Modernity, Science, and the Making of Religion:

A Critical Analysis of a Modern Dichotomy

by

Rodney W. Tussing

A Thesis Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

Approved November 2014 by the
Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Linell Cady, Chair
Joel Gereboff
Owen Anderson

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

December 2014

ABSTRACT

This project examines and challenges the West's generally accepted two category approach to the world's belief systems. That is, it will deconstruct the religion / science 'paradigm' that has developed over the past two centuries. It will argue that the dichotomy between the two categories was created by modernity for the purpose of establishing an exclusive view believed to be based on knowledge. This exclusive view, philosophical naturalism (science), was set in opposition to all alternative views identified as religion. As the exclusive view, though constructed on a defective foundation of knowledge, philosophical naturalism, nonetheless, became the privileged interpreter and explainer of reality in the academy of the Western world.

As a work in the area of epistemology and the philosophy of religion, this project will challenge philosophical naturalism's claim to knowledge. The approach will be philosophical and historical critically assessing both modernity's and postmodernity's basis for knowledge. Without a rational basis for exclusive knowledge the popular dichotomy dissolves. The implications of this dissolution for 'religious studies' will be addressed by offering an alternative scheme that provides a more plausible way to divide the world's belief systems.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

That there is such a thing as 'religion' in the world few would deny. Everyone today, at least in the West, seems to know what religion is and, just as important, everyone seems to know what religion is not. A familiar account is that religion can be best explained as a certain set of beliefs, rules, and practices for living. It is thought to be belief in a transce1ndent reality, one that is not part of this material world, one that is holy, or sacred, and makes certain things in this world holy or sacred. It consists of performing particular rituals at particular times, and, of course, it is often belief in a higher power, a God or gods. Additionally, it is thought to be a set of beliefs that explain and interpret life and, by implication, the nature of ultimate reality. To believe in this type of transcendent reality and to perform the prescribed behaviors or rituals is to be religious, so the typical account goes.

We in the West use the term, religion, freely and assume everyone knows what we are talking about. We refer to Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism, for example, as religions and the adherents of these as those who are religious. There are the faithful, those who follow their religion more or less consciously and consistently, there are those who are somewhat religious, and, of course, there are those who have no religion at all. The common understanding seems to be that there is religion and non-religion, religious people and non-religious people, and there are religious views and there are non-religious views.

At what can be called the 'popular' level, the term religion, as just summarized, appears to be clearly understood and can be differentiated using the descriptions listed above from what it is not, thus producing two separate categories—religion and non-

religion. Even without an explicit scholarly definition of religion these two categories are evident in virtually every area of life. For instance, an average bookstore will have numerous book sections including one on religion. Historians speak of religious histories and news analysts report on the latest happenings in the religious world. Critics, such as the group known as 'the new atheists,' express their disdain for religion and assert the need to abolish it favoring the idea of a world without religion—a totally secular world.[1] Examples depicting religion as a distinct category are endless, thus establishing a type of belief paradigm—religion and non-religion—a particular way of looking at the world that has become a commonly accepted conceptual scheme. These two categories have been received by the modern Western mindset and often without much critical thought. It's considered a given.

After several years of teaching Philosophy, Philosophy of Religion, and World Religions at the college level, this author has become convinced that the dichotomy between a religious perspective, or worldview,[2] and a non-religious one is deeply-seated in

[1] Philosopher of religion, Alvin Plantinga, identifies the "new atheists" as Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Christopher Hitchens, and Sam Harris with an aim to "run roughshod over religion." "[T]hey attribute most of the ills of the world to religion….religious belief is unreasonable and irrational," *Where the Conflict Really Lies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) x-xi. Victor Stenger would also include himself in this group and has addressed the relationship between contemporary atheism and religion in his work, *The New Atheism: Taking a Stand for Science and Reason* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2009). The naturalistic claims of the "new atheists" will be developed more in what follows.

[2] The term 'worldview' as used in this project means a unified comprehensive system—a metanarrative—that attempts to present a coherent view of existence by explaining the meaning and purpose of the world and life in its totality. As human beings, we tend to subscribe to and place ourselves into a grand, or master, narrative. Christianity, as an example, is one of many. George Lindbeck and William Abraham come very close to the intended meaning. Lindbeck writes, "[R]eligions are seen as comprehensive interpretive schemes, usually embodied in myths or narratives and heavily ritualized, which structure human experience and understanding of self and world….a religion can be viewed as a kind of cultural and/or linguistic framework or medium that shapes the entirety of life and thought." *The Nature of Doctrine* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1984) 32-3. Abraham writes, "Religious belief should be assessed as a rounded whole rather then taken in stark isolation. Christianity, for example, like other world faiths, is a complex, large-scale system of belief which must be seen as a whole before it is assessed. To break it up into disconnected parts is to mutilate and distort its character. We can, of course, distinguish certain elements in the Christian faith, but we must still stand back and see it as a complex interaction of these elements. We need to see it as a metaphysical system, as a world view, that is total in its scope and range." *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1985) 104. For a detailed exploration of the concept see David Naugle's, *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Grand

the Western consciousness and continues to be the putative position, which is not surprising since no strong challenge to it appears to be forthcoming.[3] The religious and non-religious categories are often characterized and exemplified by the religion and science model. Many students enter the classroom presupposing the generally accepted divide between religion and science as popularly understood. They tend to insist that a 'scientific view,' prima facie, is a justifiable alternative to a religious view.

