1) and (2) are true. If A and B assess the evidential value of the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and experiences they could disagree about the truth-values of p and q but not be equally reasonable in doing so, as (3) says. And if (2) and (3) are true, then A and B could be equally reasonable and disagree about the truth-values of p and q but only if, contrary to what (1) says, they do not assess (because, for instance, they do not have) the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and experiences. Lastly,

if (1) and (3) are true, then A and B would agree about the truth-values of *p* and not *q*, not disagree, as (2) says. Against appearances, I argue that (1)-(3) are consistent and that fully informed, reasonable disagreement of this sort is possible and that it is plausible to think that such disagreements may actually occur.

In Chapter One I introduce my account of reasonableness. I also define and explicate important terms and concepts, including "evidence" and "evidential situation," explain what it is to for people to assess the evidential value of the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and experiences, and discuss reasons for and against thinking that (1) and (2) entail not (3) in light of certain well-known disagreements between Peter van Inwagen and David Lewis.

In Chapter Two I discuss Alvin Plantinga's religious epistemology, including his proper function account of warrant and his Standard and Extended Aquinas/Calvin models. I argue that Plantinga's religious epistemology may be boiled down to five core theses, three associated with the Standard model and two associated with the Extended model. Associated with the Standard model are, (I) The Dependency Thesis, that humans are ontologically and epistemologically dependent on and created by God, (II) The Design Thesis, that humans are created in accord with a design plan one aim of which is the production of true belief, and (III) The Immediacy Thesis, that God endows humans with special cognitive faculties or belief forming processes through which Theistic Belief can be known in an epistemically immediate and basic manner. Associated with the Extended model are (IV) The Internal Inspiration of the Holy Spirit Thesis, that there is a special belief forming process the purpose of which is to produce specifically Christian beliefs about the nature of God, salvation, forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and the like,

and (V) The Scriptural Revelation Thesis, that by means of scripture, which is identified with The Christian Bible, God propositionally reveals to humans important divine teachings and doctrines. I argue that since members of Islamic, Jewish, and (monotheistic) Hindu faith traditions (at least implicitly) accept (I)-(III) there are uniquely Islamic, Jewish, and Hindu analogs of (IV) and (V) and hence multiple Theistic extensions of the Standard model.

In Chapter Three I consider a case of disagreement between Alvin Plantinga and his comrades, Ibn Plantinga, Al ben Plantinga, and Al Plantingachandra, a Muslim, a Jew, and a Hindu, respectively. All accept Plantinga's proper function account of warrant and his Standard model and some extension of it but disagree about which extension is correct. I argue that if we make certain supplements to Plantinga's religious epistemology it is possible and plausible to affirm that this diverse group of Plantingans engages in fully informed, reasonable disagreement about which extension of the Standard model is true.

Some Christians know what it is like to be a Zen Buddhist and some Zen Buddhists know what it is like to be a Christian. In Chapter Four, I consider a case featuring two such people, John and Paul. (George is away developing a *Vaishnava* extension of the Standard model and Ringo is otherwise preoccupied.) I articulate John's Zen Buddhist beliefs and Paul's Christian beliefs and show that since they understand one another's beliefs and since both have had Christian and Zen Buddhist religious experiences they are able to assess the same (or sufficiently similar) evidential considerations associated with having those experiences and hence that (1) holds in their case. It is obvious that (2) holds, so I don't argue for that.

In Chapter Five I argue that (3) holds in The Case of John and Paul. First, I argue that Tradition-Based Perspectivalism (TBP), a view rooted in and inspired by Alasdair MacIntyre's Rationality of Traditions, is true. According to TBP, starting points for dialectical argument, including foundational beliefs about what is reasonable to believe and why (e*ndoxa*) have their origins in and are passed down by particular traditions of inquiry, there is no perspective free starting point or neutral epistemic point of view for human inquiry, and rational standards that guide human enquiry are appropriately grounded only if they are historically situated and tradition-based. I argue that if TBP is true, and given that (1) and (2) antecedently hold in their case, we have a good reason to think that (3) also holds in The Case of John and Paul.

In Chapter Six I respond to objections and consider ramifications of my arguments in light of central issues in the epistemology of disagreement.

"There is no standing ground, no place for enquiry, no way to engage in the practices of advancing, evaluating, accepting, and rejecting reasoned argument apart from that which is provided by some tradition or other." Alasdair MacIntyre[1]

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[1] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Ethical Theory: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), p. 350.

CHAPTER 1. THE QUESTION OF FULLY INFORMED REASONABLE
DISAGREEMENT

1.1   Introduction

People often disagree about whether some proposition or its negation is true. Such

disagreements vary with respect to triviality, fundamentality, and scope. Naturally, not all

disagreements are philosophically interesting or problematic. Some are dull and trivial

and others amount to little more than gainsay, and we are not interested in silly or foolish

ones. (For instance, we are not interested in a disagreement between someone such as

Richard Feynman and a cranky four year old about how best to pictorially represent the

behavior of subatomic particles.) In contrast, disagreements between people who are

equally well informed, intelligent, and reasonable is interesting and can be quite

philosophically interesting and problematic.

Consider the following statements:

(1)   Regarding their respective inquires into p and q, A and B assess the
evidential value of the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and
experiences.

(2)   A believes that p is true and q false, B believes that q is true and p false,
and both A and B correctly believe that p and q are inconsistent.

(3)   A and B's beliefs about the truth-values of p and q are equally reasonable.

It seems that (1)-(3) form an inconsistent triad. That is, it seems that (1)-(3) are pairwise consistent (any two of them are consistent) but when all three are taken together they form an inconsistent triad (if any two of statements are true, the third is false). It is this sort of inconsistency I have in mind when I talk about (1)-(3) constituting an inconsistent triad.

Here's why it seems (1)-(3) form an inconsistent triad. Suppose that (1) and (2) are true. If A and B assess the evidential value of the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and experiences they could disagree about the truth-values of p and q but not be equally reasonable in doing so, as (3) says. And if (2) and (3) are true, then A and B could be equally reasonable and disagree about the truth-values of p and q but only if, contrary to what (1) says, they do not assess (because, for instance, they do not have) the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and experiences. Lastly, if (1) and (3) are true, then A and B would agree about the truth-values of p and not q, not disagree, as (2) says.

Against appearances, I argue that (1)-(3) are consistent and that fully informed, reasonable disagreement about the truth-value of mutually exclusive statements between people both of whom assess the evidential value of the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and experiences is possible and that it is plausible to think that such disagreements may actually occur.

In the rest of this chapter, I define and explicate important terms and concepts, including "evidence" and "evidential situation," explain what it is to assess the evidential value of the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and experiences, and discuss reasons for

and against thinking that (1) and (2) entail not (3) in light of certain well-known disagreements between Peter van Inwagen and David Lewis. I also introduce my account of reasonableness In the main part of the dissertation, Chapters Two through Five, I show that (1)-(3) are a consistent triad by presenting cases of disagreement in which (1)-(3) all hold. In Chapter Six I respond to objections and consider ramifications of my arguments in light of central issues in the epistemology of disagreement.

To fully appreciate both why it seems that (1)-(3) are an inconsistent triad and the difficulties involved in trying to show them to be consistent, it is necessary to consider in depth what these statements say. (2)'s meaning is unproblematic; (1) and (3), however, need explication. In Section 1.2 I clarify (1) and (3) and in Section 1.3 I consider and evaluate an argument that (1)-(3) form an inconsistent triad. I offer my conclusions in Section 1.4

1.2 Evidence

Thomas Kelly writes that, "Evidence, whatever else it is, is the kind of thing which can make a difference to what one is justified in believing or (what is often, but not always, taken to be the same thing) what it is reasonable for one to believe."[2] This is a minimalist definition of evidence, but one that is sufficient for my purposes. One of its virtues is its breadth; it allows for many types and sources of evidence, including propositional and perceptual evidence, testimony, observation statements, physical evidence, mental states, and special philosophical insights and intuitions. For my

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[2] Thomas Kelly, "Evidence," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/evidence/ first published 2006.

purposes, we don't need or want a narrower, more exclusive definition: after all, I'm concerned about disagreement about what counts as evidence (or strong evidence). (I add the qualifier "or strong evidence" because A and B might disagree about the strength of the evidence, not on what counts as evidence.)

To be in an evidential situation is to be in a belief forming context in which one is aware (perhaps only implicitly or potentially) of evidential considerations on the basis of which one may believe to some degree of credence that some proposition p is true or probably true. People can be in all manner of belief forming contexts. Just which evidential considerations in an evidential situation are relevant depends on the nature of the inquiry. For example, an office worker looking for a misplaced file in his characteristic evidential situation pays attention to certain factors and tends to form certain beliefs in that context and a football coach studying the video of last week's game forms certain other beliefs that are appropriate in his. Lawyers, firefighters, and professional musicians are in still other evidential situations and pay attention to different sorts of evidential considerations in the belief forming contexts that they typically find themselves in.

Disagreement about what counts as (strong) evidence need not involve disagreement about what evidence is supposed to do. That is, people who disagree about what counts as evidence (or how strong the evidence is) can nevertheless agree on the formal or functional aspects of evidence: evidence is that which can make a difference to what it is reasonable for one to believe. The use of 'can' here suggests that only some things are such that it is logically coherent or reasonable to take them to be evidence. Not just *anything* can count as evidence for anything else. Note that agreement about what

could count as evidence does not require agreement about what *does* count as evidence. Reasonable but fully informed disagreement, therefore, turns on substantive evidential considerations the parties involved agree could count as evidence the actual evidential merits of which are in dispute.

1.2.1   Relevant Facts and Experiences: Evidential Grounds

In our inquiries, we pay attention to relevant facts and experiences. Just which facts and experiences are relevant depends on the inquiry we are engaged in. Facts and experiences relevant to some inquiry or other can be appropriately overlooked on some occasion. For instance, for workers doing an inventory and stacking boxes according to size and shape the color of the boxes is not relevant to their inquiry when there is no correlation between the size and shape of the boxes and their color. When looking out the window in order to get a better view of the snowfall one might fail to notice the cars driving by but that's not at all problematic if the cars aren't relevant to one's inquiry.

Evidential considerations are given to us by means of evidential grounds. Roughly, evidential grounds are the most basic epistemic grounds on which beliefs are based. Basic belief sources furnish us with basic evidential grounds. Robert Audi provides a good analysis of evidential grounds, which I adopt for my purposes. Audi takes perception, memory, consciousness, reason, testimony, induction, and inference to be basic sources of basic epistemic grounds.[3] For instance, the phenomenal features associated with listening to a musical performance or those associated with taking a swim provide one

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[3] Robert Audi, *Epistemology: A Contemporary Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge*, 2nd edition, (New York: Routledge, 2003): 233.

with basic experiential grounds. The feel of cool water on one's skin provides evidential grounds for beliefs about its temperature. Attending carefully to one's experience of hearing a symphony, one has evidential grounds for the belief, say, that there are at least 4 violins, 2 violas, and a bass in the string section.[4] In short, experiences provide basic evidential grounds for beliefs and it is on the basis of these grounds that people are acquainted with certain facts.

1.2.2 Reasonableness and Reasonably Held Beliefs

For my project to succeed, it is necessary to give a clear characterization of reasonableness. Following Audi, I take it that to be reasonable is to be "governed by reason." Governed by reason, a reasonable person's reasoning conforms to appropriate logical and epistemic standards; reasonable people are responsive to reasons, willing to correct their views in light of criticism, and willing to provide others with reasons.[5] Audi writes, "A reasonable person is, in a suitably stable way, governed by reason; and a reasonable belief or action is, though not necessarily reasoned, of a kind of exhibiting support by reasons."[6]

Note that reasonable people are not *controlled* by reason. Rather, reasonable people are autonomous; they govern *themselves* reasonably. David Owens puts this point rather nicely when he writes that being reasonable is associated with having and

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[4] Audi, *Epistemology*, p. 26.

[5] Audi, *Epistemology,* pp. 149-150.

[6] Robert Audi, *Rationality and Religious Commitment*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011): 39.

exercising a kind of reflective control over your beliefs. Such reflective control is not aimed merely at uncovering additional first-order reasons for belief. Rather, according to Owens, the aim is "to get yourself to be reasonable by explicitly acknowledging (by means of higher order judgment) the normative force of those reasons you already have."[7] For reasons of this sort, and because reasonableness bears strongly on "what patterns of feeling, thought, and action we nurture or maintain," Audi speaks of reasonableness as "a second-order virtue."[8]

Owens view, however, is too strong, as it is in danger of falling prey a troubling dilemma. Either the higher-level judgment that one's reasons have normative force is reasonable or silly. Silliness here won't do. But if we take the first option, we may ask whether the reasonableness of the higher-level judgment requires a further higher-level judgment, and so on, *ad infinitum*?[9] To avoid the dangers of silliness and infinite regress, I maintain being reasonable involves seeing or acknowledging that one is being reasonable, which crucially involves having a reflective understanding of what you believe and why you believe it. Whereas S's reasonably judging that S is being reasonable sure seems to lead to an infinite regress, S's seeing that S is being reasonable by means of having a reflective understanding of what S believes and why does not: S can understand that *p* without having to understand that S understands that *p*.

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[7] David Owens, *Reasons without Freedom: The Problem of Epistemic Normativity*, (New York: Routledge, 2000): 19.

[8] Robert Audi, *The Architecture of Reason: The Structure and Substance of Rationality*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001): 149-153.

[9] I am grateful to Michael Bergmann for calling this problem to my attention.

Consider an example. Suppose that Joe has a host of passively formed object-level beliefs but is neither appropriately self-reflective nor appropriately governed by reason. Joe might have the sorts of beliefs that a reasonable person might have, and Joe might have certain cognitive excellences or epistemic virtues (he might have a very good memory and be very good at making inductive and deductive inferences), but he doesn't have a reflective understanding of what he believes and why. Joe isn't reasonable because he lacks the higher-order epistemic virtue(s) that only reasonable people have.

The second-order virtue of reasonableness is a special, hard to characterize epistemic competence. It may help to consider it in contrast to object-level epistemic competences. Someone with good vision and previous bird-watching experience can look and see a certain species of bird flying in the distance and in so doing exercise a certain kind of epistemic virtue without necessarily taking note of what it is they are doing. In this way, a person may form certain object-level beliefs about birds without being explicitly being aware of doing so or why. In contrast, one exercises a higher-order competence when, at a higher-level of cognition, one apprehends the cognitive processes by which one came to believe that *p* at the object-level of cognition and evaluates that belief as having normative force. To exercise the epistemic competence(s) associated with manifesting the cognitive virtue of reasonableness at a higher-order, then, is to (reflexively) see that one is reasoning well at the object-level in accord with standards of theoretical rationality that one reasonably believes to be true.

Reasonably holding a belief involves one's being reasonable, but being reasonable and reasonably holding a belief can come apart – that is, someone who is generally reasonable (one who often manifests the higher-order intellectual virtue of

reasonableness in his or her thinking) might unreasonably hold certain beliefs on occasion. For instance, suppose that Randy generally manifests reasonability with respect to his scientific or historical beliefs but has certain religious or political beliefs that are not reasonably held on account of his having an over zealous commitment to or disdain towards such things. In contrast, Steve manifests unreasonableness with respect to his scientific and historical beliefs but he doesn't manifest this sort of unreasonableness with respect to his religious and political beliefs. Even though Randy and Steve are both roughly generally equally reasonable, (3) would not hold for them should they engage in disagreement about the truth-value of some religious or political view about which only Steve holds beliefs in an reasonable way.

It is important to note that failure to reasonably hold a belief need not be vicious. For instance, suppose a typical undergraduate student comes to believe something about Descartes having read an article posted on *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. The student reads the article and in doing so exercises certain epistemic competences thereby forming the belief that *p* but in a strictly informative, non-reflective way, rather like how one might scan the sports page for information about which team won a game or look for coupons in the Sunday paper. In contrast, consider the manner in which the author of the article holds the belief that *p*. The author but not the student has a very thorough understanding of *p* and why he or she believes *p* to be true. In short, the author manifests the cognitive virtue reasonableness with respect to the formation and sustenance of *p* but the student does not. But we don't necessarily (and we ought not to) fault the student for not being reasonable with respect to *p* in this sort of case.

Higher-level competences are more difficult to characterize than are object-level ones. But we have an implicit understanding of them, which we can draw out by considering an archery example inspired by Ernest Sosa.[10] To improve one's archery skills, one cannot haphazardly shoot arrows any which way in any old manner. Rather, a heightened, reflective and reflexive higher-order awareness of one's actions (what one is doing with one's hands, arms and feet) is required. Analogously, cultivating reasonability is not haphazard or unreflective either. Reasonably believing that p is not a matter of uncritically stuffing one's head with facts; exercising appropriate higher-level cognitive capacities and competences is required. For instance, if he or she is sufficiently reflective and governed by reason with respect to the formation and substance of p, the student in the above example may acquire and exercise the virtue of reasonableness and so come to reasonably hold the belief that p. (In Sosa's terminology, the student's coming to reasonably believe that p is a virtuous intellectual achievement insofar as he or she comes to believe that p having exercised certain intellectual competence(s) accurately (the student reaches the intellectual aim, the belief that p), adroitly (manifesting the relevant intellectual skills and competences), and aptly (the aim is reached though the adroitness manifest).[11] I am inclined to accept Sosa's view, but my more general claims about reasonableness don't hang on the correctness of this more specific account.)

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[10] Sosa discusses examples of archers having an aptitude, a kind of excellence or skill, for hitting their shots on account of exercising the appropriate competences. See Ernest Sosa, *A Virtue Epistemology: Apt Belief and Reflective Knowledge, Volume I*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): 13, 84-86.

[11] Sosa, *A Virtue Epistemology*, p. 23.

With the above points in mind, one might object that two people can reasonably disagree about the truth values of some proposition only if both of them are generally equally reasonable, in other words, only if (diachronically) both of them are sufficiently reflective and governed by reason with respect to the formation of most of their beliefs. But this view is implausibly strong. Let us suppose that Steve and Randy are both equally well informed about meteorological matters and come to disagree about whether it will rain tomorrow in West Lafayette, Indiana. But let us now suppose that Steve is, generally, reasonable a bit more and a bit more often than Randy. Because the differences here are very slight, Steve's knowledge of this disparity would not give him a sufficient reason to doubt Randy's reasonableness with respect to his beliefs about the likelihood of rain tomorrow. Thus, Steve and Randy's disagreement about whether it will rain can be reasonable.

These sorts of examples reveal that we need to distinguish two ways of manifesting the meta-cognitive virtue of reasonableness equally well: two people can manifest reasonableness equally well in either a global or a local sense. Two people are *globally* equally reasonable if they diachronically manifest the meta-cognitive virtue of reasonableness equally well with respect to most of the beliefs that they hold. And two people are *locally* equally reasonable if they synchronically manifest the cognitive virtue of reasonableness with respect to the holding of a relevant subset of their beliefs. I take it that, regarding A's belief that p and not q and B's belief that q and not p, (3) requires only that A and B are both roughly equally *locally* reasonable with respect to their holding those beliefs. While A and B needn't be equally globally reasonable for (3) to be true, it would be problematic if either of them is exceedingly globally unreasonable with

respect to most of his beliefs or if one of them is very much more globally reasonable than the other. To avoid such problems, we may assume that both parties are roughly equally globally reasonable. But, because marginal or inscrutable differences in global reasonableness wouldn't make their disagreement locally unreasonable, all we really need is that neither party is very much more (or less) globally reasonable than the other.

The distinction between global and local reasonableness bears similarities to Audi's distinction between global and local reasonableness but there are important differences. According to Audi, global reasonableness applies to persons and local reasonableness pertains to a person's attitudes and actions.[12] On my understanding, global and local reasonableness both apply to persons. Roughly, to be globally reasonable is analogous to having a mature, stable disposition of courage whereas being locally reasonable is, roughly, analogous to acting courageously either from or in accord with the virtue of courage on a given occasion. As (so I think) virtuous people may sometimes fail to act virtuously on occasion for one reason or another, globally reasonable people may fail to be locally reasonable on occasion. Likewise, people who are not globally reasonable may manage to be locally reasonable on occasion. This is analogous to how people who do not yet have or who have not yet fully cultivated the virtue of courage can act courageously in that they act in ways that are conducive to the formation of that virtue. As Aristotle writes (*Nicomachean Ethics*, II 1103b), we acquire virtues, "just as we acquire crafts … we become builders, for instance, by building, we become just by doing

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[12] Audi, *The Architecture of Reason*, p. 151.

just actions, temperate by doing temperate actions, brave by doing brave actions."[13] Moreover, we need to distinguish two ways of being locally reasonable. One who is globally reasonable and has a matured virtue of reasonableness has the capacity to be and typically is locally reasonable. Such a person acts virtuously *from virtue*. Second, one who is *merely* locally reasonable on a given occasion may act in an excellent way but to a lesser degree because he or she is still in the process of acquiring and forming the virtue of reasonableness. Here, it is more accurate to say that such a person acts *towards virtue*.[14]

1.2.3 Reasonableness and Internal and External Rationality

There are important differences between reasonableness (both global and local) and internal and external rationality. Marking them helps to clarify what reasonableness is. Following Alvin Plantinga, internal rationality involves making inferences, deductions, and connections between the many and varied beliefs that one holds, seeking evidence of truth when appropriate, being open to and responding to the criticism of others, as well as a willingness to be corrected when wrong. External rationality consists in forming or holding the beliefs that one ought to form (normatively) in virtue of one's cognitive faculties functioning properly in an epistemic environment sufficiently similar to the one

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[13] *Aristotle: Selections*, edited by Terrence Irwin and Gail Fine, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1995): 366-367. Unless otherwise noted, all passages from Aristotle are from Irwin and Fine.

[14] For more on Aristotle's views on virtue acquisition, See Miles F. Burnyeat, "Aristotle on Learning to be Good," in *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics,* edited by Amelie O. Rorty, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980): 69-92.

for which they were designed (by evolution and/or God) to operate.[15] For Plantinga, internal and external rationality are both understood in terms of proper function; external rationality is a matter proper function "upstream" from experience and internal rationality is a matter of proper function "downstream" from experience.[16]

Note that it is possible for one who is both internally and externally rational to fail to manifest the higher-order epistemic virtue of reasonableness. Roughly, one is externally rational if one's cognitive faculties function properly in an appropriate environment. But one's cognitive faculties can function properly even if one does not engage in reflective, conscientious, or reasonable thinking. Suppose that someone is internally rational. Being internally rational, one must be conscientious and reflective to some degree. But that by itself isn't sufficient for the manifestation of the epistemic virtue of reasonableness. Because reasonableness requires a *high degree* of reflection and conscientiousness with respect to the formation and sustenance of *p*, it is implausible to think that someone who is internally and externally rational thereby necessarily manifests the meta-cognitive virtue of reasonableness.

Consider again the case of the undergraduate student forming the belief that *p* having read an article on Descartes in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. This time, suppose that the student forms the belief that *p* in an internally and externally rational way; the student's cognitive faculties are functioning properly, etc., and the student makes appropriate inferences, deductions, and connections between his or her

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[15] Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000): 111-112.

[16] Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, p. 110, 112.

beliefs, and so on. Clearly, in holding the belief that *p* thus, the student manifests certain epistemic virtues. While there is some degree of reflection involved here, the student need not exercise the epistemic competences associated with manifesting the cognitive virtue of reasonableness at a higher-order of cognition. For example, for the student to count as internally rational, it isn't necessary for the student to (reflexively) see that he or she is reasoning well at the object-level in accord with standards of theoretical rationality that are reasonably believed to be true. This shows that being internally and externally rational is not sufficient for manifesting reasonableness.

According to virtue epistemologists, in order to manifest the meta-cognitive virtue of reasonableness, a person *qua* epistemic agent (and not merely the person's cognitive faculties or processes) must be functioning well epistemically by having and exercising certain epistemic virtues.[17] The manifestation of the meta-cognitive virtue of reasonableness essentially involves having and exercising various other intellectual virtues, including (following Robert C. Roberts and W. Jay Wood) the love of knowledge, firmness, courage and caution, humility, autonomy, generosity, and practical wisdom. (I take it that a rough and ready, everyday understanding of these intellectual virtues is enough for my purposes. For more, see Roberts and Wood, *Intellectual Virtues*, Part II.) Let us, then, incorporate these intellectual virtues into the account of the meta-cognitive virtue of reasonability discussed above. Conjoined with these new insights, I articulate the following four-part (somewhat rough and approximate but nevertheless insightful) sufficient condition on reasonability, Condition N:

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[17] Robert C. Roberts and W. Jay Wood suggest this on page 96 of *Intellectual Virtues: An Essay in Regulative Epistemology*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007).

Condition N: Approximately, S (fully) manifests the meta-cognitive virtue of reasonability if:

i) S, *qua* epistemic agent, is functioning well epistemically by having and exercising the epistemic virtues that underlie the manifestation of reasonability, including the intellectual virtues of the love of knowledge, firmness, courage and caution, humility, autonomy, generosity, and practical wisdom;

ii) S is responsive to reasons; e.g., S is willing to correct his/her views in light of criticism, willing to provide others with reasons, has a measure of good judgment that is incompatible with perversely bad judgment, and is to some degree self-critical, at least in the sense of being disposed to think about and correct tendencies that have gotten them into trouble;

iii) S is minimally rational with respect to his/her desires and is not subject to serious affective disorders (e.g., extreme apathy or severe clinical depression) and is appropriately concerned about his/her own well-being;[18] and

iv) S is appropriately conscientious and reflective regarding the truth of his/her beliefs, especially when those beliefs are challenged.

Note that Condition N states that S fully manifests reasonability if all four conditions are completely satisfied. But it is possible for S to satisfy most but not all of these conditions. To the degree that S does not satisfy these conditions, S is not fully reasonable, and thus the manifestation of the meta-cognitive virtue of reasonability is

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[18] Some of what is said in conditions ii) and iii) both draws on and benefits from Audi, *The Architecture of Reason*, pp. 68-70 and 149-153.

something that comes in degrees. (I have more to say about degrees of reasonability in Chapter 3.3.)

Now that we have an account of what it is for S to manifest the meta-cognitive virtue of reasonability, we have a much better understanding of what it is for S be reasonable and what it is for S to hold the belief that *p* reasonably. We now have a sufficient understanding of what (3) says. In the next section, I explain and clarify what (1) says.

1.2.4 On Assessing the Evidential Value of the Same (or Sufficiently Similar) Facts and Experiences

Recall (1):

(1) In their respective inquiries regarding *p* and *q*, A and B assess the evidential value of the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and experiences.

Briefly, (1) states that A and B are in sufficiently similar evidential situations and that whatever differences there are between A and B with respect to evidence that is not shared by both (such as first-person epistemic seemings and apparent special insights, and the like) do not adequately account for any disagreements between them regarding the truth-values of *p* and *q*.

The parenthetical clause "or sufficiently similar" is included because, strictly speaking, different people cannot have (numerically) the same first-person seemings, and thus A and B cannot *directly* evaluate all of the same facts and experiences relevant to the

truth of *p*.[19] For instance, because A does not have access to B's first-person seemings, A cannot *directly* evaluate B's first person seeming that *p*, and vice-versa. But so long as A is aware of the fact that B has the first-person seeming that *p*, A can evaluate that fact. It is in this sense that A and B can evaluate the same evidential considerations – the very same (or sufficiently similar) facts and experiences – in an evidential situation even if they don't share *all* of the same experiences. Awareness of the same facts and experiences in an evidential situation permits A and B to disagree about how to assess the evidential merits of the same evidential considerations, and that opens up the possibility for them to evaluate the epistemic merits of those considerations differently and so disagree about what counts as evidence for what.

People in a shared evidential situation can come to know the same facts on account of having the same *types* of experiences. For instance, suppose two healthcare practitioners place a tissue sample under a microscope. Both observe the same familiar looking objects behaving in a manner characteristic of a certain type of bacteria and on that basis infer the probable cause of the patient's illness. Although they can't share (numerically) the same interior and incommunicable experiences (e.g., the way the bacteria behaving thus-and-so in the petri dish phenomenologically seems "from the

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[19] For instance, Michael Bergmann argues that even after full disclosure (i.e., patiently laying out all of the relevant evidence they can think of in favor of their respective positions), different people don't have all of the same evidence. The reason for this is that different people cannot have the same first-person insights. Michael Bergmann, "Rational Disagreement After Full Disclosure," *Episteme* (6), 3 (2009): 339. Also see Peter van Inwagen, "We're Right. They're Wrong," in *Disagreement*, edited by R. Feldman and T. Warfield, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010): 26.

inside") each of them is in the same type or kind of mental state, and so each has access to sufficiently similar evidential considerations, and so each can have the same evidence tokens of the same type(s). In other words, each has experiences that have sufficiently phenomenological features, and that is enough to say that they have the same (or sufficiently similar) evidence. In a similar fashion, I take it that to say that A and B have the same intuition that *p* is to say that both A and B have equivalent intuitional and sufficiently similar interior and incommunicable evidence that *p*. Accordingly, having sufficiently similar and equivalent intuitional evidence regarding *p* is enough for people to assess the same (or sufficiently similar) relevant facts and experiences in their evidential situation.[20]

Things are complicated if A and B have (or report having) different epistemic seemings in response to the same evidential considerations in their evidential situation *e*. Apparently, having the epistemic seeming that *p* on the basis of evidential considerations *c* is a kind of experience. If so, then A has the (strong) epistemic seeming that *p* in *e* on the basis of *c* and B has the epistemic (strong) seeming that *q* in *e* on the basis of *c* (assume that *p* and *q* are inconsistent), and thus A and B do not have the same experiences in *e*. Thus, if A and B take their respective seemings for the truth-values of *p* and *q* to be evidence for *p* and *q*, A and B do not share (all of) the same evidence. As I understand it, they do not share the same evidence because they do not evaluate the same evidential considerations in the same way. Moreover, I do not think that the fact that A and B do not share the same intuitional evidence here to be significant, and I do not think that such evidence can adequately account for disagreements between A and B regarding

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[20] Thanks to Paul Draper for very helpful comments here.

the truth-values of p and q. In short, in cases of epistemic disagreement of the sort I am concerned with, intuitional evidence of this sort is insignificant because whatever merits that A's and B's intuitions regarding the truth-values of p and q may have is offset by the fact that each knows that the other has opposing intuitional evidence. I have I shall have more to say about this issue in due course.[21]

1.3   An Argument that (1) and (2) Entail that (3) is False

In this section I consider and evaluate reasons for and against thinking that (1)-(3) form an inconsistent triad.

Consider (1)-(3):

(1)   Regarding their respective inquires into p and q, A and B assess the evidential value of the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and experiences.

(2)   A believes that p is true and q false, B believes that q is true and p false, and both A and B correctly believe that p and q are inconsistent.

(3)   A and B's beliefs about the truth-values of p and q are equally reasonable.

Suppose that two fully informed people evaluate the evidential merits of the same (or sufficiently similar) evidential considerations yet disagree about which of them count as genuine (or strong) evidence in favor of the truth or falsehood of p. Consider a few

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[21] Thanks to Michael Bergmann for pressing the problem here, and I am grateful to Paul Draper for suggestions about how to solve it.

examples. An astrologist thinks that the position of Saturn is relevant to which lotto numbers one ought to pick. Alternatively, Christians and Jews believe that it is worthwhile to consult The Book of Proverbs when going about one's day-to-day affairs or when making important decisions. In this way, the position of Saturn and what is written in The Book of Proverbs count as evidential considerations in favor of believing some proposition or other. But those who reject astrology think that the position of Saturn does not provide *any* evidence for what lotto numbers one ought to choose. And while Atheists and Agnostics may think that The Book of Proverbs contains some good advice, they do not thereby accept it to be of divine origin, and so disagree with Christians and Jews about its alleged divine authority and hence its purported evidential merits (i.e., its evidential strength, particularly whether such testimony is a basic source).

Note that judgments about whether some evidential consideration *c* counts as evidence seem to be reflexive: it seems nonsensical to say, "Evidential consideration *c* is genuine (*de facto*) evidence for me, but for you it isn't." Claims about whether this or that evidential consideration provides one with genuine evidence are objective, factual claims. And note that those who disagree about what counts as genuine evidence need not disagree about the definition of evidence. Rather, they disagree about the scope or extent of the genuine evidence, and consequently do not accept the same body of evidence to be genuine.

For the time being, I will speak on behalf of an objector, and not in my own voice. Suppose, then, we have a disagreement between A and B in which (2) is true. Given that (2) is true, either (1) or (3) could be true but not both. Here's why. Suppose that (1) and (2) are true. For (3) to be true, too, A and B must manifest equally well the meta-

cognitive virtue of reasonableness with respect to their beliefs regarding *p*. (2) implies that A and B disagree about how to assess the evidential value of the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and experiences at issue in (1). Because at least one of them fails to correctly assess the genuine (*de facto*) evidential merits of some evidential consideration *c*, it follows that their disagreement about the evidential merits of those facts and experiences is such that they aren't being equally reasonable: one of them assesses the evidential merits of those facts and experiences less reasonably than the other and the nature of this mistake precludes the truth of (3). The only way for A and B both to be equally reasonable is for them to agree in their assessment of the evidential merits of the facts and experiences, contrary to (2). This line of reasoning is further supported by appeal to the rational uniqueness thesis (RU), which states that, "a given body of evidence justifies exactly one attitude toward any particular proposition."[22] According to RU, if two people are aware of the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and experiences regarding *p* and if both of them are equally reasonable, then they will not disagree about the truth-values of *p*. (Note that on this view, *equally reasonable* implies *equally justified*.) Therefore, assuming that (1) and (2) hold in a given disagreement between two fully informed people, and assuming that RU is true, it follows that (3) is false.

Returning to my own voice, consider Peter van Inwagen's account of his philosophical disagreements with David Lewis. He writes:

How can it be that equally intelligent and well-trained philosophers can disagree about the freedom of the will or nominalism or the covering-law

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[22] Richard Feldman and Ted Warfield, editors, "Introduction," *Disagreement*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010): 6.

model of scientific explanation when each is aware of all of the arguments and distinctions and other relevant considerations that the others are aware of? How… can we philosophers possibly regard ourselves as justified in believing much of anything of philosophical significance in this embarrassing circumstance? How can I believe (as I do) that free will is incompatible with determinism or that unrealized possibilities are not physical objects or that human beings are not four-dimensional things extended in time as well as in space, when David Lewis – a philosopher of truly formidable intelligence and insight and ability – rejects these things I believe and is already aware of and understands perfectly every argument that I could produce in their defense?[23]

From this passage we glean that van Inwagen and Lewis disagree about the truth-value of the following propositions: (i) Free will is compatible with determinism, (ii) Unrealized possibilities are physical objects, and (iii) Human beings are four-dimensional things extended in time as well as in space. It is significant that in order to resolve the tension van Inwagen does not state or suggest that Lewis is unreasonable or less than fully reasonable even though Lewis disagrees with him about the truth-value of (i)-(iii).

Van Inwagen goes on to say that he is confidant that (i)-(iii) are false and that that belief is justified for him. He asks, "How can I take these positions?" His answer:

I don't know. I suppose my best guess is that I enjoy some sort of philosophical insight (I mean in relation to these there particular theses) that, for all his merits, is somehow denied to Lewis. And this would have

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[23] Peter van Inwagen, "It is Wrong, Everywhere, Always, and for Anyone, to Believe Anything upon Insufficient Evidence," *Faith, Freedom, and Rationality: Philosophy of Religion Today*, edited by J. Jordan and D. Howard-Snyder, (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1996): 138.

to be an insight that is incommunicable – at least I don't know how to communicate it – for I have done all I can to communicate it to Lewis, and he has understood perfectly everything that I have said, and he has not come to share my conclusions.[24]

What van Inwagen says generates a problem. If he is right about having a special insight, then he and Lewis do *not* have all of the same (or sufficiently similar) relevant evidence and experiences, which implies that they can't evaluate the same (or sufficiently similar) evidence and experiences, and that supports the contention that (1) does not hold in their disagreement. If (1) does not hold for them, it is not difficult to account for how (2) and (3) hold for them. But denying that (1) holds is implausible. It seems somewhat *ad hoc*, too, for on reflection it *still* seems (to me anyway) that (1) holds in their case.

So there are reasons to be dubious about appeals to special insight here. Does van Inwagen really have any special insight? Perhaps, perhaps not. Maybe Lewis is the one with the special insight. Or maybe both of them have inconsistent special insights that are phenomenologically indistinguishable – e.g., both have that hard to characterize, "Yes, that proposition seems true to me when I think about it" experiences, the difference being that Lewis has the special insight that *p* seems true and van Inwagen has the special insight that *q* is true (and *p* and *q* are inconsistent). Perhaps the reasonable thing to say here is that neither one of them has a special insight. For these reasons, perhaps it is (generally) unreasonable for someone to appeal to special insights in cases of disagreement like this. (Note that I am not addressing whether it would be internally

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[24] Van Inwagen, "It is Wrong, Everywhere, Always, and for Anyone, to Believe Anything upon Insufficient Evidence," p. 138.

and/or externally rational for people in these disagreements to appeal to special insights, whether such appeals are epistemically justified, or whether either party acquires a defeater for their belief in such cases. For my purposes, I leave those issues to one side.) After all, special insights are strange things. Rather than give them so much credence, perhaps reasonable people should resist appealing to them when disagreeing with others because doing so tends to render further inquiry into the truth of *p* or *q* dialectically futile and pointless. Once such appeals are made, the debate is effectively over; the final card has been dealt, there is nothing more to be said. Alternatively, one might say that since the evidence supplied by special insights is relevant (in that if one really did have a genuine special insight, that would make a difference as to whether (1) would be true in a given case), appeals to special insights are reasonable but such evidence is comparatively insignificant and for that reason it is unreasonable to give much weight to such claims in disagreements like this. This is especially so in cases in which we have dueling (allegedly) special insights. At any rate, it seems clear that when engaging in a disagreement with an epistemic peer about the truth-value of *p*, reasonable persons want better and more epistemically significant reasons for thinking that their belief that *p* is true. For these reasons, perhaps a skeptical response towards intellectual seemings and intuitions in such cases is the most reasonable one to take.

At any rate, van Inwagen expresses caution about whether he in fact has a special insight. He thinks that he and Lewis have the same body of public evidence in support of incompatibilism (e.g., objects of inter-subjective awareness, including arguments, propositions, diagrams, etc.) but he accepts that that body of evidence supports incompatibilism. He writes, "David Lewis 'had' the same evidence (he had seen it and he

remembered and understood those objects) and was, nevertheless, a compatibilist."[25] He notes that that same body of evidence directed Lewis towards compatibilism and himself toward incompatibilism and that in light of these facts he finds it difficult to suppose that either of them is being irrational or any less rational than the other. That this is so, he says, "tempts me to suppose that I have some sort of interior incommunicable evidence (evidence that David did not have) that supports incompatibilism."[26]

Tellingly, van Inwagen is not happy with the proposal that he has a special insight. He notes that there are very many disagreements between equally well-trained philosophers and wonders whether it is correct to suppose that he has special insights into these things that others lack: "Am I to believe that in every such case … some neural quirk has provided me with evidence that is inaccessible to them?"[27] He therefore (modestly) thinks that it is more plausible to say that Lewis and himself "have the same evidence in the matter of the problem of free will," which leads to the concession that "either we are both rational or neither of us is." [28] In saying these things, he expresses doubt that the same (publically accessible) body of evidence could somehow make his acceptance of incompatibilism and Lewis's rejection of it equally rational.

Recall that van Inwagen writes that he has no reason to think that Lewis's epistemic circumstances are inferior to his own. He is hard pressed to accept that his

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[25] Van Inwagen, "We're Right. They're Wrong," p. 26.

[26] Van Inwagen, "We're Right. They're Wrong," p. 26.

[27] Van Inwagen, "We're Right. They're Wrong," p. 27.

[28] Van Inwagen, "We're Right. They're Wrong," p. 27.

disagreements with Lewis are irrational (in the sense that exactly one of him and Lewis is irrational). He writes:

> I am convinced beyond all positive doubt that David understood perfectly all the arguments for incompatibilism that I am aware of – and all other philosophical considerations relevant to the free-will problem … It seems difficult, therefore, to contend that, in this matter, he was in epistemic circumstances inferior to mine. What, after all, could count as the ingredients of a person's epistemic circumstances (insofar as those circumstances are relevant to philosophical questions) but that person's awareness of and understanding of philosophical arguments (and analyses and distinctions and so on)? If philosopher A and philosopher B are both investigating some philosophical problem, and if each is aware of (and understands perfectly) all the arguments and distinctions and analyses – and so on – that the other is aware of, how can the epistemic position of one of these philosophers vis-à-vis this problem be inferior to that of the other?[29]

So, then, van Inwagen is faced with an unhappy dilemma. On the one hand, he is tempted to think that he has some special insight that Lewis lacks. On the other, appeals to special insight aside, it seems more plausible to him that he and Lewis have the same (publically accessible) evidence and, given that they believe contradictory things on the basis of that evidence, that either both of them are (equally) rational or neither of them is. The latter option is implausible. But that both of them are equally rational is also problematic; it implies that something other than the evidence directs van Inwagen towards incompatibilism. And that, he acknowledges, leaves him open to the Clifford-

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[29] Van Inwagen, "We're Right. They're Wrong," p. 4.

esque critique that he is under the spell of an irrational doxastic voluntarism or subjectivism, a mere "will to believe." Van Inwagen says he is unwilling to listen to these Cliffordian whispers ("I am unwilling to become an agnostic about everything but empirically verifiable matters of fact") but that he is unable to answer them.[30]

Let us sum up. We have reason to accept that (1) holds for Lewis and van Inwagen; we have reason to think that both of them share all of the same (publically accessible) evidence and that both of them are aware of the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and (types of) experiences in the course of their disagreements. Moreover, whatever differences there are with respect to allegedly incommunicable evidence isn't what makes their persistent disagreements reasonable. Of course (2) holds for them. According to van Inwagen, we ought to concede that both of them are equally reasonable, too, in which case (3) holds for them as well. So, then, according to van Inwagen and others who agree with this line of reasoning, it seems that (1)-(3) hold for Lewis and van Inwagen; it seems (to them) that some fully informed disagreements are reasonable. But, once again, *how* could that be? And can a stronger case be made for those who don't find van Inwagen's reasoning sufficiently persuasive? To offer an account of how it is possible for disagreements of this sort to be fully informed and reasonable is one of the main tasks of this dissertation.

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[30] Van Inwagen, "We're Right. They're Wrong," p. 28.

1.4   Conclusion

While the discussion in Section 1.3 lends some weight for thinking there are or could be some fully informed reasonable disagreements the case is inconclusive. One reason is that van Inwagen's concerns do not straightforwardly apply to mine. He writes that,

> I can only conclude that I am rational in accepting incompatibilism and that David was rational in accepting compatibilism. And, therefore, we have at least one case in which one philosopher accepts a philosophical position and another accepts its denial and in which each is perfectly rational.[31]

We can't take this to endorse or support the view that (1)-(3) are all true in some cases of fully informed disagreement. Van Inwagen speaks of rationality but (3) is concerned with reasonableness. At times van Inwagen talks about philosophical considerations (which he seems to identify or at least associate with evidence) but he does not seem (as?) concerned about evidential considerations and grounds, at least not as I understand them. Lastly, van Inwagen's main concern is the problem of disagreement between epistemic peers and how to avoid a skeptical response to it, whereas mine is to show how such disagreements can be fully informed and (equally) reasonable.

At best, the arguments in Section 1.3 make for a *prima facie* plausible case that (1)-(3) are consistent. They fall far short of demonstrating or showing that consistency. In Chapters Three, Four, and Five I show that (1)-(3) are consistent in particularly vexing

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[31] Van Inwagen, "We're Right. They're Wrong," p. 24.

cases of (purported) fully informed reasonable disagreement by arguing that (1)-(3) hold in them.[32]

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[32] I'd like to thank Nathan King for very helpful comments on an earlier draft of this chapter. I'd also like to thank the members of The Philosophy of Religion Reading Group (2009-2010) at The University of Notre Dame and those in attendance at Alabama Philosophical Society Annual Conference, October 2009 for helpful comments on even earlier presentations of this material.