In keeping with the popular understanding, students consistently present the scientific view as the non-religious view—the neutral, publicly held view. Religion, though notoriously difficult to define, is nonetheless believed to be a particular bias based on faith or belief, personal feelings, or family tradition, and is not grounded in knowledge and facts. Put simply, a religious view lacks evidence and proof, it is often said. Science, on the other hand, is about the pursuit of neutral brute facts obtained through the use of reason and the scientific method resulting in knowledge that can be publicly verified. The scientific view is commonly expressed as a naturalistic view, a materialist conception of the universe—one in which only a material reality exists. A non-material, or spiritual, realm is considered non-verifiable and, therefore, not science. In support of the scientific view, students will often make an immediate appeal to the voices of the leading lights, such as physicist Stephen Hawking's authoritative statement, "[i]t is not necessary to invoke God to light the blue touch paper and set the universe going," or to biologist

---

Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002). The worldview idea will be dealt with more in the final chapter of this work.

[3] As a work of interest here see Talal Asad's, *Genealogies of Religion* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993). In it he explores the idea of religion as a construct of European modernity from the perspective of anthropology and questions the inadequacy of Western modernity as a universal ideological model. Three additional works arguing a similar theme are Daniel Dubuisson's, *The Western Construction of Religion* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993) and Russell McCutcheon's, *Manufacturing Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), Timothy Fitzgerald's, *The Ideology of Religious Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Richard Dawkins' general thesis, "the factual premise of religion—the God hypothesis—is untenable." [4] While many students tend to be accepting of alternative views to science, some are less tolerant and have other favorite authors like Sam Harris and Victor Stenger. A contributor to the perceived tension and intolerance between science and religion, science writer, Sam Harris sees a clash between them and emphasizes his disdain for religion when he says, "[w]hich of our present practices will appear most ridiculous from the point of view of those future generations that might yet survive the folly of the present? It is hard to imagine that our religious preoccupations will not top the list."[5] Physicist, Victor Stenger, when speaking of religion makes a similar comment;

> Faith is absurd and dangerous and we look forward to the day, no matter how distant, when the human race finally abandons it. Reason is a noble substitute, proven by its success. Religion is an intellectual and moral sickness that cannot endure forever if we believe at all in human progress.[6]

Such rancor needs explanation. The exclusively Western perceived distinction between religion and non-religion, as just illustrated, is oftentimes portrayed as truth v. opinion, or more moderately expressed as knowledge (science) v. faith (religion). Western modernity has produced two categories with these two binaries as a common mechanism for deciphering them.[7] But, why these two? A distinction has been made, but what is the

[4] Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow, *The Grand Design* (New York: Bantam Books, 2010) 180, and Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co. 2006) 189.

[5] Sam Harris, *The End of Faith* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2005) 48.

[6] Victor Stenger, *The New Atheists: Taking a Stand for Science and Reason* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2009) 244.

[7] Chapter two will define Modernity in more detail. For now it is to be understood as the time following the European Renaissance, Protestant Reformation, and the work of Descartes and Locke that was characterized by individualism and

essential difference? Are there fixed rational grounds for these categories, as the scholars just mentioned have argued (as well as many others), or are they what Thomas Kuhn calls a product of 'normal science, a 'paradigm?' That is, as Kuhn explains, "achievements that some particular scientific community acknowledges for a time as supplying the foundation for its further practice."[8] While commitment to the same paradigm provides the basis for a consensus on particular research traditions, it is "sufficiently open-ended to leave all sorts of problems for the redefined group of practitioners to resolve."[9] Some of those problems are now coming to light and in need of resolution.

This project will respond to some of the issues inherent in the current science / religion 'paradigm' by offering a detailed explanation on the question regarding the origin and purpose of these two categories of belief. How are the two categories to be understood? Differences at the most basic level will be considered. It will seek to implement the insight of philosopher, Surrendra Gangadean, with his axiom, "[c]ritical thinking is by nature presuppositional; without the more basic in place, what comes after cannot be understood."[10] What is meant by this is that beliefs about various things are held together by reason and can form a 'belief system' when focusing on a particular topic.[11]

---

subjectivism and a move away from authoritarian standards and toward objective standards that are determined in isolation from the values and practices of particular cultures.

[8] Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962) 10.

[9] Kuhn, *The Structure*, 10.

[10] Surrendra Gangadean, *Philosophical Foundation: A Critical Analysis of Basic Beliefs* (Lanham: University Press of America, Inc., 2008) quoted from the preface.

[11] The idea of a 'belief system' here is intended to mean logically connected beliefs, a coherence of ideas, an affirmation that a proposition, or propositions about the existence, experience, meaning, and nature of the world are true (held individually or collectively), and are more or less consciously and consistently held. The idea of a belief system is essentially a 'worldview.' Sam Harris rightly recognizes the significance of beliefs when he says, "A Belief is a lever that, once pulled, moves almost everything else in a person's life. Are you a scientist? A liberal? A racist? These are merely species of belief in action. Your beliefs define your vision of the world; they dictate your behavior; they

Some of the beliefs within the system are more basic than others, are either explicitly or implicitly held, and are, therefore, foundational. For instance, beliefs about what so-called religion is and does presupposes a more basic belief about the nature of reality. In other words, the idea of religion is embedded in one's larger worldview. The idea of religion is understood in light of one's most basic belief about what is ultimate.[12] Is religion a thing in itself, *sui generis*, or a product of culture, such as an ideological socio-political perspective? Regardless of the particular understanding, so-called religion is about beliefs concerning 'what is' (metaphysics), how that is known (epistemology), and how these beliefs are practiced in order to achieve 'the good' (ethics). There is a systematic order to 'presuppositional' critical thinking. All human beings have beliefs and are held more or less consciously and consistently.[13] This is the case whether the beliefs are of a so-called religious nature or of a so-called naturalistic nature.

Western discourse on religion is regularly compared and contrasted to what has come to known as the secular—another binary. Discussion about the idea of religion and its relationship to the secular, secularism, and secularization is unavoidable, but will not be the primary focus here. It will be important in so far as theories of secularization are interrelated with Western modernity. However, the specific details of that discussion are for other projects, such as Charles Taylor's comprehensive tome, *A Secular Age*. In his

---

determine your emotional responses to other human beings." *End of Faith*, 12. More on this will be discussed in the next chapter.

[12] Ivan Strenski, in his, *Thinking About Religion: An Historical Introduction to Theories of Religion*, addresses this point in his first chapter section on 'Natural Religion.' In it he states, "Those that adhered to the idea of Natural Religion typically felt that human beings therefore can *know* about ultimate truth by their own human abilities. Divine intervention is not required for people to know God, for example." (10). Here he seems to indicate that intellectual inquiry on basic issues has, historically, been equated to the idea of religion. This, of course, assumes a particular definition of the term 'religion.' (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006). See also Roy Clouser's, *The Myth of Religious Neutrality* (Notre Dame, In., University of Notre Dame Press, 2005). In this work Clouser argues that religious belief is belief in anything with eternal attributes, that is "divine per se."

[13] Gangadean, *Philosophical Foundation*, 3.

work, Taylor understands secularization to be a feature of modernity, but challenges some of the popular theories of secularization / religion and proposes an alternative explanation. He asks and attempts to answer the simple, yet complex, question undergirding the very idea of secularization; "why was it virtually impossible not to believe in God in, say, 1500 in our Western society, while in 2000 many of us find this not only easy, but even inescapable?"[14] But, as he also asks, how and why did things change? "How did the alternatives become thinkable?"[15] In other words, how did Western culture get from a position of uniformity of belief to a state of accepting alternative views? Taylor attempts to answer this. To borrow a pertinent line from Taylor, and one that fits this project, "[t]he story of what happened in the secularization of Western Christendom is so broad, and so multi-faceted, that one could write several books this length and still not do justice to it."[16] The present project will also address Taylor's questions, but will consider them through the lens of modern philosophy. Of particular interest will be one of those contributing facets, the epistemological changes that helped define Western modernity and ultimately produce the idea of religion.

While the relationship between modernity, secularism, science, and religion is historically and culturally as Taylor says, multi-faceted, it will be important to keep in mind that this work will focus primarily on the epistemic component that produced the two belief categories—religion and science. That is, the significance of what qualifies as knowledge will be explored as a major contributing factor in the development of the

[14] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007) 25.

[15] Taylor, *Secular*, 25.

[16] Taylor, *Secular*, 29.

category distinction and the difference. Both categories claim 'to know,' however, that claim needs to be explored more fully and the meaning clarified.

To start, it seems clear from the above comments that, according to the popular understanding, one view is perceived to be based on reason and the others not. Science is based on reason and religion is not, it is often argued. This view of science has produced a scientific perspective on the world that has come to be technically called, philosophical or metaphysical naturalism, a product of Western modernity.[17] It is important to note here that metaphysical naturalism is distinct from science and functions as a perspective, or philosophy, that interprets the data of science. This proposition will soon be borne out.

Due to the wide acceptance of this view, particularly in the Western academy, the notion that naturalism qualifies as the predominant, or privileged (favorably accepted as true and, therefore, authoritative), view of reality is pervasive. As the authoritative view, scholars presuppose it to study the alternative 'religious' views and do research in the 'science of religion' or the 'phenomenology of religion.' It is the function of reason and science to produce the proper understanding of alternative views that purportedly reject the authority of reason and the naturalistic view, and favor fideistic dogma and tradition.