CHAPTER 2. PLANTINGAN EPISTEMOLOGY IN NON-CHRISTIAN THEISTIC RELIGIONS

2.1   Introduction

According to Alvin Plantinga's Proper Functionalism, a belief is warranted if and only if it is internally and externally rational. Plantinga also affirms the Standard Aquinas/Calvin Model (hereafter the Standard model), which show how things could be such that Theistic Belief is properly basic and warranted for theists. Theistic Belief (TB) is the belief that God is the all-knowing, all-powerful, perfectly good and wholly loving creator, sustainer, and providential caretaker of the universe.[33] Plantinga also accepts a uniquely Christian extension of the Standard model that shows how it is possible that uniquely Christian beliefs about God could be properly basic and warranted for Christians. Now, meet Al ben Plantinga, Ibn Plantinga, and Al Plantingachandra, a Jew, a Muslim, and a (monotheistic) Hindu, respectively. They, too, accept Proper Functionalism and the Standard model. However, whereas Alvin Plantinga accepts a uniquely Christian extension, Al ben Plantinga accepts a Jewish one and Ibn Plantinga and Al Plantingachandra accept Islamic and Hindu extensions. Could these Plantingans be fully informed of the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and experiences yet reasonably disagree about which extension of the Standard model is true? In Chapter

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[33] Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, p. vii.

Three argue that, yes, this could happen. But first, we need to see that it is plausible to think that people like Al ben Plantinga, Ibn Plantinga, and Al Plantingachandra exist (or at least that they could exist). That is the main task of this chapter.

In Section 2.1, I explain Plantinga's Proper Functionalism and his Standard and Extended models. In Section 2.3 I show that Islam affirms the Standard model and in Section 2.4 I show that there is a uniquely Islamic extension of it. I contend that Judaism and (monotheistic) Hinduism also affirm the Standard model and provide rough sketches of uniquely Jewish and Hindu extensions of it in Section 2.5. I briefly conclude in Section 2.6.

2.2 Plantinga's Religious Epistemology

In this section I explain the core elements of Plantinga's epistemology. In Section 2.2.1 I explain his Proper Functionalism in greater detail and in Section 2.2.2 I explain in greater detail the Standard and Extended models.

2.2.1 Plantinga's Account of Warrant: Proper Functionalism

Plantinga maintains that a belief is warranted if and only if it is internally and externally rational. Internal rationality involves making inferences, deductions, and connections between the various beliefs that one holds, looking for evidence of truth as appropriate, being open and responsive to criticism, and a willingness to be corrected when wrong. External rationality involves forming or holding the beliefs that one ought to form (normatively) in virtue of one's cognitive faculties functioning properly in an epistemic environment sufficiently similar to the one for which they were designed (by

evolution and/or God) to operate.[34] According to Plantinga, internal and external rationality are understood in terms of proper function; as such, internal rationality may be characterized as "a matter of proper function all belief-producing processes 'downstream from experience'" and external rationality as a matter of their proper function 'upstream' from experience.[35] Specifically, Plantinga maintains that a belief B is warranted for some epistemic agent S if and only if:

(1) The cognitive faculties involved in the production of S's belief B are functioning properly,

(2) S's cognitive environment is sufficiently similar to the one for which S's cognitive faculties were designed,

(3) The purpose of S's design plan [a design plan includes a description of how a thing will work only under conditions that a designer purposes for them; it is analogous to the blueprints for a car or any other human artifact[36]] governing the production of B is the production of true beliefs,

(4) S's design plan is a good one in that there is a high statistical or objective probability that a belief produced in accordance with the relevant segment of the design plan in that sort of environment is true.[37]

From here on, I refer to (1)-(4) as Proper Functionalism.

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[34] Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, pp. 111-112.

[35] Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, pp. 110.

[36] See Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993): 21-22.

[37] For a more complete statement of these conditions, see Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function,* p. 194.

2.2.2   Plantinga's Standard and Extended Aquinas/Calvin Models

In *Warranted Christian Belief* (WCB), Plantinga introduces the Standard and

Extended models. The Standard model shows how it is possible that Theistic Belief (TB)

is warranted in an epistemically basic manner for theists. TB states that God is an

intellectual, affective, and intentional agent who is all-loving, perfectly good, all-knowing,

and all-powerful.[38] The Extended model shows how it is possible that Christian Belief

(CB) is warranted for Christians in an epistemically basic way. CB includes the core

teachings of Christianity as they are expressed in the intersection of the Christian creeds,

including the view that humans are sinners and that God graciously provides forgiveness

of sins through Jesus's sacrificial atonement.[39]

According to the Standard model, knowledge of God is natural in that humans are

able to know God and know things about God by means of a cognitive belief forming

faculty or process that originates in a certain kind of perception or experience and ends

with the formation of an appropriate doxastic response (where appropriateness is cashed

out in terms of proper function) that is grounded in that perception or experience.

According to the model, belief in God is produced immediately and non-inferentially,

similar to the way in which visual or auditory perceptions supply us with properly basic

beliefs about our environment. Plantinga follows John Calvin here, who writes, "There is

within the human mind, and indeed by natural instinct, an awareness of deity" and "Men

of sound judgment will always be sure that a sense of divinity [Latin, *sensus divinitatis*]

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[38] Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, p. 7.

[39] Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, p. 1.

which can never be effaced is engraved upon men's minds."[40] According to Plantinga, the *sensus divinitatis* is, "a disposition or set of dispositions to form theistic beliefs in various circumstances, in response to the sorts of conditions or stimuli that trigger the working of this sense of divinity."[41]

According to the Extended model, a three-tiered cognitive process produces Christian Belief: the internal instigation of the Holy Spirit (IIHS), scripture, and faith. The IIHS is a belief forming process that produces specifically Christian beliefs about the nature of God, including belief in "trinity, incarnation, Christ's resurrection, atonement, forgiveness of sins, regeneration, and eternal life."[42] Scripture is divine teaching from God (a form of propositional testimony) and is identified with the Christian Bible.[43] Faith is defined as, "a firm and certain knowledge of God's benevolence toward us … revealed to our minds and sealed upon our hearts."[44] Faith is produced in a wide variety of situations, such as when one attends worship services, listens to sermons and religious teachings, reads scripture, prays, or considers God's handiwork in nature.

It is important to point out that what is known by faith is much more specific than what can be known about God by means of the *sensus divinitatis*. In short, the proper function of the *sensus divinitatis* is to get someone – Christian or not – to accept the

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[40] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I, iii, 1, quoted in *Warranted Christian Belief*, pp. 171-172. Also see *Romans*, 1:18-20.

[41] Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, pp. 170-173.

[42] Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, p. 241

[43] Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, p. 249-252.

[44] Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, p. 244.

content of Theistic Belief immediately and in a properly basic way. In contrast, faith produces in the Christian specifically Christian beliefs about God.

Plantinga concludes that if the Standard and Extended models (or something much like them) are true, and if Christians are able to adequately deal with objections to the truth and the coherence of CB as they arise and are generally epistemically responsible with respect to the formation and maintenance of their beliefs about God, then both CB and TB are warranted for Christians in a properly basic way.[45]

Three theses condense the core features of Plantinga's religious epistemology at work in the Standard model:

(I)   The Dependency Thesis: Humans are ontologically and epistemologically dependent on and created by God.

(II)   The Design Thesis: Humans are created in accord with a design plan one aim of which is the production of true belief.

(III)   The Immediacy Thesis: God endows humans with special cognitive faculties or belief forming processes through which Theistic Belief can be known in an epistemically immediate and basic manner.

Two theses capture the core elements of the Extended model, (IV) The Internal Inspiration of the Holy Spirit Thesis, or The Internal Inspiration Thesis for short, and (V) The Scriptural Revelation Thesis. Each thesis proposes a special means by which God causes Christians to have, immediately and in a properly basic way, faith that certain components of Christian Belief are true.

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[45] Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, p. 351.

(IV)   The Internal Inspiration of the Holy Spirit Thesis: There is a special belief forming process the purpose of which is to produce specifically Christian beliefs about the nature of God, salvation, forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and the like.

(V)   The Scriptural Revelation Thesis: By means of scripture, which is identified with The Christian Bible, God propositionally reveals to humans important divine teachings and doctrines.

A non-Christian theist may readily accept that (I)-(III) are true and agree that theses very much like (IV) and (V) are true but affirm that God is not the Christian God and so does not reveal the content of Christian Belief. For instance, Muslims, Jews, and certain (monotheistic) Hindus accept (I)-(III) but affirm suitable analogs of (IV) and (V) and in so doing each affirms that a different uniquely non-Christian extension of the Standard model is correct. In the next section I show how this is so for Islam in detail. In Section 2.4, I provide sketches of how this is so for Judaism and *Dvaita-Vedanta* Hinduism.

2.3   Islam and the Standard Aquinas/Calvin Model

Members of Islamic philosophical and religious traditions may affirm a uniquely Islamic extension of the Standard model that shows how it could be that Islamic Belief is internally and externally rational and warranted for Muslims in a basic way. To support this claim, in Sections 2.3.1 through 2.3.3 I show how The Dependency, Design, and Immediacy Theses appear in Islam.

2.3.1 The Dependency Thesis in Islam

The Dependency Thesis, which states that humans are ontologically and epistemically dependent on and created by God, is affirmed by an Islamic philosophical/religious world-view. This is clearly implied by the following Qur'anic verses:

> (13: 2-3) Allah is He Who raised the heavens … subjected the sun and the moon … He doth regulate all affairs. It is He Who spread out the earth, and set thereon mountains standing firm.[46]

> (32: 5-7) He directs the affairs from the heavens to the Earth … He is the Knower of all things, hidden and open, the Exalted (in power), the Merciful. He who created all things in the best way.

Commenting on these themes, M.M. Sharif writes:

> The Ultimate Being or Reality is God. God, as described by the Qur'an for the understanding of man, is the sole-subsisting, all-pervading, eternal and Absolute Reality.[47]

And,

> God is omnipotent. To Him is due the primal origin of everything. It is He, the Creator, who began the process of creation and adds to creation as He pleases … He created the heavens and the earth.[48]

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[46] I use the Saudi revision of Yusuf Ali's translation of the meanings of the Qur'an unless otherwise noted.

[47] M. M. Sharif, "Philosophical Teachings of the Qur'an," *A History of Muslim Philosophy,* ed. by M. M. Sharif, (Kempten, Germany: Allgauer Heimatverlag GmbH, 1961): 137.

Moreover, Classical Islamic philosophers and theologians assume the truth of The Dependency Thesis when offering philosophical accounts of God's creation of the world. For instance, Al-Ghazali affirms that God created the world "by decree" and "from out of nothing"[49] and Al-Kindi affirms that "God is one, God is creator" and "the source of all things."[50] Some Islamic philosophers, including al-Farabi and Ibn-Rushd (more commonly known as Averroes in the West), believe that the world is an eternally temporal emanation from God.[51] Nevertheless, all Muslims agree that God is the ontological source of all things and that as such humans are ontologically dependent on God. They also maintain that God's sustaining power is what makes it possible for humans to have any knowledge at all. Because God is the metaphysical ground of all created things, and given that only God has perfect knowledge, humans, being created knowers, have at best imperfect and derivative knowledge. It is in this way that God's existence and sustaining activity makes it possible for humans to have knowledge in the first place. Thus, it is clear that an Islamic world-view affirms The Dependency Thesis.

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[48] Sharif, "Philosophical Teachings of the Qur'an," p. 139.

[49] Michael E. Marmura, "Al-Ghazali," *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, edited by P. Adamson and R. C. Taylor, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 141-142.

[50] Peter Adamson, "Al-Kindi and the reception of Greek philosophy," *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy,* edited by P. Adamson and R. C. Taylor, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 35-36.

[51] See David Reisman, "Al-Farabi," *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, edited by P. Adamson and R. C. Taylor, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 56-60 and Oliver Leaman, *An Introduction to Classical Islamic Philosophy* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002): 45-48.

2.3.2   The Design Thesis in Islam

Recall that The Design Thesis states that human cognitive faculties are created in accord with a design plan that is aimed at the production of true belief. The Design Thesis is central to an Islamic world-view. In verse 32: 9 we read, "He gave you (the faculties of) hearing, and sight, and understanding." Note again verse 32: 7, which states that God "created all things in the best way." Specifically, God creates all things in a way that is in perfect accord with his purposes and plans and every thing that God creates displays a degree of perfection appropriate to its kind. Obviously, human cognitive faculties are not perfect without qualification. (Note this also follows from the view that only God has perfect and complete knowledge.) Yet, God, having created humans, ensures that human cognitive faculties are sufficiently reliable.

Islamic philosophers have a great deal to say about the human cognitive design plan. M. M. Sharif offers a classification of knowledge into three types: knowledge by inference, testimonial knowledge, and knowledge by means of personal experience or intuition.[52] Likewise, Absar Ahmad affirms that God has equipped man with an inherent light of nature, senses for observation, and reason for deduction and ratiocination.[53] Mohamed Yasien maintains that humans are endowed with three levels of perception and that at each level of perception there is a corresponding perceptual process and an appropriate cognitive faculty. The table below nicely sums up his account:[54]

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[52] Sharif, "Philosophical Teachings of the Qur'an," pp. 146-147.

[53] Absar Ahmad, *Exploring Islamic Theory of Knowledge*. http://www.tanzeem.us/IONA/Files/QH_Absar_Ahmad.htm

[54] The table is adapted from Mohamed Yasien, *Fitrah: The Islamic Conception of Human*

Table 2.1

Level of Perception	Perceptual Process	Faculty
Sensory Perception	sight, hearing, smell, etc.	eyes, ears, nose, etc.
Rational Perception	(i) cognition, reasoning, and insight; also (ii) self-consciousness and conscious meta-level thinking	$'aql^1$ (mind) $'aql^2$ (mind)
Spiritual Perception	intuition, intellection, and inspiration	*qalb* (heart)

A bit of explanation is in order. Faculties of sense perception provide sensory contact with objects in the external world. For example, memory and sensory perception operate at the level of sensory perception. At the level of rational perception, we comprehend and reason in accord with first principles, including mathematical and logical truths and relations. The operative cognitive faculty at work here is $'aql^1$ (or mind). When *aql* is used to refer to the capacities of cognition, including reasoning and insight as well as self-consciousness and conscious meta-level thinking, the operative faculty is $'aql^2$ (or mind). *Qalb*, or heart, is the faculty of spiritual perception. By means of *qalb*, Yasien writes, we experience spiritual realities, including the presence of Allah.[55] While revelation is necessary for us to attain the highest knowledge of God, Yasien writes that *qalb* provides us with an immediate knowledge of God: "Through the organ of the heart, its faculty of intellect, and the guidance of Divine Revelation, man is able to

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Nature, (London: Ta-Ha Publishers, Ltd, 1996): 93.

[55] Yasien, *Fitrah*, p. 95.

attain all levels of perception, even the knowledge of Allah in a *direct and immediate way*."[56]

Note that on an Islamic worldview, while *qalb* may inform one about spiritual realities or God, there is always some measure of doubt about that information (at least initially). The proper function of '*aql²*, or meta-level consciousness, is to judge the veracity of spiritual perception in the presence of doubt. On a uniquely Islamic view of the human design plan, humans do not passively receive the deliverances of spiritual perception (*qalb*) and it is not appropriate to accept its deliverances just in case we have no doubts or defeaters. Rather, in accord with the human design plan, people are *supposed* to have a certain level of doubt about the veracity of spiritual perception. Doubt plays an important function in the human cognitive design plan: it motivates people to seek a deeper presence of God and helps to cultivate a deeper understanding of spiritual realities. The basic idea is that humans ought (normatively) to evaluate the deliverances of spiritual perception (*qalb*) by '*aql²* so as to acquire a deeper understanding of the truth of these deliverances. For instance, in *Deliverance from Error*, al-Ghazali writes that God "casts a light that enlarges ones heart" and that this light is what enables someone to "withdraw from the mansion of deception." He writes,

> 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

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[56] Yasien, *Fitrah*, p. 97. Italics are mine.

things Divine. That light at certain times gushes from the spring of Divine generosity...[57]

From an Islamic perspective, then, God has given humans the capacity for second-order rational perception ('aql^2) in order to deal with doubts that inevitably arise. Doubt thus provides an opportunity or occasion for one's knowledge of God to be increased and deepened. But if these conditions are not met, then doubts remain and, consequently, one's beliefs lack warrant (or at least warrant sufficient for knowledge).

Two further conclusions may be drawn about a uniquely Islamic understanding of The Design Thesis. First, note that the fact that one's cognitive faculties function properly is a necessary but not sufficient condition for knowledge. While one's faculties of sensory, rational, and spiritual perception may be functioning properly it is only by actively exercising the second-order faculty of rational perception ('aql^2) that one can grasp that spiritual perception (*qalb*) furnishes one with knowledge of God. Again, doubts about *qalb* cannot be adequately dealt with at the first-order level of cognition, the level at which 'aql^1 operates, but (and in accord with our design plan) only when we self-consciously consider and judge correctly that these doubts are overcome (or at least, by our best lights, seem to be overcome). Only then can humans have the kind of deeper knowledge of God that God wants humans to have. Second, God maintains the reliability of our cognitive capacities, including the higher-level faculties by which we become aware of the reliability of our lower-level cognitive faculties. As such, God sees to it that humans are able to have the requisite second-order knowledge. Such knowledge is not

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[57] Al-Ghazali, *The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazali*, translated by Montgomery Watt, (London: George Allen, 1963): 25-26.

acquired just in case one's cognitive faculties are functioning properly. Rather, people must self-consciously and reflectively come to see that certain beliefs about God (especially beliefs that are particularly fundamental and significant) are proper and appropriate to hold. This requires cultivating certain intellectual virtues. Of course, God could not intend that we keep on going and going up levels here. There must be an upper limit to higher-order knowledge, and it certainly it is not "all the way up." The central point here is that, by God's design, it is possible for humans to have a limited second-order knowledge of God. This suggests that (on the condition that p is not a statement about what one knows) if one *knows p*, then one is in a position to *know that one knows p*. But it does not entail that if one *knows that one knows p*, one is in a position to *know that one knows that one knows p* or that one must be able to iterate ever-higher orders of knowing. The same point holds, *mutatis mutandis*, with respect to meta-level concepts.

2.3.3   The Immediacy Thesis in Islam

The Immediacy Thesis states that God endows humans with special cognitive faculties or belief forming processes by which God can be known in an epistemically immediate and basic manner. Given the above discussion of spiritual perception and doubt, certain qualifications to The Immediacy Thesis must be made. Verses 2: 192-195 assert that Qur'anic revelation is given in "the Truthful spirit to thy heart." In his

commentary on this passage, Yusuf Ali writes that the heart is the "seat of the affections and the seat of the memory and understanding."[58] Maulana Muhammad Ali adds:

> There is an inner light within each man telling him that there is a Higher Being, a God, a Creator … There is in man's soul something more than mere consciousness of the existence of God; there is in it a yearning after its Maker – the instinct to turn to God for help … it cannot find complete contentment without God.[59]

And Ahmad writes:

> The Holy Qur'an appeals to all thoughtful persons… to think and ponder over the outer universe of matter and the inner universe of spirit, as both are replete with unmistakable signs of the Almighty creator. Simultaneously, it invites them to deliberate over its own signs, i.e., its divinely inspired verses. Thus the Qur'an, in addition to its own verses, regards both 'anfus' (self) and 'afaq' (world) as sources of knowledge. By pondering over the three categories of signs, a man will be able to perceive a perfect concord between them; and, with the realization of this concord, he will grasp certain fundamental truths which are borne out by the testimony of his nature.[60]

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[58] THE PRESIDENCY OF ISLAMIC RESEARCH, I. (Ed.), *The Holy Qur'an: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary*: Call and Guidance, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Complex, for the Printing of the Holy Qur-an.

[59] 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): 105-106.

[60] Ahmad, *Exploring Islamic Theory of Knowledge*,
http://www.tanzeem.org.pk/resources/articles/articles/absar2.htm.

Ahmad does not identify signs that indicate the activity or presence of God with (inferential) evidence for the existence of God. Rather, what he says about perceiving and grasping signs suggests that some of our knowledge of the existence and activity of God is acquired immediately and in an epistemically basic way. Here is one way to develop Ahmad's view of signs to allow for basic knowledge of God. When we read everyday signs, including street signs, addresses in a phone book, or words on the back of a cereal box, we do not normally engage in deductive or inductive reasoning. Typically, unless we are reading signs in languages that we don't fully comprehend, we just don't deliberate about what these sorts of signs say but intellectually comprehend their meanings immediately in an epistemically basic way. Analogously, Ahmad suggests that we are able to intellectually see, non-inferentially and immediately, signs of order and design that indicate or testify to the reality and existence of God. This fits with Plantinga's view that belief in God need not be formed on the basis of evidence or deliberation but is naturally and spontaneously in certain appropriate circumstances.[61] (It is in this spirit, I take it, that Plantinga writes, "There is no spot in the universe wherein you cannot discern at least some sparks of his [God's] glory."[62])

Other Islamic thinkers, such as Ibn Taimiyyah, affirm that Prophet Muhammad received the "revelation common to all" (*al-wahi al-mushtaraki*), a special kind of divine testimony that is made available to all who are sensitive to God's call to obedience.[63] This suggests that Islam posits a cognitive faculty very similar in function to the *sensus*

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[61] See, for instance, Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, p. 174.

[62] Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, p. 174.

[63] Sharif, "Philosophical Teachings of the Qur'an," p. 283.

divinitatis. The obvious candidate is *qalb*. Putting all of this together, we see how Islamic philosophers may readily affirm that God provides signs of his existence that can cause the Muslim to accept Theistic Belief in an epistemically basic way in appropriate contexts. And that is sufficient for showing that The Immediacy Thesis is at home in a uniquely Islamic world-view. Since a uniquely Islamic worldview affirms views that either entail or strongly suggest The Design Thesis, The Dependency Thesis, and The Immediacy Thesis, it follows that an Islamic worldview entails or strongly suggests the truth of the Standard model (or something quite similar).

2.4   A Uniquely Islamic Extension of the Standard Aquinas/Calvin Model

For Plantinga, it is natural to extend the Standard model in a uniquely Christian way. In this section I show how it is equally natural for Ibn Plantinga to extend the Standard model in a uniquely Islamic way. Drawing on the material in Section 2.3 and adding to it as appropriate, I show that since there are uniquely Islamic analogs of The Internal Inspiration and Scriptural Revelation Theses it follows that there is a uniquely Islamic extension of the Standard model.

Ibn Plantinga thinks that God acts in special ways so as to produce faith in humans that Muslim Belief is true. Let us consider this more general point of similarity before articulating uniquely Islamic analogs of The Inspiration Thesis and The Scriptural Revelation Thesis.

Javed Ahmad Ghamidi writes that root meaning of word "*iman*", a Qur'anic word often translated as faith, is to consider something to be true (this indicates that Islamic Belief has a cognitive component) and to rely on it (this indicates that Islamic Belief has

commitment and "works" components). Ghamidi writes, "if something is accepted with the certitude of the heart, then this is called *iman*" and "the conviction which exists with all the conditions and corollaries of humility, trust and acknowledgment is called faith."[64] Faith is strengthened when one "remembers God and hears His revelations and witnesses His signs in the world within him and in that around him." Ghamidi calls attention to a parable in the Qur'an (14: 24-25) that "compares faith to a tree whose roots are deep in the soil and branches spread in the vastness of the sky." He writes:

> Do you not see how Allah sets forth a parable? A good Word (from Allah is) like a good tree, whose root is firmly fixed, and its branches (reach) to the sky – It brings out its fruit at all times, by the permission of its Lord. And Allah sets forth stories for men, so that they may remember and seek guidance.[65]

Quoting Iman Amin Ahsan Islahi, Ghamidi continues:

> In the verse, the expression "word of purity" [translated as "a good word" in the above passage] obviously refers to the "word of faith." It is compared by the Almighty to a fruit-laden tree whose roots are firmly implanted in the soil and whose branches are nicely spread in the sky and it is bearing fruit in every season with the blessing of its Lord. Its roots being deeply implanted in the soil refers to the fact that faith is deeply and firmly implanted in human nature ...[66]

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[64] Javed Ahmad Ghamidi, *Faith and Beliefs*, translated by S. Saleem, (Lahore: Al-Mawrid, 2001): 5.

[65] This passage is from *Interpretation of the Glorious Interpretation of the Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an*, translated by S. V. Ahamed, 6th edition, (Elmhurst: Tahrie Tarsile Qur'an, Inc., 2008): 200.

[66] Amin Ahsan Islahi, *Tazkiyah Nafs*, 4th ed., (Lahore: Faran Foundation, 2005): 325.

Similarly, A. A. Maududi writes that faith is "firm belief arising out of knowledge and conviction." He continues:

> The man who knows of and puts full trust in the Oneness of God, His qualities, His Revealed guidance, and in the Divine mechanism of reward and punishment is called *mu'min* or *faithful*. Such faith must direct man to a life of active obedience to the Will of Almighty God. And the person who lives this life of obedience is known as a Muslim.[67]

Maududi refers the reader to the foundational beliefs of Islam as the content of faith for the Muslim. What Maududi says adds uniquely Islamic content to faith.

There is more to say about the uniquely Islamic content of faith. In Islam, faith is an inner conviction and knowledge of the fundamental tenants of Islamic Belief accompanied by outer works and external signs of one's inner conviction. The core elements of Islamic Belief, the content of "inner faith" in Islam, are specified in The Qur'an 2:285: (1) Belief in God, (2) Belief in the Angels, (3), Belief in the Prophets, (4), Belief in Divine Books, (5) and Belief in the Day of Judgment. The outer signs that one has "inner faith" that the core elements of Islamic Belief are true are laid out in The Five Pillars of Islam, the five basic acts of faith that Muslims are obligated to perform: the *shahada*, professing "There is no god but God and Mohamed is his messenger," (2) *salat*, saying the five daily prayers, (3) *sawm*, fasting during Ramadan, (4) *zakat*, almsgiving, and (5) taking the *hajj*, the pilgrimage to Mecca, at least once if one is able to.

For the Muslim, faith is not just an inner conviction of Islamic Belief but is also a

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[67] Syed Abul Ala Maududi, *Towards Understanding Islam*, (Chicago: Kazi Publications, Inc., 1992): 18.

kind of knowledge. Faith is produced in a person who is rightly responsive to the basic sources of knowledge of God. According to Maududi, the knowledge aspect of faith is communicated to humans in various ways. By means of signs the "countless manifestations of God all around us" in nature are known, and it is by means of these signs that God's attributes of wisdom, knowledge, providence, and goodness are made knowable to us. Prophets and messengers of God, the foremost of which is Mohammed, also communicate faith. God uses prophets and messengers up to guide humans in the right way of living and to preach the true meaning and purpose of life. Most importantly, faith is communicated by means of the divine testimony of the Qur'an.[68] Consider again the points made by al-Ghazali and Maulana Muhammad Ali regarding spiritual perception and inspiration discussed previously. Ali writes that inspiration is "a form of God's speaking to man" and an "inner revelation," a means by which God infuses ideas into the human heart and mind; al-Ghazali writes that God "casts a light that enlarges ones heart" that removes doubts about Islamic Belief and that this light gushes directly from "the spring of Divine generosity."[69]

The above points support the claim that, according to Islam, God operates on human hearts and minds to produce faith and to give them an inner conviction and knowledge of the main tenets of Islamic Belief. Accordingly, Islam affirms uniquely Islamic versions of The Internal Inspiration Thesis and The Scriptural Revelation Thesis. There is, therefore, a uniquely Islamic version of the Extended model. Appropriately

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[68] Maududi, *Towards Understanding Islam*, p. 20.

[69] Maududi, *Towards Understanding Islam*, p. 20 and Al-Ghazali, *The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazali*, pp. 25-26.

modifying The Internal Inspiration of the Holy Spirit and The Scriptural Revelation theses, we end up with the following theses:

(IV)-Islam   The Islamic Internal Inspiration Thesis: There is a special belief forming process the purpose of which is to produce specifically Islamic beliefs about the nature of God, salvation, forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and the like.

(V)-Islam   The Islamic Scriptural Revelation Thesis: By means of scripture, which is identified with The Quran, God propositionally reveals to humans important divine teachings and doctrines.

Let us consider in greater detail each thesis in turn.

2.4.1   The Islamic Internal Instigation Thesis

According to Muslims, there is a special belief forming process that produces in them specifically Islamic beliefs. I have argued that Islam affirms that humans have a faculty of spiritual perception, *qalb*, and that Allah "casts a light that enlarges ones heart" that removes doubts. Al-Ghazali also writes:

> 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...[70]

Note the significance of the last sentence. It suggests that at certain times God is *directly* involved in producing in humans an intuitive understanding of things divine. The light

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[70] Al-Ghazali, *The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazali*, pp. 25-26.

"that gushes from the spring of Divine generosity" removes doubts that obscure what one has come to believe by means of spiritual perception, *qalb*, as well as what one has come to believe by Qur'anic revelation and other basic sources of testimony, including the *Sunnah* and the *Hadith*, narratives of the words and deeds of Mohammed. In this way, Allah internally inspires Muslims to accept uniquely Islamic beliefs in a basic way.

The Qur'an itself also supports the contention that there is a uniquely Islamic analog of The Internal Inspiration Thesis. In verses 42: 51-52 we read:

> It is not fitting for a man that Allah should speak to him except by inspiration, or from behind a veil, or by the sending of a messenger to reveal, with Allah's permission, what Allah wills.

The implication is that there are various types of inspiration (*wahy*) by which Allah makes himself known. One type of inspiration explained by commentators is "a suggestion thrown by Allah into the heart or mind of man, by which man understands the substance of the [Qur'anic] Message."[71] Ali speaks of this kind of inspiration as the "infusing an idea into the heart" and as "a form of God's speaking to man" and calls it a kind of "inner revelation."[72] Ali adds that this type of revelation is common to prophets and non-prophets alike.[73] (Regarding "speaking from behind a veil," Ali writes that this refers to how God may speak to men by means of dreams, visions, or in certain kinds of

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[71] Qur'an, note 4597, p. 1493.

[72] Ali, *The Religion of Islam,* p. 154.

[73] Ali, *The Religion of Islam*, p. 155.

meditative states and trances.[74]) Thus, it is clear that, effectively, Islam affirms that there is a uniquely Islamic version of The Internal Inspiration Thesis.

2.4.2   The Islamic Scriptural Revelation Thesis

Muslims believe that in times past, God spoke to humans through various prophets. As such, Islam accepts certain parts of the Christian and Jewish Bibles to be revelatory, in particular, portions of The Torah, The Psalms, certain of the books of The Prophets, and even the Gospels. However, they believe that we cannot rely on this revelation anymore because the texts have not been passed down correctly and so have been corrupted and mixed with many falsehoods. For this reason, God sent another messenger, Mohammed, to whom was given a final pure, untainted revelation acceptable to all people. This revelation is the Qur'an, dictated to Mohammed by the angel Gabriel. For the Muslim, scripture is identified with the Qur'an – the only fully reliable divinely inspired text – and it is through the Qur'an that God now intends to propositionally reveal to humans important divine teachings and doctrines. It obviously and straightforwardly follows that Islam (effectively) affirms a uniquely Islamic version of The Scriptural Revelation Thesis.[75] Thus, since Islam affirms analogs of The Internal Instigation of the Holy Spirit and Scriptural Revelation Theses, it follows that there is a uniquely Islamic extension of the Standard model.

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[74] Ali, *The Religion of Islam*, p. 155.

[75] These are basic claims of Islam, discussed in any introductory text. Ali (1990) is a good one.

2.5   Sketches of Jewish and Hindu Extensions of the Standard Aquinas/Calvin Model

Like their Muslim counterparts, Plantingan Jews and Hindus accept both the Standard model and uniquely Jewish and Hindu extensions of it. I only briefly discuss these extensions at this time. In the next two sub-sections, I argue that there are Jewish and Hindu extensions of the Standard model by showing that Judaism and Hinduism affirm views that entail or at least strongly suggest the truth of The Design Thesis, The Dependency Thesis, and The Immediacy Theses. In so doing, I shall provide details that also support how Judaism and Hinduism affirm analogs of The Internal Instigation and Scriptural Revelation Theses as well.

2.5.1   Towards a Jewish Extension of the Standard Aquinas/Calvin Model

The account of creation recorded in *Genesis* 1-3 that is accepted by Christians and Muslims has its origins in Judaism. Because Christianity and Islam have their formative roots in the Hebrew Scriptures, I take it to be obvious that Judaism (at least its traditional, orthodox forms) affirms The Dependency Thesis, The Design Thesis, and The Scriptural Revelation Theses. Moreover, many Classical Jewish Philosophers discuss and defend theses much like these. For instance, Saadya ben Joseph defends the view that God created the world *ex nihilo* in Chapter One of *The Book of Doctrines and Beliefs.*[76] Talmudic commentators, including Rabbi Aqibah and Rabbi Ishmael, effectively accept

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[76] Saadya Gaon, *The Book of Doctrines and Beliefs*, translated by Alexander Altmann with new introduction by Daniel H. Frank, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002).

Jewish versions of The Scriptural Inspiration Thesis,[77] as do philosophers such as Judah Halevi and Abraham Heschel.[78]

It may be less clear that Judaism affirms The Immediacy Thesis and The Internal Inspiration Thesis. Here's why we should think that it does. S. H. Bergman writes that faith is "an attitude of trust and confidence between man and God" and that to have faith "is to 'entrust' oneself to God and to feel secure in that trust." With echoes of Martin Buber, he maintains that we relate to God as a 'thou' with whom we can enter into a relationship of friendship.[79] He writes:

> Faith is a relationship which has an immediacy analogous to that which exists between an 'I' and a 'thou.' The believer *encounters* God. He knows God's hand is extended to him. He speaks to God and receives and answer.[80]

Bergman also writes that although faith is incapable of objective proof, the voice of God speaks in a voice more real than one's own existence and faith is grounded in the

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[77] See David Novak, "The Talmud as a source for philosophical reflection," in *History of Jewish Philosophy, Routledge History of World Philosophies*: *Volume 2*, Daniel H. Frank and Oliver Leaman eds., (London: Routledge, 1997): 53.

[78] See Lenn E. Goodman, "Judah Halevi," in *History of Jewish Philosophy, Routledge History of World Philosophies: Volume 2*, Daniel H. Frank and Oliver Leaman eds., (London: Routledge, 1997) and Halevi's *The Kurzari: An Argument for the Faith of Israel*.

[79] S. H. Bergman, "Faith and Reason," in *The Jewish Philosophy Reader*, Dan Frank, Oliver Leaman, and Charles H. Manekin, eds., (London and New York: Routledge, 2004): 583. Also see Martin Buber, *I and Thou,* A new Translation with introduction and notes by Walter Kaufman, (New York: Scribner, 1970).

[80] Bergman, "Faith and Reason," p. 584.

"immediacy of experience, in the certainty of the believer that it is God who spoke or speaks to him."[81] Suggestive of themes from Plantinga's *God and Other Minds,* including the views that belief in the existence of God is just as rational as belief in other minds, that people are justified in believing that God exists even if they can't prove it to others, and the like, Bergman writes that the Jewish believer prays to God, "…being just as certain of His existence as he is of his own or that of his neighbor. He requires no proof for this supreme certainty; yet should others desire proof he cannot provide it. He cannot offer objective evidence for what, in his heart, he knows to be utterly true and real."[82]

Views that adumbrate Plantinga's Proper Functionalism also appear in Medieval Jewish philosophy. According to Shilmo Pines, Saadya maintains that humans have four sources of knowledge, namely, sense perception, reason, inference, and reliable testimony.[83] Inferences are "based on the data furnished by the first two sources of knowledge," namely, sense perception and reason. Examples include hypothetical statements such as "if there is smoke, there is fire."[84] Pines writes that reliable testimony, "is meant to vindicate the teachings of Scripture and the religious tradition."[85] This goes to show that Saadya seems to think that God created humans such that if these basic

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[81] Bergman, "Faith and Reason," p. 585. See also Alvin Plantinga, *God and Other Minds: A Study of the Rational Justification of Belief in God*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).

[82] Bergman, "Faith and Reason," p. 584.

[83] Shilmo Pines, "Jewish Philosophy," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* ed. in Chief, Paul Edwards, (Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. & The Free Press: New York, 1967): 263-264.

[84] Pines, "Jewish Philosophy," p. 263.

[85] Pines, "Jewish Philosophy," p. 264.

sources of knowledge are functioning properly and if nothing is interfering with their proper function, they will produce in humans (mostly) warranted, true beliefs. On Maimonides's view of testimony, David Hartman writes:

> The task of the Jewish philosopher, as understood by Maimonides, is to provide the believing Jew with epistemological guidelines which enable him to identify those beliefs which his community accepts on the basis of authority and those beliefs the community shares with the universal community of rational men . . . to do this, he must establish and justify the legitimate place occupied by belief based on authority. Belief accepted on authority becomes legitimate when one realizes that the human intellect has limitations and that demonstration alone is not a sufficient source of knowledge.[86]

All this strongly suggests that Judaism accepts the three core theses of the Standard model and uniquely Jewish analogs of the two core theses of the Extended model. This supports the claim that there is a uniquely Jewish version of the Standard model.

2.5.2   Towards a Hindu Extension of the Standard Aquinas/Calvin Model

Let us consider how there could be a uniquely (monotheistic) Hindu extension of the Standard model. There are six orthodox Hindu philosophical-religious schools, or *darshanas* (literally, "view, sight" or "system"): *Samkhya*, *Yoga*, *Nyaya*, *Vaisheshika*,

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[86] David Hartman, *Maimonides: Torah and Philosophic Quest,* (Philadelphia, The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1977), p. 12.

Mimamsa, and *Vedanta*.[87] They are orthodox in that all recognize the validity of the *Vedas*, "the oldest texts of Indian literature to which orthodox Hindus ascribe superhuman origins and divine authority."[88] The Vedas are considered *shruti* (literally, "that which was revealed") to *rishis*, or "seers", in moments of great contemplation. I focus on *Vedanta*.

Vedanta seeks to understand the relationship between Brahman, or ultimate reality, and Atman, or soul. *Vedanta* has three branches: *Advaita Vedanta* (non-dualism), *Vishishtadvaita Vedanta* (qualified non-dualism), and *Dvaita Vedanta* (dualistic). All affirm that Atman is Brahman but interpret that claim in different ways. Since *Advaita Vedanta* affirms that Atman and Brahman are identical and that everything is non-dual, it is in conflict with the Standard model. *Vishishtadvaita Vedanta* affirms that the relationship between Atman and Brahman is rather like the relationship between the ocean and the drops of water that compose or constitute it: roughly, rather like how each drop of water is part of but partially constitutes the ocean, each individual atman is absorbed into but partially constitutes Brahman. This understanding, too, is inconsistent with Traditional Theism. *Dvaita Vedanta*, however, upholds that there is an ontological distinction between Atman and Brahman of the sort affirmed by Traditional Theism. The best representative of *Dvaita Vedanta* is Sri Madhvacarya, also known as Madhva. (Other

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[87] See Satischandra Chatterjee and Dhirendramohan Datta, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta Press, 1984): 2-3.

[88] Fischer-Schreiber, Ingrid, Franz-Karl Ehrand, Kurt Friedrichs, and Michael S. Diener, eds.. "Vedas," *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion*, (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc. by arrangement with Shambala Publications, Inc., 1999): 403.

Hindu religious and philosophical traditions, including *Bhakti*, *Saiva*, *Sarta*, *Nyaya*, and *Vaisnava*, may affirm the Standard model, too. I do not explore these possibilities here.[89])

Madhva thinks that Brahman is personal and identical to Vishnu, "the absolute creator of the universe."[90] As such, he affirms that the existence of all things depends on Vishnu.[91] A substance dualist, Madhva affirms a clear ontological distinction between Vishnu and the created order, which includes the material world and the various beings that inhabit it. He maintains that there are many individuals, embodied Atmans, called *jivas*. Briefly, a *jiva* is an individual human self such as it is conceived in Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. *Jivas* are personal agents that bear moral responsibilities and have limited power and intelligence. No two are alike and all have equal worth – each is unique.[92] (Radhakrishnan, commenting on Madhva, writes, "The individual soul [*jiva*] is dependent on God, since it is unable to exist without the energizing spirit [*Vishnu*], even as the tree cannot live with sap."[93]) Lastly, Vishnu, conceived as the God of Theistic Belief, introduces order and unity into the universe.[94] Despite plenty of differences,

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[89] See Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy Volume II*, Chapter 2, "The Logical Realism of *Nyaya*" and Chapter 10, "The Saiva, The Sarta, and the Later Vaisnava Theism," (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998): 722-765. Also see Stephen Cross, *The Elements of Hinduism*, Chapter 8, "The Bhakti Movement," (Element Books Limited: Rockport, 1996): 75-89.

[90] Fischer-Schreiber, et al., *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion*, "Madhva," p. 209.

[91] Sri Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy Volume II*, p. 743.

[92] Sri Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy Volume II*, p. 744.

[93] Sri Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy Volume II*, p. 745.

[94] Sri Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy Volume II*, p. 746.

Dvaita Vedanta is relevantly and sufficiently similar to Christianity.[95] As such, *Dvaita Vedanta* implies the truth of The Design, Dependency, and Immediacy Theses.

Madhva's religious epistemology is relevantly similar to Plantinga's. Madhva, too, accepts perception, inference, and scriptural testimony. (However, unlike Plantinga, Madhva maintains that certain other sources of knowledge, such as non-divine testimony, are non-basic as they are reducible to perception and/or inference.) For Madhva, perception is apprehension by means of our senses. On Madhva's theory of perception by apprehension, Radhakrishnan writes, "Apprehension … is the direct evidence of the thing that is apprehended" and "the relation between the knower and the known is direct and immediate."[96] In other words, Madhva accepts a version of direct realism according to which we have perceptual knowledge of objects that are distinct from ourselves.

Swami Satprakashananda writes that by means of induction (*anumana*), we derive consequent knowledge (*anumiti*) based on prior perceptual knowledge. A classic example of inference in the Indian tradition is as follows: Whatever has smoke has fire (Major premise). The hill has smoke (Minor premise). Therefore, the hill has fire (Conclusion). On inference, Satprakashananda writes, "The inference that the hill has fire results from the [perceptual] apprehension of smoke as a mark on the hill followed by the recollection

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[95] So much so, that some scholars argue that Christianity had a substantial influence on Madvha's thinking. This view, however, is quite controversial; Surendranath Dasgupta argues that these arguments are not sufficiently strong or plausible. See his *A History of Indian Philosophy: Volume 5 Southern Schools of Saivism,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955): 92-93.

[96] Sri Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy: Volume II*, p. 740.

of the invariable concomitance between smoke and fire."[97] Invariable concomitance holds between the middle term (*hetu*) and the major term (*sadhya*), which "implies a universal relation of co-existence between the things denoted."[98] As a theist, Madhva naturally holds that Vishnu creates and maintains things like hills, smoke, and fire and sustains the causal relations between them, insuring that that invariable concomitance holds.

By means of perception and inference, many truths are apprehended, but Madhva thinks that we must rely on the scriptural testimony of the Vedas for a true and complete knowledge of reality.[99] He maintains that we acquire testimonial knowledge of God by reading the Vedas. He also affirms that meditation to be another form of knowledge of God. Radhakrishnan writes that Madhva affirms that, "it is in the act of meditation that the soul can by divine grace arrive at a direct intuitive realisation of God (*aparoksajnana*)."[100] On Madhva's view, he continues, "It is knowledge that produces the feeling of absolute dependence on God and love for him. A correct knowledge of all things, material and spiritual, leads to a knowledge of God, which naturally results in a

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[97] Swami Satprakashananda, *Methods of Knowledge According to Advaita Vedanta*, (Kolkata: Advaita Ahsrama, 1965): 143.

[98] Satprakashananda, *Methods of Knowledge According to Advaita Vedanta*, p. 145.

[99] Sri Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy Volume II*, p. 739.

[100] Sri Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy Volume II*, p. 748. Also see Srendranath Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy, Volume IV: Indian Pluralism*, (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1955): 51–203.

love for God."[101] *Aparoksajnana*, the direct intuitive realization of God, then is a good candidate for a Hindu analog of the *sensus divinitatis*.

Other Indian philosophers and theologians are broadly sympathetic to Madhva's views. For instance, Pandeya Vidyarthis writes, "Religion springs from the spiritual constitution of man . . . Man is not satisfied with the finite because it does not contain that which he seeks."[102] He also writes, "There is such a thing as the lure of the infinite and captures the vision of God in the divine handiwork, in the worship of goodness and truth."[103]

Even this brief discussion of *Dvaita Vedanta* grounds the claim that there are uniquely Hindu versions of The Internal Inspiration and Scriptural Revelation Theses. As such, we have good reason to think that there is a uniquely Hindu extension of the Standard model.

2.6   Conclusion

The goal of this chapter was to explain Alvin Plantinga's Proper Functionalism and his Standard and Extended models and to show that there are multiple ways of extending the Standard model. I argued extensively that Islam affirms the Standard model and that there is a uniquely Islamic extension of it. I also showed how Judaism and Hinduism affirm the Standard model and provided rough but accurate sketches of how

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[101] Sri Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy, Volume II*, p. 747.

[102] Pandeya Brahmeshvar Vidyarthi, *Early Indian Religious Thought: A Study in the Sources of Indian Theism with Special Reference to Ramanuja*, (Oriental Publishers & Distributors: New Delhi, 1976): 1-2.