[17] For the purposes of this work, naturalism, and more specifically philosophical or metaphysical naturalism, will be considered a 'worldview' similarto the definition in footnote 2 above. Chapter two of this work will explain how it came to be considered a worldview. The basic metaphysical beliefs of this view are something similar to William Drees' statement that "naturalism assumes that all objects around us, including ourselves, consist of the stuff described by chemists in the periodic table of the elements" and that theism is irrelevant. Drees also quotes an applicable comment by Charley Hardwick that further defines naturalism, "(1) that only the world of nature is real; (2) that nature is necessary in the sense of requiring no sufficient reason beyond itself to account for its origin or ontological ground; (3) that nature as a whole may be understood without appeal to any kind of intelligence or purposive agent; and (4) that all causes are natural causes so that every natural event is itself a product of other natural events." "Religious Naturalism and Science," in Clayton and Simpson, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Science* (New York: Oxford University Press: 2006) 110. The idea of modernity in this project will be delimited and understood primarily from an epistemological perspective. As such, the focus will be on the impact of changes between pre-modern, modern, and postmodern with respect to what qualifies as knowledge. A more specific explanation will be demonstrated in chapter two. The term 'naturalism' is not intended to mean the same as it is used by J. Samuel Preus in his, *Explaining Religion: Criticism and Theory from Bodin to Freud* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996) or in Russell McCutcheon's, *Manufacturing Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). Both of these scholars view naturalism strictly as a method "to study religion as a part of human culture and history…without the benefit of clergy." *Manufacturing Religion,* ix.

Thus, even though there may be uncertainty regarding how to define religion specifically, there appears to be a general consensus on what religion is and is not, which hinges on the use of reason and indicates the strength of the entrenched dichotomy.

But how does one particular view attain a privileged status? There should be no doubt that the view grounded in reason and knowledge ought to be the privileged view. There is no higher authority. For rational human beings, to use reason consistently produces integrity and results in being human in the fullest sense. Reason and consistency also produce meaning. To use Gangadean's words, "[p]ersons as rational beings need meaning. Integrity, as a basic form of honesty, is a concern for consistency."[18] When used properly, reason also produces knowledge, which then results in particular practices. Conversely, not to use reason consistently, or to hold beliefs without proof or evidence, would be to be devoid of knowledge and integrity.

To recognize this relationship is to recognize that knowledge, or the lack of it, has an ethical component as well. The ethical feature is evident in the famous quote by W.K. Clifford, a significant figure of enlightened modernity, "it is wrong always, everywhere, and for anyone, to believe anything upon insufficient evidence."[19] He refers to this as 'the ethics of belief.' One's beliefs must be grounded in sound reasons, they must be rationally justified. Choices must be grounded in knowledge and not opinion. Modernity requires rational evidence as a necessary condition for belief as expressed above by naturalists, Hawking, Dawkins, and the others. The significance of these points is that there is a necessary relationship between belief, knowledge, and practice.

---

[18] Gangadean, *Philosophical Foundation*, 143-148.

[19] W.K. Clifford, *The Ethics of Belief*, quoted in Steven Cahn, ed., *Ten Essential Texts in the Philosophy of Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) 372.

But is all of this emphasis on reason anything more than the on-going misguided promotion of the Enlightenment dream? Some have argued that it is not and that reason has been overstated and over extended. Postmodernity has proposed a more 'chastened' view of reason, one that limits reason's capability, which will be discussed in more detail in chapter four.

In spite of the postmodern challenge, naturalism has held fast to Enlightenment ideals and the deliverables of reason and has been the privileged position for most of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. It has claimed to be the most reasonable position. Part of the explanation for its success has been due to the failure of theism to produce rational justification for its truth claims, thus the declaration that religion is based on a blind faith and not reason. To avoid this same fate, naturalism will eventually face the same critical tribunal. For it to succeed and continue as the privileged view, naturalism will have to demonstrate that it is indeed based on a rationally justified, sound argument. It must produce reasons that prove its first principles. That is, it must be shown to be based on more than dogma, opinion, and tradition.

This notion regarding the significance of reason raises an important question; if naturalism is based on facts and is the most rational view, then why would any rational person opt for an alternative view? The obvious response by many naturalists is that a rational person would not. Hence the charge that religion is non-cognitive and believers have no rational basis for their belief seems to substantiate the need for a category distinction. Given the very real tension here, how, then, is this issue to be explained? What is apparent is that in the commonly accepted paradigm there are two distinct categories of belief systems. One category consists of a naturalistic view of the world and

the other category consists of a multitude of alternative belief systems that are unified in their rejection of naturalism. While the idea of naturalism is reasonably clear as explained above, of what, then, does the category called religion consist? What is religion and, more specifically, what is a religious belief and a religious belief system? Is religion a thing in itself, an intrinsic part of human nature (*sui generis*) that all humans innately possess? That is, do they have a religious inclination by nature? Is it something that is identifiable that can be researched and studied as a science and as a cultural phenomenon? Does it require a particular discipline that can justify inquiry and a 'science of religion' or 'phenomenology of religion'?[20] Is it something that can be isolated and scientifically analyzed as many scholars in the field of religious studies, past and present, have said that it is? Or is it as other scholars have argued—just an ideological social or psychological construct and not an isolatable thing in itself to be studied?

Some contemporary scholars have attempted to answer these questions by exposing the idea of religion as a modern Western invention, an ideology, and created, whether consciously or unconsciously, for the purpose of legitimating authority and power within institutions.[21] Jonathan Z. Smith is one of those scholars who contend that the idea of religion is a general category of diverse views about the nature of existence and the world that has been socially constructed. Smith argues that "[t]here is no data for religion. Religion is solely the creation of the scholar's study. It is created for the scholar's analytic purposes by his imaginative acts of comparison and generalization. Religion has no

[20] See Mircea Eliade's, *The Sacred and the Profane* (New York: Harcourt Brace &Co., 1959), an illustration of *sui generis* religion and Russell McCutcheon's *Manufacturing Religion* in which the idea is critically assessed.