[103] Vidyarthi, *Early Indian Religious Thought*, p. 6.

there are uniquely Jewish and Hindu extensions of the Standard model. Thus, it is plausible to think that people like Ibn Plantinga, Al ben Plantinga, and Al Plantingachandra exist (or at least could exist). In the next Chapter I consider whether this diverse group of Plantingans can be aware the same (of sufficiently similar) facts and experiences yet reasonably disagree about which extension of the Standard model is true.[104]

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[104] I have discussed how there are non-Christian theistic extensions of the Standard Model in Baldwin (2006) "Could the Extended Aquinas/Calvin Model Defeat Basic Christian Belief?" and Baldwin (2010) "On the Prospects of an Islamic Externalist Account of Warrant." Parts of this chapter benefit from and draw on these papers.

CHAPTER 3. THE CASE OF PLANTINGA AND HIS COMRADES

3.1   Introduction

I take it that I have adequately supported the claim that the Standard model has Christian, Islamic, Jewish, and Hindu extensions in the last Chapter. Now, then, suppose that Alvin Plantinga encounters Al ben Plantinga, Ibn Plantinga, and Al Plantingachandra, who, respectively, accept Jewish, Islamic, and Hindu extensions of the Standard model. Call this The Case of Plantinga and his Comrades. Obviously, Plantinga and his Comrades disagree about which extension of the Standard model is correct. But can they reasonably disagree about that if they are fully informed of the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and experiences? To answer this question, in Section 3.2, I explain the nature of the case in more detail. I articulate and evaluate a Plantingan response to this case in Section 3.3. In Section 3.4 I argue that Plantinga and his Comrades could engage in fully informed reasonable disagreement about which extension of the Standard model is true if we make certain corrections to Plantinga's epistemol

3.2 The Case of Plantinga and His Comrades

Before continuing, I want to note a few assumptions and make a few clarifications. First, the case is idealized. The archetypal Plantingan is none other than Alvin Plantinga himself, but there are many like-minded folk. Call them Plantingans. For my purposes, Plantingans accept Proper Functionalism and the Standard model as well as some extension of it but not necessarily other well-known Plantingan views, such as Essentialism, Substance Dualism, that The Free Will Defense is successful, that The Evolutionary Argument Against Naturalism is sound, etc.

Second, I take Plantinga and his similarly-yet-distinctively named non-Christian Comrades to be idealized representatives of their respective Theistic traditions. I do not make the silly claim that there is an actual Muslim philosopher named Ibn Plantinga, but rather that there are Muslims who accept the views that I attribute to Ibn Plantinga (or views very much like them). *Mutatis mutandis*, similar points hold for Al ben Plantinga and Al Plantingachandra, too. Hence, what I say has real world traction if there are (as I think there are) actual Christians, Muslims, Jews, and Hindus who are sufficiently similar to these imaginary ones in the relevant respects. Obviously, there are quite a few actual Christian Plantingan philosophers. While not all of them think of themselves as such, it's not overly controversial to think that there are (presently or at times past) actual Jewish, Muslim, and Hindu Plantingans, too. (Perhaps, someday, recognizing that this is so will be about as obvious and unexciting as the claim that there are or have been Islamic Aristotelians (al-Kindi and al-Farabi), Jewish Platonists (Isaac Israeli, Solomon Ibn Gabriol, and Maimonides) and Hindu Rationalists (including Gotama, founder of the *Nyaya* School of Philosophy.)

Third, I suppose that Plantinga and his Comrades have had relevantly similar religious experiences but nothing particularly exciting, remarkable or earthshaking. For example, whether a Plantingan hikes along a wilderness trail in Michigan, discovers an oasis after a long desert sojourn, strolls along a path lined with ripe fig trees, or sits in quiet meditation on the bank of the Ganges River, at some point he finds himself looking into the midnight sky and immediately and non-inferentially forming the belief that "God created all of this." Additionally, none of them think that any of the arguments for Theistic Belief are rationally compelling and none of them believes the target propositions of their respective models on the basis of evidence or argument.

Fourth, each acknowledges that the cognitive environment in which he grew up contributed significantly to the formation of his religious beliefs and commitments. Each believes that God has providentially seen to it that their cognitive environment is conducive to the formation of true beliefs about God, that their scriptures are divinely inspired and have been revealed by genuine prophets, that scriptural revelation has been accurately handed down, and the like; and each maintains that at least one or more of these things is not so for the others.

Fifth, I assume that each accepts the Standard model and some unique extension of it. Naturally, each thinks that the extension he affirms is correct and so thinks that the others accept incorrect extensions. That is, all of them accept the following disjunction: "Either the Jewish, Christian, Islamic, or Hindu extension of the Standard model is correct."

Sixth, none of these Plantingans, like the actual Plantinga, think that there are any successful arguments for the existence of God. That is, all think that a philosophical

argument for the existence of God is successful only if it can "convert an ideal audience of agnostics from unbelief to belief" and none of them think that any of the arguments for the existence of God are able to do this.[105] All agree that attempts to provide empirical and historical evidences in support of the truth of the Standard model or any of its extensions will fail to convince an audience of ideal agonistic, too. Accordingly, none of them appeal to evidence and arguments in favor of their creedal-specific beliefs about God or otherwise engage in natural theology and/or apologetic projects aimed at convincing others of the truth of these things by means of argument. Moreover, none of them thinks that using these methods can show that any one of them is being more reasonable than the others, holds his beliefs more reasonably than any of the others, or anything like that. Lastly, given their shared commitments to Proper Functionalism and the main tenants of Plantinga's religious epistemology, each is perfectly willing to suppose that the others reasonably (but not necessarily rationally) believe what they do about God.

Assumptions in place, I reply to a few initial objections and make a few observations and general points.

Note that Jews, Christians, Muslims, and Hindus do not first accept the Standard model and then decide which of these four extensions is true. They already find themselves being Jews, Christians, Muslims, and Hindus. But it may very well be that

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[105] See Plantinga, "Two Dozen (or so) Theistic Arguments," in *Alvin Plantinga*, edited by Deane-Peter Baker, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 203-227. See also Peter van Inwagen, *The Problem of Evil*, chapter three, "Philosophical Failure," (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006): 37-55.

some people who reasonably accept the Standard model reasonably reject Jewish, Christian, Islamic, and Hindu extensions of it. Such people think that the Standard model (or something like it) is true, grant that at most one extension of it could be true, but deny or doubt that any of these extensions is true. Such people affirm Generic Theism; they accept that God exists but do not accept any form of special revelation.[106]

In contrast to Generic Theists, Plantingans think that God has purposes and plans for humans and that God reveals things to humans that go beyond the content of Theistic Belief. They think that if the Standard model is true then humans have the cognitive faculties they do because God created them in accord with a specific design plan that is fitting and appropriate given His particular purposes and plans. The (sufficiently) complete (but not necessarily exhaustive) story is captured by the correct extension of the Standard model. In contrast, Generic Theist does not fill in these details and does not accept any extension of the Standard model.

The following analogy illustrates the Plantingans' thinking here. Suppose that autoworkers in Detroit design and build a car. They do so in accordance with very specific constraints the details of which are supplied by the car's design plan. According to the design plan, the car has an engine that satisfies the specifications of its design plan, and so on for the rest of the car's component parts. Similarly, Plantingans think that God creates humans in accord with a very specific and detailed design plan that is not specified by the Standard model. Extensions of the Standard model provide important

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[106] The definition of Generic Theism comes from Paul Draper. See, for instance, his "The Problem of Evil," *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology*, edited Tom Flint and Michael Rea, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009): 347.

details and the correct extension gets these details right. The proliferation of incorrect models can be explained in various ways. Perhaps some people have misunderstood, mistranslated, or otherwise mistakenly passed on genuine revelation, added to it in erroneous ways, or made stuff up and called it divine revelation.

The Generic Theist does not accept any extension of the Standard model but maintains that it would be more reasonable for Jews, Christians, Muslims, and Hindus to reject their extensions of the model and affirm Generic Theism instead. Of course, Plantingans don't think they would be more reasonable if they gave up those beliefs. The Generic Theist and this diverse group of Plantingans, then, disagree about whether it is more reasonable to reject all extensions of the Standard model. It is important to say something in response to the Generic Theist's challenge and about how Jews, Christians, Muslims, and Hindus might reasonably go beyond Generic Theism.

First, let us consider how it could be that a person could go beyond Generic Theism and in so doing move towards reasonably accepting an extension of the Standard model. Putting to one side just which extension is true, one may reasonably accept that there is a correct extension of the Standard model, that God has particular purposes and plans for us, and that we are created in accord with a specific design plan, and the like, but not believe anything more than that. The belief that there is a correct extension of the Standard model is consistent with the belief that we are ignorant about which of its extension is correct and is consistent with the view that none of the target propositions of that extension (or not enough of them) have been fully revealed or adequately understood as of yet. Thus, even if we aren't yet in a good epistemic position to know (or even have an adequate cognitive grasp of) the correct extension or its target propositions, it may

nevertheless be reasonable to think that there is a correct extension of the Standard model. (This view is not something that the Generic Theist must necessarily be unhappy with.) In similar fashion, perhaps it would be reasonable for one to incrementally accept additional details about what the correct extension of the Standard model might be like. For instance, it seems possible for one to reasonably approximate towards affirming additional details about what our design plan might be like, and so come to accept certain statements about God (perhaps ones that resemble or adumbrate certain views that Jews, Muslims, Christians, and Hindus accept) without relying on special revelation.

Another related problem is that there are other forms of theism, and hence additional extensions of the Standard model, that we have not yet considered. Why not consider these alternative extensions at this time? Why focus only on Jewish, Christian, Islamic, and Hindu extensions? There are several reasons. I don't have space to adequately consider any additional models at this time. Moreover, doing so wouldn't add that much, as Plantingans could readily concede that many other faith traditions affirm something like the Standard model.[107] According to them, the fact that there are many more models wouldn't give Plantingans any reason to think the target propositions of their extension are false, that those who affirm the correct extension of the model have internally and externally irrational and unwarranted beliefs about God, or anything of the sort. Plantingans may concede that it would be more challenging for their beliefs to be internally rational if there are very many extensions, but they won't think that it is difficult for those beliefs to be internally rational. Note that all of this assumes that the Plantingan solution to the general problem of religious diversity is successful, which is

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[107] See Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, p. 350.

controversial. Let us bracket this question for now, as I discuss the problem of religious diversity in more detail in the next section.

In sum, in The Case of Plantinga and his Comrades, each Plantingan affirms that if his respective model is true (and his cognitive faculties are functioning properly, etc.) then his beliefs about God are internally and externally rational and warranted. (Not all of them will actually have beliefs that are externally rational and warranted, of course.) And each believes that the creedal-specific religious beliefs held by the others (the target propositions of rival extensions) are *not* externally rational and so lack warrant, and each has an explanation of how it is that the others are thus mistaken, an error theory that accounts for how it is that the others have gotten things wrong. Lastly, all agree that the features of their case do not give any of them a good reason to think that the models that they accept are false or probably false, none of them believes that they acquire any defeater for the target propositions of their respective models, and all concede that all of them reasonably hold their respective beliefs. I consider the plausibility of this "no-defeater" response in the next section.

3.3   The "No-Defeater" Response to The Case of Plantinga and his Comrades

Plantinga and his Comrades think that the facts of religious diversity do not epistemically defeat their creedal-specific beliefs about God. All have read and endorse *Warranted Christian Belief* Chapter 13, Part II, *Pluralism*; all think that the facts of religious diversity do not give them any sort of defeater for their beliefs about God. Whether they are correct to think this is controversial.

Plantinga contends that merely being aware of the facts of religious diversity doesn't give one a reason to give up one's religious beliefs and that the fact that those beliefs are improbable doesn't give one a defeater for one's beliefs either.[108] As such, he maintains that it is not arbitrary, immoral, inappropriate, or ethically sub-par for Christians to accept uniquely Christian exclusivist beliefs.[109] He is willing to grant that non-Christian beliefs about God are on epistemic par with his in that members of "different religious tradition[s] have the same sort of internally available markers – evidence, phenomenology, and the like – for their beliefs as the Christian has for [theirs]."[110] But he maintains that Christian Belief is not ultimately on par with non-Christian belief. He writes: "If something like the extended Aquinas/Calvin (A/C) model … is in fact correct, then there is a significant difference between the epistemic situation of those who accept Christian belief and those who do not."[111] Specifically, if the Christian extension of the Standard model is true, then the uniquely Islamic, Jewish, and Hindu beliefs about God that Ibn Plantinga, Al ben Plantinga, and Al Plantingachandra hold may be internally rational but they will not be externally rational and warranted. (Of course, if the Islamic extension of the Standard model is true, then the other Plantingans' uniquely Christian, Jewish, or Hindu beliefs about God are not externally rational and warranted. Similar conclusions hold, *mutatis mutandis*, if the Jewish or Hindu extension of the Standard model is correct.) In short, the facts of religious diversity, the Plantingan

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[108] Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, pp. 441-442.

[109] Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, pp. 442-452.

[110] Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, p. 452.

[111] Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, p. 453.

claims, do not provide any reason to think that their beliefs about God are not internally and externally rational and warranted in a basic way in accord with the Standard and Extended models.

Underlying his view that his beliefs about God are undefeated by the facts of religious diversity is Plantinga's view about how to formulate criteria for the proper basicality of belief. Plantinga accepts a broadly inductive method of determining which of our beliefs are properly basic: we start with beliefs that are (so one thinks) obviously properly basic and then, "frame hypotheses as to the necessary and sufficient conditions of proper basicality and test these hypotheses by reference to those examples."[112] (While this view is expressed early on in Plantinga's career, his more recent work is in keeping with this more fundamental point.) But the problem of religious diversity seems amplified when people from many different faiths make use of this method. For instance, Philip Quinn objects that the use of this method has the unhappy consequence that Muslims, Buddhists, and the followers of the Reverend Moon can all think that their religious beliefs are properly basic.[113] Plantinga writes that Quinn's objection seems to be as follows:

> If this inductive procedure were correct, then different philosophers (and others) could quite properly employ it to arrived at different (and conflicting) criteria; for there is no reason in advance to assume that

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[112] Alvin Plantinga, "Reason and Belief in God," in *Faith and Rationality*, edited by Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff, (South Bend: The University of Notre Dame Press, 1983): 76.

[113] Philip Quinn, "On Finding the Foundations of Theism," *Faith and Philosophy*, 2 (1985): 473.

everyone who employs the method will agree on the initial sets of positive and negative examples. But then a criterion arrived at in this way cannot be used to settle the issue between, say, a Calvinist and a Great Pumpkinite.[114]

In response to Quinn's objection, Plantinga writes:

Different philosophers employing this method may arrive at different conclusions: true enough, but do we know of some reasonably viable philosophical methods (for reaching epistemic criteria) of which this is not true? That's just life in philosophy.[115]

I think Plantinga's response to Quinn has force. But I also think there is something right about Quinn's objection. I think that reflection on The Case of Plantinga and his Comrades generates a special problem of religious diversity that helps bring into focus and sharpen that which I think is right about Quinn's objection. Before continuing, however, I want to emphasize that the objection I shall offer is not a variation of The Great Pumpkin or Son of Great Pumpkin objections.[116]

Briefly, the main premise of The Great Pumpkin objection is that, "if belief in God can be properly basic, then so can any other belief, no matter how bizarre."[117] And

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[114] Alvin Plantinga, "The Foundations of Theism: A Reply," *Faith and Philosophy* 3, 3 (1986): 302.

[115] Plantinga, "The Foundations of Theism: A Reply," p. 303.

[116] As we've seen, Plantinga himself brings up The Great Pumpkin Objection in "Reason and Belief in God" p. 76. Michael Martin offers what Plantinga calls The Son of Great Pumpkin in his *Atheism: A Philosophical Justification,* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press): 272.

[117] Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief,* p. 344.

the main premise of The Son of Great Pumpkin objection is that if Reformed epistemologists can legitimately accept that belief in God is properly basic then for any belief that is accepted in some community, no matter how bizarre, the epistemologists of that community could legitimately claim that bizarre beliefs are properly basic.[118] Both arguments proceed to deny that the consequents of these conditionals are true and conclude that belief in God is not (or cannot be) properly basic. But the main premise of The Great Pumpkin objection is false. Plantinga writes,

> To recognize that *some* kinds of belief are properly basic with respect to warrant doesn't for a moment commit one to thinking that all *other* kinds are; even if the extended A/C model is correct, it doesn't follow that these other beliefs are properly basic with respect to warrant. Descartes and Locke thought that *some* beliefs were properly basic with respect to warrant; should we object that they were committed to thinking that *any* belief is properly basic?[119]

The main premise of The Son of Great Pumpkin is also false. Plantinga contends that if the Standard and Extended models are correct, then Christian Belief is "subject to no *de jure* objections that are independent of *de facto* objections" – but this just doesn't hold for just any beliefs: for example, it doesn't hold for voodooism, the belief that the earth is flat, or Humean skepticism.[120]

Plantinga grants that, perhaps, "Judaism, Islam, some forms of Buddhism and some forms of Hinduism are like Christianity in that they are subject to no *de jure*

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[118] Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, p. 345.

[119] Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, p. 344.

[120] Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, p. 350.

objections that are not independent of *de facto* objections."[121] I think that Plantinga has given us a convincing argument for that conclusion. But (so far as I can tell) I don't think that what he has to say (in *Warranted Christian Belief* or elsewhere) adequately addresses the problems generated by the features of The Case of Plantinga and his Comrades: that a diverse group of apparently reasonable Plantingans disagree about which of its extensions is correct and which of their beliefs about God are internally and externally rational and warranted. I think that this particular combination of epistemic similarity and religious diversity provides the makings for a more forceful objection to Plantingan epistemology. Note that I do not argue that belief in God cannot be properly basic and I do not take issue with Proper Functionalism or the Standard model.

Apparently, in The Case of Plantinga and his Comrades each member of a diverse group of Plantingans reasonably claims to have internally and externally rational and warranted beliefs about God despite disagreement about which extension of the Standard model is true. Obviously, not all of their beliefs about God are internally and externally rational and warranted. All of these Plantingans know that only one extension can be correct and all know that most of them accept an incorrect extension. That there are multiple mutually exclusive extensions of the Standard model affirmed by apparently reasonable people gives these Plantingans (and by extension other Plantingans) cause to be concerned about whether they reasonably affirm the correct extension of the model after all. I think that it would be unreasonable for Plantingans in this situation to be unconcerned about whether their own extension of the Standard model is correct. Rather, as reasonable people, they ought to reasonably deal with this potential defeater in some

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[121] Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, p. 350.

way. If they are unable to deal with this it adequately, then their beliefs about God are unreasonable. Apparently, then, each Plantingan is in danger of acquiring an undercutting internal rationality defeater for the belief that his extension is the correct one.

Plantingans are likely to respond that this special problem of religious diversity – that there are diverse extensions of the Standard model and that apparently reasonable people can disagree about which extension of the Standard model is true – is not relevantly different than other instances of disagreement that occur against a background of significant agreement. They will grant that equally reasonable philosophers may extend the Standard model to cover different, mutually exclusive creedal-specific beliefs about God. They will contend that it is unproblematic for Plantingans of different theistic faiths to reasonably disagree about which extension of the Standard model is true. They think that none of the Plantingans are in danger of acquiring any sort of defeater for the belief that his extension is correct after all. Call this the "no-defeater" response.

Is the no-defeater response correct? Does it show that Plantinga and his Comrades could engage in fully informed, reasonable disagreement about which extension of the Standard model is true? And is it plausible to think that (1)-(3) hold for this diverse group of Plantingans? Recall (1)-(3):

(1)   Regarding their respective inquires into p and q, A and B assess the evidential value of the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and experiences.

(2)   A believes that p is true and q false, B believes that q is true and p false, and both A and B correctly believe that p and q are inconsistent.

(3)   A and B's beliefs about the truth-values of *p* and *q* are equally

reasonable.

(To be precise, since our case has four disagreeing parties we need to revise (1)-(3) to add

that C believes *r* and D believes *s*, that A, B, C and D correctly believe that *q*, *p*, *r* and *s*

are inconsistent, and that A, B, C and D are equally reasonable. We end up with the

following:

(1)*   In their respective inquires regarding *p*, *q*, *r* and *s*, A, B, C and D

evaluate the evidential value of the same (or sufficiently similar) facts

and experiences.

(2)*   A believes that *p* • (~*q* •~*r* •~*s*) is true, B believes *q* • (~*p* •~*r* •~*s*) is

true, C believes that *r* • (~*p* •~*q* •~ *s*) is true, and D believes that *s* •

(~*p* •~*q* •~*r*) is true, and A, B, C and D correctly believe that these

beliefs are inconsistent.

(3)*   A, B, C, and D's beliefs about the truth-values of *p*, *q*, *r* and *s* are

equally reasonable.

Since we can get by without the added precision, I'll continue to speak of (1)-(3) as they

are easier to work with.)

That (2) holds isn't at all problematic. It is problematic, however, to think that (1)

and (3) hold. Let us consider each in turn.

One reason one may object that it is implausible to think that (1) holds is that

Plantinga and his Comrades come to hold different, mutually exclusive beliefs about God

upon having had different person-specific and incommunicable religious experiences. Ibn

Plantinga has his own experiences of God, Al Plantingachandra has his, and so on. Only Alvin Plantinga's experiences of reading The Christian Bible (specifically, *Second Corinthians* 5:19) provides him with basic grounds for the belief that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself."[122] The others don't form that belief when they read the text. And only Ibn Plantinga takes his reading the opening chapter of The Qur'an, "Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the world: Most Gracious, Most Merciful; Master of the Day of Judgment" (*Al-Fathiha*, 1: 2-4) to provide him with basic grounds for believing its propositional content (namely, that Allah is the Cherisher and Sustainer of the world: Most Gracious, Most Merciful; Master of the Day of Judgment). Similar points hold for Al ben Plantinga and Al Plantingachandra. (Perhaps Al ben Plantinga comes to form some relevant belief about God in keeping with both Theistic Belief and Jewish belief if he visits a Christian Church but he would not accept uniquely Christian beliefs about God in such contexts. While Al Plantingachandra would not find himself accepting Islamic Belief when he visits Ibn Plantinga's Mosque, he might come to hold some Theistic belief that is common with both Hinduism and Islam.)

Presumably, without their having had the same (or sufficiently similar) experiences themselves it'd be a best *very* difficult for this diverse group of Plantingans to fully share or disclose the phenomenological character of their experiences with one another. Moreover, one might object that since these Plantingans don't have the same epistemic seemings, they don't have the same (or sufficiently similar) experiences and thus they are not aware of the relevant evidential considerations and do not share the same evidence. (More on this objection shortly.) This gives us good reasons for thinking

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[122] Unless otherwise noted, all Bible quotations are from *The King James* version.

that (1) doesn't hold in their case. It would seem, then, that fully informed reasonable

disagreement among this diverse group of Plantingans about which extension of the

Standard model is true doesn't occur because their disagreement is not fully informed.

The conclusion that fully informed reasonable disagreement about which

extension of the Standard model is true doesn't occur may seem unavoidable. I argue that

is possible to show that (1)-(3) are consistent in Section 3.4. But first, let us consider

whether it is plausible to think that (3) holds in the current case on Plantingan

assumptions.

For sake of argument, assume that the Islamic extension of the model is true.

Alvin Plantinga, Al Plantingachandra, Al ben Plantinga and Ibn Plantinga agree that the

externalist conditions on external rationality and warrant (whatever they are) hold for one

and only one of them. Accordingly, something has gone wrong when Alvin Plantinga, Al

Plantingachandra and Al ben Plantinga fail to form uniquely Islamic beliefs when they

visit Ibn Plantinga's Mosque – either their cognitive faculties or belief forming processes

aren't functioning properly or something is obstructing or getting in the way or their

proper function (or all of the above and maybe more). But so long as their beliefs are

internally rational, it would not be unreasonable for them to think that their creedal-

specific beliefs about God are true – or so the Plantingan may claim. But the claim that (3)

holds in The Case of Plantinga and his Comrades is plausible *only if* we suppose that

being internally rational is sufficient for manifesting the meta-cognitive virtue of

reasonableness. However, because the requirements on reasonability are stricter than

those on internal rationality it does not follow that someone manifests the meta-cognitive

virtue of reasonableness just in case he or she is internally rational. Therefore, if

Plantinga and his Comrades reasonably hold their creedal specific beliefs about God, something more is required. Without supplementing Plantinga's religious epistemology and/or his Standard and Extended models in some way to provide or accommodate for this needed thing, it will not be possible to show that the disagreement between Plantinga and his Comrades is reasonable (at least not on Plantingan assumptions). Now, I realize that Plantinga would not argue that external rationality or reasonableness (in my sense) holds with respect to disagreeing Plantingans and would merely allow (but would not defend) that internal rationality holds for them; I do not offer an internal objection to Plantinga.[123] But I think that Plantingans ought to be concerned about being reasonable (in my sense) and that they should be concerned about cases of epistemic disagreement in which (3) holds. Therefore, I am offering an external objection to Plantinga's views.

The above argument shows that we don't yet have a good account of what makes Plantinga and his Comrades reasonable, if indeed they are. Note also that the Plantingans in the case may suppose or think that they are not being unreasonable but be wrong about that. This is because there is a distinction between one's being unreasonable and one's being aware of one's unreasonableness – it can be unreasonable for S to believe that *p* even if S fails to see that it is unreasonable for S to believe that *p*. *Perhaps* the thing to say here is that it can be internally rational for one to think that one reasonably holds that *p* when one does not actually reasonably or even unreasonably hold that *p*. (This assumes that Plantingans accept that external rationality is not necessary for reasonability.) In such cases, perhaps on account of insufficient reflection or conscientiousness or some other similar failing, one overlooks the fact that one fails to reasonably hold one's creedal-

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[123] I thank Michael Bergmann for bringing this to my attention.

specific beliefs about God. But if this diverse group of Plantingans hold their beliefs unreasonably, and if they are made aware of that fact (or otherwise come to believe that they hold their beliefs unreasonably), then each acquires a defeater for their creedal-specific beliefs about God. And since defeated beliefs are not internally rational, it follows that their beliefs about God would not be internally rational. Consequently, because beliefs are warranted if and only if they are internally and externally rational, their creedal specific beliefs about God would lack warrant, too. This argument rests on the following plausible epistemic principle:

> (P1) If it is unreasonable for S to believe that *p*, and if S comes to realize that S unreasonably believes that *p*, then it is not internally rational for S to continue to believe that *p* and S acquires an (undercutting) internal rationality defeater for the belief that *p*.

Briefly, P1 asserts that S's coming to see that it is unreasonable for S to believe that *p* gives S an (undercutting) internal rationality defeater for *p*. There is much more to say about P1. I will say only a few things, some of which is in keeping with Plantinga's epistemology and some of which is meant to supplement (or correct) it.

P1 does not entail that beliefs are internally rational only if they are reasonable and is consistent with the claim that not all beliefs need to be reasonably held in order to be internally rational. Many internally rational beliefs are quite transitory; it seems that it can be internally rational to believe at one moment "I need to turn left here to get to the store" and give that belief up the next without ever having reasonably held that belief. If so, one may form certain kinds of internally rational beliefs that are not reasonably held without thereby acquiring an internal rationality defeater for *p*. But we should not say that

such beliefs are *un*reasonable. Perhaps we should say that one's failing to manifest a certain intellectual (or moral) virtue on some occasion doesn't necessarily entail that one has the corresponding intellectual (or moral) vice. For instance, one who sometimes fails to tell the truth when appropriate would lack the virtue of truthfulness to some degree but such a person needn't be untruthful; such a person isn't thereby a vicious gossip, backbiter or slanderer. There are degrees of virtue and vice at play here, which suggests a grey area between the virtue of reasonableness and the vice of unreasonableness. As such, perhaps we should recognize that some beliefs are clearly reasonable, some are clearly unreasonable and that, apparently, still others are neither clearly reasonable nor clearly unreasonable. It is natural to think that beliefs that are neither clearly reasonable nor clearly unreasonable can nevertheless be internally rational. Since beliefs within this penumbra are neither (clearly) reasonably nor (clearly) unreasonably held, one need not give them up in order to be reasonable. (Note that if one is unhappy with predicate-vagueness, construed either epistemologically ("We just don't know just what to say in borderline cases") or metaphysically ("There really are vague predicates and properties"), we could take a semantic/pragmatic route and say that all beliefs are either reasonably or unreasonably held and that not all reasonably held beliefs are sufficiently reasonable to count as being held in accord with Condition N.[124])

Recall that when I introduced Condition N, I said that the manifestation of the meta-cognitive virtue of reasonableness comes in degrees. As such, to the degree that one

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[124] For more on vagueness and theories about how to deal with it, see R. M. Sainsbury (1995), *Paradoxes*, second edition, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995): 30-49.

fails to manifest the conditions listed in Condition N, one fails to fully manifest reasonableness. As explained above, failing to be fully reasonable isn't the same thing as not being reasonable, and not being reasonable isn't the same thing as being unreasonable. That this is so seems to raise problems for (P1). Suppose that S lacks one of more of the following intellectual virtues: love of knowledge, firmness, courage and caution, humility, autonomy, generosity, and practical wisdom. Or suppose that S is subject to serious affective disorders (e.g., extreme apathy or severe clinical depression) or is not appropriately concerned about her own well-being. Apparently, S can agree that one or more of these things is the case and yet not thereby acquire an internal rationality defeater for certain beliefs, including, for example, the belief that S has hands or that there are other people in the room. How bad must things get for S's beliefs to be unreasonable? And under what conditions would it be unreasonable for S to hold some belief or other and so acquire an internal rationality defeater for that belief?[125]

In response to these worries, I concede that it'd be nice to have supply more specific conditions under which S's belief is reasonable, not reasonable, or unreasonable. The only way to provide them, I think, is to carefully reflect on many and varied concrete cases and attempt to come up with some general principles. It is valuable to consider a few cases in order to see how it is possible to make progress here.

In some cases, the fact that S is extremely apathetic or suffers from severe clinical depression won't give S an internal rationality defeater for the belief that *p*. And perhaps only certain beliefs are in danger of being thusly defeated in the first place. For instance, it is hard to see how S's belief that she has hands or that there are other people in the

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[125] I thank Michael Bergmann for bringing these problems to my attention.

room could be defeated merely because S is clinically depressed. On the other hand, perhaps S can be so severely depressed that S no longer is appropriately responsive to reasons and so fails to be appropriately conscientious and reflective when certain of his beliefs are challenged. For instance, suppose that S is given what he recognizes to be good reasons to reject some political or religious belief that p but doesn't do anything about it because he is too depressed and unmotivated to care about it. In some such cases, that S recognizes that he unreasonably holds that p may give him an undercutting internal rationality defeater for the belief that p. Similarly, if one is completely apathetic about one's own well-being, then one doesn't care whether one eats food and thus lacks certain (internal motivating) reasons to act on certain beliefs. Perhaps, for such people, being hungry doesn't provide them with (internal motivating) reasons to believe that they should eat breakfast. Perhaps such people are aware that they are hungry but just don't form any beliefs about that, or perhaps whatever force such beliefs might have is ignored, drowned out, or otherwise negated. (Such people still might have *external* reasons to eat breakfast. But it is even easier for completely apathetic people not to care about whether they have external reasons to eat breakfast!) Lastly, as I understand it, being unreasonable involves not just the lack of virtue but also the presence of intellectual vice. For example, someone who is epistemically cowardly is much too hesitant to subject one's beliefs to the criticism and so will tend to insulate oneself from criticism and hide or run away from conflict. An epistemically cowardly person's beliefs are soft and frail, easily torn down and defeated; he or she is not appropriately responsive to reasons, is not appropriately self-critical, etc. Accordingly, beliefs held by epistemically cowardly people are subject in danger of epistemic defeat.

In other cases, that S fails to hold the belief that *p* in a way that accords with Condition N does not imply that S's belief is unreasonable. In such cases, S does not manifest the meta-cognitive virtue of reasonableness with respect to the belief that *p* but it does not follow that S is thereby being unreasonable and it follows that S does not acquire an internal rationality defeater for *p*. For example, recall the student who forms the belief that *p* having casually read an article about Descartes on *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Suppose that *p* is not all that important to the student's present concerns; perhaps the student is just browsing, is merely in data-collecting mode, or is just killing time. Such a student can come to believe that *p* in accord with the standards of internal rationality yet fail to reasonably believe that *p* in accord with Condition N. And doing so may be entirely appropriate. This suggests that part of what it is to be a reasonable person is having the ability to discern which of one's beliefs ought to be reasonably held in accord with Condition N if at all from those which need not be. It seems that exercising discernment with respect to the governance of one's beliefs is correlative to one's overall goals and purposes, the importance and centrality of the subject matter about which one forms the beliefs in question, and the extent to which it matters to one whether those beliefs are true or false, among other factors. Plausibly, the student's belief, say, that Descartes died in Sweden, need not be reasonably held in accord with Condition N so long as it doesn't matter much to his concerns and has no special reason why he should know or reasonably believe or even care about that fact. But the same sorts of things cannot be said of the target propositions of the various extensions of the Standard model that Plantinga and his comrades believe to be true in their case.

The Plantingans in our case think that they reasonably believe the target propositions of their respective extensions of the Standard model. All say that they have done all they are able to do and all that can be reasonably expected of them to do. All remind us that philosophy cannot help us to determine which extension of the Standard model is true. ("After all," they may respond, "we can't be faulted for failing to make philosophy do something that can't be done any more than you can fault us for failing to make a robot out of chewing gum, a few paper clips, and a bag of sunflower seeds.") Plantinga, speaking of the truth of the Christian Belief, writes:

> But is it true? This is the really important question. And here we pass beyond the competence of philosophy, whose main competence is to clear away certain objections, impedances, and obstacles to Christian Belief. Speaking for myself and of course not in the name of philosophy, I can only say that it does, indeed, seem to me to be true, and to be the maximally important truth.[126]

Naturally, Al ben Plantinga, Ibn Plantinga, and Al Plantingachandra make similar claims regarding their uniquely Jewish, Islamic, or Hindu creedal-specific beliefs about God, not Christian Belief. Each will, perhaps, lament that nothing more can be done yet all will insist that they are being reasonable, that none of them is any less reasonable than the others, and that their beliefs are reasonably held. But are these claims true? How might one argue that these claims are true?

One might point out that on reflection it seems to each Plantingan that he is being reasonable and that that is enough for them to not unreasonably suppose that they are

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[126] Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, p. 499.

being reasonable. This reply apparently assumes something like Phenomenal Conservatism (PC):

> (PC) If it seems to you that *p*, then, in the absence of defeaters, you thereby have at least some degree of prima facie justification for believing *p*.[127]

Given PC, one might argue that if S has no defeaters and S's creedal specific beliefs about God seem true to S, then S's seemings are reasonable, or at least not unreasonable. But making this move in The Case of Plantinga and his Comrades is deeply unsatisfying. Appealing to PC here doesn't help because reiterating *prima facie*, object-level epistemic seemings doesn't have any obvious bearing on whether such seemings are reasonable (or whether beliefs held on the basis of such seemings are reasonably held). All sorts of things can seem true to S in accord with PC without S's manifesting the meta-cognitive virtue of reasonability in accord with Condition N. Moreover, because the Plantingans in our case have reasons to think that their respective epistemic seemings are misleading and erroneous, there *are* (at least potential) defeaters in play. Each affirms a different extension of the Standard model and each has an epistemic seeming that the model he accepts is true. But all *know* that at most one extension is true so all *know* that most of their epistemic seemings are false and misleading. Each of them is fully aware of all of these facts. In light of these facts, the account of reasonability offered in Chapter One suggests that it is unreasonable for them to appeal to their object-level seemings in the way that the PC defender would have them

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[127] See Michael Huemer, "Compassionate Phenomenological Conservatism," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, LXXIV (1), (2007): 1.

to do. This in turn suggests that if they are sufficiently reasonable and reflective each of them will eventually come to see that relying so heavily on these object-level epistemic seemings is unreasonable.

Some Plantingans may object that the fact that these Plantingan comrades have different epistemic seemings about the same (types) of evidential considerations (e.g., it seems to each of them that their own beliefs about God are true, it seems to each of them that the religious experience of the other Plantingans is misleading, and the like) and insist that such evidential considerations provide them with (strong) evidence for their respective beliefs about God (evidence that is not shared between them).[128] I think that whatever evidence such epistemic seemings may provide is not sufficiently strong or significant and hence that putting so much weight on these sorts of epistemic seemings is unreasonable. (Of course, not all Plantingans will think that being reasonable in my sense is desirable or possible. Naturally, I think otherwise.)

Alternatively, perhaps a Plantingan (one who accepts my account of reasonableness and its ramifications, of course) could somehow get others to notice that the meta-cognitive virtue of reasonableness is manifested in his intellectual life generally (i.e., that he is diachronically globally reasonable) and that as such the target propositions of the model that he accepts are reasonably held (i.e., that his beliefs about God are locally reasonable). This "look and see" test might work in some cases, but in all likelihood it won't convince people who weren't already inclined to accept that the Plantingans are reasonable, and it won't do anything for those who think that they are being unreasonable. Perhaps a Plantingan could undermine the reasons that others have

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[128] I thank Michael Bergmann for pressing this objection.

for thinking that he fails to reasonably hold his beliefs. Implementing this strategy would take quite a bit of work. But even if one does the hard work that would not necessarily show that a Plantingan is reasonable: to rebut or undermine objections to the truth of *p* does not thereby show that *p* is true. What is needed is some *positive* reason for thinking that the Plantingans in the case reasonably believe what they do. It's not clear to me that we can provide such reasons in a way that is both promising and consistent with only the assumptions of Plantingan religious epistemology.

Apparently, the Plantingan cannot plausibly show or contend – not on the basis of Plantingan resources alone at any rate – that the disagreement in The Case of Plantinga and his Comrades is reasonable. Is there a way to for (1)-(3) to hold in a suitably modified version of The Case of Plantinga and his Comrades? I think so, and give an argument for that conclusion in the next section.

3.4   How (1)-(3) Might Hold in The Case of Plantinga and his Comrades

In this section, I argue that if (1) and (2) hold for the Plantingans, and if Condition N also holds, then we have good reason to think that (3) holds.

In Chapter One I argued that the manifestation of the meta-cognitive virtue of reasonableness involves having and exercising various intellectual virtues, including the love of knowledge, firmness, courage and caution, humility, autonomy, generosity, and practical wisdom. Recall Condition N, which further spells out what it is to manifest reasonableness:

Condition N: Approximately, S (fully) manifests the meta-cognitive virtue
of reasonability if:

i) S, *qua* epistemic agent, is functioning well epistemically by having
and exercising the epistemic virtues that underlie the manifestation of
reasonability, including the intellectual virtues of the love of
knowledge, firmness, courage and caution, humility, autonomy,
generosity, and practical wisdom;

ii) S is responsive to reasons; e.g., S is willing to correct his/her views in
light of criticism, willing to provide others with reasons, has a measure
of good judgment that is incompatible with perversely bad judgment,
and is to some degree self-critical, at least in the sense of being
disposed to think about and correct tendencies that have gotten them
into trouble;

iii) S is minimally rational with respect to his/her desires and is not subject
to serious affective disorders (e.g., extreme apathy or severe clinical
depression) and is appropriately concerned about his/her own well-
being; and

iv) S is appropriately conscientious and reflective regarding the truth of
his/her beliefs, especially when those beliefs are challenged.

And recall that two people are equally (locally) reasonable if they (synchronically)
manifest the cognitive virtue of reasonableness with respect to the holding of a relevant
subset of their beliefs. In order for Condition N to hold for them, both need to be equally
locally reasonable with respect to the holding of their beliefs. If we accept that the
Plantingans are roughly equally globally reasonable and have no good reason for thinking
that any of them is any less locally reasonable than the others, then we ought also to grant
that Condition N holds for them. That is, generally, if we have a reason to think that two
people are roughly equally globally reasonable (diachronically), we ought to suppose that
they are (at least roughly) equally locally reasonable (synchronically), too, unless we

have sufficient reason to think otherwise. Because this line of reasoning may be controversial or less than fully clear, in the next paragraph I unpack in more detail the reasoning behind it.

Suppose that each Plantingan is roughly equally globally reasonable (in general and with respect to their beliefs about God in particular) and that each has been for a long stretch of time. As such, each has manifested the meta-cognitive virtue of reasonability about as well as the others for some time. Now, from the fact that each of them has been roughly equally globally reasonable for some length of time it does not *follow* that each of them is equally locally reasonable presently, but the likelihood that each of them presently manifests the meta-cognitive virtue of reasonability (with respect to their beliefs about God) about as well as the others is quite high. The situation is analogous to a case in which we have observed that two equally competent archers or sharpshooters have performed roughly equally well for months on end. When we watch them perform yet again, we would not expect any one of them to vastly outperform the others on the next shot but rather that each of them would once again perform about as well as the others. Similarly, supposing that all of the Plantingans in our case have been roughly equally globally reasonable for some time, if we lack sufficient reasons for thinking that any of them is presently any less locally reasonable than the others, then we ought to think that they are currently equally locally reasonable (at least approximately so) in the course of their current disagreement, too. This argument supports the conclusion that if we accept that each of them is equally locally reasonable, we ought to accept that Condition N holds for them, which provides us with a reason for thinking that (3) holds in their case.

But might a Plantingan happily agree and claim that Condition N fits nicely within Proper Functionalism? Perhaps, but this won't work: Condition N *adds* something to Proper Functionalism that wasn't there before. Might one claim that in virtue of being internally rational one implicitly has the requisite intellectual virtues spelt out in Condition N? Perhaps, but that claim is just false. Arguably, if one is internally rational, then (ii) and (iii) of Condition N hold. The constraints on reasonableness, however, are more demanding than are the constraints on internal rationality. As such, S can be internally rational even if (iv) fails to hold; e.g., it may be internally rational for S to believe *p* even though S fails to be appropriately conscientious and reflective regarding *p*, in which case S fails to reasonably believe that *p*. (Recall that S needn't be *aware* of being unreasonable in order for S to *be* unreasonable.) Finally, (i) doesn't hold just in case S's cognitive faculties are functioning properly. For (i) to hold, epistemic agents *qua* agents must have and exercise certain epistemic virtues and that doesn't occur just in case one is internally rational. Roberts and Woods express this point well when they write:

> Someone who takes this approach [the approach of the virtue epistemologist] has given up the spirit of a faculty epistemology … Faculty epistemologists who are willing to accord to character traits a major and essential role in the acquisition of some epistemic goods have wandered far from the original idea of a faculty epistemology, because what is doing the work in the new permutation of their view is no longer just the faculties but, in the upper-end cases at least, the epistemic agent who *uses* the faculty virtuously for his or her purposes. The epistemologist may wish to keep the virtues in the humble role of supplementing the

functioning of faculties, but in reality he has reduced the faculties to appliances in the hands of a person.[129]

To summarize, since the conditions on internal rationality are looser than the conditions on reasonability, being internally rational is not sufficient for being reasonable and it follows that an epistemic agent's being internally rational isn't enough for him or her to manifest reasonableness. Thus, Plantinga's religious epistemology can't provide (and nor does it attempt to provide) what we need in order to account for how the people in The Plantinga Case could be (equally) reasonable. On the other hand, if we suppose that Plantinga and his Comrades manifest the meta-cognitive virtue of reasonability, we can readily see how (3) could hold in their case: if each of them is roughly equally (globally) reasonable, then, so long as we have no special reason to think otherwise, we have a reason to think that each is roughly equally (locally) reasonable in accord with Condition N. If Condition N holds for them that would make it plausible to think that (or at least more plausible than it would otherwise be to suppose that) Plantinga and his Comrades are being (at least roughly) equally locally reasonable in the course of their disagreement. And that shows how (2) and (3) both could hold in The Case of Plantinga and his Comrades. But we have yet to show how (1) could hold given that (2) and (3) hold.

As I've developed the case so far, Alvin Plantinga, Al ben Plantinga, Ibn Plantinga, and Al Plantingachandra do not evaluate the evidential value of *all* of the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and experiences because they don't *have* the same (or

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[129] Roberts and Wood, *Intellectual Virtues*, pp. 110-111.

sufficiently similar) experiences and are not directly aware of the same facts in the same way. For instance, when Ibn Plantinga reads The Bible, he doesn't have the epistemic seeming that it is genuine revelation. Likewise, when Alvin Plantinga reads the Qur'an, it doesn't seem to him to be genuine revelation. Since neither Plantingan has the same sorts of epistemic seemings, it is not possible for them to assess the evidential value of the same facts and experiences "from the inside." But things could be otherwise. Let us consider another version of the case in which these things are otherwise.