[21] For more on this idea see Timothy Fitzgerald's, *The Ideology of Religious Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) and Russell McCutcheon's, *Manufacturing Religion.*

independent existence apart from the academy."[22] This idea will be examined in more detail in the next chapter.

Yet another account of so-called religion may be just as bold as J. Z. Smith's. Perhaps defining religion is self-evident. A common denominator of all that is called religion is that they are all contrary to, in some form or another, the major tenets of naturalism. As such, these 'religious belief systems' form a part of a socially constructed category that can be defined by what it is not. Therefore, a separate category is required for all belief systems that fundamentally oppose naturalism. Additionally, it can be convincingly argued that these diverse alternative belief systems have all been constructed for the purpose of providing an interpretation and an explanation of particular people's life experiences. But understood in this way, another important question is raised. Could it not also be the case that naturalism, like religion, has been socially constructed for the purpose of interpreting and explaining the data of experience? There is one category that is naturalistic in perspective and another category consisting of all other belief systems. The idea of religion, as a separate category, can now be seen as a totalizing concept developed by modernity that allows for grouping disparate, non-naturalistic beliefs or belief systems. This establishes the two category idea, but more discussion on this is needed. A 'definition' and additional qualification for the term 'religion' is important for this project and will also be addressed in greater detail in the next chapter.

It will be argued that the religion category and the two category approach to the world's belief systems, commonly understood as religion and science, is inadequate and ought to be deconstructed and reformulated. While this work does not argue for or against

[22] Jonathan Z. Smith, *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982) xi.

Wilfred Cantwell Smith's approach to the idea of religion, however, perhaps he was right in stating that a different conceptual framework is necessary to handle today's data.[23] It is time for a 'paradigm shift' in the Kuhnian sense, that is to say, a change in the way the idea of religion is conceived that will, of necessity, realign the relationship between so-called religion and science. Both the idea of religion and naturalism can be considered ideologies, belief frameworks or worldviews that are grounded on presupposed basic beliefs. Moreover, how can there be profitable discourse when the major term used in the discussion is determined undefinable?

These points will be addressed in what follows with three separate objectives in mind. The first objective will assess the origin of the category dichotomy and the historical thought that produced it. The second will be a more critical analysis, exposing the major epistemic issues regarding the way the categories of religion and science have been established with the ultimate goal being to deconstruct the existing dichotomy and paradigm. And thirdly, after the existing dichotomy is deconstructed, a proposal that more accurately divides the world's belief systems will be offered along with a methodology for more fruitful inquiry. Once the artificial paradigm is removed a more objective assessment of the world's belief systems can be made. These three objectives will combine to illustrate not only that the present divide between science and religion is illegitimate and unacceptable, but also that the belief that naturalism ought to be the privileged view is unfounded.

[23] Wilfred Cantwell Smith, in his, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (New York: New American Library, A Mentor Book, 1962) 111, argues for an approach to the idea of religion as an individual personal piety. Smith considers religion to be notoriously difficult to define and any attempts as artificial constructs and ultimately a fruitless exercise. 16-22. Thomas Tweed also notes that "religion is not a native term; it is a term created by scholars for their intellectual purposes and therefore is theirs to define," *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2006) 33.

Although this work is not a study in anthropological or socio-political value theory, it will, however, show how the foundational beliefs addressed herein form the basis for such values and theories.[24] It is a type of 'first order' work. That is, it will address and explore the most basic beliefs (first principles) upon which ideas such as religion, naturalism, secularism, and theory are constructed. While all of these ideas will be mentioned, the amount of emphasis on each will need to be limited to the context at hand—with a more specific reference to epistemology and the ideas of religion and naturalism.

The methodology used in the project will be at once historical and philosophical—although limited to epistemology and the ideas of religion and naturalism. To be more specific, the concept of knowledge and what qualifies as knowledge played an important role in the development of Western modernity and, therefore, in the formation of the ideas of religion and naturalism. The project will be historical by showing the progressive maturation of the naturalistic view that ultimately produced the category of religion. And philosophical, by revealing the intellectual challenges to theism that permitted an exclusively naturalistic perspective on the data of science and the idea of religion to gain dominance, as well as to critically assess the inherent shortcomings of each. This combination will expose the inadequacy of the two categories as they are currently expressed and the need for a reformulation. The project is essentially a work in the philosophy of the idea of religion, tracing some of the intellectual developments that have

[24] Manuel Vasquez, in his work, *More Than Belief: A Materialist Theory of Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011) uses what he calls "a non-reductive materialist framework" to describe how particular so-called religious believers appeal to the supernatural to "build their identities, narratives, practices, and environments. Thus it behooves scholars of religion to take seriously the native actor's lived world and to explore the biological, social, and historical conditions that make religious experiences possible as well as the effects these experiences have onself, culture, and nature."(3). Vasquez assumes the category distinction and illustrates, at least descriptively, how a so-called religion functions as a combination of beliefs and comprehensive cultural practices.

not only informed and shaped the academic and popular conceptions of the relationship between religion and science, but also university religious studies programs.