To make things more manageable, consider a simplified case of disagreement between two people both of whom accept Plantinga's religious epistemology in which (2) and (3) already hold, one who used to be a Christian but converted to Islam and another who used to be a Muslim who converted to Christianity. (Surely, some Christians convert to Islam and some Muslims convert to Christianity. So it's easy to suppose that two people have had relevantly similar Christian and Islamic religious experiences, that both are sufficiently and equally informed of Christian Belief and Islamic Belief, and so on.) With respect to their respective inquires into the truth of Islamic Belief and Christian Belief, each is able to assess the evidential merits of the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and experiences. Obviously, while neither literally has had one another's first-person seemings, each has had epistemic seemings of the same relevant type(s). And that (along with my previously defended view that the weight of these epistemic seemings is neither sufficiently strong nor significant) is enough to show that (1) holds for them. Thus, we now see how it is that in their respective inquires regarding p and q, where p stands for 'The Christian extension of the Standard model is correct' and q stands for 'The Islamic extension of the Standard model is correct,' the Christian and the Muslim are

readily able to assess the evidential value of the same (or sufficiently similar) relevant facts and experiences. (To be clear, these facts and experiences consist of evidential considerations acquired in a basic way and not evidential considerations based on inference or arguments that those engaged in natural theology and related philosophical projects would appeal to.)

There is no special reason to think that if (1) thusly holds it follows that (2) and (3) could not also hold. Accordingly, therefore, we see how (1)-(3) could all hold in an appropriately modified version of The Case of Plantinga and his Comrades. To add Al Plantingachandra and Al ben Plantinga to the mix, let r and s stand for 'The Hindu extension of the Standard model is correct' and 'The Jewish extension of the Standard model is correct.' Then suppose that, in their respective inquires regarding p, q, r, and s, all of the Plantingans are able to assess the evidential value of the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and experiences. That these things are so isn't a gratuitous supposition. Perhaps Plantinga and his Comrades can do this because their respective research projects lead them to do a lot of work in comparative religion and comparative philosophy of religion, to participate in inter-faith dialogue, and the like. Perhaps each has made a personal commitment to reach out to and understand other faith traditions 'from the inside,' perhaps even going so far as to live as though one were a member of other religious traditions for some extended period of time in order to acquire a deep understanding of them. Perhaps each of them wholeheartedly commits to whatever faith seems most true at the time and in the course of doing undergoes several conversion experiences.

But is it really plausible to suppose that these Plantingans are reasonable? One might object that if the Plantingans in the case don't think they have any undefeated defeaters, then all of them are unreasonable. Specifically, one might object that each of them has an undefeated defeater because the purported revelation upon which they base their specific religious beliefs is unclear, unreliable (about morality as well as factual claims), unimpressive (at least by divine standards), and relatively lacking in terms of moral fruit (in the lives of believers and as exemplified in religious institutions). Without a sufficiently strong defeater-defeater, it is unreasonable for any of them to accept the target propositions of any extension of the Standard model, in which case the Plantingans don't reasonably disagree about which extension is correct. Consider another way to motivate this conclusion. Suppose that the Standard model is true. It follows that religious experiences of the Traditional Theistic God are veridical. In virtue of accepting the Christian extension of the model, the Christian adds to Traditional Theism the claim that Christian religious experiences are veridical. The Islamic, Jewish, and Hindu models, respectively, add that Muslim, Jewish, or Hindu religious experiences of God are veridical. But one might reasonably think that God hasn't adequately revealed himself or that whatever (purportedly) divine revelations humans have received so far do not support anything more than the Generic Theism of the sort expressed in the Standard model. Briefly, the Plantingan accepts the conjunction of Theistic Belief (TB) and some extension of it whereas the Generic Theist accepts TB and the conjunction of the negations of all its purported extensions. (For any extension of the Standard model you can to iterate, the Generic Theist will say, "No, I don't think that extension of the model is correct. Generic Theism is the way to go.") Apparently, because Generic Theism is

more modest than the conjunction of TB and some extension of the Standard model, comparatively, it is more reasonable to accept Generic Theism. The argument then proceeds in much the same way as the first: because the purported revelation affirmed by each extension of the model is unclear, unreliable, unimpressive, and relatively lacking in terms of moral fruit, it is more reasonable to reject all extensions of the Standard model and accept only Generic Theism instead.[130]

Presumably, Plantingans will not grant that either of these arguments gives them an actual defeater. (Some may grant that such considerations furnish them with a *prima facie* defeater that on reflection doesn't amount to a genuine defeater.) For instance, a Christian Plantingan who has reflectively considered the issues is likely to say that he has no inclination to think that the other extensions are true. He might say that (given that the Christian extension seems true to him and that the competing extensions do not) that the conditional epistemic probability that the Christian extension is true is relatively high compared to other extensions and that it is not unreasonable for him accept the target propositions of the Christian extension. And because what is epistemically probable is (in part) a function of other things one accepts to be true, Jewish, Muslim, and Hindu Plantingans could mull things over and make different yet equally reasonable judgments about the relevant conditional epistemic probabilities. As for the charges that the purported revelation is unclear, unreliable, unimpressive, and relatively lacking in terms of moral fruit, a Plantingan may say that he just doesn't see things that way and that the force of objections to the contrary is less than compelling when the (purported) revelation is properly understood or appropriately qualified. Consequently, Plantingans maintain

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[130] Thanks to Paul Draper for suggesting these objections.

that they don't acquire any defeaters or that they have intrinsic defeater-defeaters that undermine the force of these *prima facie* defeaters.[131] (Plantinga defines intrinsic defeater-defeaters thus: "When a basic belief *p* has more by way of warrant than a potential defeater *q* of *p,* then *p* is an intrinsic defeater of *q* – an intrinsic defeater-defeater, we might say."[132])

It doesn't seem to me that this response provides a sufficiently convincing reply to the Generic Theist's objection. I think that the debate about the comparative merits of revelation is not settled in the Plantingans favor and that giving a satisfactory reply to Generic Theists' objection is not easy. But maybe there is a plausible reply to the objection that I'm not seeing.

Another problem is that it is far from clear that Condition N holds for Plantingans who make these sorts of conditional epistemic probability judgments. That isn't to say that it doesn't or couldn't possibly hold but the Plantingan hasn't given convincing reasons to think that it does. What can one say to defend the claim that Condition N holds, and what could one say to prove to another that someone holds some particular belief in accord with Condition N? It's not clear to me how to answer these questions in a fully satisfactory way, but I think that recognizing the distinction between proving that Condition N holds and getting someone to recognize that Condition N holds will shed some light on things.

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[131] Some of the makings of this argument are gleaned from Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, p. 485.

[132] Alvin Plantinga, "The Foundations of Theism: A Reply," *Faith and Philosophy* 3, no. 3 (1986): 298-313.

Here's how one might get another to see that Condition N holds for someone else. Generally, two people can know one another well enough to be able to recognize (or be willing to grant) that the other reasonably holds beliefs about some subject matter in accord with Condition N. Applied to our current case, and assuming that Alvin Plantinga, Al ben Plantinga, Ibn Plantinga, and Al Plantingachandra know each other sufficiently well, it is possible for each of them to recognize that the others reasonably believe what they do in accord with Condition N. As such, on the assumption that Condition N holds for them, each could do something to get the others to recognize that it holds. (Presumably, they wouldn't need to show this to one another; they simply see that this is so. But they could.) By extending this strategy, perhaps it is possible to get people that don't yet recognize or doubt that Condition N holds for these Plantingans to accept that it does. Perhaps, by getting to know each of them better, conversing with them about their beliefs about God and why they hold them, and the like, one could come to see that Condition N holds for them. But results may vary: people who take these steps might still fail to see that Condition N holds, have good reasons to deny that it does, or (seem to) see that it does not hold. At any rate, I take it that I have shown how it could be that someone can come to see (or seem to see) that Condition N holds for another person. This suggests that it is possible to acquire good reasons for thinking that each Plantingan manifests reasonableness with respect to their religious beliefs in accord with Condition N.

But suppose that someone doesn't find the above strategy sufficiently convincing. Such a person still thinks that none of the Plantingans reasonably accept their respective extensions of the Standard model and that it would be more reasonable for all them to reject those extensions and accept Generic Theism instead. That Alvin Plantinga, Al ben

Plantinga, Ibn Plantinga and Al Plantingachandra all believe one another to be reasonable and that other people can be convinced of that needn't carry much weight for such a person. One way to proceed is to draw another distinction: showing someone how it is possible to come to see (or seem to see) that this diverse group of Plantingans reasonably disagrees about which extension of the Standard model is true is one thing, giving someone a good argument that Condition N holds for this diverse group of Plantingans is another. I maintain that I have adequately defended the first claim and concede that I haven't yet adequately defended the second. Adequately defending the second claim requires providing convincing reasons or evidence for thinking that Condition N holds for Alvin Plantinga, Al ben Plantinga, Ibn Plantinga, and Al Plantingachandra. It also requires convincingly arguing that it would not be any more reasonable for them to give up their respective extensions and accept Generic Theism instead. I think that I can offer these reasons if Tradition-Based Perspectivalism is true. However, I don't explain and defend Tradition-Based Perspectivalism until Chapter Five, so I can't discuss the argument right now. I provide these reasons and conclude this line of argument in Chapter Six, Section 3.2.

Showing that (1)-(3) are consistent is easier if we imagine another case of disagreement between Plantingans. This time, let us situate their disagreement in a possible world such that the competing revelations are clear, impressive, fruitful, and none of which are provably unreliable. (1)-(3) would hold in that sort of world. However, there are good reasons to think that the actual world isn't sufficiently like this sort of world so the claim that (1)-(3) holds for Plantingans in worlds like ours is not well supported (not by this argument anyway). Still, this argument shows that fully informed

reasonable disagreement about which extension of the Standard model is true is at least *possible*.

In closing, in this chapter I have adequately supported a modest conclusion: insofar as it is plausible to think that there are Christians, Muslims, Hindus and Jews for whom the conditions on reasonable belief articulated in Condition N hold and who are fully informed about the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and experiences, we have reason to think that fully informed reasonable disagreement about which extension of the Standard model is true is possible and, perhaps, some reason for thinking that it might actually occur.[133]

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[133] I have discussed what I now call The Case of Plantinga and his Comrades in Baldwin (2006) "Could the Extended Aquinas/Calvin Model Defeat Basic Christian Belief?" and Baldwin (2010) "On the Prospects of an Islamic Externalist Account of Warrant." Parts of this chapter benefit from and draw on these papers.

CHAPTER 4. THE CASE OF JOHN AND PAUL

4.1   Introduction

In this chapter I introduce another case of (so I will argue) fully informed reasonable disagreement: The Case of John and Paul. Paul is a Christian who accepts much of Thomas Aquinas's Christian philosophy. John is a Zen Buddhist who is affiliated with (or very strongly influenced by) the Kyoto school of Japanese philosophy. (George is away developing a *Vaishnava* extension of the Standard model and Ringo is otherwise preoccupied.) Like the Plantingans in Chapter Three, John and Paul are imaginary and idealized but I take it that there are people rather like them.

Recall (1)-(3):

(1)   In their respective inquires regarding *p* and *q*, A and B assess the evidential value of the same or (sufficiently similar) facts and experiences.

(2)   A believes *p* and B believes that *q*, and both A and B correctly believe that *p* and *q* are inconsistent.

(3)   A's belief that *p* and not *q* and B's belief that *q* and not *p* are equally reasonable

For The Case of John and Paul, we'll work with the following fillings for *p* and *q*:

(1*)   In their respective inquiries into Christianity and Zen Buddhism, John and Paul assess the evidential value of the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and experiences.

(2*)   Paul believes that Christianity is true; John believes that Zen Buddhism is true, and they correctly believe that Christianity and Zen Buddhism are inconsistent.

(3*)   Both Paul's and John's beliefs are equally reasonable.

I contend that (1*)-(3*) hold in The Case of John and Paul. That (2*) holds isn't controversial but that (1*) and (3*) hold individually is, let alone in addition to (2*). Since the nature of their disagreement is multi-faceted it is necessary to consider many and sundry details. This makes my project difficult, all the more so because while philosophers doing analytic epistemology and philosophy of religion in the Western tradition these days are somewhat familiar with Buddhism, most are unaware of sophisticated Buddhist views (Zen or otherwise) in epistemology, logic, and metaphysics.[134] But I can't show that it is plausible for John and Paul to assess the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and experiences, let alone show that it is plausible to think that they reasonably disagree about how to assess their evidential merits, without

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[134] There are notable exceptions. See for instance, Mario D'Amato, Jay L. Garfield, and Tom J. F. Tillemans, editors, *Pointing at the Moon: Buddhism, Logic, Analytic Philosophy*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) and Mark Siderits, *Buddhism as Philosophy: An Introduction*, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2007).

discussing these views in some detail. Since this will take a lot of work, I argue that (1*) holds in this chapter and that (3*) holds in the next. Another reason to go into John's and Paul's beliefs in such detail in this Chapter is that doing so will help set up and motivate the argument that (3*) holds in the next.

Before continuing, it is worthwhile to say more about the relevant facts and experiences the evidential merits of which Paul and John assess so differently. The facts include things that enable them to understand the same relevant philosophical and religious views. Examples will clarify what I mean. Those who reject Leibniz's theory of monads can understand the same body of facts of interest to Leibniz scholars, including his writings, what commentators and critics say about them, and other background information. In this sense, scholars can assess the same facts yet disagree about if and if so in what sense it is correct to say that Leibniz was an Idealist.[135] Someone who rejects David Lewis's modal realism can know all the relevant facts about the view, including what the view says, the pertinent (purported) evidence for and against it, the arguments and background information that Lewisians appeal to in its defense, the consequences of the theory, and so on. It is in this sense that one can know the facts about modal realism without accepting it to be true. Similarly, I take it that John and Paul are fully aware of and fully understand one another's views and are able to assess the evidential value of the same facts (and purported facts) that are relevant to their disagreement about whether Christianity or Zen Buddhism is true. Additionally, I assume that both have had the same (or sufficiently similar) Christian and Zen Buddhist religious experiences, that they know

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[135] See, for instance, Peter Lopston, "Was Leibniz an Idealist?" *Philosophy*, 74.289 (1999): 361-385.

'what it is like' to take Christian and Zen Buddhist philosophical views seriously, and that they both have a genuinely sympathetic grasp of what it would be like to hold one another's views. Fully informed of the same facts and experiences, both are aware of the same (or sufficiently similar) evidential considerations in a shared evidential situation. Because of this they are in a position to disagree about whether some evidential consideration c counts as (strong) evidence for some belief that p. I take it, then, that (1*) holds for Paul and John.

One final note. In the Western philosophical tradition, one may assume one's audience to have a basic understanding of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. As such, in Chapter Three, it was relatively uncontroversial to suppose that Ibn Plantinga and Alvin Plantinga assess the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and experiences. But again, Zen Buddhism isn't something that many philosophers in the Western philosophical tradition are very familiar with. Thus it is important to convey a sense of what it is to be a philosophically sophisticated Zen Buddhist who, like John, understands full well and yet does not accept the fundamental assumptions of the Western philosophical tradition. It is equally important to convey a sense of what it is to be a philosophically sophisticated Christian who, like Paul, understands full well and yet does not accept the fundamental assumptions of the Japanese philosophical tradition. On the other hand, to show that (1*) holds for them, it will be enough if I can show that Paul and John are able to assess the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and experiences that are relevant to their disagreement. Thankfully, I can do that without imparting to the reader an ability to assess all the relevant facts and experiences that John and Paul both assess!

4.2   The Case of John and Paul

John and Paul are equally familiar with the teachings of Zen Buddhism and Christianity. Both have had that hard to describe "God made all of this" impression when hiking in the woods. Both have practiced Zen Buddhist sitting meditation, *zazen*, and both have had the even more difficult to describe religious experiences associated with *zazen* practice. Very roughly, both have had the unmediated impression that all reality is interconnected, impermanent and empty of own-being (*svabhava-sunya*).[136] Paul takes his impression that "God made all of this" to be veridical; he believes that God is the creator of the universe. Paul has had and continues to have Zen Buddhist meditative experiences but is not inclined to think that all reality is interconnected, impermanent and empty of own-being. John takes his Zen Buddhist meditative experiences to support the view that all reality is interconnected, impermanent and empty of own-being. While John has had (and perhaps even continues to have) experiences that made (make) it seem to him that "God created all of this" he doesn't believe that God exists on the basis of those seemings, and he does not think that Christianity is true. As such, John and Paul disagree about how to evaluate the evidential merits of the same (or sufficiently similar types of) evidential considerations.

More needs to be said about John's Zen Buddhist meditative experiences. The aim of Zen meditation is enlightenment, or *satori*. Fully capturing in words what *satori* is like is impossible but we can characterize it in part. Robert Wilkinson writes, "*satori* is direct apprehension of being-as-is" that "occurs when consciousness realizes a state of

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[136] For sake of clarity and readability, and because their use is unnecessary, I do not use diacritics in this dissertation.

'one thought.'"[137] When one achieves *satori*, *sunyata*, or emptiness, is revealed: one has the unmediated impression or realization, not achieved by reasoning, that all reality is *sunyata* – interconnected, impermanent, wholly undifferentiated (non-dualistic) and void of own-being. This experience gives one the impression of an impersonal, absolute reality to which none of our concepts and conceptual distinctions accurately apply. It is an authoritative (as in psychologically compelling), liberating, even joyful, experience involving an affirmative attitude towards all that is.[138] For my purposes, I am concerned with the impression that reality is empty of own-being (*svabhava-sunya*) that one has having achieved *satori*. I shall refer to this impression as *sunyata* experience.

One worry about *sunyata* experience is as follows. *Sunyata* experience gives one the impression of an impersonal, absolute reality to which none of our concepts and conceptual distinctions accurately apply. But to say that is to apply to absolute reality the concept of *being something to which our concepts don't accurately apply*. But *that* can't be accurate, for we are to suppose that *none* of our concepts apply correctly to (ultimate) reality. But then why think that the claim (that *sunyata* experience gives one the impression of an impersonal, absolute reality to which none of our concepts and conceptual distinctions accurately apply) is true?[139] In response, note that *sunyata* experience is non-conceptual and cannot be accurately articulated in conceptual terms; the nature of the experience is linguistically incommunicable. However, one may use

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[137] Robert Wilkinson, *Nishida and Western Philosophy*, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009): 9.

[138] Wilkinson, *Nishida and Western Philosophy*, pp. 7-9. Wilkinson derives aspects of his analysis from D.T. Suzuki's *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, 1st and 2nd series, (London: Luzac, 1927 and 1933).

[139] Michael Bergmann brought up this objection via personal correspondence.

words to give others a sense of what having that experience is like. One who does this does not intend to propositionally or conceptually describe *sunyata* as-it-is-and-as-such. Rather, one uses words to point to or gesture at a non-linguistic reality. (While one can't give an accurate linguistic account of what having *sunyata* experience is like, perhaps it is unproblematic to say what is not like. For any concept that is brought up, one will say, "No, *sunyata* experience isn't really like that, at least not in anything more than a poetical or metaphorical sense." That is how those who have *sunyata* experience can see that our concepts of it do not accurately apply to it.)

Note that when Zen Buddhists say that ultimate reality is empty of own-being, they mean to deny the *Abhidharma* Buddhist doctrine of momentariness according to which the basic elements (*dharmas*) of existence are momentary events each of which are essentially self-existing and have *svabhava*, or "own-being."[140] Thus, John maintains that the basic elements are "empty of own-being" (*svabhava-sunya*). He accepts the doctrine of dependent origination: nothing exists independently of anything else and all things are dependent on all other things for existence. To say that all things are empty of own-being is not to affirm the existence of some ultimate reality above or beyond the basic elements of existence. I have more to say about the implications of this view below, particularly in Sections 4.4 and 4.6.[141]

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[140] D. W. Mitchell, *Buddhism: Introducing the Buddhist Experience*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008): 135.

[141] Mitchell, *Buddhism: Introducing the Buddhist Experience*, p. 108. I thank Don Mitchell for pressing me to explain these points in greater detail.

Before pressing on, it is prudent to consider a few more preliminary objections and replies, to make a few qualifications, and do a bit of stage setting. Doing so will clear away obstacles that inhibit progress.

One might object that it is doubtful that there are or could be people like John and Paul both of whom are qualified and able to assess the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and experiences in their inquires into Christianity and Zen Buddhism. But this objection is easily met if we note some basic facts. Some Zen Buddhists convert to Christianity and some Christians convert to Zen Buddhism. For various reasons, some committed Zen Buddhists engage in Christian meditative practices and some committed Christians engage in Zen Buddhist religious practices and representatives from both groups report having had and continuing to have both Zen Buddhist and Christian religious experiences.[142] Some people (somewhat mysteriously), including Ruben L.F. Habito, claim membership in both Christian and Buddhist religions.[143] Still others (less mysteriously), including Keiji Nishitani, think of themselves as Christians in the making and as Buddhists in the making.[144] Nishitani writes:

> I do not feel satisfied with any religion as it stands, and I feel the
> limitations of philosophy also. So, after much hesitation, I made up my
> mind and have at present become a Buddhist-in-the-making. One of the
> main motives for that decision was – strange as it may sound – that I could

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[142] For example, See Habito (2003), (2007), Mitchell and Wiseman (1997), May (2007), Ingram (2009), and Aitken and Steindl-Rast (1994).

[143] On double religious belonging, see Cornille (2003), Habito (2003), (2007), Knitter (2009), and McDaniel (2003).

[144] Traditionally, Japanese surnames are listed before first names. To avoid confusion, I follow Western conventions.

not enter into the faith of present-day Christianity and was nevertheless not able to reject Christianity. As for Christianity, I cannot become anything more than a Christian-in-the-making... for I cannot bring myself to consider Buddhism as a false doctrine. When it comes to Buddhism, however, I can enter into Buddhism as a Buddhist-in-the-making who had found his home in Buddhism and ... from that standpoint I can, at the same time, be a Christian-in-the-making who does not find his home in Christianity ... I am fully aware of the shortcomings of Buddhism, and I understand the strong points of Christianity. Because of this, I am all the more convinced that I can, as a Buddhist, with the help of Buddhist dialectics and always within Buddhism, work for the solutions of these difficulties.[145]

A more serious problem is that Buddhism teaches that attachments inhibit enlightenment and that beliefs are a form of attachment. Thus, it seems that we can't say that John believes things (at least not without qualification). Within a Zen framework, however, this objection is not problematic. Along with other forms of *Mahayana* Buddhism, Zen recognizes the following distinctions between conventional truth and ultimate truth: a) conventional truth conceals, hides or obscures, whereas ultimate truth is seen clearly and distinctly; b) conventional truth is expressible in words and depends on linguistic conventions to exist and to be expressed, whereas ultimate truth cannot be expressed in words and is beyond verbal conventions; and c) conventional truth is relational; it is perspectival and depicts things in terms of their relationships to other things, as opposed to ultimate truth, which is perspective invariant and depicts things just

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[145] James W. Heisig, "East-West Dialogue: *Sunyata* and *Kenosis*," *Spirituality Today* 39:10 (1987).

as they are due to relatedness.[146] Distinction in play, we say that John believes things at the level of conventional truth; he has the appropriate conventional beliefs and cognitions and they play an important soteriological role in his coming to see that everything is empty of own-being at the level of absolute truth. But from the standpoint of ultimate truth, also known as the standpoint of *sunyata*, conventional thinking is transcended.

While the distinction between ultimate and conventional truth is controversial, I take it that this view is both intelligible and philosophically defensible.[147] It will, perhaps, stave off certain objections if I say a bit more about this view before continuing.

Masao Abe writes that although Buddhists speak of everything being empty they do not deny that our everyday concepts have practical efficacy but mean rather mean to say that they cannot stand under philosophical scrutiny. Abe points out how in everyday talk we say that the sun rises and sets even though from the point of view of astronomy we know these things to be false. Similarly, Buddhists "speak of two levels of truth: the conventional and the ultimate. Conventionally, the sun rises; really, it does not. Conventionally, objects exist; really, they are empty."[148] Zen Buddhists also think that conventional truth and ultimate truth are dynamically related: "…ultimate truth

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[146] Chris. Mortensen, "Zen and the Unsayable," in *Pointing at the Moon: Buddhism, Logic, Analytic Philosophy*, M. D'Amato, J. L. Garfield and T. J. F. Tillemans, editors, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009): 4.

[147] Nagarjuna offers the seminal defense of the view in his *Mulamadhyamakakarika*, or *Fundamental Treatise on the Middle Way*. For a contemporary translation with commentary, see Garfield (1995). A nice general study of the distinction as it appears in various forms of Buddhism is Tsering (2008).

[148] Masao Abe, "Emptiness," in *Zen and Comparative Studies*, edited by Steven Heine, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997): 51.

encompasses mundane life and validates its conventional meaning. The two truths theory is not intended to be a refutation of worldly, or conventional, truth in favor of ultimate truth, but rather it indicates the dynamic structure and interrelationship of the two truths."[149] This later point will become clearer later on in the chapter.

We are familiar with the standpoint of everyday experience. But *sunyata* experience is unusual and needs explanation. Nishida explicates *sunyata* experience in light of William James's notion of pure experience. While it is incorrect to identify pure experience with *sunyata* experience they are clearly related. Perhaps the thing to say is that *sunyata* experience is a kind of or certain way of having pure experience.

James affirms that pure experience is conceptually unmediated, direct perception.[150] On James's view, Joel Krueger writes:

> According to James, pure experience is the non-conceptual givenness of the aboriginal field of the immediate, a phenomenal field prior to the interpretive structures (and concomitantly, subject-object bifurcations or conceptual discriminations) that we subsequently impose upon it. Pure experience is prior to the reflexive thematizing of the cogito in language and thought … pure experience is a pure *seeing* … it simply bears mute witness to the world in all its "blooming, buzzing confusion."[151]

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[149] Masao Abe, "Emptiness," p. 52.

[150] William James, "A World of Pure Experience," *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, Vol. 1, No. 20 (1904): 533-543.

[151] Krueger, Joel W., "The Varieties of Pure Experience: William James and Kitaro Nishida on Consciousness and Embodiment," *William James Studies*, 1.1 (2006): Jul. 2009<http://williamjamesstudies.press.illinois.edu/1.1/krueger.html>.

As Nishida describes it, pure experience is unified, non-dualistic experience beyond cognitive grasping that is prior to all further experiences in that all other cognitions are derived from it.[152] Nishida writes:

> To experience means to know facts just as they are, to know in accordance with facts by completely relinquishing one's own fabrications. What we usually refer to as experience is adulterated with some sort of thought, so *by pure experience I am referring to the state of experience just as it is without the least addition of deliberative discrimination.* The moment of seeing a color or hearing a sound, for example, is prior not only to the thought that the color or sound is the activity of an external object or that one is sensing it, but also to the judgment of what the color or sound might be. In this regard, *pure experience is identical with direct experience.* When one directly experiences one's own state of consciousness, there is not yet a subject or an object, and knowing and its object are completely unified. This is the most refined type of experience … when one makes judgments about it, it ceases to be a pure experience. A truly pure experience … is simply a present consciousness of facts just as they are.[153]

According to Nishida, our everyday assumptions – that there are real individuals and that there are real distinctions between space and time, mind and body, and subject and object – do not "mark real and final divisions in the order of things."[154] He elucidates this view in Neo-Kantian terms. He writes, "from the standpoint of pure experience …

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[152] See Kitaro Nishida, *An Inquiry Into the Good*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990): 3-10.

[153] Nishida, *An Inquiry into the Good*, pp. 3-4. Italics are mine.

[154] See Robert Wilkinson, *Nishida and Western Philosophy*, Ashgate Publishing Limited, Surry: (2009): 60.

experience is not bound to such forms as time, space, and individual persons; rather these discriminations derive from an intuition that transcends them."[155] He conceives pure experience as pure intellectual intuition, a "state of oneness of subject and object, a fusion of knowing and doing" that "lies at the base of all relations, and relations are established by means of it."[156]

It is important to note that in his later thinking, Nishida rejected views that analyzed self-consciousness in terms of activities and believed the notion of pure experience to be overly psychologistic. He therefore replaced the philosophy of pure experience with the philosophy of *basho*, literally, "place." The basic metaphor is that human thinking arises within a place, or field, of non-substantive entities in relation. The gist of the theoretical proposal is that the structure of human thinking is accurately characterized non-psychologistically in terms of three major places, conceived of as overlapping planes: the plane of being (roughly, the plane of the natural, or physical, world), the plane of relative nothingness (roughly, the plane of the negation of being), and the plane of absolute nothingness (the plane of emptiness, *sunyata*).[157] It might help to think of these planes as roughly analogous to different levels of description.[158]

Nishida's philosophy of *basho* is complex, owing to its originality and to the way it draws heavily on and critically responds to Neo-Kantianism, Hegelianism, and other schools of thought in the German Idealist tradition. Comparatively, the philosophy of

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[155] Nishida, *An Inquiry Into the Good*, p. 31.

[156] Nishida, *An Inquiry Into the Good*, pp. 32-33.

[157] Wilkinson, *Nishida and Western Philosophy*, pp. 104-105, 108 and 110.

[158] I thank Don Mitchell for suggesting the need to take into account the fact that the later Nishida replaced pure experience with the philosophy of *basho*.

pure experience is more accessible and easier to understand and put to use. For my purposes it is sufficient and prudent to work with Nishida's earlier philosophy of pure experience. But I take it that what I have to say may be paraphrased or translated in a way that is consistent with Nishida's later philosophy of *basho*: one could take the talk of 'pure experience' and '*sunyata* experience' and replace it with talk of 'human experience as it is characterized within the plane of absolute nothingness.' We may then say that John and Paul disagree about the veracity of John's characterization of human thinking as it arises within the plane of absolute nothingness and for that reason disagree about the merits of the evidential considerations that are associated with that mode of thinking.

For the Zen Buddhist, the aim is to be enlightened yet to live in the world, which amounts to accepting things just as they are from both the conventional and ultimate standpoints. (There is a certain tension involved in accepting both standpoints. For the Zen Buddhist, such is life.) According to Nishida, from the standpoint of pure experience we see, by a kind of intellectual intuition, that that which gives rise to all conceptual thinking is pure experience and that it is having pure experience that makes it possible for us to mark and to articulate conceptual and perceptual differences from the standpoint of everyday experience. With these views in mind, the following well-known Zen proverbs are more readily understood:

> Thirty years ago, before I began the study of Zen [from the standpoint of everyday experience], I said 'Mountains are mountains; waters are water.' After I got into the truth of Zen through the instruction of a good master [no longer trusting the standpoint of everyday experience], I said 'Mountains are not mountains; waters are not waters.' But now, having attained the abode of final rest [from the standpoint of *sunyata* which

accepts things just as they are], I say, 'Mountains are really mountains; waters are really waters.'[159]

Before enlightenment, carry water chop wood [from the standpoint of everyday experience]. After enlightenment, carry water chop wood [from the standpoint of *sunyata* which accepts things just as they are].[160]

In sum, Nishida's thinking is an attempt to articulate into a Western Philosophical Framework the basic insights of *Mahayana* sayings such as "*Nirvana* is *Samsara*,"[161] and "form is emptiness, emptiness is form."[162] *Very* roughly, the idea is that from either standpoint, reality is what it is: *samsara*, reality as it is encountered from the standpoint of everyday experience, just is reality as it is encountered from the standpoint of *sunyata* experience, *nirvana*.

This is but the tip of the iceberg. The disagreements between Paul and John are complex and multifaceted, and there is much more to discuss. We must tread carefully and thoughtfully.

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[159] Masao Abe, "The Core of Zen: The Ordinary Mind is Tao," *Zen and Comparative Studies*, Steven Heine (ed.), (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997): 32.
[160] Anonymous.
[161] The full passage reads, "There is no difference at all between Samsara and Nirvana! There is no difference at all between Nirvana and Samsara! [They are both empty (*shunya*) of essence.]" See Nagarjuna, *Mulamadhyamaka-Karika*, (*The Fundamentals of the Middle Way*), edited by George Cronk, (1998), p. 167.
[162] From *The Heart Sutra, with Commentary*, translated by R. Pine, (Washington, D.C.: Shoemaker and Hoard Publishers, 2004): 2.

4.3   Four Facets of Disagreement Between John and Paul

There are at least four facets of disagreement between John and Paul: The Logical, Metaphysical, Epistemological, and Phenomenological-Existential facets. The Logical Facet turns on the fact that Paul accepts Aristotelian logical views and John accepts but Paul denies the logic of *soku*:

> "S accepts Aristotelian logical views" = def. S accepts the Western common-sense, pre-modern views about logic that stem from and are associated with Aristotle, namely, that logical subjects and predicates correspond to existing things, that existing things are composed of substances and attributes, and that attributes predicated of subjects exist but only in the ontological subjects in which they inhere.

> "S accepts the logic of *soku*" = def. S's metaphysical views are such that S emphasizes internal rather than external relations, affirms that parts always in some way reflect the whole, and accepts that *a* and not-*a* overlap such that *a* can only be fully *a* insofar as it expresses something of not-*a*, and thus accepts the *soku* rule of inference: "A is A, and yet A is not A; therefore A is A."

> "S denies the logic of *soku*" = def. While S recognizes the distinction between internal and external relations, S denies that this has any far reaching logical implications; consequently, S denies that parts always in some way reflect the whole, denies that *a* and not-*a* overlap such that *a* can only be fully *a* insofar as it expresses something of not-*a* and does not accept the *soku* rule of inference: "A is A, and yet A is not A; therefore A is A."

I realize that the definitions of "S accepts the logic of *soku*" and "S denies the logic of *soku*" are dense and that the *soku* rule of inference, "A is A, and yet A is not A", may seem utterly opaque. I will attempt to fully explain these definitions below.

Note that affirming the logic of *soku* does not necessarily involve the *rejection* of traditional Western or Aristotelian logic. Rather, because it recognizes a distinction between conventional truth and ultimate truth, Zen Buddhism maintains that Aristotelian logic is well suited for talking about what is important from the standpoint of everyday experience and that the logic of *soku* is well suited for talking about what is important from the standpoint of *sunyata*. Accordingly, John accepts both logics with the important qualification that, ultimately, Aristotelian logic doesn't represent how things really are but rather how they seem or appear to us from the standpoint of everyday experience. I discuss John's logical beliefs in Section 4.4 and Paul's logical beliefs in Section 4.5.

The Metaphysical Facet turns on the fact that Paul accepts the metaphysics of being and John accepts the metaphysics of *sunyata*:

> "S accepts the metaphysics of *sunyata*" = def. S accepts that there are particulars and affirms that they are not self-identical but "open" in that they radically project and inter-penetrate one another ontologically.

> "S accepts the metaphysics of being" = def. S accepts the substratum theory and accepts that there are (at least) two basic categories of existence: substances and properties of substances.

To affirm the metaphysics of being is to deny the metaphysics of *sunyata*, and *vice-versa*. While John grants that from the standpoint of everyday experience it may *seem* that something like the metaphysics of being is true, he takes it that this seeming is

conventional, a view that is appropriate only from the standpoint of everyday experience. Accepting the metaphysics of being is consistent with but does not entail Christian Theism. As a Christian, Paul adds uniquely Christian content to the metaphysics of being. I discuss Paul's metaphysical beliefs in Section 4.5 and John's metaphysical beliefs in Section 4.6.

Roughly, The Epistemological Facet turns on whether having *sunyata* experience gives one a good reason to accept the metaphysics of *sunyata*. John accepts whereas Paul denies the epistemology of *sunyata*. More precisely:

> "S accepts the epistemology of *sunyata*" = def. S believes that (i) *sunyata* experience occurs and (ii) having *sunyata* experience gives one a good reason to believe that all reality is interconnected, impermanent and empty of own-being (*svabhava-sunya*).

> "S denies the epistemology of *sunyata*" = def. S believes that (i) *sunyata* experience occurs and (ii) having *sunyata* experience does *not* give one a good reason to believe that all reality is interconnected, impermanent and empty of own-being (*svabhava-sunya*).

I discuss The Epistemological Facet of their disagreement in Section 4.7.

Lastly, John thinks that the phenomenological features of or associated with *sunyata* experience are of ultimate existential and religious significance. He thinks that the appropriate response to *sunyata* experience is to accept that ultimate reality is *sunyata* and that the nature of ultimate reality is non-self. In other words:

> "S accepts that having *sunyata* experience phenomenologically and existentially reveals that the nature of ultimate reality is non-self" = def. S thinks that (i) the phenomenological-existential features associated

with having *sunyata* experience indicate that the nature of the human self (or person) is non-substantial and that (ii) the ultimate, religiously significant metaphysical ground of self-hood is *sunyata*.

While Paul may think that *sunyata* experience is valuable, and might even affirm it to be religiously significant, he denies (i) and (ii). I discuss the phenomenological-existential facet of their disagreement in Section 4.8. I offer my overall conclusion in Section 4.9.

4.4   John's Logical Beliefs: The Logic of *Soku*

Recall the Logical Facet of the disagreement between John and Paul and the three definitions:

"S accepts Aristotelian logical views" = def. S accepts the Western common-sense, pre-modern views about logic that stem from and are associated with Aristotle, namely, that logical subjects and predicates correspond to existing things, that existing things are composed of substances and attributes, and that attributes predicated of subjects exist but only in the ontological subjects in which they inhere.

"S accepts the logic of *soku*" = def. S's metaphysical views are such that S emphasizes internal rather than external relations, affirms that parts always in some way reflect the whole, and accepts that *a* and not-*a* overlap such that *a* can only be fully *a* insofar as it expresses something of not-*a*, and thus accepts the *soku* rule of inference: "A is A, and yet A is not A; therefore A is A."

"S denies the logic of *soku*" = def. While S recognizes the distinction between internal and external relations, S denies that this has any far

reaching logical implications; consequently, S denies that parts always in some way reflect the whole, denies that *a* and not-*a* overlap such that *a* can only be fully *a* insofar as it expresses something of not-*a* and does not accept the *soku* rule of inference: "A is A, and yet A is not A; therefore A is A."

John accepts the logic of *soku* because his thinking is influenced by traditional pre-modern, Japanese thought. On this topic, Thomas Kasulis makes several helpful remarks. Regarding thinking that emphasizes internal relations, he writes that relatents *a* and *b*, "are generally understood to be not separate entities that have been connected by a relating principle, but to be two overlapping entities: part of *a* is *b* and part of *b* is *a*." The gist of this view is that no entity exists independently as a discrete substance but that every entity is always in flux and dependent on some other entity for its existence. As such, traditional Japanese thought affirms that "whole and parts are internally related, the part (as in a recursive set) always reflects in some way the whole" and that opposites are internally related, which is to say that *a* and not-*a* overlap such "that *a* can only be fully *a* insofar as it [expresses] something of not-*a*."[163] It is with these views in mind that John accepts the logic of *soku*.

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[163] T. Kasulis, "Logic in Japan," *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (New York: Routledge, 1998): 4880. I substitute Kasulis's "contains" with "expresses" because the English term "contains" misleadingly suggests that not-a is *in* a as a shoe is in a box. Rather, a and not-a are mutually interpenetrating in that there are no strict boundaries between a and not-a. I take the locutions "a and not-a are mutually interpenetrating" and "a expresses not-a and not-a expresses a" to be synonymous. Thanks to Don Mitchell for calling this to my attention.

The logic of *soku* is mysterious and difficult to understand from a Western point of view. In effect, to accept the logic of *soku* is to accept the following rule of inference: "A *soku* not-A," alternatively, "A is A, and yet A is not A; therefore A is A."[164] Explaining the logic of *soku*, Nicholas Jones writes:

> Western philosophers insist that 'A and yet not-A' is a contradiction, while the Kyoto philosophers acknowledge the fact and maintain that the combination is legitimate: reflection upon reality inevitably reveals antinomies, they argue, so that any logic adequate to such reflection must allow contradictions. Since anything follows from a contradiction, Western philosophers can dismiss arguments involving the *soku* dialectic as unintelligible or meaningless, thereby eschewing any serious confrontation with or appropriation of the Kyoto philosophies. Yet disciples of the Kyoto school analyze and critique each other's work as though it is intelligible and meaningful. Such a situation prompts the suspicion that 'A *soku* not-A' is not a contradiction, despite the insistence of the Kyoto philosophers to the contrary.[165]

The interpretative task is to understand what the Kyoto philosophers are doing when they make use of the *soku* inference. Effectively, Jones argues that the *soku* inference is intelligible only if one understands the principle of contradictory identity and the distinction between internal and external negation. Let us consider each in turn.

The principle of contradictory identity states that S is P and yet not-(S is P). According to the principle of contradictory identity, the proper referent of the sentence "S

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[164] See Nicholas John Jones, "The Logic of Soku in the Kyoto School," *Philosophy East and West* 54, no. 3 (2004): 302.

[165] Jones, "The Logic of Soku in the Kyoto School," p. 302.

is P and yet not-(S is P)" is both S and not-S.[166] Effectively, it says that for all S, S contains not-S in order to be S: that all things are contradictorily self-identical. Kyoto school philosophers offer life as a paradigmatic example of contradictory self-identity: life contains the capacity for illness as well as the capacity for health, and the interaction between birth (i.e., life) and death (i.e., non-life) is an essential, determinative feature of life.[167] (I have more to say about this shortly.)

On the distinction between internal and external negation, Jones writes:

According to Aristotle, the denial of 'S is P' is given by its external negation, 'not-(S is P)' rather than its internal negation, 'S is not-P' … while the external negation of a sentence is true whenever its internal negation is true, the reverse is not always the case: 'not-(S is P)' can be true when the subject referred to is not an S, in which case 'S is not-P' is false. Take the sentence 'The log is white'. This sentence, said of some thing, might be false because the log is, say, brown, in which case its internal negation is true; or the sentence might be false because the thing referred to as white is not a log, in which case only the external negation of the sentence is true.[168]

Jones continues:

When the internal negation of 'S is P' is true, the subject of the sentence refers properly but fails to predicate the appropriate property of the subject. When the external negation is true, the subject of the sentence fails to refer

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[166] Jones, "The Logic of Soku in the Kyoto School," p. 307.

[167] See John W. M. Krummel, "Basho, World, and Dialectics: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Nishida Kitaro," *Place and Dialectic: Two Essays by Nishida Kitaro*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012): 40.

[168] Jones, "The Logic of Soku in the Kyoto School," p. 306.

properly, so that the question of whether the sentence predicates the appropriate property of the subject is moot … an external contradiction occurs when the 'not' in 'A and yet not A' expresses an external negation, while an internal contradiction occurs when the 'not' expresses an internal negation.[169]

Pulling together these themes, note that when Nishida and others affirm that identity statements are contradictory, they do so with regards to external negation exclusively; they do *not* accept true internal contradictions.[170] Common sense clearly rules out true internal contradictions, but it does not obviously rule out true external contradictions. Jones continues:

> When you refer to yourself in any sentence, do you not also refer to what you are not, simultaneously and in precisely the same respects? Isn't it true, on some level, that you have the properties you do because what is not-you also has those properties? Take the following sentence: 'Nishida is Nishida'. Here one identifies Nishida with himself, and one cannot also say that Nishida is not$_I$-Nishida, on pain of (internal) contradiction. [Jones uses "not$_I$" to stand for internal negation.] One also refers to Nishida as the subject who is self-identical; so the sentence properly refers to its subject and is true just because Nishida is Nishida. Now comes the metaphysical twist: can we intelligibly say that Nishida is not$_E$ Nishida? [Jones uses "not$_E$" to stand for external negation.] Perhaps we can, if we mean by Nishida not the set of all properties that some person has, but rather the person himself. At least as a living person, Nishida is always changing, and although he never has a property and lacks it at the same time, he is always simultaneously himself and other-than-himself, for he is becoming.

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[169] Jones, "The Logic of Soku in the Kyoto School," p. 308.

[170] Jones, "The Logic of Soku in the Kyoto School," p. 309.

Without this sort of contradictory identity, Nishida could not become: "On all sides I escape being and yet-I am."[171]

The upshot, according to Jones, is that, intuitively, we see that the *soku* inference validly applies in cases of self-predication and self-reference. We need to invoke the principle of contradictory identity in order to refer to ourselves accurately because we refer to ourselves as what we *are* as well as what we *are not* simultaneously and in precisely the same respects. Each of us is always changing, and although we never have a property and lack it at the same time (i.e., there are no true internal contradictions), given that we are in a constant state of becoming, each of us is always simultaneously himself and other-than-himself (i.e., there are true external contradictions). For instance, in biological organisms as we encounter them, the process we call "living" is the same process we call "dying." While "living" and "dying" are conceptually opposed properties, living creatures *just are* dying creatures. In other words, the actual, concrete biological processes of becoming called "living" just are the actual, concrete biological processes of becoming called "dying." Specifically, the inference "Life is life, and yet (since the process of living just is the process of dying, i.e., not-living), life is not-life; therefore life is life" is an instance of the *soku* inference, "A is A, and yet A is not A; therefore A is A." Keiji Nishitani makes a similar point when he writes:

> …while life remains life to the very end, and death remains death, they
> both become manifest in any given thing [e.g., biological organism – note
> that Nishitani metaphorically extends living and dying to non-biological
> things], and therefore that the aspect of life and the aspect of death in a

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[171] Jones, "The Logic of Soku in the Kyoto School," p. 309.

given thing can be superimposed in such a way that both become simultaneously visible. In this sense, such a mode of being might be termed life-*sive*-death, death-*sive*-life.[172]

Seiichi Yagi provides additional examples that (so he maintains) intuitively and plausibly illustrate the validity of *soku* inference. Much of what he says has obvious metaphysical implications, some of which we consider later on. While we focus on how Yagi's views help elucidate the logic of *soku*, let us note these metaphysical implications as well.