With a metaphysical and epistemological focus, it will show that the scientific worldview of modernity has, with a large measure of intention, constructed the separation between science and religion for the purpose of claiming exclusive rights to what qualifies as knowledge and deems those views in the religion category as based on something less. Consequently, what forms and divides the two categories at the most basic level is the claim to knowledge, and virtually all modern academic disciplines presuppose, either explicitly or implicitly, the validity of this claim.[25] Both categories have sought, and continue to seek, rational justification for their claims to knowledge.[26] Each claims to have knowledge, and since the Enlightenment era specific criteria have been established to determine if it is indeed possessed.[27] But according to strict Enlightenment standards both religion and naturalism, in spite of their claims, have fallen short.

Modernity's view of science, as expressed by philosophical naturalism, has been constructed on a foundation insufficient to produce the knowledge and authority that it claims to have. It claims to have knowledge of the nature of existence, which is essentially a statement about the nature of reality. But this claim, it will be shown, is based on unproven epistemic assumptions and, therefore, cannot be considered knowledge. Yet it still makes the claim to knowledge and to reason without offering rational proof for its

[25] See George Marsden's, *The Soul of the American University* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). In this work Marsden argues that today in the American University secular naturalism is generally perceived as the only valid academic perspective and precludes alternative perspectives.

[26] Beliefs require justification in order to be considered knowledge and to be considered true. The most basic beliefs of worldviews, the first principles, need to be justified by reason in order to avoid dogmatism and / or fideism. So-called religious belief has not been able to do this and, consequently, has not been considered knowledge. Presumably, naturalism can justify its most basic beliefs and can then claim knowledge. The following will examine that claim.

[27] Chapter two will identify modernity's qualifications for knowledge.

most basic beliefs, or presuppositions—the same charge made by naturalists against theism, which was jettisoned for lack of proof. Theism was marginalized and deemed irrelevant because it could not rationally justify its most basic belief regarding existence and ultimate reality—that a non-material reality exists that is infinite, eternal, and immutable. When naturalism is critically examined at the most basic level it will be shown that, like the charge against theism, it also cannot justify its most basic beliefs, thus dissolving the dichotomy. If neither category can demonstrate knowledge, then the popular divide between them collapses. Moreover, without justification for the claim to knowledge, there is no basis for privilege. Thus, it will be apparent that *the category distinction between science and religion as presently conceived is a fabrication by modernity and needs to be deconstructed and reformulated.* If neither category can produce a basis for knowledge, then opinion and skepticism are the only options. Fruitful, meaningful discourse then ceases. Additionally, the term, religion, as used by modernity, has been misappropriated leaving the status of the term, and the category itself, unfounded and a source of confusion.

This work is not an argument supporting the idea of religion nor is it promoting postmodern skepticism.[28] While it challenges the privileged position of naturalism, it is not an attempt to prove the existence of God. It is, rather, a study that explores and ultimately deconstructs today's understanding of the relationship between the idea of religion and science as two separate categories of belief, the currently popular paradigm, and replaces it with an alternative conceptual scheme. As a necessary bi-product of the

[28] Postmodern thinkers have challenged the objectivity of science and epistemic realism, which ultimately leads to skepticism. While this work addresses the issue and its significance, it is not arguing for it as the sole argument against naturalism. See Michael Ruse, *Mysteries of Mysteries: Is Evolution a Social Construction?* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999) and Keith Parsons, ed., *The Science Wars* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2003).

discussion, the concept of privilege will also be addressed. A distinction between the perspective of religion and the perspective of science has been made historically, but the difference at the most basic level has not been made clear. The intent here is to tear down a stronghold that has not, and is not, effectively serving the academy by facilitating growth in understanding, but rather, has promoted confusion. Such an undertaking will require the critical analysis of the presuppositions of both in order to discover the essential difference between their belief frameworks. Once clearly identified, it will be evident that the dichotomy and current assignment of privilege is not rationally defendable.

The primary focus for the project will, therefore, be on the theoretical basis for the distinction and differences between the two categories, religion and science (non-religion), which have been constructed and defined by a particular hermeneutic of Western modernity. Informed by Western modernity, the meanings, purpose, and even validity of these categories, have become a part of the cultural landscape. However, failure to fully understand the significance of the issues at hand has brought confusion to the academic study of the idea of religion and of science. Current debate asks the questions; what is it that is to be studied? Whose methodology is to be used in the academy, the naturalist's or the theist's, or neither? Considered undefinable, who then has the right perspective on the idea of religion? Or, more importantly, what does the term, religion, signify?

These are philosophical questions and issues that need philosophical answers. As a work in the philosophy of religion, it will critically analyze the epistemic presuppositions upon which the idea of religion has been constructed. And, since religion has become integrally related to science and in some sense, by modern assessments, subordinate to it in its contention for truth and knowledge, it necessarily addresses the epistemic

presuppositions of naturalism, modernity's interpretation of science. It will trace some of the intellectual developments prompted by the religion / science relationship that have, more or less, consciously informed and shaped all academic fields of inquiry at the foundational level, including the field of religious studies within the Western academy.