4.4.1   The Logic of *Soku* and Front-Structure

Yagi thinks we can see that the *soku* inference applies to reality in things that exhibit what he calls "front-structure."[173] Consider two rooms, A and B, which share a wall W as a border. From within room A, call "a" the side of W facing A; from within room B, call "b" the side of W facing B. The surfaces of W, "a" and "b", remain surfaces of W but at the same time are constitutive parts of rooms A and B. Moreover, W is not W *unless* it thus separates A and B. Yagi writes, "The board first becomes a wall when it

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[172] Keiji Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness,* translated by Jan Van Bragt, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983): 93.

[173] It is worth nothing that Yagi is a Christian. He tells us that he develops his notion of "front structure" in order to help facilitate dialogue between Christians and Buddhists, particularly Japanese ones. He writes that Japanese Christians who accept the absolute claims of Christianity yet also encounter the "profound relatedness" of Buddhism need to ask and answer "wherein the relatedness consists, whence it comes, and what it means for Christianity." See Seiichi Yagi and Leonard Swidler, *A Bridge to Buddhist-Christian Dialogue*, (Mahweh: Paulist Press, 1990), p. vii.

divides a space into two rooms, for a room needs a wall in order to be a room. The walls and the room condition each other."[174]

Figure 4.1
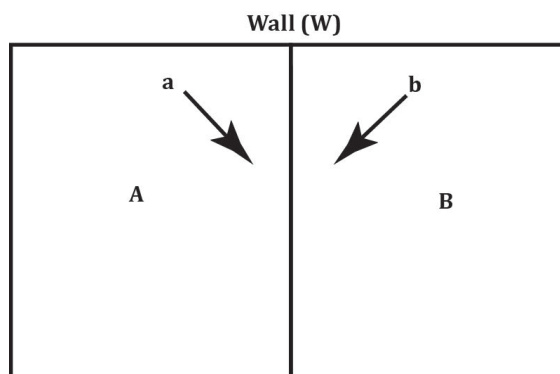
To better understand front-structure, it is worthwhile to consider the above figure in light of the following passage:

> Let us call "b", namely, the surface of the wall in room B, the Front of the wall. Then of course the surface "a" is the other front of (W). The Front is that in which we encounter the other. The Front "a" belongs to and expresses A, so that contact with the Front of A is an encounter with A itself. The Front is, however, also a border … "a" … is the Front of the wall that has become a component of A while "b" similarly is the Front of the wall which has become constitutive of B. The wall (W) separates and joins A and B because their Fronts "a" and "b" each are constitutive parts of A and B. When the Front of one object, while it remains the Front, has a constitutive part of another object, we call this structure a "Front-Structure." Stated more generally: it is the structure in which the Front of A, while remaining that Front, has become a constitutive part, a component of non-A. Then the Front "a" belongs 100% to A, while at the same time it belongs 100% to non-A. In this of course the viewpoint from which it belongs to A and the viewpoint from which it belongs to non-A

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[174] Yagi and Swidler, *A Bridge to Buddhist-Christian Dialogue*, p. 77.

are respectively different. Then this Front is the unity of A and non-A, or we can say: A and non-A are, as this Front, one and the same. This state of affairs would be expressed in Buddhist technical terminology as 'A *soku* Non-A." "*Soku*" therefore means, "is/is not." This "soku" arises in Front-Structure.[175]

Yagi provides additional examples of front-structure, states of affairs in which he thinks that the *soku* inference clearly holds, cases in which he thinks it is correct to infer that "A is A, and yet A is not A; therefore A is A." One involves a family's garden and another involves a woman pregnant with child.

1. A house has a garden in which there are trees planted and in which flowers are blooming. Every plant in the garden is a part of nature, the Front of nature. We encounter nature in the trees and grasses in the garden … on the other hand, the garden is also a living area for the family. That is, the garden is the Front of nature which has become a part of a human living area. Human living stands in contrast to nature. However, the essence of the garden lies in the fact that it is the Front of nature which has become intermeshed in the family life. The plants grow in the garden and attract insects which disturb us … We control the growth of the plants, destroy the damaging insects, in order to maintain the Front-Structure, but we do not totally eliminate nature from the garden, for that would eliminate the garden.[176]

2. In the womb the child is connected with the placenta by means of the umbilical cord. Thereby the child receives everything it needs from the

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[175] Yagi, *A Bridge to Buddhist-Christian Dialogue*, p. 77-78. The figure is adapted from p. 76.

[176] Yagi, *A Bridge to Buddhist-Christian Dialogue*, p. 78.

mother. We ask now whether the nourishment which the umbilical cord draws from the mother into the child is a part of the child or the mother. Here the univocal "either-or" does not fit. Everything which flows from the mother into the child is the Front of the mother, which has become a component of the child. In this case the Front-Structure shows forth the essential relationship between the mother and the child in the womb. The child lives because it transforms the Front of the mother into its own component part.[177]

Yagi provides still other examples of front-structure. It is enough to summarize a couple of them.

3. Human bodies are made up of matter, and every process of its living activity (*qua* material body) is a process of material reactions. Human bodies, however, aren't merely identified with mater. Our bodies are the Front of the material world and the material behavior of oxygen in our bodies is at the same time a part of our living activity itself. (He writes, "the fundamental recognition that the body is more than the sum of its matter is a fundamental axiom of modern humanistic sciences … All material processes of our body have as their meaning the maintenance of life. We are a part of the world, but in such as way that the Fronts of matter appropriated into our bodies form our personal existence.")[178]

4. Front-Structure is found in the relationships of living beings one to another in an ecosystem. In a fish bowl bacteria, algae, and fish live together; bacteria decompose the fish excretions and photosynthesis sustains the algae, and supplies the fish food and oxygen. In this way,

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[177] Yagi, *A Bridge to Buddhist-Christian Dialogue*, p. 79.

[178] Yagi, *A Bridge to Buddhist-Christian Dialogue*, pp. 84-85.

the Fronts of the fish, algae and the bacteria interact dynamically.[179]

While the logic of *soku* may still seem anti-intuitive to the Western mindset, I take it that reflection on Jones's arguments, Nishida's and Nishitani's examples involving biological organisms engaged in a mode of being accurately termed life-*sive*-death or death-*sive*-life, and Yagi's various examples of front-structure motivate the view that the logic of *soku* is intelligible and philosophically defensible. I take it that I have shown that is plausible that John and Paul, being fully informed of the same (or sufficiently similar) relevant facts and experiences as they are, understand the logic of *soku* equally well. And although Paul rejects the logic of *soku*, he doesn't think that it is gibberish; he just doesn't think it correctly captures or describes the nature of ultimate reality. But note that Paul may accept the logic of *soku* in a limited and qualified sense: he might accept it to be valid when talking about non-substances, such as walls and rooms and cities and gardens, but reject it with respect to substances, such as humans and bunnies.

In closing, recall that from the standpoint of everyday experience John accepts common-sense views about substances and properties. He also thinks that categorical logic and modern propositional and quantificational logic are appropriate to discourse about things at the level of everyday experience in our everyday contexts. But John also accepts that the objects we encounter in everyday experience are, from the standpoint of *sunyata* experience, interconnected, impermanent and empty of own-being. As such, the

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[179] Yagi, *A Bridge to Buddhist-Christian Dialogue*, pp. 85-86.

logic of *soku* more accurately represents ultimate reality as it is in in itself, which is why John accepts it.[180]

4.5 Paul's Logical and Metaphysical Beliefs

Paul accepts metaphysical views long associated with Aristotle: he thinks that there are substances and properties and that human thought accurately depicts the way things are, that the grammatical subjects and predicates of ordinary, everyday discourse accurately map onto or represent reality. On this view there are individuals, such as this ball, this fire engine, and this squirrel, and some such individuals are substances. Sentences such as "This dog is furry," "Fred's desk is made of wood," and "Banana trees bear fruit," and the like, have grammatical subjects and predicates that linguistically convey the real natures of things. Naturally, Paul accepts Aristotelian categorical logic and modern propositional and quantificational logic, too. In short, Paul accepts Aristotelian logical views and the metaphysics of being:

> "S accepts Aristotelian logical views" = def. S accepts the Western
> common-sense, pre-modern views about logic that stem from and are
> associated with Aristotle, namely, that logical subjects and predicates
> correspond to existing things, that existing things are composed of
> substances and attributes, and that attributes predicated of subjects exist
> but only in the ontological subjects in which they inhere.

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[180] John's views about our discourse about ultimate reality are similar in relevant respects to Paul Tillich's view that talk about God is symbolic, a point that is noticed by Masao Abe. See his "Tillich From a Buddhist Point of View," in William R. LaFleur (ed.), *Zen and Western Thought*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, 1985): 171-86.

 "S accepts the metaphysics of being" = def. S accepts the substratum
theory and accepts that there are (at least) two basic categories of
existence: substances and properties of substances.

I take it that we have a good understanding of the strictly logical aspects of
Aristotelian logical views as defined above. I shall, therefore, focus on explaining the
metaphysics of being. Doing that will explain the metaphysical aspects of the definition
of what it is to S accept Aristotelian logical views as well.

Paul's ontology admits properties, substances, and concrete particulars. It is
helpful to employ a few definitions proposed by Michael Loux. By "substance" is meant
something that endures over time as a subject of predication.[181] That which is predicated
of a substance is a property. Examples of substances include this horse, that person, that
angel; examples of predicates include "is white", "is a primate", and "is playing a harp."
Concrete particulars are "things the nonphilosopher thinks of as 'things' – familiar
objects like human beings, animals, plants, and inanimate material objects."[182] In sum,
Paul accepts the substratum theory, according to which,

> … a concrete particular is a whole made up of the various properties we
> associate with the particular together with an underlying subject or
> substratum that has an identity independent of the properties with which it
> found – a bare particular; and the claim is that the bare particular or
> substratum is the literal exemplifier of those properties.[183]

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[181] Michael J. Loux, *Metaphysics: A Contemporary Introduction*, 3rd ed., (New York and
London: Routledge, 2006): 114.

[182] Loux, *Metaphysics*, p. 19.

[183] Loux, *Metaphysics*, p. 84.

Note that that if the substratum theory is true, then the metaphysics of *sunyata* is false. On the substratum theory, a substance is a particular, self-identical thing. (As Butler put it, "everything is what it is and not another thing."[184]) It follows that substances are not "open" but "closed" – substances are non-interpenetrating and self-identical.

While not necessarily a full-blooded Thomist, Paul accepts Aquinas's metaphysics of being. In *On Being and Essence*, Aquinas distinguishes *ens* and *esse*. Thomas Maurer writes, "*Esse* is the infinitive of the verb *sum*, and it means simply 'to be.' *Ens* is the participial form, corresponding to the English 'being.'"[185] Maurer illustrates the relationship between the two uses of *sum* using a concrete example, the word *currens*. He elaborates:

> As *currens* signifies a person along with the act of running, so *ens* signifies a subject as possessing an act of being or existing. This act of being, exercised by the subject, is expressed by the infinitive *esse*, as *currere* expresses the act of running … *Ens* resembles the noun *album*, which means 'a white thing', expressing the subject qualified by the color white. *Esse*, on the other hand, denotes only the act of being, in abstraction from the subject of the act.[186]

He continues:

> … *ens* ('a being') is in fact nothing but the concrete conceptualization of *esse* ('the act of being'). The word *ens* is derived from *esse* or *actus*

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[184] Joseph Butler, *Five Sermons,* ed., Stephen L. Darwall, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1983): 4.

[185] Thomas Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*, translated by A. Maurer. Second Revised ed., (Ontario: The Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1963): 14.

[186] Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*, p. 14.

essendi. It is being (*esse*) that gives to a being (*ens*) its character of being, as it is running (*currere*) that gives to a runner (*currens*) his characteristic act of running.[187]

The word *esse* signifies the dynamic act of being (as in *actus essendi*). As such, Paul conceives ultimate reality as dynamic being and conceives God as *esse ipsum subsistens*, the dynamic act of subsistent being itself. One implication of this view is that in God and in God only are existence and essence one and the same.[188]

Paul thinks that although the logic we use to talk about objects of everyday experience also applies to our discourse about God, we cannot know God as he in himself (we can't know God's essence) but can only have analogical knowledge of God.[189] (I have more to say about this in Section 4.5.3.) In the next three subsections, I say more about Paul's specifically Christian metaphysical views.

4.5.1   Trinity

Paul accepts the doctrine of the Trinity. There is much that could be said, philosophically and religiously, about the doctrine. It is enough for my purposes to provide a concise statement of it.[190] Thomas C. Oden writes that God is a tri-unity, or

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[187] Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*, p. 15.

[188] See Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*, chapter 4.

[189] Aquinas defends this view, the Doctrine of Analogy, in *Summa Theologica* I.13.5 and *Disputed Questions On Truth* 2.11.

[190] For philosophical articulations and defenses of the doctrine of the Trinity, see Brown (1985), Feenstra and Plantinga, Jr. (1989), Swinburne (1994) and van Inwagen (1995) chapters 8 and 9.

three-in-one: "one God, Son, and Holy Spirit." There are two crucial aspects: "unity and distinction" and "God is one is three distinct persons." These aspects refer to God in different ways, "one to the nature of God (as one) and the other to the persons (as three)." Briefly, the doctrine of the Trinity states "that God is one; that the Son is God and the Spirit is God, even as the Father is God; and that the distinction between the three is not merely of mode or manifestation but is real and personal."[191]

4.5.2   Incarnation: The *Kenosis* of the Son of God

Paul accepts that Jesus is the incarnate Son of God. Various models of the incarnation attempt to make sense of how God could also be human. According to the Chalcedonian model, Jesus was simultaneously God and man. The impetus for kenotic models is found in *Philippians* 2:5-8:

> Have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Although he was in the form
> of God and equal with God, he did not take advantage of this
> equality. Instead, he emptied himself by taking on the form of a servant,
> by becoming like other humans, by having a human appearance. He
> humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, death on a
> cross.[192]

On one construal of the kenotic model, David Brown writes, "roughly … God became human and subsequently became God again."[193] This construal is problematic, as

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[191] Thomas C. Oden, *Systematic Theology: Volume One*, (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006): 186, 188, 215.

[192] This passage is from the *New American Standard Bible*.

[193] David Brown, *The Divine Trinity*, (La Salle: Open Court, 1985): 102-103.

it seems to imply that Jesus incarnate was not God in essence. For this reason Paul accepts a version of the kenotic model that is consistent with the Chalcedonian model according to which Jesus, the Son of God, divested himself of deity yet remained the Son of God and so always remained God in essence.

Defenders of the kenotic model who accept the Chalcedonian model, too, maintain that God's "becoming man" does not imply the Son's loss of divinity. Ronald J. Feenstra writes that, on such views the Son of God humbled himself and in so doing divested himself of "the attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence." Because these attributes are "external manifestations of the immanent, or essential, divine attributes" it follows that God "did not forsake the divine nature because he did not give up any essential divine attributes." Feenstra go on to quote Gottfried Thomasius on the matter thus:

> Omnipotence is no "more" of the absolute power, omniscience is no enhancements of the immanent divine knowledge, omnipresence is no enhancement of the divine life. Thus, if the Son as man has given up these attributes, he lacks nothing which is essential for God to be God.[194]

Feenstra points to passages in the Gospels to support this view. For instance, in *Luke* 2:52 we read that, "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature." This implies that because being omnipotent is incompatible with acquiring of wisdom, Jesus set aside his omniscience. And in *Matthew* 24:36 Jesus says, "But of that day and hour knoweth no

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[194] Ronald J. Feenstra, "Reconsidering Kenotic Christology," in *Trinity, Incarnation, and Atonement: Philosophical and Theological Essays,* edited by Ronald J. Feenstra and Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., (Indiana, University of Notre Dame Press, 1989): 130-131.

man, no, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only." Here, Jesus affirms that there is something that he does not know, which implies that he does not (at that time) have the property of omniscience. That the kenotic model of the incarnation can readily handle such sayings counts in favor of it (or so Paul would say).

4.5.3 Godhead

Paul also accepts the doctrine of Godhead. Going back to at least Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (around 4th or 5th century C.E.), there is a sense in which the being of God is said to be non-personal, or transpersonal. Because Scripture teaches that God is infinite, and since humans can only know what God is really like from what he has revealed about himself in Divine Scripture, we are unable to comprehend God's nature as it is, so we cannot fully comprehend or know the nature of the Divine essence. Pseudo-Dionysius cautions that, "We must not then dare to speak, or indeed to form any conception, of the hidden super-essential Godhead, except those things that are revealed to us from the Holy Scriptures."[195] Clarence Rolt calls Pseudo-Dionysius's view, "the doctrine of the Super-Essential Godhead." Succinctly, it states that, "God is, in His ultimate Nature, Supra-Personal."[196] For short, I refer to the supra-personal substance of God (God as God is in God's-self) as Godhead. Note that Godhead is not another person of the Trinity but is, in Tillich's terminology, *Das Urgrund* (literally, the ground of

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[195] Clarence Edwin Rolt, *Dionysius the Areopagite: On the Divine Names and the Mystical Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1920): 51-52.
[196] Rolt, *Dionysius the Areopagite*, pp. 4-5.

being), the eternal mystery of the primeval ground of being.[197]

Aquinas agrees with Pseudo-Dionysius; he affirms that since we don't fully understand God's substance (at least not in this life) our words cannot express God's substance. His argument is as follows. Only God has all perfections and creatures are imperfect and thus represent God imperfectly. And since we can talk about God only as we know him, and since we know him only through creatures, we can only know God as creatures represent him to us. Therefore, words "express God's substance and say something of what God really is, but represent him inadequately."[198]

What Aquinas says allows room for us to speak of Godhead metaphorically as the "far side" (i.e., the transcendence) of God. It is the far side of God that Christian mystics (including St. John of The Cross and Meister Eckhart) claim can be known through a process called unknowing. Mitchell writes that Godhead may be experienced in unknowing as a mystical voidness, and the silence of Godhead is experienced as "the ground of Being and beings" (the terminology is reminiscent of Tillich).[199] Insofar as God is revealed in Scripture and in his "near side" (i.e., the immanent) activity in the world in the persons of the Trinity, Christians may speak metaphorically of the "far side" of God as Trinity. Along these lines, Wolfhart Pannenberg writes,

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[197] See Andrew O'Neill, *Tillich: A Guide for the Perplexed*, (New York: Continuum Books, 2008): 96.

[198] *Summa Theologica*, Iª q. 13 a. 2 co. Text taken from Thomas Aquinas, *Selected Philosophical Writings*, translated and edited by Timothy McDermott, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993): 217-218.

[199] Donald W. Mitchell, *Spirituality and Emptiness*, (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1991): 23.

… absolute reality does have a personal aspect as well as an impersonal one … the Christian doctrine of the trinity involves both, the personal and the impersonal element, because the one "essence" the three persons share is not once more a person in its own right in addition to the Father, the Son, and Spirit. The one divine essence of Father, Son, and Spirit is supra-personal. Not separate form the three persons, however, but exists only as it is manifest through Father, Son, and Spirit … in their mutual relationships with one another … in terms of a mutual perichoresis, or indwelling of the three.[200]

In conclusion, Paul takes *sunyata* experience to be experience of the near side of God's *kenosis*, or as kenotic "giving" of creation. Through *sunyata* experience Paul also takes himself to encounter Godhead, or the impersonal "far side" of God in creation. For a Christian like Paul, *sunyata* is the near side of God's *kenosis* made absolute by Buddhism. As such, there is no far side, or transcendence, for Buddhism.[201]

4.5.4   The Substantiality of the Human Self

Lastly, Paul affirms that the human self is a substance that endures over time as a subject of predication. Roughly, Paul affirms that "selves" or "persons" are conscious of their own existence as bearers of "person properties" and that person properties must inhere in substantial persons in order to exist, that there are no person properties unless persons are substantial. Conscious thinking involves complex and detailed self-conscious mental episodes of sensing, feeling, thinking, judging, believing, knowing, willing, etc.

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[200] Wolfhart Pannenberg, "The Abe-Pannenberg Encounter, Afterword," in *Masao Abe: A Life of Zen Dialogue*, edited by D. W. Mitchell, (Boston: Tutle Publishing, 1998): 208.

[201] I thank Don Mitchell for helping me to clarify many of the points in this section.

While not universally held in the Western philosophical tradition, it is a traditional and widely held view. For my purposes I need not say any more about it.

4.6 John's Metaphysical Beliefs: The Metaphysics of *Sunyata*

Like Paul, John accepts that there are concrete particulars: e.g., he accepts that there are such things as this chair, this rabbit, this car, etc. However, he understands them much differently, as John affirms the metaphysics of *sunyata*:

> "S accepts the metaphysics of *sunyata*" = def. S accepts that there are particulars and affirms that they are not self-identical but "open" in that they radically project and inter-penetrate one another ontologically.

According to this view, particulars do not stand alone but are fundamentally relational: individual things do not exist apart from their standing in relations with other individual things. On this view, "no existing being is composed simply and exclusively of the constituent parts that belong to it and to it alone" and nothing exists "through itself" but all things "exist in one another without hindrance" in "mutual dependence and relatedness" as "the endlessly multiple in-one-another of existing being and effects."[202]

Recall that *sunyata* means "emptiness" or "voidness", as in empty or void of own-being (*svabhava-sunya*). Leonard Swidler writes, "Emptiness is another name for the Buddhist doctrine of *Pratityasamutpada*, Dependent Co-origination [variously translated as Dependent Origination or Co-Dependent Origination] … that nothing exists as a self-subsisting, isolated thing; rather, everything is ultimately a net of relationships, and consequently always in flux." On this view, whatever is at any moment of space-time

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[202] Yagi, *A Bridge to Buddhist-Christian Dialogue*, pp. 84, 86 and 97.

consists of conditions or relationships that are dependently co-originated. Using somewhat metaphorical and symbolic language, Swidler writes that the nature of *sunyata* "is that of unspecified relatedness in process."[203] (To get a better understanding of the way "nature" is used metaphorically to describe *sunyata*, it may be helpful to consider Heraclitus's barley drink passage: "The barley drink [*kykeon*, a mixture of wine, grated cheese, and barely meal[204]] stands still by moving."[205] Here, "stands still" expresses the what-it-is-to-be, or nature, of the barley drink, which suggests that Heraclitean natures are dynamic and inter-related. Similarly, and also metaphorically, we may say that the nature of *sunyata* is dynamic and inter-related: more exactly, *sunyata* is pure unspecified inter-relatedness.)

Abe writes that co-dependent origination "is realized in the most strict sense by rejecting both transcendence and immanence." As a consequence of the doctrine of co-dependent origination, "everything is dependent on something else without exception, nothing whatsoever in the universe being independent and self-existing." *Sunyata* may be said to be the fundamental foundation for the doctrine of dependent origination, and it is the fact that everything is completely interdependent on everything else that the

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[203] Yagi, *A Bridge to Buddhist-Christian Dialogue,* p.17.

[204] Kathleen Freeman, *Ancilla to the Presocratic Philosophers,* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1962): 33.

[205] Translated by Dan Graham. See his *Early Greek Philosophy: The Complete Fragments and Selected Testimonies of the Major Presocratics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 163.

realization of *sunyata* is possible. It is in this way that *sunyata*, boundless, limitless and without form, "best describes the nature of ultimate Reality."[206]

Abe cautions Western readers not to associate the emptiness of *sunyata* with Parmenidean non-being. According to the metaphysics of *sunyata*, there is no ontological priority of relative being over non-being; *sunyata* is prior to any distinction between relative being and non-being. Abe writes,

> *Actually existing being* is never pure being. Pure being is an abstract concept. For being (*Sein* or *u*) is always related to non-being (*Nichts* or *mu*). Being can only be being in contract to non-being … Actually existing being is simultaneously being and non-being. Being and non-being are, therefore, mutually inseparable and relative concepts, and actually existing being is always being in which being and non-being are inseparable.[207]

According to Abe, both being and non-being are conditioned; neither has ontological priority over the other and both depend on something else, the non-conditioned, i.e., *sunyata*. Abe writes, "*Sunyata* is realized not only by negating the 'eternalist' view [the Platonic and Parmenidean view of being] but also by negating the 'nihilistic' view [the negation of being, i.e., Parmenidean non-being]."[208] Because it

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[206] Masao Abe, "*Sunyata* as Formless Form: Plato and Mahayana Buddhism," in *Zen and Comparative Studies*, edited by S. Heine, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997): 139-141.

[207] Masao Abe, "Zen and Western Thought", in *Zen and Western Thought*, edited by William R. LaFleur, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1985), p.108.

[208] Masao Abe, "Non-Being and Mu - The Metaphysical Nature of Negativity in the East and the West," *Zen and Western Thought*, edited by W. R. LaFleur, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1985): 127.

negates both being and non-being, the emptiness of *sunyata* is absolute non-being, which is why Nishida, Nishitani and others of the Kyoto School often speak of *sunyata* as Absolute Nothingness.

4.6.1   *Sunyata*, Trinity, and Godhead

Nishida, Nishitani, and Abe, and others associated with the Kyoto School, take themselves to be talking about the "far side" of ultimate reality, i.e., Godhead, when discussing what Christians refer to as the God of Christianity. This is because Buddhists think that the emptiness of Godhead is absolute: they think that the self-emptying *kenosis* of the persons in the Godhead is complete, which means that Godhead must fully empty itself of transcendent personhood in order to be Godhead. (Note the application of the *soku* inference.) Accordingly, Buddhists conceive the voidness of Godhead in terms of the emptiness of *sunyata*. When Buddhists experience reality as relational and inter-penetrating, they take themselves to be experiencing what Christians refer to as the near side of the Trinitarian God of Christianity but they associate this interrelatedness with the interrelatedness of all things in *sunyata*. For them, the impersonal far side of ultimate reality has ontological priority. In contrast, for Christians the personal near side of God has ontological priority; God is revealed as being fundamentally personal. While Paul affirms that we can't comprehend Godhead and that our knowledge of God is analogical, he thinks that by means of revelation (and to a lesser degree experiential contact with the persons of the Trinity) humans can know that Godhead is personal. John, in contrast, denies these views and affirms that the essence of Godhead is the absolute emptiness of *sunyata*.

4.6.2 *Sunyata* and Self-Emptying

Nishida and Abe are familiar with the kenotic model of the Incarnation. Again, they think that the Christian understanding of *kenosis* is problematic because it does not go far enough. John agrees with their assessment. Abe writes, "*Sunyata* is not only not Being or God, but also not emptiness as distinguished from somethingness or fullness" and "*sunyata* completely empties everything, including itself. That is to say, the pure activity of absolute emptying is true *Sunyata*."[209] To say that the *kenosis* of the Son of God is absolute is to say that "Christ as the Son of God is *essentially* and *fundamentally* self-emptying or self-negating."[210] Making clear use of the logic of *soku*, Abe writes:

> The Son of God is not the Son of God (for he is essentially and
> fundamentally self-emptying). Precisely because he is not the Son of God
> he is truly the Son of God (for he originally and always works as Christ,
> the Messiah, in his salvational function of self-emptying).[211]

Recall that John identifies Godhead with the absolute self-emptying of *sunyata*. If the *kenosis* of the Son of God is absolute, then there is no far side of God. Even so, members of the Kyoto School may conceive the dynamic act of the complete self-emptying of *sunyata* in terms of Aquinas's characterization of the dynamic act of the being (*esse*) of God. In so doing, they associate the dynamic self-emptying of *sunyata*

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[209] Masao Abe, "Kenotic God and Dynamic *Sunyata*," in *Divine Emptiness and Historical Fullness: A Buddhist, Jewish, Christian Conversation with Masao Abe*, edited by C. Ives, (Valley Forge: Trinity Press, 1995): 50, 51.

[210] Masao Abe, "Kenosis and Emptiness," in *Buddhist Emptiness and Christian Trinity*, edited by R. Corless and P. F. Knitter, (New York: Paulist Press, 1990): 13.

[211] Abe, "Kenosis and Emptiness," p. 13.

with the complete *kenosis* of The Son of God in the incarnation. Consequently, Mitchell writes that the Zen Buddhist may "speak[s] of an absolute near side in which any far-side reality is emptied out" and thereby collapse the conceptual distinction between the near side and the far side of God but "a Christian cannot."[212]

4.6.3   The Doctrine of No-Self

John affirms that there are no substantial selves, from which it follows that human selves are empty of own-being: humans, too, are *sunyata*. He affirms that after the particulars of the self are abstracted out or taken away (its experiences, properties, its materially constitutive parts, etc.) in the hopes finding or discovering the true nature of what it is to be a person, one does not uncover any stable ontological subject of prediction that endures over time. This isn't to affirm anihilationism or nihilism about the self; Zen Buddhists do not absurdly deny the existence of empirical or psychological selves or deny that humans have first-person perspectives. They maintain that persons are impermanent processes of insubstantial particulars and relations that lack own-being, that persons are not ontologically prior to their person-properties, and that the fundamental features and constituents of reality are non-personal. This is the Doctrine of No-Self.[213]

Recall that pure experience is a kind of pure intellectual intuition, a "state of oneness of subject and object, a fusion of knowing and doing" that "lies at the base of all

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[212] Mitchell, *Spirituality and Emptiness*, p. 28.

[213] Mark Siderits gives an argument along these general lines in his *Buddhism as Philosophy: An Introduction*, Chapter Three, "Non-Self: Empty Persons," (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2007).

relations, and relations are established by means of it."[214] According to Nishida, from the standpoint of everyday experience, we think that there is an agent of activity from which activity arises. However, from the standpoint of pure experience, we see that *activity* – specifically, the dynamic self-emptying activity of *sunyata* – is fundamentally real and that so-called agents are conceptual abstractions.[215] Nishida writes, "The self does not exist apart from this intuition [of the will], for the true self is this unifying intuition"[216] and "It is not that there is experience because there is an individual, but that there is an individual because there is experience."[217] Following Nishida, John thinks that the human self just *is* the dynamic, unifying activity of pure experience. As such, he thinks that the pure experience of *sunyata* reveals the truth of the Doctrine of No-Self.

4.7   The Epistemological Facet of their Disagreement

John accepts the epistemology of *sunyata* whereas Paul denies it. Recall the relevant definitions:

> "S accepts the epistemology of *sunyata*" = def. S believes that (i) *sunyata* experience occurs and (ii) having *sunyata* experience gives one a good reason to believe that all reality is interconnected, impermanent and empty of own-being (*svabhava-sunya*).

> "S denies the epistemology of *sunyata*" = def. S believes that (i) *sunyata* experience occurs and (ii) having *sunyata* experience does *not* give one a

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[214] Nishida, *An Inquiry Into the Good*, pp. 32, 33.

[215] Nishida, *An Inquiry Into the Good*, 58.

[216] Nishida, *An Inquiry Into the Good*, p. 33.

[217] Nishida, *An Inquiry Into the Good*, p. xxx.

good reason to believe that all reality is interconnected, impermanent and empty of own-being (*svabhava-sunya*).

Recall that in *sunyata* experience one has the immediate impression that reality is empty of own-being (*svabhava-sunya*). To say that *sunyata* experience is possible, then, is to say that it is possible to have *this* kind of experience. Both Paul and John report that they have had *sunyata* experience; they don't wonder about its possibility. But many of us have not had it and some doubt or deny its possibility and so don't accept their testimony to be veridical. I need to say something to address such doubts.

Given the similarities between pure experience and *sunyata* experience, one might argue that the fact that pure experience occurs provides evidence for thinking that *sunyata* experience occurs. Nishida seems to be arguing something to this effect when he discusses James's views on pure experience in the context of his account of intellectual intuition on pages 30-34 of *An Inquiry into the Good*. Such reasoning has some weight, at least for someone who already accepts James's views about pure experience. However, those who are inclined to doubt the possibility of *sunyata* experience are probably inclined to doubt the possibility of pure experience, too. As such, this way of trying to show that *sunyata* experience is possible is not very promising.

To make progress, I think it will help to address underlying factors that inspire doubt about unmediated experience more generally. I take it that pure experience and *sunyata* experience are two types of unmediated experience. There are other and less controversial types of unmediated experiences that many people find to be acceptable. If we accept that these other types of unmediated experience are possible or actually occur we ought not to rule out of hand the possibility of *sunyata* experience. Thus, those who

have had these other unmediated experiences but haven't had either pure experience or *sunyata* experience ought not to be so sure that they do not or could not occur.

People may doubt or deny that unmediated experience is possible for broadly Kantian reasons. Kant famously thought that truth is not disclosed in a purely aesthetic manner (by means of sensible intuitions alone) because all valid cognitions are mediated by concepts. In *The Critique of Pure Reason*, he writes:

> Intuition and concepts … constitute the elements of all our cognitions, so that neither concepts without intuition corresponding to them in some way nor intuition without concepts can yield a cognition … without sensibility no object would be given to us, and without understanding none would be thought. Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind. It is thus just as necessary to make the mind's concepts sensible (i.e., to add an object to them in intuition) as it is to make its intuitions understandable (i.e., to bring them under concepts). Further, these two faculties or capacities cannot exchange their functions. The understanding is not capable of intuiting anything, and the senses are not capable of thinking anything. Only from their unification can cognition arise … one must not mix up their roles …[218]

In this passage Kant provides a straightforward argument against the possibility of all unmediated experience, including pure experience and *sunyata* experience. If all possible human experience is conceptually mediated, and if pure experience and *sunyata* experience are unmediated, then pure experience and *sunyata* experience are not possible

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[218] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A51-52/B75-76, translated and edited by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 193-194.

human experiences. It trivially follows that *sunyata* experience can't give anyone a reason to believe anything, let alone that ultimate reality is *sunyata*.

Contra Kant, Laurence BonJour argues that *a priori* intuition is direct, immediate, and non-discursive. BonJour offers his argument in the course of objecting to the symbolic conception of thought, which claims that propositional attitudes are relations to internal representations that are symbolic in character the properties of which are extrinsic and such that their representational character is "determined solely by some external cause or causal-historical relations" between symbol tokens and what they represent. He rejects the theory because mere awareness of symbols provides one with no genuine awareness of content and so cannot countenance how we are aware of the intrinsic properties of 'redness' and 'greenness' or for how we are aware of the internal content of our own thoughts.[219] He thinks that *a priori* insights such as 'redness is not greenness' must involve representations of realities the intrinsic properties of which we are non-discursively aware, that we non-discursively "see or grasp or apprehend in a seemingly direct and unmediated way"; he affirms that "the natures of redness and greenness are such as to preclude their being jointly realized."[220]

The deeper issue here is the claim that awareness of the phenomenal features of experience, or qualia, such as the conscious awareness of the redness of red and the greenness of green, is non-discursive, direct and conceptually unmediated. For instance, we are introspectively aware of the phenomenal features of experience, the characteristic

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[219] Laurence BonJour, *In Defense of Pure Reason*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 165 and 169.

[220] BonJour, *In Defense of Pure Reason*, p. 101.

'what it is like' to be in a particular conscious state. On the basis of such considerations, many take introspective knowledge of the phenomenal features of experience to be unmediated in the sense that, from a subjective point of view, there doesn't seem to be any gap between being conscious of these phenomenal features and our introspective awareness of them. This view is somewhat controversial, but I take it to be plausible enough.[221]

William Alston provides a similar argument for thinking that unmediated experience is possible. While he concedes that ordinary, mature perception "almost always involves conceptualization and judgment" he contends that it remains to be shown that perception without concepts and judgments does not occur. He writes:

> I would suppose that in certain reduced states of visual consciousness –
> when just waking up, for example – and at the periphery of the visual field,
> one has pure perception without the intrusion of higher cognitive
> processes. And perhaps the sensory experience of very young infants is
> barren of conceptualization.[222]

Elsewhere, Alston writes that objects of perception present or give themselves directly to our awareness as red, round, or loving, or whatnot. He calls this kind of

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[221] Daniel Dennett argues that qualia are illusory in his paper "Quining Qualia," in *Contemporary Science,* edited by A. Marcel and E. Bisiach, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988). John R. Searle writes that Dennett's eliminativist approach is mistaken because, "*where consciousness is concerned the existence of the appearance is the reality*", *The Mystery of Consciousness,* (New York: The New York Review of Books, 1997): 112.

[222] William Alston, *A Realist Conception of Truth*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996): 90.

experience direct awareness. He maintains that direct awareness is: "a mode of cognition that is essentially independent of any conceptualization, belief, judgment, or any other application of general concepts to the object [of perception]." He takes it to be clear that "sensory experience essentially involves a presentation of objects to consciousness in a way that does not *necessarily* involve the application of general concepts" to the objects of perception and that it is this feature that separates perception from other modes of interacting with objects, such as thinking about them, remembering them, and the like. While explicitly saying that he rejects Kant's view, he proposes that perhaps people still tend to accept it on account of confusing *direct awareness of an object* and *awareness of an object as possessing some property, p.*[223]

There are still other reasons for thinking that conceptually unmediated experience is possible. Consider the newborn that sees red and green objects in her playpen for the first time. If we buy the Empiricist's story about concept acquisition, she need not have concepts of redness or greenness before having her first visual experiences of red or green things. Indeed, her very first experiences would be, as James says, "one great blooming, buzzing, confusion."[224]

On the basis of these arguments, I conclude that objections that unmediated experiences such as pure experience and *sunyata* experience are not possible are unconvincing and do not provide sufficient reason to discredit the sincere testimony of those that claim to have had them.

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[223] William Alston, *Perceiving God*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991): 37-38.

[224] William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981): 446. Originally published in 1890.

As a Buddhist, John objects to Kant's View for special reasons. Understanding these objections sheds light on why he thinks *sunyata* experience occurs and why he thinks that having *sunyata* experience gives one a good reason to believe that all reality is interconnected, impermanent and empty of own-being.

According to Buddhism, people are subject to suffering (*duhkha*) because they are caught in the chain of rebirth (*saṃsara*) due to the influence of karma. Karma arises on account of negative mental dispositions, including thoughts, words, and deeds. According to Acharya Nagarjuna, negative mental dispositions are products of how the mind perceives the world in ordinary thinking, or *vikalpa*, defined as discriminating, bifurcating and dualistic thinking.[225] Nagarjuna calls incorrect perceptions *prapanca*. As Mitchell writes, "*prapanca* keeps one from seeing that all things are really dependently arisen, they have no 'own-being,' or substantial independent nature."[226]

The Zen Buddhist accepts Nagarjuna's account of *vikalpa* and *prapanca*. One type of incorrect perception is the view that there are substantial, independent things. According to Abe, Nagarjuna's core insight is that phenomenal things do not exist as *svabhava* but that phenomenal things are empty of own-being. Abe writes, "*Prapanca* implies verbal pluralism of fiction of language. *Vikalpa* arises from *prapanca* because human thinking is nothing but a fiction unrelated to reality."[227] Note that Abe is talking about thinking from the standpoint of *sunyata*. Nagarjuna's thought is Kantian in that it affirms that our ordinary way of thinking does not capture how things are in themselves

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[225] Abe, "Emptiness," p. 45.

[226] Mitchell, *Buddhism*, p. 140.

[227] Abe, "Emptiness," p. 43.

(i.e., it does not correspond to any noumenal reality) but rather represents phenomena. But his views are anti-Kantian in another, deeper respect: He affirms that non-discursive experience is possible and is indicative of things as such and just as they are. As Abe puts the point, since ordinary thinking is inadequate and flawed, if we are to have a right understanding of the world, "it is necessary for us to retrograde to thinking and judgment to the realm of non-discursive intuition. In so doing we face reality prior to language."[228] Nagarjuna's key insight is that in order to see things as such and just as they are – empty of own-being – it is necessary to go beyond conventional, discursive thinking. Emptiness is realized when all misconceptions (*vikalpa*) are done away with and one encounters reality as such and as it is non-discursively. Note that *sunyata* is not hereby reified: emptiness is empty, too. Abe writes, "Emptiness that is objectified and conceptualized must be emptied. The self-negation, or self-emptying, of Emptiness is essential for the authentic realization of emptiness."[229]

To sum up, John and Paul agree that having *sunyata* experience makes it *seem* that all reality is interconnected, impermanent and empty of own-being, that we can have experiential states in which reality appears to us to be *sunyata*. It is important to stress that each has exactly the same epistemic seemings about this. What they disagree about is whether such experiences give one a good reason to believe that all reality *is* interconnected, impermanent and empty of own-being: John thinks that it does and Paul thinks it does not. Similarly, while both John and Paul have *sensus divinitatis* experiences, only Paul takes them to be of the Christian God and only he takes them to provide

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[228] Abe, "Emptiness," pp. 43-44.

[229] Abe, "Emptiness," p. 48.

reasons or evidence for thinking that God exists. They disagree about the evidential merits of *sunyata* and *sensus divinitatis* experiences in part because they disagree about the phenomenological-existential significance of *sunyata* experience. A better understanding of the phenomenological-existential facet of their disagreement will help us to have better understanding of the nature of the epistemological facet of their disagreement and *vice-versa*.

Lastly, it may seem strange to suppose that John has *sensus divinitatis* experiences. But it isn't if we understand where he is coming from. First, note that from the standpoint of everyday experience it is appropriate for John to accept Proper Functionalism. But could John accept the Standard model and some extension of it from the standpoint of everyday experience, too? I think that this might be possible. Traditionally, Zen Buddhism is non-theistic but it is sufficiently similar to certain forms of Buddhism that are Theistic or have strong Theistic overtones, such as Pure Land Buddhism. Moreover, Buddhist philosophers of and affiliated with the Kyoto School have Theistic tendencies.[230] For these reasons, a Zen Buddhist may affirm (perhaps only highly qualified versions of) The Dependency, Design, and Immediacy Theses, or theses sufficiently similar to them that are able to do the relevant philosophical work. A plausible uniquely Zen Buddhist extension of the Standard model would likely to draw on the theology of Godhead articulated by Meister Eckhart. Not coincidentally, many

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[230] Kyoto School philosophers have much to say about God. Raw materials for showing that certain forms of Zen Buddhism affirms the Standard model and for formulating a uniquely Buddhist extension of it may be found in Nishida (1978) and (1990), Nishitani (1983), Tanabe (1986), Abe (1995), and Carter (1997). Also of interest is Buri/Oliver (1997).

Kyoto School philosophers have written on how Eckhart's views about Godhead are relevantly similar to their views about *sunyata*.[231] This is speculative and controversial, to be sure. Fortunately, all that is *required* here is that John has had *sensus divinitatis* experiences. Since John once was a Christian, it is only natural that he has had and now and again still has Christian religious experiences.

4.8   The Phenomenological-Existential Facet of their Disagreement

In Sections 4.4 through 4.6, although some of what I said indicated how John and Paul have had the same (or sufficiently similar) experiences, I focused on showing that John and Paul are aware of the same (or sufficiently similar) facts in the course of their disagreement. In this section, that emphasis is reversed.

John thinks that the phenomenological features of *sunyata* experiences are crucially important; he thinks they are of ultimate existential and religious significance. He thinks that it reveals that the nature of ultimate reality is "the non-self of *sunyata*." That is, he thinks that a religiously and existentially appropriate response to *sunyata* experience is to accept that ultimate reality is non-personal. Recall the definition:

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[231] Ueda Shizutera has much to say about Eckhart in relation to *sunyata*. See his "Nothingness in Meister Eckhart and Zen Buddhism with Particular Reference to the Borderlands of Philosophy and Theology," in D. Papenfuss and J. Soring (ed.), *Transzendenz und Immanenz: Philosophie und Theologie in der veränderten Welt* (Berlin: Kohlhammer. 1977). Also see D. T. Suzuki (2006), Chapter 1, "Meister Eckhart and Buddhism," in *Mysticism: Christian and Buddhist*. Also of interest are Nishida (1990), Chapter 30, "God," 164-165, and Tanabe (1986): 173-187.

> "S accepts that having *sunyata* experience phenomenologically and
> existentially reveals that the nature of ultimate reality is non-self" = def.
> S thinks that (i) the phenomenological-existential features associated
> with having *sunyata* experience indicate that the nature of the human
> self (or person) is non-substantial and that (ii) the ultimate, religiously
> significant metaphysical ground of self-hood is *sunyata*.

In contrast, Paul denies that *sunyata* experience phenomenologically and existentially reveals that the nature of ultimate reality is non-self; he denies both (i) and (ii). As a Christian, he takes his experience of emptiness to be of the personal Christian God. Specifically, he may think of experience of emptiness is a "mediation of the divine brought about by the Holy Spirit."[232] Alternatively, as described by Frances S. Adeney, he may think of *sunyata* experience as a type of contemplative prayer that is not focused on communication with God (bringing petitions to God or listening for God's voice, and the like), not rooted in Biblical concepts and ideas, and not focused on any particular outcome.[233] Søren Kierkegaard suggests another option, that the experience of emptiness is a way of cultivating silence. For Kierkegaard, silence is a mode or way of existence of inward deepening. He writes:

> Silence is like the subdued lighting in a pleasant room, like the friendliness in
> a modest living room; it is not something one talks about, but it is there and
> exercises its beneficent power. Silence is like the tone, the fundamental tone,

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[232] James L. Fredericks, *Buddhists and Christians: Through Comparative Theology to Solidarity*, (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2004): 95.

[233] F. S. Adeney, "How I, a Christian, Have Learned from Buddhist Practice," *Christians Talk about Buddhist Meditation, Buddhists Talk about Christian Prayer*, R. M. Gross and T. C. Muck (eds.), (New York: Continuum, 2003): 16.

which is not given prominence and is called the fundamental tone precisely because it lies at the base.[234]

Of course, John won't think that any of these (or similar) interpretations of *sunyata* experience is (fully) correct. For instance, he will think it is a mistake to associate *sunyata* experience with a transcendent personal God.

In the rest of this section I focus narrowly on a few of the phenomenological-existential features of self-emptying that Buddhists and Christians are both familiar with in the course of their religious experiences. I consider these experiences in terms of Christian and Buddhist doctrines and teachings, for it is through the lens of these teachings that Christians and Buddhists such as John and Paul understand and interpret the religious significance of the phenomenological-existential features of their experiences.

4.8.1 *Agape*, Self-Emptying, and Non-Differentiating Love

In having experiences of *agape* love, Christians have self-emptying experiences. According to Nishitani, the Christian notion of *agape* love is acknowledged in Buddhism. He writes that in Buddhism, "… the command to love one's enemies as one's friends [i.e., *agape* love] … is known as "non-differentiating love beyond enmity and friendship."[235] But Christians and Buddhists conceive the activity and aim of *agape*/non-differentiating

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[234] Søren Kierkegaard, *For Self-Examination,* "What is Required," edited and translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton University Press: New Jersey, 1990): 49.

[235] Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, p. 58.

love differently: Christians associate it with the love of a kenotic God; Buddhists associate it with *sunyata*.

For the Christian, self-emptying love, *agape*, and spiritual unity are interrelated notions. Commenting on *Philippians* 2:5-8, Mitchell writes that as God pours out *agape* love in the incarnation of Christ, Christians pour themselves out in self-giving love and share with others the grace and love they receive from God.[236] According to Augustine, "charity (*caritas*) is love centered on God and [love] shared with others for the glory of God (*agape*)."[237]*Agape* is at the center of importance to the Christian's spiritual life: charity, poured from the *kenosis* of Christ into each believer individually, "becomes the foundation for the City of God." In short, the *kenosis* of Christ enables the Christian to have spiritual union with God.[238] On these themes, Hans Urs von Balthasar writes that the kenotic self-giving *agape* love of God revealed in the cruxifiction of Christ is the highest expression of love; *agape* purifies human *eros* and enables people to love both God and neighbor with selfless kenotic love. Chiara Lubich emphasizes the idea that becoming empty of self is a necessary step for Christian spiritual unity with God and neighbors. The underlying theme is that spiritual unity requires self-emptying, *agape* love.[239]

As a Buddhist reflecting on such themes, Nishitani writes that central to both *agape* love and self-emptying *sunyata* is *kenosis*. Commenting on *Matthew* 5:43-48 (in which Jesus says, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you"), he writes,

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[236] Donald Mitchell, "Christian Kenosis," *Pro Dialogo* 1, no. 100 (1999): 141-142.

[237] Mitchell, "Christian Kenosis," p. 144.

[238] Mitchell, "Christian Kenosis," p. 144.

[239] Mitchell, "Christian Kenosis," pp. 153-155.

"What is it like, this non-differentiating love, this *agape*, that loves even enemies? In a word, it is "making oneself empty.""[240] He characterizes *agape* love as a type of perfection that is actualized differently in God and Christ and in humans. He writes that, "In the case of Christ", actualizing the perfection of *agape*,

> … meant taking on the form of man and becoming a servant, in accordance with the will of God, who is the origin of the *ekkenōsis* or "making himself empty" of Christ. God's love is such that it shows itself willing to forgive even the sinner who has turned against him, and this forgiving love is an expression of the "perfection" of God. Accordingly, the meaning of self-emptying may be said to be contained within God himself. In Christ, *ekkenōsis* is realized in the fact that one who was in the shape of God took on the shape of a servant; with God, it is implied already in his original perfection. That is to say, the very fact itself of God's being God essentially entails the characteristic of "having made himself empty." With Christ we speak of a deed that has been accomplished; with God, of an original nature. What is *ekkenōsis* for the Son is *kenōsis* for the Father. In the East, this would be called *anātman*, or non-ego.[241]

In contrast,

> For man to actualize this perfection [*agape* love], to be perfect as the Father in heaven is perfect and so to "become a Son of God", man must engage himself in loving his enemies. This requires a transition from differentiating human love to non-differentiating divine love. It means denying *eros* and turning to *agapē*, denying ego and turning to non-ego. Christ embodies this perfection of God through the love by which he

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[240] Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness,* p. 58.

[241] Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, pp. 58-59.

"emptied himself" of his equality with God to take the shape of a servant among men. The Christian is said to practice or imitate that self-emptying perfection when he converts from a human differentiating love to a divine non-differentiating love.[242]

Nishitani speaks of being emptied of self as primarily "a mode of being" but notes that when considered in relation to activity or deed, self-emptying "can also be called love." The practice of *agape*/non-differentiating love has both a personal character to it and something elemental, more basic than personal, a quality of "*transpersonality, or impersonality*", but the "personal" and "impersonal" aspects are both fully present.[243] For Nishitani, the term 'impersonal' is not the opposite of the 'personal,' but is understood as the 'personally impersonal', i.e., the way in which the impersonal (*sunyata*) manifests personally.[244]) As such, in the practice of *agape*/non-differentiating love, the ego engages in a process of self-emptying but is not thereby fully negated. This suggests that *agape*/non-differentiating love is a dynamic activity that involves continual self-emptying.

According to Abe, dynamic self-emptying is described variously in Christian terms by St. Paul, as offering oneself as a living sacrifice to God in worship (*Romans* 12:1), as crucifying the desires of the passions and the flesh (*Galatians* 5:24), and as walking not in the flesh but in the Spirit (*Romans* 8:1-5). Elsewhere, Abe calls attention to Jesus's saying that only by losing one's life will one save one's life (*Matthew* 10:39), as well as St. Paul's admonishment that Christians should count themselves dead to sin

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[242] Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness,* p. 59.

[243] Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, pp. 59-60.

[244] Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, p. 60.

but alive to God in Christ Jesus (*Romans* 6:11).[245] Recall that Abe thinks that this conception of *kenosis* does not go far enough; he thinks it is overly conceptualized and dualistic. He maintains that God's self-emptying must be not partial but total, that self-emptying is not merely an attribute of but the fundamental nature of God, that only a God that completely and continually empties himself is truly God.[246] In short, Abe identifies the kenotic God with the Absolute Nothingness of *sunyata*: "the notion of a kenotic God opens up for Christianity a common ground with Buddhism by overcoming Christianity's monotheistic character, the absolute oneness of God, and sharing with Buddhism the realization of Absolute Nothingness as the essential realization of the Ultimate."[247] John accepts what Nishitani and Abe have to say about the kenotic God. Christians like Paul may appreciate what Kyoto School philosophers have to say here but think that these views on the *kenosis* of God go too far.

Mitchell, Augustine, Balthasar and Lubich on the one hand and Nishitani and Abe on the other show that the manifestation of *agape*/non-differentiating love in religious practice is important to both Christians and Zen Buddhists. That this is so provides a point of contact for Zen Buddhists and Christians like John and Paul: both have self-emptying religious experiences. Reflecting on the similarities and differences between Buddhist and Christian teachings on *agape*/non-differentiating love, as well as the religious experiences associated with self-denial and dynamic self-emptying, we understand how John and Paul are able to assess the same (or sufficiently similar)

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[245] Abe, "Kenosis and Emptiness," p. 13.

[246] Abe, "Kenosis and Emptiness," pp. 17-18.

[247] Abe, "Kenosis and Emptiness," p. 19.

experiences even as they disagree about their religious significance.

4.8.2   The Near Side and the Far Side of God

Recall that (some) Christians experience the near side of God, which is in essence personal, and the far side of God, which is impersonal. Christians and Zen Buddhists experience what is called the essence of the far side of God similarly. Robert Aitken Roshi (a Zen Buddhist Master) and David Steindl-Rast (a Catholic Benedictine monk) report having a grasp of both Zen and Christianity. For them, Christianity has a "warmer, personal feeling of relationship to the Ultimate." In contrast, they report that Zen Buddhism has a "cool, non-personal side."[248] What they say gives us a better understanding of the way in which John and Paul have the same (or sufficiently similar) phenomenological-existential experiences even as they disagree about whether the impersonal or the personal side has ontological priority. With respect to their phenomenological-existential experiences, John and Paul are in much the same position as are Aitken and Steindl-Rast: they, too, assess the evidential value of the same or (sufficiently similar) experiences (and facts).

4.8.3   Self, No-Self, and the Overcoming of Self-Alienation

John and Paul agree there is an objective side and a subjective to side to their religious experiences and that this generates phenomenological-existential problems. Estrangement, alienation, anxiety, and despair result when one is unable to integrate the

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[248] Robert Aitken and David Steindl-Rast, *The Ground We Share: Everyday Practice, Buddhist and Christian*, (Liguori: Triumph Books, 1994): xxi and 26.

objective and subjective sides of experience. For example, from a Christian perspective, one can (objectively) phenomenologically-existentially encounter God's movement in one's life but fail to be subjectively receptive to him by resisting God's objective movement. To avoid self-alienation, etc., one must be subjectively receptive to the objective movement from God.[249] A Christian may understand that she is "dead to sin and made alive in Christ" even as she struggles to overcome "this body of sin and death." He may strive "to be a living sacrifice to God" even as he fights to get off of the altar.

The objective-subjective dichotomy is problematic for the Zen Buddhist, too. The problem most obviously arises when the self paradoxically attempts to overcome itself. Even framing the issue this way is problematic. As Leslie D. Alldritt writes:

> …in trying to locate the asking 'I,' it seems incumbent to 'step back' from the duality of the asking 'I' and oneself, yet in that very step 'backward' (the direction is illustrative rather than spatial), one *necessarily* creates another duality between the asking 'I' and the new asking 'I' that now asks the question.[250]

Wrestling with the objective-subjective dichotomy, the Buddhist aims to overcome radical estrangement, alienation, anxiety, and despair. Abe writes that the first step to overcoming the objective-subjective is to realize that "life, which is itself living-

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[249] Leslie D. Alldritt, "Masao Abe and Paul Tillich: A Dialogue Toward Love," in *Masao Abe: A Zen Life of Dialogue*, edited by Donald W. Mitchell, (Boston: Charles E. Tuttle Co., Inc., 1998): 237.

[250] Leslie D. Alldritt, "Masao Abe and Paul Tillich: A Dialogue Toward Love," pp. 234-235.

and-dying, is none other than nothingness." [251] Wrestling with, "the antinomic oneness of living and dying … is the most serious existential problem that must be solved to attain emancipation."[252] The process of overcoming the objective-subjective dichotomy can be exceedingly difficult.

For the Christian, self-alienation is overcome in Christ. The human self is only truly a self when it is put to death and brought back to life in Christ. In one sense, dying to sin and being alive to Christ is a past event; it is something that has happened. Yet in another sense, it is an ongoing process of getting rid of sinful habits and tendencies, something that can only be accomplished by the grace of God and only completely so with God in heaven. The process of becoming holy can be exceedingly difficult.

In sum, for the Christian, being a true self is a continual process of dying to sin and giving one's self over to God. For the Buddhist, a self is a True or Absolute Self only if the self negates itself absolutely and finds fulfillment in that self-emptying. For both the Christian and the Zen Buddhist, the self must be liberated from self-alienation by the activity of something other than self. In that sense, both acknowledge the soteriological activity of ultimate reality. Both John and Paul have had experiences of liberation, and both can understand them in light of Christian and Zen Buddhist categories. Both have had self-emptying religious experiences, and both have had them in Christian and Buddhist contexts. That is why they are able to compare both types of experiences and see they have the same (or sufficiently similar) phenomenological features. And that is

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[251] Masao Abe, "Meaning of Life in Buddhism," *Zen and the Modern World*, S. Heine ed., (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003): 18.

[252] Abe, "Meaning of Life in Buddhism," p. 21.

another reason why each is able to assess the evidential value of the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and experiences in the course of their disagreement.

4.9   Conclusion

The goal of this chapter was to show that (1*) holds in The Case of John and Paul. Recall (1*):

(1*)   In their respective inquires regarding whether Christianity or Zen Buddhism is true, John and Paul assess the evidential value of the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and experiences.

The arguments in this chapter support the conclusion that John and Paul are each sufficiently familiar with the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and experiences at issue for each facet of their disagreement and so are able to assess their evidential merits in the course of their disagreement. This is sufficient to show that (1*) holds in their case. In the next chapter I argue that (3*) also holds in their case.

CHAPTER 5. TRADITION-BASED PERSPECTIVALISM

5.1   <u>Introduction</u>

In Chapter Four I explained the four facets of disagreement between John and Paul and concluded that (1*) holds in their case. In this Chapter I argue that (3*) holds in their case, too.

First, recall (1*)-(3*):

(1*)   In their respective inquires into Christianity and Zen Buddhism, John and Paul assess the evidential value of the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and experiences.

(2*)   Paul believes that Christianity is true and that Buddhism is false; John believes that Zen Buddhism is true and that Christianity is false, and John and Paul correctly believe that Christianity and Zen Buddhism are inconsistent.

(3*)   Both John and Paul's beliefs about the truth-values of Christianity and Zen Buddhism are equally reasonable.

And recall Condition N from Chapter One:

> N: Approximately, S (fully) manifests the meta-cognitive virtue of reasonableness if:
>
> i) S, *qua* epistemic agent, is functioning well epistemically by having and exercising the epistemic virtues that underlie the manifestation of reasonableness, including the intellectual virtues of the love of knowledge, firmness, courage and caution, humility, autonomy, generosity, and practical wisdom;
>
> ii) S is responsive to reasons; e.g., S is willing to correct his/her views in light of criticism, willing to provide others with reasons, has a measure of good judgment that is incompatible with perversely bad judgment, and is to some degree self-critical, at least in the sense of being disposed to think about and correct tendencies that have gotten them into trouble;
>
> iii) S is minimally rational with respect to his/her desires and is not subject to serious affective disorders (e.g., extreme apathy or severe clinical depression) and is appropriately concerned about his/her own well-being; and
>
> iv) S is appropriately conscientious and reflective regarding the truth of his/her beliefs, especially when those beliefs are challenged.

I explain Tradition-Based Perspectivalism (TBP) in Section 5.2. In Section 5.3 I offer two arguments in favor of TBP, both of which are rooted in the work of Alasdair MacIntyre. In Section 5.4 I argue that if Condition N holds in The Case of John and Paul then we have reason to think (3*) holds in their case as well and show how TBP makes it more plausible to think that Condition N holds in The Case of John and Paul. I conclude in Section 5.5.

5.2   Tradition-Based Perspectivalism

Tradition-Based Perspectivalism (TBP) states:

The Tradition-Source Thesis: Starting points for dialectical argument, including foundational beliefs about what is reasonable to believe and why (e*ndoxa*), have their origins in and are passed down by particular traditions of inquiry.

The Perspectival Thesis: There is no perspective free starting point or epistemic point of view for human inquiry.

The Tradition-Based Thesis: Rational standards that guide human enquiry are appropriately grounded only if they are historically situated and tradition-based.

In the next three sub-sections, I explain each thesis in greater detail. I start with the Tradition-Source Thesis.

5.2.1   The Tradition-Source Thesis

The Tradition-Source Thesis: Starting points for dialectical argument, including foundational beliefs about what is reasonable to believe and why (e*ndoxa*) have their origins in and are passed down by particular traditions of inquiry.

To understand the Tradition-Source Thesis, we need to understand what tradition is. Edward Shils writes that tradition, in the barest sense, is, "anything that is transmitted

or handed down from the past to the present."[253] Tradition includes a wide variety of things: artifacts, tools, texts, buildings, stories, myths, art, images, accounts of acts and events, beliefs about all sorts of things, as well as accounts of belief, justification and knowledge. Traditions are distinguished by what they pass down to their descendants. While particular actions and events can't be passed down, patterns of action and norms and modes of behavior can. Similarly, while we may literally pass down copies of *The Iliad* or *Hamlet*, we can't literally pass down interpretations of texts or methods of interpreting them. But interpretations and methods of interpretation can be handed down in the sense that one may teach them to others and so enable them to engage in appropriate interpretive practices. By appropriating and engaging in these practices, people internalize and appropriate interpretive methods and learn how to read and interpret texts on their own.[254]

According to Shils, a tradition is alive, or genuine, only if it is embodied within a contemporary socio-cultural context. Some traditions are living and breathing institutions made up of flesh and blood members while others have died out because no living persons are left to embody them. While not itself a tradition of inquiry, a text sitting in a library can be a record of one, which makes it possible for long forgotten texts to be rediscovered, reread, and reintroduced and so once again become embodied in a living tradition.[255]

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[253] Edward Shils, *Tradition*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981): 12. I thank Dan Frank for referring me to this very helpful text.

[254] Shils, *Tradition*, pp. 12-13.

[255] Shils, *Tradition*, pp. 12-13.

Consider a couple examples of philosophical traditions. Plato drew on the work of and responded to his predecessors; his body of work is incomprehensible unless we consider it in terms of its place within an overall historical-philosophical narrative of Greek thought. Plato could not have developed his philosophy if he wasn't aware of the views of Parmenides and Heraclitus, knew nothing of Greek poets, or if his thinking was not informed by Greek thought more generally. Similarly, Kant's Transcendental Idealism is a response to the Rationalists and Empiricists of his day, including Leibniz, Descartes, Berkeley, Locke, and Hume. By building on and otherwise amending what was handed down to them, Plato and Kant each founded new traditions of inquiry that, in their view, dealt with the intellectual concerns and problems of their day better than the ones that they started out with. As Kantianism and Platonism became more influential they were subjected to various internal and external critiques and were in turn amended, augmented, and reinterpreted so that contemporary and neo- Platonists and Kantians could, in their view, more adequately address new problems and concerns. Despite such developments, these traditions retain their identities: even as a tradition develops, it retains its "common themes," its "contiguity of presentation and departure," and its "descent from a common origin," features that account for and preserve its identity as a distinct philosophical tradition.[256]

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[256] Shils, *Tradition*, p. 14.

5.2.1.1 *Endoxa*

Traditions of inquiry don't arrive fully formed, like Athena from Zeus's head; they are based on and built up out of prior materials. As Aristotle writes, "demonstration must start from somewhere" (*Posterior Analytics*, 84a30-35); we start out with what is "prior and better known to us" (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1095b), namely, with what is "known as far as we are concerned" and "in our view" (*Posterior Analytics*, 72a5). Aristotle called these starting points *endoxa*, "opinions accepted by everyone, or by the majority, or by the wise – and among the wise, by all or most of them, or by those who are the most notable and having the highest reputation" (*Topics*, 100b21–23).[257] *Endoxa* provide appropriate starting points for philosophical inquiry, furnish us with basic object-level beliefs, and play an essential role in whether or not someone takes some evidential consideration or other to provide good or bad reasons and/or evidence to believe some proposition or other at the object-level. (Note that starting with *endoxa* isn't unique to Aristotelian or Western traditions. For instance, according to the Confucian tradition, the sage-Kings of the *Zhou* dynasty are moral exemplars. What is recorded in *The Four Books* and *The Five Classics* provides standards of acceptable doxastic practice as well as materials to formulate theoretical standards specifying what to believe and why. This suggests that Confucians accept, at least implicitly, something very much like the account of *endoxa* articulated here.[258])

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[257] From Aristotle, *Selections*, p. 61, 351, 41 and 70.

[258] Alasdair MacIntyre, among others, notes that Confucian views are relevantly similar to Aristotelian views. See "Contrasting Confucian Virtue Ethics and MacIntyre's Aristotelian Virtue Theory" by Wan Junren, translated by Edward Slingerland, and

5.2.1.2 Traditions of Inquiry

Alasdair MacIntyre maintains that processes and forces of enculturation, socialization, and education shape and form traditions of inquiry. These processes and forces are not abstract or impersonal; they are manifest only through the actions of people engaging in practices of parenting, teaching, mentoring, and the like. Elder members of traditions of inquiry pass on to up and coming members specific practices of belief acquisition and pre-philosophical notions, concepts, and ideas about what to believe and why, which are then fashioned and formalized into explicit standards of substantive rationality. Once formulated and disseminated, all members of a tradition of inquiry, novice and expert alike, may appeal to these standards in order to evaluate whether particular belief-forming practices are appropriate, reasonable, truth-conducive, etc. On this view, being theoretically rational involves being rational in accordance with the standards of theoretical rationality of the particular tradition of inquiry to which one belongs as a member.

According to MacIntyre, belief-forming practices have much in common with other kinds of practices. By 'practice' MacIntyre means,

> … any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative
> human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are

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Alasdair MacIntyre, "Once More on Confucian and Aristotelian Conceptions of the Virtues: A Response to Professor Wan," in Robin Wang, ed., *Chinese Philosophy in an Era of Globalization*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004). Also see MacIntyre, "Incommensurability, Truth, and the Conversation Between Confucians and Aristotelians About the Virtues," in *Culture and Modernity*, edited by Elliot Deutsch, (Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 1991).

realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended.[259]

For example, chess, football, astronomy, and nuclear physics are different kinds of practices: each is a form of socially established cooperative human activity, has a certain goal and certain internal goods associated with the activity in question, and is such that the standards of excellence associated with and appropriate to them arise from within the context of their performance. The standards that make for a good or bad chess player arise internal to the playing of the game and are fully explicable only in light of its history and practice. Likewise, to be an excellent astronomer is to internalize the methods and practices central to doing astronomy and to engage in them well. That requires knowing how to use various astronomical instruments (telescopes, spectrographic equipment, etc.), the ability to apply the scientific method and data collection procedures to make systematic observations of astronomical bodies, and the ability to comprehend and follow standards that guide astronomers in the formulation of hypotheses, theories, and laws intended to explain and predict stellar and interstellar phenomena.[260] Similarly, a particular tradition of inquiry is authoritative over its own practices: the proper way for

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[259] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*. 2nd ed., (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987): 187.

[260] Many of these points are developed in light of Christopher Lutz's discussion of MacIntyre's definition of 'practice' in *Tradition in the Ethics of Alasdair MacIntyre: Relativism, Thomism, and Philosophy*, (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2004): 41.

a member to evaluate the acceptability and epistemic aptness of one's beliefs is to check them in accord with the standards that govern, guide, and otherwise constitute the belief forming practices of one's tradition. For instance, Rugby players do not judge the rational appropriateness of picking up and throwing the ball according to the rules of Soccer. Similarly, Rationalists do not judge the rational appropriateness of believing things on the basis of *a priori* intuition according to Empiricist standards of theoretical rationality.

Jennifer Herdt writes that traditions of inquiry are "groups of people engaged in a common conversation on a set of topics over an extended period of time, groups that may overlap and have fuzzy edges and whose set of topics is constantly evolving."[261] On this understanding, since different traditions of inquiry are made up of different groups of people engaged in different conversations about different topics at various places and times, we expect their members to disagree about whether some particular standard of theoretical rationality or other is true, that they do not accept the same basic sources of evidence (or that they do no give the same evidence equal weight), and so on. But we must be cautious: different traditions of inquiry may accept the same basic sources yet make incompatible evaluations of their evidential merits. For example, two distinct traditions of inquiry may accept that a certain type of religious experience is a basic source of belief and yet disagree about its significance and evidential merits. Of course, two different traditions of inquiry may be in agreement in their evaluations of the same basic source of evidence (including its weight). At any rate, to the extent that the members of different traditions of inquiry accept different *endoxa* and different core

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[261] Jennifer Herdt, "Alasdair Macintyre's 'Rationality of Traditions' and Tradition-Transcendental Standards of Justification," *The Journal of Religion* 78, no. 4 (1998): 544.

metaphysical and/or 'common sense' assumptions, we are not surprised to discover that they accept different substantive standards of theoretical rationality. And because particular traditions of inquiry are distinguished by which standards of theoretical rationality they take to be true or false, we have some reason to expect their members disagree to some extent about what to believe and why.

5.2.1.3   Tradition, Logical Principles, and Tradition-Transcendent Truth

One potential problem for The Tradition-Source Thesis is that it seems that the rational acceptability of basic logical principles and axioms does not have its source in tradition or traditions of inquiry. So it seems unnecessary to appeal to tradition in order to ground the rational acceptability of logical principles and axioms. But that seems inconsistent with The Tradition-Source Thesis. But once we have a better grasp of what The Tradition-Source Thesis says we shall see that there is a satisfactory response to the problem.

According to TBP, logical principles are not basic starting points, *per se*, but rather purely formal constraints on whatever points from which traditions of inquiry may coherently start. As such, logical principles set necessary limits on what is coherent and meaningful to claim to be true. MacIntyre writes,

> …[the] observance of the laws of logic is only a necessary and not a
> sufficient condition for rationality, whether theoretical or practical.[262]

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[262] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, p. 4.

Elsewhere, MacIntyre tells us that logical principles, such as 'Every whole is greater than its part', are evident in the sense that competent language users immediately comprehend them. As such, necessary truths are formal; they are not substantive in content.[263]

Since the laws of logic are necessary but not sufficient for rationality, something more must be added. MacIntyre maintains that:

> It is on what has to be added to observance of the laws of logic to justify ascriptions of rationality – whether to oneself or to others, whether to modes of enquiry or to justifications of belief, or to courses of action and their justification – that disagreement arises concerning the fundamental nature of rationality and extends into disagreement over how it is rationally appropriate to proceed in the face of these disagreements.[264]

In other words, one reason we engage in disagreement about the fundamental nature of rationality is that we cannot appeal to evident logical principles in order to adjudicate disputes about what is rational to believe and why. In order to show or justify that we are being rational, to our selves or others, we must add to the laws of logic substantive claims and principles about what to believe and why and carefully reason in accord with those principles; it is because people make different substantive claims about what to believe and why that we disagree about how to rationally proceed in the face of these disagreements.

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[263] Alasdair MacIntyre, "First Principles, Final Ends and Contemporary Philosophical Issues," in Kelvin Knight (ed.), *The MacIntyre Reader*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press. 1998): 175.

[264] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, p. 4.

To sum up, logical truths are not substantive whereas starting points for dialectical argument are. It follows that starting points for dialectical argument, *endoxa*, cannot be logical truths. Thus TBP recognizes that what is or is not logically true does not depend on tradition but maintains that the rational acceptability of logical and mathematical truths is tradition-dependent.

One implication of this view is that in order for us to show or justify to ourselves or to others that we are being rational, substantive standards of theoretical rationality must be added to the laws of logic. These standards make or presuppose contingent claims about what is rational to believe and why. For example, Rationalism could be false: it is no contradiction to say that humans lack faculties of *a priori* intuition or that humans have such faculties but that they are woefully unreliable. Similarly, it is easy to suppose that certain religious experiences (or most of them or all of them) are not truth-conducive. And we can imagine worlds in which clairvoyance, reading tealeaves, and gazing into crystal balls are widely taken to be basic sources of evidence because these things are reliable indicators of truth. But there are limits here. For instance, no live tradition of inquiry could take it as axiomatic that all contradictions are true, that affirming the consequent is a valid inference rule, or that disjunctive syllogism was invalid.[265] Perhaps, in the very beginning stages at the very start of a tradition of inquiry, and perhaps for some short time there after, there may be a period of 'anything goes' with respect to logical principles are rational to accept. But if the members of that tradition of inquiry are at all concerned about truth and if they are sufficiently reasonable, they reject these flawed logical views, and soon.

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[265] I thank Michael Bergmann for comments that pressed me to add these qualifications.

Another indication that the rational acceptability of logical and mathematical truths is tradition-dependent is that unlike mathematical and logical truths themselves, logical and mathematical inquiries have histories. Mathematical and logical knowledge is passed down by traditions of inquiry. Differences in the development of mathematics and logic in the West, Arabia, India, and Japan illustrate how different logical and mathematical inquiries that start out with different background assumptions often follow different trajectories, something that the influence of tradition can readily account for. For instance, the development of the concept of zero has a history. Because they accepted metaphysical views friendly to the concepts of non-existence and non-being, zero was happily put to use by Indian and Chinese mathematicians. In contrast, Greek mathematicians were strongly averse to the notions of non-existence and non-being. As such, zero was, at least initially, very strongly rejected by the Greeks.[266] (Chris Anderson writes, "The Greeks … explicitly rejected zero. Since their mathematical system was based on geometry, numbers had to represent space of one sort or another … Zero space didn't make sense" and "Although they understood that arithmetic sometimes produces negative numbers, irrational numbers, and even zero, the Greeks rejected all of them because they could not be represented by physical shapes."[267]) Similarly, while the logic of *soku* is very mysterious to the Western mind it is readily acceptable to the Traditional Japanese mindset.

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[266] See Charles Seife, *Zero: The Biography of a Dangerous Idea*, (New York: Penguin, 2000).

[267] Chris Anderson, *Free: The Future of a Radical Price*, (New York: Hyperion, 2009): 35-36.

Further reason to think that the rational acceptability of logical and mathematical truths is tradition-dependent and that rational inquiry in logic and mathematics is grounded in tradition is the fact that we engage in apparently reasonable disagreements about certain logical truths, axioms, and even entire systems of logic. For instance, is Goldbach's Conjecture necessarily true or necessarily false? Must one accept the modal system **S5** or are there good reasons to stick with **S4** instead? (*Very* briefly and perhaps inchoately, one might accept the modal system of **S4** and reject **S5** on grounds that if the actual world sets in place constraints on what is possible, and if there are possible worlds so different from the actual world that they violate or run contrary to those constraints (i.e., if there are worlds with 'alien properties' in them) then, in *some* sense, there are possible worlds that are inaccessible from the actual world.[268]) And how should we assess the merits of deviant logical systems, such as multi-valued and paraconsistent logic?[269] If, as it seems, inquiry into the rational acceptability of (at least some) logical truths is strongly influenced by tradition-based starting points, in order to make progress on these questions, it'd be good to be pay attention to the histories of logical, mathematical, and philosophical inquiries, methodologies, and practices.

In closing, recall that the goal of inquiry is truth. Inquiry into basic logical principles is such that once they are comprehended we see immediately and evidently that they are true. But comprehending even basic logical truths is not an ahistorical

[268] For one defense of something like this view, see David Armstrong, *A Combinatorial Theory of Possibility*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), in particular, pp. 61-62.

[269] For more on deviant logic, see Graham Priest, *An Introduction to Non-Classical Logic,* 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

process; again, our logical and mathematical inquires have histories. We may use the resources of traditions and traditions of inquiry in order to recognize that there are some tradition-transcendent truths, among them the basic truths of logic and mathematics, but it is only by relying on the resources of some tradition or other that we can rationally hope to transcend the limitations of our tradition-based starting points. But tradition can never be completely overcome because we cannot transcend the limits of tradition without also depending on its resources. As such, TBP maintains that the rational acceptability of tradition-transcendent truths, including logical and mathematical truths, is tradition-dependent.

5.2.2   The Perspectival Thesis

The Perspectival Thesis: There is no perspective free starting point or epistemic point of view for human inquiry.

I take it that the gist of this thesis is clear. As a negative thesis, it is inconsistent with a large constellation of views according to which there is some purely objective perspective or standpoint from which human enquiry can proceed. It implies that we always start out from a particular perspective or standpoint and cannot avoid doing because there is an ever-present, ineliminable subjective element to human inquiry. As such, The Perspectival Thesis has obvious Anti-Cartesian and Anti-Kantian implications: it suggests that human enquiry does not have neutral foundations and that our enquiries are not grounded in or completely guided by universal principles that are acceptable to all rational people at all times and places.

While it might sound like the sort of thing a Nietzschian might say, The Perspectival Thesis does not imply anything like Nietzschian Perspectivism, briefly, the view that "there is no such thing as truth-as-such, but only truth-from-one-or-another-point-of-view."[270] In short, the Nietzschian Perspectivist eschews talk of truth and falsehood and avoids accepting or advocating any single perspective of the world but prefers to remain ironically detached from any and all particular perspectives. Michael Tanner writes:

> [Nietzsche] does not believe that there are such things as facts without interpretations … his most explicit statement [in his published works] is 'There is *only* a perspective seeing, only a perspective "knowing"; and the *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing, the more complete will our "concept" of this thing, or "objectivity" be' (*Genealogy of Morals* III. 12). So what interprets and what is interpreted are both in a different position from what a naïve epistemology would attribute to them. We are bound to see things from our point of view, so it is a good idea to take up as many points of view as possible.[271]

There are good reasons for rejecting Nietzschian Perspectivism. MacIntyre writes that the Nietzschian Perspectivist,

> … fails to recognize how integral the conception of truth is to tradition-constituted forms of inquiry. It is this which leads perspectivists to suppose that one could temporarily adopt the standpoint of one tradition and then exchange it for another, as one might wear first one costume and then another … But genuinely to adopt the standpoint of a tradition

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[270] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Ethical Theory: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990): 36.

[271] Michael Tanner, *Nietzsche*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994): 64.

thereby commits one to its view of what is true and false and, in so committing one, prohibits one from adopting any rival standpoint. Hence the perspectivist could indeed pretend to assume the standpoint of some one particular tradition of inquiry; he or she could not in fact do so.[272]

He continues:

> [Nietzschian] Perspectivism … is a doctrine only possible for outsiders … from the standpoint afforded by the rationality of tradition-constituted inquiry it is clear that such persons are by their stances excluded from the possession of any concept of truth adequate for systematic rational inquiry. Hence theirs is a conclusion not so much about truth as an exclusion from it and therefore from rational debate. [273]

The Perspectival Thesis does not imply that rationality is arbitrary and is consistent with the view that facts are mind-independent and objective in a way that their interpretations are not. It is consistent with the views that the goal of rational enquiry is truth and that successful enquiry into truth is a matter of progressing towards better rational justifications of our assertions and claims by replacing less adequate of rational justification with more adequate ones.

Whereas human enquiry is perspectival, progress in enquiry "consists in transcending the limitations of such particular and partial standpoints" and the aim of inquiry is to overcome "the limitations of one-sidedness and partiality, towards or to an

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[272] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, pp. 367-368.

[273] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, p. 368.

adequacy of understanding."[274] But rational inquiry requires taking up a tradition-based perspective: only from the standpoint of some particular tradition-based perspective is it possible to identify and make progress towards overcoming or transcending these limitations.

One final comment about the consistency of The Perspectival Thesis and The Tradition-Source Thesis is in order. [275] Recall that logical principles are not substantive: they do not provide us with substantive standards about what is rational to believe and why but rather constitute necessary constraints on which of standards from which human inquiry may get going. In accordance with The Perspectival Thesis, logical principles cannot provide perspective free starting points or epistemic points of view for human inquiry. Truth is tradition-independent, but our standpoints for *getting* at truth are not. Once particular substantive standards of rationality are explicitly formulated by members of traditions of inquiry, and given that we humans are creatures with intelligence, people can reason in accord with and can recognize themselves as either succeeding or failing to reason in accord with the necessary constraints on thinking set in place by tradition-transcendent logical truths. In short, once we understand the following distinction, we can see that The Perspectival Thesis and The Tradition-Source are not inconsistent: (tradition-transcendent) logical constraints on human thinking are one thing and (tradition-dependent) substantive standards of rationality that guide human inquiry are

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[274] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Moral Relativism, Truth, and Justification," *The Tasks of Philosophy, Selected Essays, Volume 1*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 58, 69, 67.

[275] I thank Michael Bergmann for bringing up worries about whether these theses are consistent.

another. As MacIntyre writes, "There is no standing ground, no place for enquiry, no way to engage in the practices of advancing, evaluating, accepting, and rejecting reasoned argument apart from that which is provided by some tradition or other."[276]

5.2.3   The Tradition-Based Thesis

Recall the Tradition-Based Thesis:

> The Tradition-Based Thesis: Rational standards that guide human enquiry are appropriately grounded only if they are historically situated and tradition-based.

Although the basic idea is fairly clear, I need to unpack a few central terms.

Roughly, by rational standards, I mean any principle or rule or criteria that is used as a guide in the many and varied practices of human enquiry. Examples include foundational beliefs about what is reasonable to believe and why (*endoxa*), rules of thumb, substantive standards of theoretical and practical rationality, epistemic principles, decision procedures, and criteria of scientific theory selection.

I speak of rational standards as being appropriately grounded and not of their being epistemically or rationally justified because the Tradition-Based Thesis in not a substantive theory of justification but functions more like a meta-constraint that rules out as inappropriate first-order rational standards (including proposed theories of justification and accounts of justified belief) that are not historically situated and tradition-based. In short, appeals to purported rational standards that are not historically situated and tradition-based are inappropriate because there are no rational standards that are not

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[276] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?,* p. 350.

historically situated and tradition-based and no single first-order account of justification or theoretical rationality will apply to all members of all traditions of inquiry. As MacIntyre writes, "Actual rational justifications are characteristically advanced by particular persons at particular stages of particular enquiries" and "rational justification [is] specific and idiosyncratic to the standpoint of [a] particular tradition."[277]

Lastly, I shall say a bit about what it is to say that rational standards that guide human enquiry are appropriately grounded and historically situated and tradition-based. Putting the point another way, I affirm that human enquiry is not and cannot be ahistorical but is (appropriately) rooted and grounded in conceptual resources that have their origins in and are passed down by particular traditions of inquiry. Gordon Graham expresses (and elaborates) this view well when he writes:

> Traditionalists – those who self-consciously work within an historical tradition of inquiry – see the pursuit of understanding as a matter not merely of acquiring items of knowledge but of pursuing intellectual questions and problems that they have not invented but inherited. This notion of intellectual inheritance raises the individual inquirer above the peculiarities of his or her own time, but without removing the whole enterprise into the impossible realm of the timeless. It thus implies that "science," broadly conceived, requires membership in a tradition – a movement of thought from and through history. Accordingly, acceptance of this inheritance implies that a large part of the pursuit of understanding is exploration of coherent self-understanding, discovering what we know by grasping who we are.[278]

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[277] MacIntyre, "Moral Relativism, Truth, and Justification," pp. 56-57.

[278] Gordon Graham, "Macintyre on History and Philosophy," in *Alasdair Macintyre*, edited by Mark Murphy, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003): 28.

5.3   Defending Tradition-Based Perspectivalism

Now that I've explained each of its theses, I argue that TBP is true. In this section I offer two arguments for Tradition-Based Perspectivalism, both inspired by and rooted in the work of Alasdair MacIntyre: an argument against Liberalism and another that aims to show that Tradition is victorious over its main rivals Encyclopaedia and Genealogy. The basic strategy of each argument is similar: each aims to show that only tradition-based perspectives are viable by showing how an apparently promising attempt to overcome tradition fails.

5.3.1   Argument I: Against Liberalism

In *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, MacIntyre argues that Liberalism, which advocates an objectively rational, tradition-independent neutral starting point for inquiry, fails. Liberalism maintains that there is available to us a neutral starting point or epistemic point of view from which to engage in inquiry. As such, we need not rely on the resources of tradition either in order to be theoretically rational or to manifest reasonableness. However, MacIntyre argues, Liberalism fails to overcome tradition and so cannot secure a tradition-independent starting point but rather ends up being yet another tradition. Christopher Lutz writes:

> Liberalism began with the rejection of the authority of tradition on the
> grounds that the manifest rationality of true moral laws could be
> recognized and agreed upon by all rational people, but it ends up locked in

controversy over the definition of the universal rational principles whose existence it dogmatically asserts.[279]

> Liberalism, which began as an appeal to alleged principles of shared rationality against what was felt to be the tyranny of tradition, has itself been transformed into a tradition whose continuities are partly defined by the interminability of the debate over such principles.[280]

And,

> The inconclusiveness of the debates within liberalism as to the principles of liberal justice … reinforces the view that liberal theory is best understood … as itself the articulation of an historically developed and developing set of social institutions and forms of activity, that is, as the voice of a tradition.[281]

MacIntyre argues that Liberalism ends up being tradition-dependent because in order for it to be viable it must be embodied in some social institution(s) or other. Institutions, made up of persons, are products of tradition. Particular social orders and societies are structured in unique ways; each advocates and endorses certain norms of action, moral principles, and views about just what is rational to believe and why. Likewise, those who endorse Liberalism endorse norms of action, moral principles, and views that are (or are intended to be) implemented in social orders and societies. Thus, Liberalism shows itself to be embodied in institutions and cannot survive apart from them

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[279] Christopher Stephen Lutz, *Tradition in the Ethics of Alasdair MacIntyre: Relativism, Thomism, and Philosophy*, (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2004): 54.

[280] Lutz, *Tradition in the Ethics of Alasdair MacIntyre*, p. 54.

[281] Lutz, *Tradition in the Ethics of Alasdair MacIntyre*, p. 55.

and since institutions are products of tradition, Liberalism does not overcome tradition.

MacIntyre concludes, "Liberalism does not provide a neutral tradition-independent

ground from which a verdict may be passed upon the rival claims of conflicting traditions

in respect of practical rationality and justice, but turns out itself to be just one more such

tradition with its own highly contestable conceptions of practical rationality and of

justice."[282]

Additionally, contrary to Liberalism, there simply are no uncontroversial,

universally shared and compelling standards of rationality that are shared by all members

of all societies that can be appealed to in order to formulate universally acceptable ethical

standards. Explicating MacIntyre's argument against Liberalism, Thomas D'Andrea

writes,

> … there are no unvarnished facts about the ethical … waiting to be
> discovered by some theoretically uniformed inquiry, because the very
> determination of what counts as justice, or the structure of human action,
> or of rationality … must presuppose some contestable theoretical
> commitments as to what the nature of each of these is.[283]

Continuing, D'Andrea writes that the different social orders in which accounts of

practical and theoretical rationality are articulated are not acceptable to all "ordinary

members" of the social order in question, let alone to members of other, alien social

orders. Members of alien social orders judge foreign accounts of theoretical rationally to

be unacceptable when they conflict with their own views, which supports the claim that

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[282] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* p. 346.

[283] Thomas D. D'Andrea, *Tradition, Rationality and Virtue: The Thought of Alasdair Macintyre*, (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, 2006): 323.

accounts of moral and epistemic standards are "social-order specific and not universal."[284] These facts undermine the *raison d'être* of Liberalism, namely, "to provide a theory of justice and of practical rationality compelling to all rational agents independent of their particular histories and their native social orders and native traditions of moral inquiry."[285]

It is worth noting that MacIntyre realizes that his argument against Liberalism is inductive and concedes that he has not provided a conclusive refutation of its views, ideals, and goals. He acknowledges that no a priori argument can provide one. But Liberalism's failure is telling: it "provides the strongest reason that we can actually have for asserting that there is no neutral ground, that there is no place for appeals to a practical-rationality-as-such or a justice-as-such to which all rational persons would by their very rationality be compelled to give their allegiance. There is instead the practical-rationality-of-this-or-that-tradition and the justice-of-this-or-that-tradition."[286] The conclusion of MacIntyre's argument is similar in content to the three theses that make up TBP. As such, MacIntyre's argument against Liberalism supports the truth of the Tradition-Based Perspectivalism.

5.3.2   Argument II: Traditionalism vs. Encyclopaedia and Genealogy

In *Three Rival Versions of Moral Inquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition*, MacIntyre, predictably, distinguishes three versions of moral inquiry,

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[284] D'Andrea, *Tradition, Rationality and Virtue*, p. 323.

[285] D'Andrea, *Tradition, Rationality and Virtue*, p. 324.

[286] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, p. 346.

Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Traditionalism. Very roughly, Traditionalism affirms that practical and theoretical rationality and human inquiry are tradition-dependent. Although mutually exclusive, Encyclopaedia and Genealogy are alike in that both reject Traditionalism.