While the scope is not intended to be a detailed argument against the epistemological positions of the major Enlightenment figures, David Hume and Immanuel Kant, it will, however, reveal some of the implications of their thought and how they advanced the cause of empirical science, thus promoting the dichotomy. For instance, since empirical science precludes the existence of the supernatural or, more generally, any non-material reality, it set the stage for the decline of theism as the dominant view of the Western world and for the ascendency of its replacement, philosophical naturalism. A principal task here, then, following Charles Taylor, will be to offer a perspective on how and why the once dominant theistic worldview in the West eventually gave way to a naturalistic worldview that would determine itself to be the exclusive view for securing knowledge and truth.[29]

Few would deny the accuracy of the assessment of the religion / science relationship described above. Indeed, it appears indisputable that this way of explaining the relationship has achieved paradigmatic status. But as this project will show, to substantiate a distinction in this way is problematic on several levels. Some have explained the distinction between the two categories as natural v. supernatural or belief in

[29] J. Samuel Preus' work, *Explaining Religion,* is a historical study in which he poses the question of the origin of religion (cause and source) to several authors with the goal of showing how "a naturalistic approach to religion achieved paradigmatic status as a new enterprise." It is important to note here that what Preus means by naturalism is that religion is treated as an element of culture without reference to an innate religious sense. He traces this development through a series of historically influential scholars. *Explaining Religion: Criticism and Theory from Bodin to Freud* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996).

God or gods v. no god. While these distinctions may be valid, they fall short, however, as *the* definitive essence of the religion category. As is commonly understood, not all so-called religions affirm the supernatural or the existence of a God or gods, thus confusing the distinction. If a distinction is made, then there must be a definable difference identified.

Although it is often ignored, resolving the religion definition issue is imperative for intelligible inquiry if dialogue is to be fruitful. How does anyone, particularly a scholar, know what to inquire about without a definitive concept to work with? What is the difference between religion and non-religion whether assessed philosophically or culturally? What are the essential differences dividing the two categories? Again, is religion *a thing* that is identifiable? If religion is to be considered a concept, then it must have a unique characteristic, or set of characteristics, that distinguishes it from other concepts. If we say that a religion, minimally, is a set of beliefs and practices, then what is non-religion—a different set of beliefs and practices? It would seem that the two categories consist of two opposing sets of beliefs and practices, while at the same time being formally and functionally alike. If a distinction is made, then the differences must be made clear. For the purposes of this project, fundamental definitions will need to be established, which will be addressed in the next chapter.

A useful definition for the idea of religion is not the only issue that needs to be addressed. Each of these two basic categories represents a multitude of sub-views and all claim to have knowledge and, therefore, truth. The implicit question then that begs to be answered is—which one, if any, has knowledge and truth? Is an answer possible? If the answer is, no, then it does not matter what is believed. Each view can claim knowledge

and truth without any way to have certainty or to resolve differences. Choices would lose their significance and be, essentially, meaningless. All meaningful dialogue and argument then ceases. On the other hand, if one can be known to be true, then certainty and meaning are secured. But how that is accomplished needs to be demonstrated. There is much at stake with these questions and to the answers given. In the grandest sense, it is the answer given to the question of meaning and purpose of existence itself.

Although the very concept of 'truth' is a problematic issue for today's scholars attempting to remain objective with their research, nonetheless, naturalists believe that they possess knowledge and truth and that it has been acquired objectively. This serves to substantiate naturalism's assumed position of privilege in the academy. However, along with this claim comes the burden of evidence and proof. But the notion of proof, ironically, is not one that is often addressed by the twentieth century academic ethos. Universities are supposed to be bastions for truth seekers, but the notion of truth is more often explicitly ignored, while unavoidably presupposing some concept of it. For instance, the commonly assumed formulation, especially in the Western academy, is that naturalism is thought to be the stronger position, based on knowledge, and religion the weaker, based on opinion and belief. Naturalism is assumed to be 'true' and the owner of the exclusive research methodology, which is assumed to be neutral and objective. This point is made manifest by the questions that are asked. Due to its stronger position, science, or rather philosophical naturalism, assumes that the category of religion 'arises' and asks questions such as; where did religion come from, what is the nature of its origin, and why does it exist? In other words, what are the possible causes of views, such as theism, that reject

naturalism? How and why is it possible, it is queried, for these alternative views to be believed?

These are the primary concerns of a naturalistic academic approach to religion theory and assume a privileged role when asking these questions about opposing alternative views. That is, it assumes an authoritative role and perspective when interpreting and explaining other views.[30] It also assumes the validity of the two categories of belief—there is naturalism and then there are the alternative views. From this it would appear that the idea of religion is any view that is contrary to naturalism, perhaps the reason for the difficulty in defining religion. The academy is the place where critical thinking occurs, or ought to occur. Should the academy not also be examining the uncritically held presuppositions, the foundational beliefs, of the privileged view?

Given the perspective of naturalism, the methods of inquiry assume that the idea of religion is somehow derived from nature by natural causes; it is a thing and is explainable just as any other object of critical investigation. So-called religious belief systems are thought to be explainable in either anthropological (E.B. Tylor), psychological (Freud), or sociological (Durkheim) terms. Depending on the interests of the particular theorist, the specific answers to the questions will vary, however. These types of concerns, regularly raised in theory courses in university religious studies programs, presuppose a naturalistic perspective.[31] Any affirmation of a reality that transcends a material reality is either

[30] Preus develops the idea that "a naturalistic approach to religion achieved paradigmatic status as a new enterprise—not only in the sense of being articulated in thought (as in Hume's "science of man"), but by becoming institutionalized as well…." *Explaining Religion*, xii.