Encyclopaedists affirm that rationality is unitary. Explaining this view, MacIntyre writes that for the Encyclopaedists,

> … it was a guiding principle of thought that substantive rationality was unitary, that there is a single if perhaps complex, conception of what the standards and achievements of rationality are, one which every educated person can without too much difficulty [acknowledge].[287]

This view, Lutz writes, is derived from Modern and Enlightenment thinkers, such as Descartes and Kant, who start with the "rejection of metaphysical speculation and traditional moral authority" and affirm that "substantive human rationality is of only one kind."[288] Lutz writes that Encyclopaedists affirm that,

> All rational people … could agree with objectively sound arguments. Traditions [are] superfluous, and their pronouncements irrational unless they [can] be backed up by arguments that Enlightenment thinkers could accept.[289]

Making a related point, MacIntyre writes that Encyclopaedists,

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[287] MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Ethical Theory*, p. 14. The original reads, "be brought to agree in acknowledging" which I have replaced with "acknowledge" for sake of greater clarity in the present context.

[288] Lutz, *Tradition in the Ethics of Alasdair MacIntyre*, p. 53.

[289] Lutz, *Tradition in the Ethics of Alasdair MacIntyre*, p. 53.

… took it for granted that not only all rational persons conceptualize data in one and the same way and that therefore any attentive and honest observer, unblinded and undistracted by the prejudices of prior commitment to belief would report the same data, the same facts, but also that it is data thus reported and characterized that provide enquiry with its subject matter.[290]

In sum, Encyclopaedists believe that all rational persons (so long as they are fully informed) agree that the same body of reasons and evidence is compelling and hence that the standards of substantive rationality hold "once and for all" for all people everywhere equally and universally.[291]

Genealogists maintain that Encyclopaedia has a history and an origin, that it has a genealogy. Friedrich Nietzsche and Michel Foucault are paradigmatic exemplars of The Genealogical Tradition. According to Genealogists, when the so-called objective standards defended by Encyclopaedists are unmasked they are revealed to amount to no more than appeals to force and manifestations of ultimately non-rational means of persuasion, influence, and power.[292]

Both Genealogists and Traditionalists reject Encyclopaedia's claim that rationality is tradition-independent. Genealogy rejects Traditionalism, too. Traditionalism maintains that from a tradition-based perspective one can make progress towards understanding and discover truths about the real world; Genealogy rejects the view that there is any stable,

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[290] Lutz, *Tradition in the Ethics of Alasdair MacIntyre*, p. 53.

[291] Lutz, *Tradition in the Ethics of Alasdair MacIntyre*, p. 54.

[292] Lutz, *Tradition in the Ethics of Alasdair MacIntyre*, p. 53-54.

real world to grasp.[293] Lutz writes, "Whereas encyclopaedists had taken rationality-as-such and truth-as-such as given, Friedrich Nietzsche took them both to be mere intellectual artifacts."[294] And MacIntyre writes:

> Nietzsche, as a genealogist, takes there to be a multiplicity of perspectives within each of which truth-from-a-point-of-view may be asserted, but no truth-as-such, an empty notion, about *the* world, an equally empty notion. There are no rules of rationality as such to be appealed to, there are rather strategies of insight and of subversion.[295]

Both Genealogy and Encyclopaedia characterize themselves in terms of the rejection of tradition; both call into question all standards of theoretical and practical rationality that are handed down by tradition and traditions of inquiry. Because Genealogy defines itself negatively in terms of the rejection of both Traditionalism and Encyclopaedia, it is conceptually dependent on both in that Genealogy's goals and projects do not make sense unless understood as a reaction to them. As Nancy Murphy writes, "… the Genealogical tradition is dependent for its concepts, modes of argument, and style on a set of contrasts between it and what it aspires to overcome. Hence it is

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[293] Bruce Ballard, *Understanding MacIntyre*, (Lanham: University Press of America, 2000): 49

[294] Lutz, *Tradition in the Ethics of Alasdair MacIntyre*, p. 53.

[295] MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Ethical Theory*, p. 42.

inherently dependent upon, derivative from, that which it professes to have discarded."[296] Genealogy's attempt to overcome tradition fails.

Genealogy has other problems, too. Genealogy involves the rejection of metaphysics. But, Lutz writes, since "the very activity of genealogical research is possible only if the researcher possesses the kind of metaphysical identity that he rejects … the genealogical narrative is itself incoherent."[297] For instance, Nietzsche wrote books and in so doing presupposed that the written word is stable enough to record and communicate his thoughts, that others would read and understand them, and so on. Thus, in his intellectual practice Nietzsche demonstrated that he could not avoid all metaphysical assumptions. Also, insofar as members of the Genealogical Tradition make use of logic and rational argumentation, they appeal to rational standards when presenting their case for the rejection of Encyclopaedic and Enlightenment views of rationality. Additionally, because Genealogy affirms that overcoming Tradition is possible, and because its advocates defend their views in the public sphere so that others might accept and propagate them, it, too, accepts an intellectual end or goal. As such, we may say that it constitutes a research program. According to Lutz, a research program is a "fundamental unit of scientific enquiry" that "consists of a set of core theories, surrounded by auxiliary theories which explain and defend the hard core."[298] Since the goal of a research program is truth, insofar as Genealogy is a research program,

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[296] Nancy Murphy, "Postmodern Non-Relativism: Imre Lakatos, Theo Meyering, and Alasdair MacIntyre," *The Philosophical Forum*, XXVII (1), (1995): 51. Also see MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Ethical Theory,* p. 214-215.

[297] Lutz, *Tradition in the Ethics of Alasdair MacIntyre*, p. 54.

[298] Lutz, *Tradition in the Ethical Thought of Alasdair MacIntyre*, p. 48.

apparently, it acknowledges and seeks the very goal it claims is impossible to reach. On the other hand, if Genealogy is not a research program, then it's unclear what its aim or goal is, in which case the genealogical project is rendered unintelligible. Either way, Genealogy is an incoherent intellectual project. Lastly, insofar as the genealogical project is unable to support itself rationally, its advocates must resort to dogmatic assertion, rhetorical flourishes, and other non-rational forms of discourse to motivate their views. Despite replacing rational with non-rational persuasion, Genealogy claims an authority that it insists cannot be legitimately acquired.[299]

MacIntyre thinks that despite all its many faults, to its credit Genealogy has shown us that:

> The transformation of the moral enquirer from a participant in an encyclopaedic enterprise shared by all adequately reflective and informed human beings into an engaged partisan of one such warring standpoint against its rivals is an accomplished fact, and adequate recognition of which results in the dissolution of the encyclopaedist's standpoint …The encyclopaedic mode of enquiry has become one more fideism and a fideism which increasingly flies in the face of contemporary realities.[300]

Given the failure of its main rivals, Encyclopaedia and Genealogy, Traditionalism is the only plausible theory left standing. MacIntyre concludes that:

> … reason can only move forward towards being genuinely universal and impersonal insofar as it is neither neutral nor disinterested, that

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[299] Lutz, *Tradition in the Ethical Thought of Alasdair MacIntyre*, p. 56.

[300] MacIntyre *Three Rival Versions of Ethical Theory*, p. 56.

membership in a particular moral community … is a condition for genuinely rational enquiry ...[301]

If Traditionalism is true then plausible substantive standards of theoretical rationality are tradition-dependent and all such standards are "specific and idiosyncratic to the standpoint of [a] particular tradition."[302] Additionally, there is no such thing as theoretical-rationality-as-such, but rather numerous contending tradition-based standpoints that "have internal to them their own standards of rational justification."[303] The fact that no tradition-independent, substantive standards of theoretical rationality are rationally acceptable to all apparently reasonable people provides a good inductive reason to believe that, probably, no tradition-independent standards of substantive rationality are forthcoming.[304] Moreover, if there are any tradition-independent substantive standards of theoretical rationality yet to be discovered, we'd expect the criteria of their acceptability to be formulable and defensible from an epistemic vantage point that did not rely on the resources of some tradition of inquiry or other. Again, since the best attempts to formulate such criteria have so far turned out not to be tradition-independent, the view that no tradition-independent substantive standards of theoretical rationality are forthcoming is inductively well grounded. These arguments also provide strong support for the truth of TBP.

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[301] MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Ethical Theory*, p. 59-60.

[302] MacIntyre, "Moral Relativism, Truth, and Justification," p. 57.

[303] MacIntyre, "Moral Relativism, Truth, and Justification," p. 69.

[304] For another argument along these lines, see MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, Chapter XVII.

There are (at least) two implications of the conclusion of MacIntyre's argument. First, tradition-independent, substantive standards of theoretical rationality are plausible and explicable only to the extent that they implicitly rely on the conceptual resources of some particular tradition(s) of inquiry or other. Second, there is no neutral starting point for inquiry from which say anything substantive about theoretical rationality and so we need to make use of conceptual resources available to us only through the cooperative, socially embodied activity of members of particular traditions of inquiry or their descendants and beneficiaries, namely, those who inherit and make use of the resources of tradition but do not necessarily notice or acknowledge doing so. Accordingly, MacIntyre's arguments in defense of Traditionalism vs. Genealogy and Encyclopaedia support the truth of Tradition-Based Perspectivalism.

Despite all that has been said, one might be reticent and contend that there are tradition-independent criteria according to which we may formulate substantive standards of theoretical rationality that are tradition-independent. Before going on to the next section I will consider and evaluate an argument in favor of that view.

One might contend that principles like Bayes's Theorem are among the tradition-independent logically necessary limits on human thinking and that as such we could appeal to it (or something like it or something in the neighborhood) in order to make well-grounded judgments about which substantive standards of theoretical rationality are probably true. If so, it seems that we could have a tradition-independent guide in our search for substantive standards of theoretical rationality after all. But this way of proceeding would not really be tradition-independent because in order for Bayes's Theorem to be useful to us we need to start with certain givens prior to inquiry, including

empirical premises, assumptions, presuppositions, and the like, as well as *endoxa*, all of which are logically prior to Bayesian probability judgments. Thus, since Bayesian reasoning is useful in the search for truth only if we already have something substantive to feed into it, and since we must feed into it content that is tradition-dependent, it cannot be used independently of tradition.

But one might press the claim, saying, "Isn't it right to say that propositions have intrinsic probabilities and that our knowledge of intrinsic probabilities gives us an indication of what is (probably) the case independent of tradition?" But note that when we make use of intrinsic probabilities in our reasoning to judge which hypothesis *h* is most likely to be true, we must do so against a given a body of background information *i* and (assumed) knowledge base *k*. Consequently, so-called intrinsic probabilities turn out not to be intrinsic after all. And we have to make use of Bayes's Theorem to make these judgments. Consequently, while the intrinsic probabilities of propositions (if there are such things) would be good to know, *by themselves* they don't do any work for us, which shows that Bayesian reasoning isn't tradition-independent. Having said that, I concede that abstract, logical forms of reasoning that accord with logical probabilities, including Bayesian reasoning, are tradition-independent but in the sense that such forms of reasoning were valid before the dinosaurs evolved, would be valid even if all life on Earth is eradicated by nuclear war, etc. Nevertheless, the actual probability judgments that we make are plausible because and insofar as we make them from a tradition-based perspective.

Lastly, I take it that if TBP is true, we have good reasons to think that the manifestation of reasonableness is tradition-dependent. Here's why. Recall that in order

to manifest reasonableness, one must satisfy the sufficient conditions articulated in Condition N. Briefly, one must (i) have and exercise the requisite underlying intellectual virtues, (ii) be responsive to reasons and self-critical, (iii) be minimally rational with respect to one's desires, and (iv) be appropriately conscientious and reflective regarding the truth of one's beliefs, especially when those beliefs are challenged. I set aside condition (iii), as it is not directly relevant at this time. Conditions (i), (ii) and (iv) imply that in order to be reasonable, one must engage in certain social practices as a member of a particular community of intellectually virtuous people. Discovering and cultivating intellectual virtues, being appropriately self-critical, conscientious, and reflective when the truth of one's beliefs are challenged by others, and being responsive to reasons and giving reasons to others as necessary require engaging in many and various social practices. These practices have their origins in and are passed down by particular traditions of inquiry. Thus, it follows that one does not manifest reasonableness from a perspective free, neutral starting point or epistemic point of view, which supports the view that there is no tradition-independent way to manifest reasonableness. This, too, counts in favor of TBP. Finally, while these arguments might not convince everyone, I take it that I have provided sufficiently convincing reasons to think that TBP is true.

<div align="center">5.4   <u>That (3*) Holds in The Case of John and Paul</u></div>

In this section, I argue that if TBP is true we have good reasons to think that John's and Paul's beliefs are reasonably held in their case and that it is plausible to think that (3*) holds in their case, too.

Recall Condition N:

Condition N: Approximately, S (fully) manifests the meta-cognitive virtue of reasonableness if:

i) S, *qua* epistemic agent, is functioning well epistemically by having and exercising the epistemic virtues that underlie the manifestation of reasonableness, including the intellectual virtues of the love of knowledge, firmness, courage and caution, humility, autonomy, generosity, and practical wisdom;

ii) S is responsive to reasons; e.g., S is willing to correct his/her views in light of criticism, willing to provide others with reasons, has a measure of good judgment that is incompatible with perversely bad judgment, and is to some degree self-critical, at least in the sense of being disposed to think about and correct tendencies that have gotten them into trouble;

iii) S is minimally rational with respect to his/her desires and is not subject to serious affective disorders (e.g., extreme apathy or severe clinical depression) and is appropriately concerned about his/her own well-being; and

iv) S is appropriately conscientious and reflective regarding the truth of his/her beliefs, especially when those beliefs are challenged.

And recall my argument in Chapter Three in defense of the principle that if we have a reason to think that two people are roughly equally globally reasonable (diachronically) we ought to think that they are roughly equally locally reasonable (synchronically), too, unless we have sufficient reason to think otherwise. If that argument is sound, then if the Plantingans in the Case of Plantinga and his Comrades are roughly equally globally reasonable, we have reason to think that each is roughly equally locally reasonable, too. It follows that we have reason to think that Condition N holds for them and hence reason to

think that (3*) holds in their case. We may now apply this principle and argument strategy to The Case of John and Paul: if John and Paul are both roughly equally globally reasonable (diachronically) and if we have no good reason to think they are not roughly equally locally reasonable (synchronically), we have a reason to think that Condition N holds for them and that (3) holds in their case.

TBP gives a plausible account of how it could be reasonable for John and Paul to start their inquiries into truth from their respective Zen Buddhist and Christian tradition-based perspectives. TBP shows how it is that both John and Paul reasonably assess the evidential value of the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and experiences from their tradition-based perspectives as members of their respective traditions of inquiry. In accord with TBP, Paul accepts *endoxa* that are appropriate and reasonable for him *qua* member of a distinctively Christian Tradition of Inquiry and John accepts *endoxa* that are appropriate and reasonable for him to accept *qua* member of a distinctively Zen Buddhist Tradition of Inquiry. As such, each is reasonable in accord with the standards of theoretical rationality of the tradition of inquiry of which he is a member. Note that although John and Paul accept different standards of theoretical rationality and do not accept the same sources of basic evidence (for instance, only John takes *sunyata* experience to be a basic source of belief about the nature of ultimate reality), and although they come to hold different object-level epistemic judgments about whether to accept *p* or not *q* (where *p* stands for some particular Zen Buddhist and *q* stands for some particular Christian belief) on the basis of the same (or relevantly similar) evidential considerations (such as the having of *sunyata* experience), both of them make and hold those judgments reasonably. Despite disagreement about what to believe and why on the

basis of the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and experiences, both John and Paul are equally reasonable. In this way, TBP accounts for how (3*) holds in the Case of John and Paul.

I take it that I have satisfactorily defended the claim that if John and Paul are equally reasonable in accord with Condition N from the perspective of their respective tradition-based standpoints, it follows that (3*) holds in their case. However, from the perspective of Western philosophy, it may seem particularly implausible to some that John could reasonably believe what he does. Of course, certain Western philosophers might think Paul's beliefs are unreasonable, too. (On the other hand, from the point of view of Eastern Philosophy, Paul's views will seem particularly implausible. But my primary audience is Western.) Presumably, from a Western perspective, it is more controversial to think that John's beliefs are reasonably held, so I defend that stronger claim. That I can support the stronger, more controversial claim suggests that it is possible to support the comparatively weaker claim, too.

I cannot show that John reasonably holds *all* of his Zen Buddhist beliefs. Rather, I will show how John reasonably affirms a Zen Buddhist view that many philosophers in the West find to be particularly problematic, The Doctrine of No-Self. Extrapolating appropriately and armed with a bit of philosophical imagination, one can have a good sense of how all of John's (or Paul's) beliefs could be reasonably held.

5.4.1   John Reasonably Affirms the Doctrine of No-Self

To many in the Western world, The Doctrine of No-Self seems highly counter-intuitive and implausible. One reason for this is that English and other Western languages

naturally suggest Aristotelian metaphysical and logical views according to which linguistic subjects and predicates correspond to fitting metaphysical entities. In contrast, traditionally, the Japanese do not have these metaphysical views; one reason for this is that the Japanese language does not suggest them.

Kasulis points out that in English, interpersonal communication is considered to bridge a gap between the "I" and "You." Language is seen a medium through which personal transmitters send and receive messages to and from one other. In English, the primary emphasis is on who is saying what to whom. In Japanese, however, "the emphasis is on the relationship … and its direction, not on the people who created the situation."[305] Rather than explicitly referring to persons, the Japanese (especially when being polite) use directional terminology. Consequently, for them, the concept of person-hood arises within the space of inter-personal relations. Consider the following table of common Japanese phrases translated into English, colloquial and literal:[306]

Table 5.1

Japanese	Colloquial English	Literal English Translation
"Sumimasen."	"Oh, excuse me."	"[Indebtedness] does not end."
"Iie, kochirakoso."	"Oh no, excuse me."	"Oh no. This way [goes the indebtedness]."

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[305] T. P. Kasulis, *Zen Action, Zen Person*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1981): 7.

[306] This chart is from Kasulis, *Zen Action, Zen Person*, p. 7.

This table illustrates how the Japanese language emphasizes relations and provides a sense of why relations between the speakers are of primary importance to Japanese speakers. Additionally, the Japanese language has many honorifics, and there are various ways of address based on the relations between communicating parties. Kasulis writes that what is to be said in a given context depends on the relations in which the speakers stand. Facts about whether people relate as equals or subordinates, intimate friends or total strangers, as older or younger, siblings or parents, employer or employee, and so on, determine the social and linguistic appropriateness of what is said. Without knowing the social role(s) of another, it is not possible to know what relation one stands in to another and consequently the other remains un-contextualized and cannot be addressed properly as a person, not in the full sense. For these reasons, Kasulis writes, "in Japan the context is given primacy over the individual: the context defines and elaborates the individual rather than vice-versa … The individual becomes meaningful only insofar as he or she is an outgrowth of the relationships established by the operative context, not vice versa."[307]

According to Kasulis, the most commonly used term in Japanese for "man" or "person" is *hito* 人. The term has a phenomenalistic connation; it refers to "the person one perceives in everyday affairs." Using *hito* 人 in combination with other *kanji*, more complex words are formed. For instance, the Japanese word for "individual human being" is *kojin* 個人 and the word for "person" is *ningen* 人間. A human being (*kojin*

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[307] Kasulis, *Zen Action, Zen Person*, p. 8.

個 人) is a person in the full sense (*ningen* 人 間) only if he or she stands in personal relationships to other persons. Kasulis writes,

> … when the Japanese see someone as an individual (*kojin*), they see him or her as one object among many, but when they see that person as a "human being" (*ningen*), they see that person in a context. From the Japanese point of view, the person is not primarily an individual subsequently placed in a world. Rather, as indicated by the very structure of the word for "human being", the person is *always* in a context, in a necessary relationship with what is around him or her.[308]

To elaborate on Kasulis's line of reasoning, recall the Japanese word for "individual human being," *kojin* 個 人. Observe that the term is a construction of two Japanese characters, 個 *ko* and 人 jin. Used in other contexts, *ko* 個 means "an individual," as in *individual thing* (as in *ko-ko no* 個 々 の, used when counting or enumerating objects). *Jin* 人 means "man" in English, as in biological *man* or *homo sapien sapiens*. Only when *ko* 個 and *jin* 人 are put together to form *kojin* 個 人 do we have what we would translate into English as "a human self," as in "an individual, a private person."[309]

Kasulis draws from these philological-hermeneutical reflections important philosophical conclusions. First, the common, everyday sense of the Japanese term for "man," *hito* 人, is primarily phenomenological and as such carries with it no metaphysical connotations. Second, while the Japanese term for "person," *kojin* 個 人,

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[308] Kasulis, *Zen Action, Zen Person*, p. 9.

[309] Kasulis, *Zen Action, Zen Person*, pp. 6-7.

has physicalistic or logical implications its use in no way implies the metaphysical thesis that persons are substantial. He notes that the *kanji* for "human being," *ningen* 人 間 , is a construction of two characters, *nin* 人 , which means "man," and *gen* 間 , which by itself means "interval, relationship, betweeness." This suggests that if they do not stand in these relations with others, individual humans (*ningen* 人 間) lose their status as persons (*kojin* 個 人).[310]

One implication of this argument is that individual humans are not persons *unless* they stand in relation to other persons. And that suggests the metaphysical view that person-hood is intrinsically relational, that what it is to be an individual human being is to stand in a relationship towards other human beings that completes them both as persons. Above all, we must not read into Japanese thinking the "strongly personalistic nuances" of the English word "person."[311] (Understanding these points helps to explain why Zen Buddhism encourages forms of practice and meditation designed to break down and eradicate the person relations that hold between humans. The idea is that no longer attached to person-relations, one is more likely to have experiences of enlightenment, including the pure, unmediated experience of *sunyata*.)

MacIntyre, reflecting on the conceptual distinctions between the individual and the social in Japan, says the following about the Japanese notion of person-hood:

> In a Japanese understanding there is that in the individual which is
> manifest, which is presented, which is facial expression and spoken words

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[310] I thank my Stepmother, Yoshiko Baldwin, a native speaker of Japanese, for helping me with the Japanese in the last few paragraphs.

[311] Kasulis, *Zen Action, Zen Person*, p. 6.

and actions, all of them to significant degrees conventionally ordered, and there is by contrast that which is concealed, what belongs to the heart, the sphere of unspoken thoughts and feelings. The former is not only what is socially presented, it is what in and through its conventional orderings constitutes social life. There is not the individual with inner and outer aspects and then, independent of these in some way, the institutionalized social order. The outer aspects of the individual *are* the social order. Or, to put the same point another way, the individual without and apart from his or her social role is not yet complete, is a set of potentialities waiting to be achieved…[312]

Commenting on why it is not at all unusual or odd for the Japanese to reject the view that there is a substantial self, he writes:

… take the Japanese self, in its self-understanding, away from social roles, and what you have is a self that is not yet or no longer. It is no accident that there are no Japanese Aristotelians any more than there are Japanese Wittgensteinians. For the terms of Japanese philosophical debate, except insofar as they are affected by the incursions of the West, presuppose a conceptually structured tradition quite other than and alien to that presupposed by Western philosophy.[313]

As MacIntyre implies, Japanese traditions of inquiry, informed by Japanese linguistic and social practices, have their own canonical literary, philosophical, and religious texts, all of which suggests to the Traditional Japanese mind that it is

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[312] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Individual and Social Morality in Japan and the United States: Rival Conceptions of the Self," *Philosophy East and West*, 1990, 40 (4): 489-497.

[313] MacIntyre, "Individual and Social Morality in Japan and the United States: Rival Conceptions of the Self," p. 495.

appropriate and reasonable not even to start out thinking that the self is substantial. The view that persons are empty of own-being is fully in keeping with Japanese philosophical and religious traditions.

I take it that I have shown how and why it is that Japanese people and those influenced by Traditional Japanese thinking may reasonably affirm The Doctrine of No-Self in accord with the conditions set forth in Condition N. In so doing, I have shown how John reasonably accepts Traditional Japanese philosophical ideas and ways of thinking. That is enough to show how it is that John reasonably believes that human selves are non-substantial. This also gives us a good idea how John's other characteristic Zen Buddhist beliefs could be reasonably held. In like manner, with a bit of imagination, we can see how it Paul's characteristic Christian beliefs could be reasonably held. That these things are so gives us clearer understanding of how (3*) could hold in The Case of John and Paul and how their disagreement could be fully informed and reasonable.

5.5   Conclusion

Together with the arguments in Chapters Two, Three, and Four the arguments in this chapter show that it is plausible to think that there are or could be actual cases in which people like John and Paul engage in fully informed reasonable disagreement about whether Zen Buddhism or Christianity is true. This supports the view that (1*)-(3*) form a consistent triad, which in turn shows that fully informed reasonable disagreement is possible. I think these arguments support the conclusion that it is plausible to think that fully informed reasonable disagreement may actually occurs. In the next and final chapter, I respond to objections and consider a few implications and applications of TPB.

CHAPTER 6. OBJECTIONS AND REPLIES, IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

6.1   Introduction

In this final chapter I consider objections and replies to Tradition-Based Perspectivalism and propose a few its implications and applications. I respond to objections in Section 6.2. In Section 6.3, I apply TBP to the disagreement between Lewis and van Inwagen, strengthen my argument that Condition N holds in The Case of Plantinga and his Comrades, and discuss a few implications that TBP has on issues in the epistemology of disagreement, and conclude.

6.2   Objections

I consider four objections. The first objection is that TBP leads one to be skeptical about which tradition of inquiry one should belong to. The second is that TBP is superfluous. The third is that everyone ought to belong to the Scientific tradition of inquiry and the fourth is that traditions of inquiry aren't always what they're cracked up to be, which casts doubt on TBP.

6.2.1   A Skeptical Objection

One might object that if TBP is true, then it is possible that a person could manifest reasonableness equally well whether he reasoned from the perspective of his own tradition of inquiry or that of a rival tradition. If so, then, with respect to being reasonable, it really wouldn't matter which tradition of inquiry one is a member of. For instance, suppose Joe manifests reasonability as a member of tradition of inquiry A. Suppose that in counter-factual conditions Joe is a member of rival tradition of inquiry B and manifests reasonability equally well as such. With regards to his being reasonable it seems to make no difference which tradition he is a member of so it doesn't seem to matter whether actual or counter-factual conditions obtain. That this is so gives Joe a reason to be skeptical about whether his own tradition, Tradition A, is any better than the rival tradition, Tradition B. That in turn gives Joe a reason to be skeptical about which of these traditions of inquiry to belong to. What holds for Joe holds, more or less, for real people, too. For instance, someone who was adopted and raised Christian might think that he is reasonable to believe the teachings of Christianity but suppose that if he been adopted and raised by Buddhists he would think it is reasonable to accept the teachings of Buddhism instead. And it's not too difficult for a Christian to think that she would have been a Muslim if she were born and raised in Indonesia or Pakistan and reasonably hold uniquely Islamic beliefs about God instead of Christian beliefs. This sort of thinking can lead one to doubt whether one's actual religious beliefs are reasonably accepted after all.

While troubling in various ways, I don't think that these "What if?" scenarios give one an all things considered good reason to be skeptical about which tradition of inquiry to belong to. This is because facts about what one would (reasonably) believe in non-

actual circumstances do not sufficiently undermine or defeat the force of the reasons that one actually has. If I am right about that, then one need not be skeptical just because there are true counterfactuals of rationality and reasonability, i.e., true counter-to-fact statements about what would be rational and reasonable for a person S to believe *qua* member of a tradition of inquiry that S is not actually a member of. This blocks the conclusion of the skeptical argument.

Plantinga offers considerations that support the above line of reasoning in his "A Defense of Religious Exclusivism." Plantinga notes that pluralists such as John Hick maintain that in the vast majority of cases, one's religious beliefs depend on where one is born. Hick writes, "Someone born to Buddhist parents in Thailand is very likely to be a Buddhist, someone born to Muslim parents in Saudi Arabia to be a Muslim, someone born to Christian parents in Mexico a Christian, and so on."[314] That this is so is supposed to support the conclusion that exclusivist religious belief is unwarranted. Plantinga thinks that such arguments fail. He writes:

> Suppose we concede that if I had been born of Muslim parents in Morocco
> rather than Christian parents in Michigan, my beliefs would have been
> quite different … there are places and times such that if we had been born
> there and then, then we would not have displayed the pattern of holding
> and withholding of religious and philosophical beliefs we *do* display …
> this can indeed be vertiginous; but what can we make of it? Does it follow,
> for example, that I ought not to accept the religious views that I have been
> brought up to accept, or the ones I find myself inclined to accept, or the

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[314] John Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion: Human Responses to the Transcendent*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989): 2.

ones that seem to me to be true: or that the belief-producing processes that have produced those beliefs in me are unreliable? Surely not. [315]

In short, Plantinga claims that the Pluralist's worry does not generate a good reason to think that just because he would have held different religious beliefs in counterfactual situations it follows that his actual religious beliefs are unreliably formed (and so in danger of failing to be internally and externally rational and warranted). My concern is somewhat different. Namely, I aim to show that although in counter-factual situations one would belong to some other tradition of inquiry and reason quite differently than one does now, that this is so does not necessarily undermine the reasonableness of one's views about what is rational to believe and why.

Consider my worry in greater detail. According to TBP, one is rational insofar as one correctly reasons in accord with standards of rationality that one reasonably takes to be true. The problem is it seems that since one could manifest reasonableness equally well whether he reasoned from the perspective of his own tradition of inquiry or that of a rival tradition, it doesn't really matter which standards of rationality one accepts to be true (so long as they are reasonably held). Thus counter-factuals of rationality and reasonability cast doubt on whether one is reasonable to accept the standards of rationality that one (actually) accepts to be true after all. In a move analogous to Plantinga's, I think that just because there are true counterfactuals of what it would be reasonable for one to believe *qua* member of another tradition of inquiry, it does not

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[315] Alvin Plantinga, "A Defense of Religious Exclusivism," *The Analytic Theist: An Alvin Plantinga Reader*, J. Sennett (ed.), (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998): 206.

follow that it is unreasonable for one to believe what one does *qua* member of one's actual tradition of inquiry.[316]

Another reason to think that the skeptical argument fails is that one can have good practical reasons for reasoning in accord with the standards of theoretical rationality of one's own tradition of inquiry. If one has such reasons then even if one could be equally reasonable as a member of some rival tradition of inquiry one has a good reason to remain a member of one's own tradition of inquiry.[317]

One may acquire practical reasons to act by engaging in practical reasoning. According to Audi, the basic pattern of practical reasoning is as follows: (1) *major premise* – the motivational premise; (2) *minor premise* – the *cognitive* (or instrumental) premise; and (3) *conclusion* – the practical judgment. More abstractly, generally, practical reasoning goes like this: (1) I want Φ, (2) my A-ing would contribute to realizing Φ, so (3) I should A.[318] For example, suppose Lorne wants to be reasonable and believes that being a member of his tradition of inquiry contributes to his being reasonable. It follows that Lorne has a practical reason to remain a member of his particular tradition of inquiry. Conversely, if he didn't have such practical reasons, he wouldn't have a (internal motivating) reason to continue to trust the methodological dispositions he currently has, which would threaten to impoverish his cognitive and

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[316] I thank Michael Bergmann for helpful comments on the last few paragraphs.

[317] The following arguments are similar in certain ways to ones found in William Alston in his *The Reliability of Sense Perception* and *Perceiving God.*

[318] Robert Audi, *Practical Reasoning and Ethical Decision*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2006): 140-141.

intellectual life. Wanting to avoid that consequence, Lorne has a practical reason to trust the methodological dispositions he finds himself with. Here, then, is an example of how practical reasoning supports one's remaining a member of one's own tradition of inquiry: (1) Lorne wants to avoid a greatly impoverished cognitive and intellectual life; (2) Lorne's trusting the basic sources of evidence and the methodological dispositions he finds himself with contributes to his avoidance of a greatly impoverished cognitive and intellectual life; so (3) Lorne should trust those basic sources and methodological dispositions and, in effect, remain a member of his current tradition of inquiry. This shows that Lorne has a practical reason to remain a member of his particular tradition of inquiry. (I assume that Lorne desires to avoid a greatly impoverished cognitive and intellectual life, finds himself trusting certain basic sources of evidence and the methodological dispositions *qua* member of his tradition of inquiry, and realizes how it is that trusting them helps him to avoid a greatly impoverished cognitive and intellectual life. And I take it to be evident that trusting the basic sources of evidence and methodological dispositions that one finds oneself with is a splendid way to avoid a greatly impoverished cognitive and intellectual life.)

Lorne could have additional practical reasons that would make his decision to reason in accord with the standards of theoretical rationality of the tradition of inquiry to which he belongs non-arbitrary. For instance, it may be very costly (in terms of personal attachments, time, energy, and resources) for Lorne to give up his current tradition of inquiry and join another one. He might have other, more pressing commitments, such as supporting his spouse and children. And doing so might be psychologically unrealistic; it might not be, to paraphrase William James, a live possibility for him. Not everyone has

the ability or opportunity to carefully reflect on and evaluate alien traditions of inquiry, which is one reason why many only do so when forced to by doubt, hardship, suffering or other similar existential crises. Other things being equal, then, Lorne has good practical reasons to avoid those costs and stay a member of his current tradition of inquiry.

Consider one more argument. As Aristotle noted, all humans have a desire to know (*Metaphysics*, Book 1.1). Inquiry is very often (but not always) motivated by the desire to know, and is motivated by similar intellectual desires as well, such as the desires to understand, to comprehend, to be reasonable, to have justified beliefs, and the like. On a broadly Aristotelian view of human nature it is plausible that these desires are intrinsically rational and that we have reason to pursue these intellectual goods for their own sake. (This line of argument will have traction only for those who accept these Aristotelian views or sufficiently similar views.) If so, then one has a practical reason to act so as to satiate one's desire for these intellectual goods. (Other non-Aristotelian traditions of inquiry may give more or less similar arguments, or perhaps offer altogether different arguments at this juncture.) It seems, then, that in virtue of having intrinsic desires for the associated intellectual goods, one has practical reasons to accept the *endoxa* that one does and thereby has practical reasons to engage in theoretical reasoning that accords with those *endoxa*. The upshot is that some people can have practical reasons to remain a member of their tradition of inquiry. (Consider for a moment what it would be like *not* to have these practical reasons. In the grip of some affective disorder, one may lose motivation to engage in inquiry; in the grip of depression, stress, illness, or chronic pain one may lose the will to get out of bed, let alone continue one's research. Having

little or no desire or motivation to reason and act in accord with the *endoxa* that one accepts could wreak havoc in one's life.)

In closing, the above arguments show that even if one could manifest reasonableness equally well if one reasoned from the perspective of one's own tradition of inquiry or that of a rival one, one has good reasons to remain a member of one's own tradition of inquiry, which blocks the conclusion of the skeptical objection.

6.2.2   Tradition-Based Perspectivalism is Superfluous

Another objection is that TBP is superfluous. This objection states that it is sometimes rational to go outside of one's own tradition, which implies that one can be theoretically rational regardless of TBP. The main idea is that if the conceptual resources of one's own tradition of inquiry are deficient or otherwise unable fully to account for what is rational and reasonable for one to believe and why, it is necessary to rely on conceptual resources that are external to one's tradition of inquiry. But if one relies on what is thus imported in order to decide what to believe and why, then, since whether one is theoretically rational depends on what is outside of one's tradition of inquiry, it seems that TBP isn't doing any real work. If successful, this objection shows that one can be theoretically rational regardless of the standards of theoretical rationality of one's tradition of inquiry, which suggests that those standards are superfluous.

It may be helpful to consider an example of how one might come to see that one's tradition of inquiry is inadequate and so look to other traditions of inquiry to fix the problem. Suppose that at some point in the development of a particular tradition of inquiry T, its members accept standards of rationality that imply that the position of the

planets provides (strong) evidence to believe some proposition p and so gives one a reason to perform some action Φ. Later on, if someone outside of T gives S an argument for thinking that the position of Saturn has nothing to do with what he ought to believe or do, S has been given an opportunity to question whether it is reasonable to continue to accept beliefs based on Astrological principles. Given that what is at issue is what counts as (strong) evidence for what, S can't just look at 'the evidence' here. But S could come to realize that Astrological principles don't stand up under external criticism and so accept that he must either reject or refine them. Either way, if S relies on what is imported from outside of T in order to decide what to believe and why in this way, then, apparently, S doesn't rely on what his own tradition of inquiry has to say about the issue. Apparently, TBP isn't doing any real work, and that gives one reason to think that TBP superfluous. To shed light on the superfluousness here, it may help to consider the following example. Suppose that S accepts that testimony from others is reliable but only because S has broadly inductive reasons for thinking that the testimony of others is generally trustworthy. S would think that testimony doesn't provide one with (strong) evidence, that testimony is an inadequate basic ground of belief. As such, it would be superfluous for S to rely on testimony.[319]

In response, while it may be that one's tradition of inquiry is deficient in some way and that one must import resources from a rival one in order to make up for it, it doesn't follow that the standards of rationality of one's own tradition of inquiry are superfluous. Rather, conceptual resources brought in from outside may be incorporated into one's tradition of inquiry. By drawing on and internalizing conceptual resources

[319] I thank Michael Bergmann for pressing me to clarify and sharpen this objection.

from rival traditions the members of particular traditions of inquiry may overcome epistemological crises.

According to MacIntyre, an epistemological crisis arises upon "the discovery of a significant inadequacy in one's scheme of belief and interpretation."[320] Thomas D'Andrea writes:

> What more, exactly, does MacIntyre mean by an epistemological crisis? A paradigm example … is the predicament that Hamlet finds himself in upon arriving back from Wittenberg. Hamlet is besieged by radical interpretative doubts regarding how he should construe the events at Elsinore of which he has been a part. Are those events to be construed along the lines of a revenge saga, or a competition for power, or a Renaissance courtier's drama? And whom is he to believe? – His mother? His father's ghost? Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern? Without a decision regarding his interpretive scheme, MacIntyre notes, Hamlet does not know what to regard as evidence for what is really happening. But without knowing what to treat as evidence, he cannot decide which interpretative scheme to adopt.[321]

Hamlet's problem – no longer knowing what to treat as evidence for what and so being unable to decide on an interpretative scheme to make sense of the data – is similar to the crisis that precipitated the Copernican Revolution prompted by Galileo.

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[320] D'Andrea, *Tradition, Rationality and Virtue: The Thought of Alasdair MacIntyre*, p. 213.

[321] D'Andrea, *Tradition, Rationality and Virtue: The Thought of Alasdair MacIntyre*, p. 213. MacIntyre discusses this problem in "Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative and the Philosophy of Science," *The Tasks of Philosophy: Selected Essays, Volume 1*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) pages 4 and 5.

It is important to note that while finding oneself in the grips of an epistemological crisis about what to believe and why is sufficient for one to have cause to reevaluate what counts as evidence for what, existential angst is not necessary. An epistemological crisis need not be psychologically unsettling or disturbing. Moreover, not all circumstances in which it would be appropriate for one to reevaluate what counts as evidence for what need to rise to the level of an epistemological crisis. Epistemological puzzles, problems, discrepancies, worries, or concerns and the like may suffice, too. [322] On the other hand, epistemological puzzles, problems, discrepancies, worries, or concerns need not cause one to reassess what counts as evidence for what. For instance, it would seem that being slightly tempted or finding oneself a curious urge to reason in accord with 'foreign' standards of rationality don't provide strong enough occasions for reevaluating what counts as evidence for what.[323] Apparently, MacIntyre focuses on epistemological crises because it would be inappropriate for those who are in them *not* to reassess what to believe and why. As such, epistemological crises are paradigmatic examples of occasions in which it is appropriate to reassess what is rational to believe.

According to MacIntyre, Galileo's success was a narrative accomplishment that was not merely brought about by appealing to facts that showed that the Ptolemaic theory was wrong. He writes:

> … the superiority of Galileo to his predecessors … is that he, for the first time, enables the work of all his predecessors to be evaluated by a common set of standards. The contributions of Plato, Aristotle, the scholars at Merton College, Oxford, and at Padua, the work of Copernicus

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[322] Thanks to Dan Frank for bringing this to my attention.

[323] I thank Michael Bergmann for making this possibility apparent to me.

himself all falls into place. Or, to put matters in another and equivalent way: the history of late medieval science can finally be cast into a coherent narrative. Galileo's work implies a rewriting of a narrative which constitutes the scientific tradition. For now it becomes retrospectively possible to identify those anomalies which had been genuine counterexamples to received theories from those anomalies which could justifiably be dealt with by ad hoc explanatory devices or even ignored. It also became possible to see how the various elements of various theories had fared in their encounters with other theories and other observations and experiments, and to understand how the form in which they had survived bore the marks of those encounters.[324]

The upshot is that although Galileo incorporated insights from other traditions and sources, he didn't simply appeal to new facts or merely add new resources into his current tradition-based perspective. Galileo solved his epistemological crisis by articulating a coherent narrative or story of the nature and resolution of the conflict that culminated in an account of why the geocentric model ought to be rejected and why his heliocentric model ought to be accepted instead. His method was interpretative and synthetic. Above all, the advances he made were not made from a tradition-independent perspective.

To generalize, then, when a member of a tradition of inquiry is faced with an epistemological crisis about what to believe and why, he or she must overcome that crisis. (By extension, and to a lesser extent, this applies to epistemological puzzles, problems, discrepancies, worries, and concerns, too.) In order to overcome it, it may be necessary to

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[324] MacIntyre, "Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative and the Philosophy of Science," pp. 10-11.

formulate new rational standards. Old standards may need to be reformulated or rejected or borrowed from and incorporated into own tradition of inquiry. Note that it is because traditions of inquiry are committed to the truth that they remain open to correction in this way. Remaining flexible and open to revision, traditions of inquiry aim to approximate ever closer towards truth. MacIntyre writes:

> It is more rational to accept one theory or paradigm and to reject its predecessor when the later theory or paradigm provides a stand-point from which the acceptance, the life-story, and the rejection of the previous theory or paradigm can be recounted in a more intelligible historical narrative than previously. An understanding of the concept of the superiority of one physical theory to another requires a prior understanding of the concept of the superiority of one historical narrative to another.[325]

What MacIntyre says about rationally deciding between rival scientific theories applies to rationally deciding between rival traditions of inquiry as well. The members of rival traditions of inquiry disagree about whether certain evidential considerations count as genuine (or strong) evidence and so accept logically incompatible standards of theoretical rationality. For example, Empiricists reject but Rationalists accept rational intuition to be a basic source of evidence. How can the members of rival traditions of inquiry rationally adjudicate their disagreement? Commenting on MacIntyre, D'Andrea writes that it is necessary first to acknowledge that epistemological starting points and first principles about what counts as (strong) evidence for what are contingent and

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[325] MacIntyre, "Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative and the Philosophy of Science," pp. 18-19.

dialectically established. By engaging in dialectical inquiry about what to believe and why, members of rival traditions of inquiry are committed to the possibility that they may discover new reasons for or against their current beliefs, including their beliefs about what counts as (strong) evidence. This shows how it is possible for members of a tradition of inquiry who are reasonable and engaged in dialogue with members of other traditions of inquiry about what to believe and why to be in a position to reasonably conclude that their tradition of inquiry is rationally preferable to rivals.[326]

Ideally, reasonable inter-traditional dialogue requires that members of rival traditions of inquiry satisfy several additional conditions. I don't think that these are necessary conditions on fully informed reasonable disagreement *per se*, but take them to be additional constraints on the manifestation of reasonableness that members of traditions of inquiry aim to embody when they engage in disagreements with others (especially members of rival traditions of inquiry) about what to believe and why. In some cases, presumably, these additional conditions need not be satisfied. Arguably, they need to be satisfied by John and Paul in their case and by Plantinga and his Comrades in theirs.

First, reasonable inter-traditional disagreement requires inter-traditional dialogue. For inter-traditional dialogue between members of rival traditions of inquiry to occur, the parties involved need to be aware of and have an adequate understanding of one another's tradition of inquiry as well as the conceptual similarities and differences between them. Metaphorically speaking, each needs to learn the philosophical language of the other as though it were a second native language: each needs to be able to understand the conflicts

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[326] D'Andrea, *Tradition, Rationality and Virtue*, p. 334.

between them in terms of their own tradition-based perspective as well as that of the other and be able to translate or paraphrase concepts as necessary.[327] For example, regarding their disagreement about whether the *kenosis* of the incarnate Jesus involves the absolute self-negation of *sunyata*, both John and Paul must understand the key terms equally well as though he were speaking the same native language as the other.

Second, reasonable inter-traditional disagreement requires the members of rival traditions of inquiry to note their different views about basic sources of evidence. For instance, Paul must recognize what it is about *sunyata* experience that inclines John (from his Zen Buddhist tradition-based perspective) to accept it to be a basic source of evidence and John must recognize what it is about *sunyata* experience that inclines Paul (from his Christian tradition-based perspective) to reject that it is a basic source of evidence. Only then will Paul and John be able to adequately identify what they are disagreeing about.

Additionally, in ideal cases, fully informed reasonable disagreement with members of rival traditions of inquiry requires satisfying two more conditions: "both must enter into the present debates internal to that tradition" and both must "be willing to bring that tradition into relation with alien traditions."[328] MacIntyre writes:

> What such an individual [i.e., a member of a tradition of inquiry who is to engage in critical dialogue with a member of another tradition of inquiry] has to learn is how to test dialectically the theses proposed to him or her by each competing tradition, while also drawing upon these same theses in order to test dialectically those convictions and responses which he or she has brought to the encounter. Such a person has to become involved in the

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[327] See MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, pp. 374-376.

[328] D'Andrea, *Tradition, Rationality and Virtue*, pp. 337-338.

conversation between traditions, learning to use the idiom of each in order to describe and evaluate the other or others by means of it. So each such individual will be able to turn his or her own initial incoherences to argumentative advantage by requiring of each tradition that it supply an account of how these incoherences are best to be characterized, explained, and transcended.[329]

One may still wonder just what makes disagreement of this sort reasonable. One might also ask why John and Paul, equally able to understand one another's traditions of inquiry, remain members of their respective traditions of inquiry. That is, why doesn't Paul (John) decide to belong to John's (Paul's) tradition of inquiry instead? Why is it that neither of them suspends judgment about which tradition of inquiry to be a member of? Here deeper and even more difficult skeptical objections may be raised. There are no easy answers. MacIntyre's response to such questions in *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* is as follows:

> … a person is confronted by the claims of each of the traditions which [he has considered] … How is it rational to respond to them? The initial answer is: that will depend upon who you are and how you understand yourself. That is not the kind of answer we have been educated to expect in philosophy, but that is because our education in and about philosophy has presupposed what is in fact not true, that there are standards of rationality, adequate for the evaluation of rival answers to such questions, equally available, at least in principle to all persons, whatever tradition they happen to find themselves in and whether or not they happen to inhabit any tradition. When this false belief is rejected, it becomes clear that the problems of justice and practical rationality and of how to

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[329] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?,* p. 398.

confront the rival systematic claims of traditions contending with each other in the *agon* of ideological encounter are not one and the same set of problems for all persons. What those problems are, how they are to be formulated and addressed, and how, if at all, they may be resolved will vary not only with the historical, social, and cultural situation of the persons whose problems these are but also with the history of belief and attitude of each particular person up to the point in which he or she finds these problems inescapable … genuine intellectual encounter does not and cannot take place in some generalized, abstract way.[330]

In sum, if the substantive standards of theoretical rationality of one's tradition of inquiry are shown to be deficient, those standards should be appropriately amended or augmented as necessary. One ought not avoid but seek out the ideas and theories of rival traditions of inquiry. It is by engaging in dialectical, inter-traditional dialogue the limitations and deficiencies of one's own tradition of inquiry may be discovered. Discovering the limitations and deficiencies of one's views is an essential part of inquiry. Dialectical, inter-traditional dialogue and debate with members of rival traditions of inquiry may lead to an epistemological crisis, but its successful resolution will strengthen one's understanding and give one better reasons for staying a member of one's tradition of inquiry. Alternatively, one may come to see that one can no longer reasonably belong to one's tradition of inquiry and so seek out a different and better tradition of inquiry to which to belong. For these reasons, although it is sometimes necessary for members of a tradition of inquiry to go outside of their tradition, it doesn't follow that one can be theoretically rational regardless of TBP or that TBP is superfluous. In sum, rather than

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[330] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, p. 393.

being superfluous, I think that TBP is a necessary precondition for the possibility of dialectical inquiry into what is reasonable to believe and why.

6.2.3   The Scientific Objection

A third objection states that any informed person should reason in accord with the rational standards suggested by the Scientific tradition of inquiry. There may be different ways to understand this objection. I take it to be tantamount to the claim that the methodologies of science constitute a tradition of inquiry and that this tradition of inquiry is to be preferred over all others.

What are the core features of the Scientific tradition of inquiry? One plausible proposal is to identify or associate the Scientific tradition of inquiry with the Naturalist research program. Following Michael Rea, I take Naturalism to be "a research program which treats the methods of science and those methods alone as basic sources of evidence."[331] Rea proposes that the methods of science are just those methods that are accepted by biologists, chemists, and physicists, including standards of logical reasoning, criteria for theory selection, and the like. These methods presuppose that perception is a basic source of evidence. Those who rely on the methods of science accept other sources of evidence only if they are endorsed by the methods of science; they rely on memory, testimony, and logical, mathematical and conceptual truths, too, but only because the methods of science endorse or presuppose them. Let us, then, consider the Scientific tradition of inquiry to be roughly synonymous with the Naturalist research program. (One

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[331] Michael Rea, *World Without Design: The Ontological Consequences of Naturalism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002): 67.

might rather associate the Scientific tradition of inquiry with what Bas van Fraassen calls the empirical stance, according to which science is a paradigm of rational inquiry.[332] Or one might propose that central to the Scientific tradition of inquiry is scientific perspectivism, roughly, the view that all theorizing is perspectival and that universal laws of nature are best understood as "defining highly generalized models that characterize a theoretical perspective."[333] Briefly, I don't think that either of these alternative characterizations best captures what is unique to the Scientific tradition of inquiry: it is possible for one to adopt the empirical stance or accept scientific perspectivism without being a member of the Scientific tradition of inquiry as characterized above.)

One might be impressed by the intellectual achievements and discoveries made by those engaged in scientific inquiry and so come to think that other methods of inquiry are not rationally acceptable *unless* they can be incorporated into or otherwise confirmed by the methods and standards of the scientific community. But people who are not members of the Scientific tradition of inquiry can be similarly impressed by and adopt scientific methods of inquiry, too. In contrast, someone who sees oneself as a member of the Scientific tradition of inquiry and it alone holds an exclusivist view: one ought to reason in accord with the methods and standards of the scientific community and that those standards and methods alone determine what counts as evidence. In contrast, a member of the Scientific tradition of inquiry who is an inclusivist accepts the methods of scientific

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[332] Bas C. Van Fraassen, *The Empirical Stance*, (New Haven and London Yale University Press, 2002): 63.

[333] Ronald N. Giere, *Scientific Perspectivism*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006): 14-15.

inquiry but maintains that they can be accepted in way that allows one to accept various other basic sources of evidence and methods or kinds of inquiry as well.

On an inclusivist understanding, the methods of scientific inquiry are trans-traditional ways of solving empirical problems and proposing and testing empirical hypotheses and explanations. TBP is consistent with an inclusivist, trans-traditional understanding of the methods of scientific inquiry. (Of course, TBP may recognize that there are people who see themselves as members of the Scientific tradition of inquiry in an exclusive sense.) Because an informed TBP defender can accept the inclusivist view of scientific inquiry, it is false that all informed people ought to reason in accord with the rational standards suggested by the Scientific tradition of inquiry and those standards alone. Moreover, there isn't any obvious reason why one can't reasonably reject the exclusivist view. Thus, the scientific objection doesn't undermine TBP.

An alternative reply to the scientific objection construes scientific inquiry not as a tradition of inquiry but as a practice. Farming, for instance, is a practice: farmers make use of certain methodologies and decision-making procedures when they go about their inquiries and when engaging in their characteristic activities. (They ask things like, "When ought I seed the field this year?" and "What should I do given that there is a drought this year?") These days, farming is heavily informed by the methods of science. While farmers rely on scientific methods when engaging in their characteristic activities they are not *ipso facto* members of the Scientific tradition of inquiry. For example, a farmer who tests the pH-level of soil for optimum corn growth need not reject *a priori* intuition as a basic source of evidence or trust its deliverances only if the methods of science can prove that it is reliable or anything like that. Secondly, recall that John and

Paul both engage in Zen Buddhist meditation practices but only John does so *qua* member of the Zen Buddhist tradition of inquiry. Clearly, people like Paul who aren't Zen Buddhists can and do engage in Zen Buddhist meditative practices. Generally, engaging in the practices of farming or Zen Buddhist meditation or what have you does not place any obvious constraints on which traditions of inquiry one may reasonably belong to. (On the other hand, there is a tight connection between being a member of a tradition of inquiry and engaging in practices that are central to it. For instance, it is fitting for a member of the Zen Buddhist tradition of inquiry to engage in regular Zen Buddhist meditation, at least some of the time or at certain formative stages in life.) Construing scientific inquiry as a practice, therefore, accounts for how members of rival traditions of inquiry can all engage in scientific inquiry. That this is so provides a good response to the scientific objection.

Whether we go with the first or second proposal we have a satisfactory reply (or two) to the scientific objection. I conclude that the members of traditions of inquiry do and should reason in accord with the rational standards suggested by the methods of scientific inquiry when it is appropriate but deny that that gives them a reason to think that they should reason in accord with those methods and those methods alone.

6.2.4 The "Traditions of Inquiry Aren't Always What They're Cracked up to be" Objection

A fourth objection states that some traditions of inquiry are so thoroughly discredited that arriving at a belief by reasoning in accord with the rational standards of those traditions does not imply the rationality of that belief. That this is so casts doubt on

TBP. For instance, suppose that at the early stages of their development, it was reasonable for members of certain traditions of inquiry to accept divination and astrological signs as basic sources of evidence. But since at least since the time of Augustine (see *City of God, Part One*, Book V), astrology has been criticized and thoroughly discredited (even though some people don't see that this is so). Now, at best, astrology is a "fossil science," a "failed attempt on the part of man to try to elucidate the natural world."[334] Thus, I think that reasonable, fully informed people don't reason in accord with the principles of astrology and that people who think otherwise are just mistaken or ignorant; perhaps some of them are unreasonable or irrational, or both. Similarly, I grant that are there are (or could be) traditions of inquiry that are thoroughly discredited and that other traditions are dead or dying. What I deny is that these things give us reason to doubt TBP.

As I understand it, ideally, members of traditions of inquiry ought to reasonably accept their tradition-based views. At the very least, given my account of reasonableness, they ought to aim at cultivating the meta-cognitive virtue of reasonableness. I think that when a particular tradition of inquiry is subject to internal or external criticism, its members must reasonably address and overcome them. Otherwise their tradition-based beliefs are unreasonable. If a member of a particular tradition of inquiry fails to see that his tradition is unable to overcome internal and external criticisms, he is mistaken in his assessment about the reasonable acceptability of his tradition-based standpoint. But if the he is reasonable, he may reasonably judge that internal and external criticisms are

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[334] See William A. Lessa's review of Mark Graubard's *Astrology and Alchemy: Two Fossil Sciences*, in *American Anthropologist*, (56), 1954, 1162.

satisfactorily overcome. In a similar fashion, it is possible for a member of a tradition of inquiry to judge that his own tradition of inquiry is better (with respect to truth-adequacy) than a rival tradition that is subject to certain fatal flaws, all the more so if from his tradition-based perspective he can account for and explain why members of the rival tradition make these mistakes in the first place.[335] Therefore, that some traditions of inquiry are rightly and thoroughly discredited for failing to withstand internal and external criticism (even if their members don't see this) doesn't count against the truth of TBP, and it certainly doesn't show that *all* traditions of inquiry are discredited.[336]

6.3   Tradition-Based Perspectivalism: Implications and Applications

In Section 6.2 I showed that TBP can withstand several serious objections. That TBP can withstand them counts in its favor. In this Section I consider implications and applications of TBP to issues in the epistemology of disagreement. In Section 6.3.1 I apply TBP to the disagreements between Lewis and van Inwagen discussed in Chapter One and in Section 6.3.2 I complete my argument that Condition N holds in The Case of Plantinga and his Comrades. In Section 6.3.3 I discuss implications that TBP has for the rational uniqueness thesis, how it places constraints on adequate definitions of "epistemic peer," and how it implies that people can engage in non-trivial, meaningful disagreement about what to believe and why about matters of ultimate importance.

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[335] Certain points in this paragraph are gleaned from MacIntyre, "Epistemological crises, dramatic narrative, and the philosophy of science," pp. 3-24.

[336] I thank Michael Bergmann for pressing me to clarify and further support some of these claims.

6.3.1   That (1)-(3) Hold for Lewis and van Inwagen

Recall in Chapter One that some philosophers think that not (3) follows from (1) and (2). And recall that in Chapter One I also discussed Peter van Inwagen's various disagreements with David Lewis. We saw that while it seems that they engage in fully informed reasonable disagreements about whether free will is compatible with determinism, among other things, it is difficult to see how that could be. Van Inwagen's difficulty (slightly different from mine) is that, on the one hand, he is tempted to think he has some special insight Lewis lacks. On the other hand, it seems more plausible to him that he and Lewis have the same evidence and given that they believe mutually exclusive things on the basis of that evidence that either both are equally rational or neither of them is. So van Inwagen is in a bit of a bind: he is unwilling to become an agnostic about everything but empirically verifiable matters of fact but is unable to give an account of how his disagreement with Lewis could be rational.[337] Now that I've articulated and defended Condition N and TBP I offer a way to resolve his dilemma.

I think that the disagreement between van Inwagen and Lewis is (probably) a genuine case of fully informed reasonable disagreement. Obviously, (2) holds in their case. It seems that (1) holds for them, too: each assesses the evidential value of the same (or sufficiently similar) evidential considerations. Each (apparently) has the same publically accessible evidence. And each is aware of the same facts and experiences. Of course, they don't have access to one another's epistemic seemings and apparently special insights, but they both have experiences that have the same or sufficiently similar phenomenological feels. What are we to say about special, incommunicable insights?

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[337] Van Inwagen, "We're Right. They're Wrong," p. 28.

Recall that van Inwagen is inclined to suppose he has one but expresses doubt about whether he really does. Let us suppose that if Lewis were alive today he, too, would be similarly tempted to suppose yet equally inclined to doubt that he has a special insight of his own that is incompatible with van Inwagen's. Such insights are, I take it, epistemic seemings that have a phenomenological character we are familiar with. I take it that if van Inwagen and Lewis are directly acquainted with their own special insights, each has phenomenologically similar experiences. Thus, that they have these experiences is among the facts and experiences of which both of them are equally well aware.

Is it correct to think that (1) holds for Lewis and van Inwagen? One reason to think that (1) doesn't hold is the fact that Lewis and van Inwagen do not have the same epistemic seemings. One might object that this shows that (1) can't hold for them in their disagreement.[338] However, on the face of it, Lewis and van Inwagen's disagreement is weird, just about as weird as a case in which two health care practitioners share all the publically accessible evidence, are aware of the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and experiences, and yet have different and incommunicable epistemic seemings about the probable cause of the patients illness. Given their situation, if these two health care practitioners were to find out about their dueling intuitions, it would be unreasonable for them merely to insist that their respective intuitions are true. After all, at least one of them is mistaken, perhaps both. In disagreements of this sort, the evidential merits and significance of the intuitional evidence is rightly discredited. Likewise, for people who engage in epistemic disagreements (sufficiently) similar to Lewis and van Inwagen's to insist that their intuitions and special insights are correct would be unreasonable because

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[338] I thank Paul Draper and Michael Bergmann for pressing this objection.

the significance of epistemic seeming is similarly and rightly discredited. In these sorts of cases, the evidential force and significance of epistemic seemings is weak, far too weak to adequately account for how such disagreements can be reasonable.

We have reason to think that (3) holds for van Inwagen and Lewis. As I argued for the diverse group of Plantingans (Chapter Three, Section 4) and for John and Paul (Chapter Five, Section 4), if van Inwagen and Lewis are both (diachronically) roughly equally globally reasonable and if we have no good reason to think they are not (synchronically) roughly equally locally reasonable then we have a good reason to think that Condition N holds for them and thus reason to think that (3) holds for them in their case as well.

I take it that van Inwagen and Lewis both manifest reasonableness in accord with Condition N. If we are to successfully apply TBP to their case it must be that van Inwagen and Lewis are members or at least beneficiaries of different traditions of inquiry. Let us consider how that could be. Just which tradition each of them belongs to or is a beneficiary of is a very good question. I won't offer definitive answers but it is necessary to provide plausible and approximate ones.

David Lewis tells us, "I am an atheist."[339] He is also, among other things, a naturalist, a materialist, a metaphysical and scientific realist[340] and, (in)famously, a modal realist: he accepts "the thesis that there are other worlds, and individuals inhabiting these

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[339] David Lewis, "Evil For freedom's sake?", *Papers in Ethics and Social Philosophy,* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 2000): 102.

[340] This list, and a nice summary discussion of David Lewis's metaphysical views, can be found in Daniel Nolan, *David Lewis*, (Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press: 2005): 7-10.

worlds; and that these are of a certain nature, and suited to play theoretical roles."[341] I don't know if Lewis states that he has any official traditional affiliation in print, but given his views I think it is fair to say that Lewis is a naturalistic philosopher of the Humean tradition very broadly construed.

Peter van Inwagen tells us he is an Episcopalian Christian.[342] In "Quam Dilecta," describing his journey to Christian faith, he writes that everyone "accepts certain authorities and certain traditions."[343] A good part of the essay explains van Inwagen's transition from trust in the Enlightenment to trust in the Church. As such, van Inwagen takes seriously the creeds, authorities, and traditions of the Christian Church in a way that Lewis does not. Moreover, van Inwagen takes issue with many of Lewis's metaphysical views, including modal realism and global materialism, the view that everything that exists is material. Additionally, he accepts that divine revelation and religious experience (at least in their Christian varieties) are basic sources of evidence, whereas Lewis, as an Atheist, presumably does not. (Perhaps Lewis might accept certain sorts of non-Theistic religious experience.)

First, I don't mean to imply that there is a single, unitary and monolithic Christian Tradition of Inquiry. For instance, some Christians are evidentialists (Richard Swinburne) and others are not (Alvin Plantinga) and as such disagree about whether evidence is required in order to rationally believe that Christianity is true. Catholic and non-Catholic

[341] David Lewis, *On the Plurality of Worlds*, (Oxford, Blackwell Publishing: 1986): viii.
[342] See Peter van Inwagen, "Quam Dilecta," *God and the Philosophers: The Reconciliation of Faith and Reason*, T. V. Morris (ed.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994): 37.
[343] Van Inwagen, "Quam Dilecta," p. 49.

Christians disagree about how much weight tradition and church authorities have, especially Papal authorities. There seems to be a wide variety of distinctively Christian traditions of inquiry but they share a common thread: minimally, they all accept that The Bible and certain sorts of religious experiences are basic sources of evidence or at least crucially important guides to what is rational to believe and why. Similarly, there is no single, unitary and monolithic tradition of inquiry called The Humean Tradition of Inquiry or The Atheist Tradition of Inquiry either, but rather many more or less similar traditions that share a common core.

Even if I haven't fully defended just which traditions of inquiry van Inwagen and Lewis belong to or are beneficiaries of, it is clear that they don't belong to the same one. As such, it is fruitful to bring TBP to bear on their case. Specifically, I think the fact that van Inwagen and Lewis belong to different traditions of inquiry helps to account for not only why they disagree about their various specific claims but how it is possible for them to engage in fully informed reasonably disagreement about those claims.

Recall that van Inwagen and Lewis disagree about whether (i) free will is compatible with determinism, (ii) unrealized possibilities are physical objects, and whether (iii) human beings are four-dimensional things extended in time as well as in space. I consider how TBP bears on (i) and (ii).

Van Inwagen thinks that free will and determinism are incompatible. Not all Christians accept Incompatibilism. Typically, those that do accept it because they believe that people are held morally responsible by a good and just God who wouldn't hold people accountable for things that are not up to them in the libertarian sense. And it is because humans have libertarian free will that evil exists: God can't create people who

are free and determine that they do no evil. In his "Magnitude, Duration, and Distribution of Evil" he tells us, among other things, that, "It is generally … conceded by Christians that the existence of evil has something to do with free will." He also offers a narrative sketch of the origin of evil that makes use of "certain propositions drawn from Christian Theology." Without getting into the details of the narrative, note that van Inwagen thinks that certain details are necessary to give "flesh to the skeleton provided by the standard 'free-will' account of the origin of evil because it [is] clear that that skeleton was no [successful] theodicy."[344] As such, we see how it is that the Christian tradition informs van Inwagen's views on what to believe and why about human freedom and moral responsibility. Because he is not a Christian and does not accept that The Bible is a source of evidence, this narrative does not appeal to Lewis; he does not find it convincing and as such (presumably) it does not inform or constrain or influence his views about whether free will is compatible with determinism in any appreciable way. Their respective assessments are reasonable for them *qua* members of their respective traditions of inquiry. Thus, bringing TBP to bear on their disagreement about whether free will is compatible with determinism, we have a better understanding of why Lewis and van Inwagen disagree about that and a better idea of how it could be that their disagreement could be fully informed and reasonable.

Lewis and van Inwagen disagree about whether unrealized possibilities are physical objects. Lewis thinks that a property is the set of all of its this-world and

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[344] Peter van Inwagen, "The Magnitude, Duration, and Distribution of Evil," in *Essays in Philosophical Theology*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995): 98, 99, 102.

otherworldly instances.[345] He thinks that worlds are concrete; they are individuals and particulars, not sets or universals.[346] As such, he thinks that unrealized possibilities in this world are particular individuals that are realized possibilities in some other world. For example, although this world doesn't contain amphibious giraffes other worlds contain both non-amphibious and amphibious giraffes in the same way our world contains only non-amphibious giraffes. Lewisian modal realism is one way to account for unrealized possibilities given the truth of global materialism.[347]

Van Inwagen does not think that unrealized possibilities are physical objects and does not accept global materialism; he believes that God exists and that God is not a physical object. Whether or not there are other worlds in Lewis's sense, traditionally, Christians have ways of accounting for the existence of unrealized possibilities without positing modal realism. For instance, many Christians, including van Inwagen, accept that God knows all possible states of affairs, that unrealized possibilities are complete descriptions of non-actual states of affairs and that non-actualized essences (or natures) exist as ideas in the mind of God.[348] (For instance, van Inwagen writes that possible worlds are possible states of affairs that are "maximal with respect to the inclusion (or

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[345] Lewis, *On the Plurality of Worlds*, p. 50.

[346] Lewis, *On the Plurality of Worlds*, p. 83.

[347] Another attempt is David Armstrong's combinatorialism. See his "The Nature of Possibility," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 16, 4 (1986): 575-594.

[348] For instance, Plantinga defends these sorts of views in his work. In particular, see his *The Nature of Necessity*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), *God, Freedom, and Evil*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), and *Does God have a Nature?*, (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1980).

entailment) of other possible states of affairs."[349]) But because he does not accept Christian Theism, Lewis has no special reason to take account of what the Christian tradition has to say in his metaphysical theorizing and has no reason to worry about whether his views about modality are consistent with or cohere well with Christianity. (I set aside here the possibility that Lewis has external reasons to worry about these things. Why? Because I think that purely external reasons have nothing to do with what is rational to believe and why in the relevant sense.) Bringing TBP to bear on their disagreement about whether unrealized possibilities are physical objects, we have a better understanding of why Lewis and van Inwagen disagree about that and a better idea of how it could be that their disagreement could be fully informed and reasonable.

There are problems with my attempt to uncover which traditions of inquiry Lewis and van Inwagen are either members or beneficiaries of. It is worthwhile considering some of the difficulties here. One problem is that compatibilism vs. incompatibilism debates do not match well with theism vs. atheism debates. For instance, many atheists are incompatiblists and many theists are compatiblists. That this is so complicates things considerably. A related problem is that van Inwagen would likely insist that he held incompatibilism before being a Christian, and so take issue with the rationale I have given in favor of the view. Lastly, since many atheists reject Lewis's account of possible worlds for the same reasons theists do, it seems that the rationale for rejecting Lewis's account of possible worlds has almost nothing to do with theism.[350]

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[349] Peter van Inwagen, "Two Conceptions of Possible Worlds," in *Ontology, Identity, and Modality*, (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2001): 208.

[350] I thank Michael Bergmann for bring these problems to my attention.

The fact that Theists who accept compatibilism (including certain Lutherans and certain Calvinists) are at odds with Christians who affirm libertarianism (including Wesley and other Arminians) goes to show that we need to consider how and why Christians get into debates about whether compatibilism or incompatibilism is true, too. But this doesn't show that the teachings of Christianity are irrelevant to debates between Christians about whether to accept compatibilism or incompatibilism. Rather, it shows that underlying at least some disagreements between Christians about whether compatibilism or incompatibilism is true are still further disagreements about how to understand and interpret the teachings of Christianity, including core texts, such as The Bible. Similar points may be made about why atheists debate about whether compatibilism or incompatibilism is true.

I can see that van Inwagen might insist that he held incompatibilism to be true before becoming a Theist. Nevertheless, according to TBP, how van Inwagen was raised and brought up, including what and how he was taught in his formative years, played a significant role in shaping his views about evidence. Specifically, his upbringing had an impact on his past and current views and intuitions about incompatibilism. My primary intention is to attempt to identify which traditions of inquiry may have had a formative impact on what he believes and why. And I think I have shed at least some light on that issue.

Lastly, I concede that many Christians and non-Christians agree that Lewis's modal realism is implausible. Perhaps the deeper issue here is how to give an account of modality if one is a strong materialist. If one who is a strong materialist, then one ought to think that Lewis's theory of modality is at least somewhat attractive. On the other hand,

if one is a theist, one has a special reason to reject Lewisian modal realism. *Qua* Theist, one has reason to reject strong materialism and no special reason to accept an account of modality that eschews all abstracta. And that is how Theism has something to do with whether or not one finds Lewis's account of modality acceptable.

TBP can also help to solve a special problem that van Inwagen has. Recall that van Inwagen expresses doubt that he and Lewis are both rational. My answer (which he might not like) is that Lewis and van Inwagen are equally but equivocally rational. Let me explain what I mean by that. Because Lewis and van Inwagen reason in accord with different standards of rationality, they aren't univocally rational (not in the relevant sense). But both may still be equally rational in the sense that (roughly) neither of them makes any mistakes when reasoning in accord with the substantive standards of theoretical rationality that each, respectively, reasonably accepts to be true. Thus, from the perspective of their respective traditions of inquiry, each of them is fully rational but in different, equivocal senses. (Perhaps it would be better and more accurate to say that they are analogically rational. But I take it that being analogically rational is one way of being equivocally rational.) That these things are so in no way undermines the claim that each of them is (roughly) equally reasonable (either locally or globally). And that is how TBP gives us reason to think that (1)-(3) could hold in the case of Lewis and van Inwagen. (If one is concerned about some of the moves made here, I have more to say about this proposal in Section 6.4.1 below. It seemed better to get into the details about the proposal in the context of my discussion of The Rational Uniqueness Thesis.)

Lastly, one might object that TBP entails some problematic version of relativism about rationality. I don't think it does. I take it to be obvious that TBP is consistent with a

realist conception of truth and doesn't entail anti-realism or conceptual relativism. TBP doesn't entail epistemic relativism either because, briefly, (i) it is not rationally arbitrary for a member of a tradition of inquiry to reason in accord with the standards of substantive rationality of their tradition of inquiry rather than some other one and (ii) members of traditions of inquiry may think that their tradition-based epistemic standards are better suited for getting at truth than other, incompatible standards.[351] I take it to be clear that I accept a view about rationality that is inconsistent with 'objective rationality', and argued why there is no such thing as objective rationality in Chapter Five. Does TBP entail some version of relativism about rationality? Apparently so, but that is just part of the theory: according to TPB, there are many different conceptions of rationality and people disagree about which is true. Disagreement of this sort is rather like how people who accept different accounts of justice disagree about which acts are just. Whether a particular act is judged to be just depends on which standard of justice is brought to bear on the action. However, whether such judgments are true depends on which account of justice is true.

6.3.2   The Case of Plantinga and his Comrades: Condition N and Generic Theism

In Chapter Three I showed that it is possible for Alvin Plantinga, Al ben Plantinga, Ibn Plantinga, and Al Plantingachandra to reasonably disagree about which extension of the Standard model is true. I conceded that the argument is flawed and to fix it I needed to provide a convincing reason for thinking that Condition N holds for this diverse group

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[351] For a good discussion of the various forms of relativism, see Maria Baghramian, *Relativism*, (New York: Routledge, 2005).

of Plantingans and convincingly argue that it would not be more reasonable for them to give up their respective extensions and accept Generic Theism instead. Having defended TBP, I can now show a promising way to supply the needed argument.

Recall (1)-(3):

(1)   Regarding their respective inquires into p and q, A and B assess the evidential value of the same (or sufficiently similar) facts and experiences.

(2)   A believes that p is true and q false, B believes that q is true and p false, and both A and B correctly believe that p and q are inconsistent.

(3)   A and B's beliefs about the truth-values of p and q are equally reasonable.

Suppose that TBP is true. And suppose that Alvin Plantinga, Al ben Plantinga, Ibn Plantinga, and Al Plantingachandra are each members of appropriate traditions of inquiry. I will show how it could be that each manifests the meta-cognitive virtue of reasonableness in accord with Condition N from within the epistemic standpoint of their respective traditions of inquiry.

Recall Condition N:

Condition N: Approximately, S (fully) manifests the meta-cognitive virtue of reasonability if:

i) S, *qua* epistemic agent, is functioning well epistemically by having and exercising the epistemic virtues that underlie the manifestation of reasonability, including the intellectual virtues of the love of knowledge, firmness, courage and caution, humility, autonomy, generosity, and practical wisdom;

ii) S is responsive to reasons; e.g., S is willing to correct his/her views in light of criticism, willing to provide others with reasons, has a measure of good judgment that is incompatible with perversely bad judgment, and is to some degree self-critical, at least in the sense of being disposed to think about and correct tendencies that have gotten them into trouble;

iii) S is minimally rational with respect to his/her desires and is not subject to serious affective disorders (e.g., extreme apathy or severe clinical depression) and is appropriately concerned about his/her own well-being; and

iv) S is appropriately conscientious and reflective regarding the truth of his/her beliefs, especially when those beliefs are challenged.

In Chapter Five I defended the claim that Condition N holds for John in The Case of John and Paul. I showed how it is plausible to think that John, influenced by Traditional Japanese thinking and *qua* member of the Zen Buddhist tradition of inquiry, reasonably accepts Traditional Japanese philosophical ideas and ways of thinking. I did so by showing how it is possible for John to reasonably accept the Doctrine of No-Self in a way that accords with Condition N. I did not show that each of John's uniquely Zen Buddhist beliefs could be reasonably held but suggested that with a bit of philosophical imagination one can see how that could go. Following that strategy, I argue that it is possible for Alvin Plantinga, Al ben Plantinga, Ibn Plantinga, and Al Plantingachandra, *qua* members of their respective traditions of inquiry, to reasonably hold Christian Belief, Jewish Belief, Islamic Belief and Hindu Belief in a way that accords with Condition N. Construing their disagreement as a disagreement about what to believe and why between members of rival traditions of inquiry provides us with a more promising way to show

that their disagreement is reasonable. As such, TBP makes it more plausible to think that disagreement between Plantinga and his Comrades is or could be reasonable. To develop this argument in detail would take considerable work. But I think we can imagine how doing that work would go and that it is plausible enough to think it could be done. At the very least, I think I have said enough to provide additional support for the following claim: if TBP is true, then it is more plausible than it would otherwise be to think that Condition N holds for Alvin Plantinga, Al ben Plantinga, Ibn Plantinga, and Al Plantingachandra in their disagreement.

Second, applying TBP to their case in another way, I can show that it would not be any more reasonable for Alvin Plantinga, Al ben Plantinga, Ibn Plantinga, and Al Plantingachandra to give up their respective extensions and accept Generic Theism instead. In order for it to be reasonable for them to no longer believe that their respective extensions of the Standard model are true, presumably, it must also be reasonable for them to give up being members of their respective traditions of inquiry. But it is from the perspective of their respective traditions of inquiry that they manifest reasonableness. So, then, unless Generic Theism brings about some sort of epistemological crisis for each of them that forces them to fundamentally reevaluate what is rational to believe and why, it would not be more reasonable for any of them to stop being members of their respective traditions of inquiry. We haven't yet seen that Generic Theism is able to raise problems sufficiently strong enough so as to bring about an epistemological crisis for each of the Plantingans. Perhaps it can. But if not, each Plantingan has a reasonable response to the Generic Theist's objection.

6.4   Tradition-Based Perspectivalism and The Epistemology of Disagreement

The truth of TBP has important consequences for the epistemology of disagreement. I consider three. First, I consider consequences the truth of TBP may have on the Rational Uniqueness Thesis. Second, I suggest that definitions of "epistemic peerhood" ought to include a clause that epistemic peers are generally roughly equally reasonable. Third, I point out that the fact that TBP can handle tough, non-trivial cases of disagreement counts in its favor.

6.4.1   Tradition-Based Perspectivalism and The Rational Uniqueness Thesis

The truth of TBP has implications for The Rational Uniqueness Thesis (RU), formulated by David Christensen thus:

RU: There is a unique maximally rational response to a given evidential situation.[352]

If RU is true, then (on the assumption that maximally rational agents respond in a maximally rational way in an evidential situation) if epistemic agents A and B are maximally rational, both have the same rational doxastic response in a given evidential situation. RU also implies that if A and B are fully aware of the same (or sufficiently similar) evidence, then if A and B are maximally rational, they do not reasonably disagree about what to believe and why. As such, RU implies that maximally rational

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[352] See Christensen, "The Epistemology of Disagreement: The Good News," *The Philosophical Review* 116, no. 2 (2007): 5. RU is an idealization. As such, defenders of RU needn't affirm that there are any maximally rational agents, only that 'normal' people sufficiently approximate maximal rationality.

agents do not disagree about the truth-value of statements of the form "*e* is evidence for *p*," "*e* is not evidence for *p*," "*e* is good evidence for *p*," and "*e* is bad evidence for *p*," and so on. Thus, if A and B disagree about what to believe and why in their evidential situation, it follows that one of them is confused or making some sort of mistake. But since we have supposed that A and B are both maximally rational and aware of the same (or sufficiently similar) evidence, confusions and mistakes seem to be ruled out. How, then, could A and B be maximally rational, aware of all of the same (or sufficiently similar) evidence *and* reasonably disagree about what to believe and why without either of them being confused or making some sort of mistake based on the evidence? Is such a thing possible? Perhaps, but only if A and B are equivocally maximally rational, that is, only if each is maximally rational in accord with a different set of standards about what rationality requires. Let me explain this proposal in more detail.

People who belong to (or who are otherwise influenced by or beneficiaries of) different traditions of inquiry do not reason in accord with the same standards of theoretical rationality. For instance, Rationalists accept but Empiricists deny that *a priori* intuition is a basic source of evidence. In accord with TBP, neither Rationalists nor Empiricists can be maximally rational *simpliciter*. Rather, a Rationalist could be maximally rational *qua* Rationalist and an Empiricist could be maximally rational *qua* Empiricist. Similarly, there is a unique way of being maximally rational associated with each distinct set of standards of theoretical rationality. Similarly, Al Plantinga, Ibn Plantinga, Al ben Plantinga, Al Plantingachandra, John and Paul belong to different traditions of inquiry and accept different standards of theoretical rationality and different

accounts of what to is rational to believe and why. As such, if they are maximally rational, they must be equivocally maximally rational.

On this proposal, even though A and B are not maximally rational in accord with the same set of standards they can still be equally and univocally reasonable. This is because reasonability, like whiteness and mammality, is multiply realizable. For instance, a piece of paper and a light bulb can be the same shade of white even though the physical properties and causes that lead up to perceiving the white of the paper and the white of the light bulb are very different.[353]

Consider the implications of all this on RU. One might think that these considerations show that there is no such thing as a unique maximally rational response in a given evidential situation and think that RU is false. For instance, one might argue that accepting RU is tantamount to buying into the views of the Encyclopaedia tradition and reject RU on account of having already rejected Encyclopaedia. The arguments against the viability of Encyclopedia offered in Chapter 5, Section 3.2 may be easily modified in such a way that they count against the truth of RU.

Alternatively, one might try to understand these considerations in a way that is consistent with the truth of RU. Here's one attempt. Recall that for each distinct set of standards of theoretical rationality there is a unique way of being maximally rational in accord with that set of standards. Thus, one may deny that there is a *uniquely* unique maximally rational response in a given evidential situation *e* and accept that are many different sets standards of theoretical rationality and hence that there is a unique

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[353] For more on this subject, see C. L. Hardin, *Color for Philosophers: Unweaving the Rainbow*, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1988).

maximally rational response that one can have in *e* in accordance with each of these sets of standards. On this proposal, RU is not false but schematic and incomplete: one renders it complete by specifying just which set of standards of rationality is in play. Of course, we don't want to put into play bizarre or arbitrary standards, but want viable standards of theoretical rationality that we reasonably believe to be true. An example will help clarify the view.

Suppose that Fred (short for Winifred) is a member of the Rationalist tradition of inquiry and Wesley is a member of the Empiricist tradition of inquiry. (Even though there are many distinct traditions of inquiry that either affirm or deny that rational intuition is a basic source of evidence, for the sake of argument and to simplify things suppose that there are unified, overarching traditions of inquiry called Empiricism and Rationalism.) For Fred, theoretical rationality involves accepting that rational intuition is a basic source of evidence for certain truths, including logical and mathematical truths. Moreover, Fred is a maximally rational Rationalist and so she has a unique maximally rational response in accord with Rationalist standards of rationality in a particular evidential situation *e*. Wesley denies that rational intuition is a basic source of evidence and thinks that something other than rational intuition gives him reason to think that logical and mathematical statements are true (perhaps their consonance with our best empirical theories or their fecundity). Wesley is a maximally rational Empiricist and has a unique maximally rational response in accord with Empiricist standards of rationality in *e*. Moreover, Fred and Wesley are fully informed: each is aware of all the same (or sufficiently similar) evidential considerations in *e*. According to Rationalist standards of theoretical rationality Fred has a unique maximally rational response in *e* but Wesley

does not. And according to Empiricist standards of theoretical rationality Wesley has a unique maximally rational response in *e* but Fred does not. Because they do not have the same maximally rational response in the same (or sufficiently similar) evidential situation we cannot say without equivocation that Fred and Wesley are equally theoretically rational. Even so, both are aware of the same (or sufficiently similar) evidential considerations in *e* and both have a unique maximally rational response in that evidential situation (albeit in accord different standards of theoretical rationality). This allows Fred and Wesley to be equally reasonable as well, as the conditions on reasonability do not require one to affirm or deny that rational intuition is a basic source of evidence but rather that one manifest reasonability in accord with the standards of theoretical rationality that one reasonably accepts to be true.

6.4.2   Tradition-Based Perspectivalism and Adequate Definitions of "Epistemic Peer"

The truth of TBP has implications on the nature of epistemic peerhood and so places constraints on adequate definitions of "epistemic peer." Gary Gutting defines epistemic peers as people who are alike in "intelligence, perspicacity, honesty, thoroughness, and other relevant epistemic virtues."[354] Tom Kelly adds to this definition that epistemic peers are alike "with respect to their exposure to evidence and arguments

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[354] Gary Gutting, *Religious Belief and Religious Skepticism*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982): 83.

which bear on the question at issue."[355] Richard Feldman and Ted Warfield write that epistemic peers are "familiar with all the same evidence and arguments and are equals with respect to the general epistemic virtues."[356] Earl Conee acknowledges this point when he writes that people are "*epistemic peers on the topic of a proposition* when they have a thoroughly shared basis and capacity for reasonable doxastic attitudes concerning the proposition."[357] All of these definitions imply that epistemic peers are equal in terms of intellectual virtue and so can easily accommodate the requirement that epistemic peers are roughly equally globally reasonable in accord with Condition N.

Other definitions of epistemic peer in the literature do not (at least not explicitly) require that people be roughly equal with respect to intellectual virtue. (It's not clear to me why these philosophers propose definitions that don't explicitly make reference to intellectual virtue or reasonability.) For instance, Hilary Kornblith writes that two people qualify as epistemic peers if they are equally familiar with the arguments for and against a position and are equally smart.[358] Ralph Wedgwood, surveying various definitions of epistemic peer, writes that epistemic peers are people who "have *exactly the same evidence* … and are *equally rational* (either in the sense that on a particular occasion their reasoning processes are equally rational or that they are generally equally rational in the

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[355] Thomas Kelly, "The Epistemic Significance of Disagreement," in *Oxford Studies in Epistemology* edited by John Hawthorne and Tamar Gendler Szabo, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): 168, fn. 1.

[356] Feldman and Warfield, "Introduction," in *Disagreement,* p. 3.

[357] Earl Conee, "Rational Disagreement Defended," in *Disagreement,* p. 71.

[358] Hillary Kornblith, "Belief in the Face of Controversy," in *Disagreement*, p. 37.

deliberations)"[359] And David Christensen writes that epistemic peers are equally informed, equally intelligent and rational, and have no reason to think that one or the other of them is especially likely to be particularly good or bad at reacting to the evidence about the topic of disagreement.[360] But people can satisfy these requirements and fail to be reasonable. Kornblith's definition is flawed because it implausibly allows two people who are equally familiar with the arguments for and against a position and are equally smart to count as epistemic peers even if one of them is extremely unreasonable. Wedgewood's definition is flawed because it implausibly allows two people who have exactly the same (or sufficiently similar) evidence and are equally rational to count as epistemic peers even if one of them is extremely unreasonable. Christensen's definition is flawed for similar reasons. I think that any adequate definition of "epistemic peer" ought to include constraints that require that both parties be roughly equally globally reasonable. So, then, these and other definitions of "epistemic peer" that fail to make reference to intellectual virtues in general and to reasonableness in particular are flawed.

6.4.3 Tradition-Based Perspectivalism can Handle Tough, Non-Trivial Cases of Epistemic Disagreement

TBP implies that people can engage in non-trivial and meaningful disagreements about what to believe and why about matters of ultimate importance, not only about the topics discussed in my cases but also about a host of other things as well, such as whether

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[359] Ralph Wedgewood, "The Moral Evil Demons," in *Disagreement*, p. 226.

[360] David Christensen, "Epistemology of Disagreement: The Good News," *The Philosophical Review* 116, no. 2 (2007): 187-217.

God or some other divinity or ultimate reality exists and if so what his/her/its nature and/or purposes might be, whether humans are endowed with faculties of *a priori* intuition, etc. Moreover, TBP offers a way to rationally adjudicate these complex and messy disagreements: briefly, by manifesting reasonability as members of particular traditions of inquiry and by engaging in critical, sustained dialectical and inter-traditional dialogue with others, it is possible to reasonably determine what to believe and why. In contrast, cases often discussed in the literature on epistemic disagreement are neither very important nor all that consequential. We encounter disagreements about mundane things like what to believe given that you are exposed to conflicting weather reports, whether one rightly calculates how much change a dinner party ought to have received from the waiter or how big a tip to leave, and the like.[361] Feldman and Warfield offer the following representative examples: "Two expert weather forecasters disagree about the weekend forecast. Two equally well-informed economists disagree about the most likely movement in interest rates. Two chess players with the same ranking disagree about whether 'white' stands better in a given board position."[362] These are genuine disagreements, and the fact that they occur raises philosophically interesting and important questions and problems, but nothing of much real life importance rides on them (except, perhaps, disagreement about which direction interest rates will move) and such disagreements are rather easily resolved in practice. For instance, we'll know soon enough whether the weekend weather forecast was accurate (in the meantime keep an umbrella handy) and which prediction about which direction interest rates will move is

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[361] See Christensen, "The Epistemology of Disagreement: The Good News," pp. 193-194.

[362] See Feldman and Warfield, "Introduction", in *Disagreement,* p. 1.

correct (in the meantime it'd be a good idea to think twice about taking out that new loan or refinancing the mortgage). Granted, when coming up with a theory of any sort, it's helpful to consider simple, ideal cases and then extend them, if possible, to harder cases. But it's also good to formulate a theory that can readily handle the very tough cases straightaway. That TBP has a lot to say about really hard cases shows that it is not limited to somewhat trivial cases or puzzles of interest primarily to epistemologists and other philosophers. And that ought to be of interest to epistemologists and other philosophers.

In conclusion, TBP can fruitfully be brought to bear on deep disagreements about perennial philosophical questions of the utmost importance that many people care about. We have seen this to be so in my discussion of the Case of Plantinga and his Comrades and the Case of John and Paul. TBP not only offers a promising way to handle tough cases of disagreement, it gives a clear explanation of why there is persistent disagreement between fully informed and equally reasonable people in the first place. As such, it even sheds light on apparently intractable disagreements between philosophers such as Peter van Inwagen and David Lewis. TBP is a promising theory that can be applied to tough cases and its explanatory power and fecundity make it an attractive theory. All of this counts in its favor.

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