[31] The methodology for the study of the "science of religion" is a much debated topic in academia. See Donald Wiebe's *The Politics of Religious Studies* (New York: Palgrave, 1999). In this work he uses a series of lectures to address the methodological issues between theology and the scientific method. See also the work of historian, Claude Welch, particularly chapter three, "Faith Viewed from Without: The 'Objective' Study of Religious Subjectivity" where he explores the historical development of the application of methodological naturalism in his, *Protestant Thought in the*

dubious or a discoverable product of the human psyche or culture. The next chapter will discuss several contemporary religion theorists who believe they have the proper way to interpret the idea of religion. What will be evident is that they claim neutral objectivity in their scholarship while uncritically presupposing naturalism, which actually betrays objectivity.

The two categories, while popularly conceived as mutually exclusive, are, nonetheless, unavoidably related as each seeks interpretive power and authority—albeit from their respective differing perspectives. But in keeping with the questioning strategy, it can also be asked, where did this paradigm, this conceptual scheme, come from and why has this type of divide come to be so readily embraced in the West? Are these categories, as presently divided, warranted or is the divide just a thin veil for an Enlightenment ideal that gained favor in order to promote one view, naturalism, over the others? Why should naturalism not be considered just a modern social power construct? To counter these charges, naturalism will need to provide a rational basis (proof) for its position in order to maintain its privileged role. Without the support of a sound argument, could it be legitimately asked; from whence the origin of naturalism? Why does it exist and how did it arise? The answer given for the origin question depends on the perspective of the questioner and the rational soundness of the respective position.

The intended ultimate objective for this project will be to deconstruct the prevailing category dichotomy and the understanding of religion that modernity has created, reformulate it, and thereby provide a more accurate and fruitful method by which to divide and classify the world's various systems of belief and practice. As a deconstruction project

---

Nineteenth Century, Vol.2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985). Also in the same volume see 110-123 for more discussion on late nineteenth century methodology.

it will demonstrate specifically how modernity has erroneously produced this notion of religion and for what purpose. Once assessed, naturalism will be shown to have been established on a foundation that cannot be rationally defended. The present conception of religion is unacceptable and, as a construction project, a viable alternative will be offered. Thus, intellectual progress through growth in knowledge and understanding will result.

Also discussed in the following will be what each category needs in order to be rationally justified. A starting point for the reasoning process will need to be rationally demonstrated and not simply dogmatically postulated as self-evident truths in the order of Cartesian 'clear and distinct ideas.' These are the basic beliefs that form the foundation for a belief system. This starting point, or first principle, works as an axiom from which logical inferences are made in order to arrive at meaning and truth.[32] Since an axiom is ultimate, it is not possible to get behind it to confirm or verify it through demonstration. If it were possible to get behind an axiomatic first principle, then something else would be more ultimate and would constitute a more basic principle. For theism, the first principle, or basic belief concerning what is ultimate, is a God who is a spirit that is infinite, eternal, and immutable. That such a being exists has not yet been rationally justified, according to naturalists, and is, therefore, rejected as fideism and unproven dogmatism. If not the God of theism, what then ultimately exists? Other views postulate something else. Philosophical naturalism postulates the material universe as an alternative. But can matter be proven to be all that exists and all that has ever existed, or can it also only be dogmatically postulated? If it can only be dogmatically postulated, how then can naturalism be considered a stronger, more rational, position than theism? How can it be

[32] Gangadean, *Philosophical Foundation*, 40-41.

considered privileged? This is the issue at hand and if it cannot be resolved, then we are left only with skepticism and Nietzsche's 'will to power,' postmodernity's answer.

Late nineteenth and early twentieth century so-called postmodern philosophy, building on David Hume and empiricism, has dealt with the issue of first principles by denying that knowledge of them is possible. Reason, according to philosophers Hume, Immanuel Kant, and others, cannot grasp a transcendent reality in order to determine such things. Continuing that trend, the modern notion of certainty has been challenged by what has been termed, postmodern criticism. The postmodern outlook denies the dichotomy between science and religion by denying the dichotomy between truth and error. Claims to knowledge of truth and error, good and evil, are contextually situated only. Knowledge of ultimate reality from any perspective, theistic or naturalistic, is not possible because reason does not have a rationally justified starting point and, therefore, nothing can be clear to reason. If nothing is clear, then distinctions cannot be made regarding true and false, right and wrong, good and evil, and, therefore, there is no basis for the tension between science and religion. Without objective knowledge, such binaries lose their meaning. Each view pursues its own relative 'truth.'[33] This view, as a postmodern response to the claims of naturalism and theism, will be examined in more detail below.

Following this introduction, five chapters will assess and analyze an aspect of what is being called the modern dichotomy with the last chapter including a summary of the project and argument. Chapter one will further explore the tension between the categories and offer workable definitions for the project. It will also demonstrate how naturalism is presupposed in the works of contemporary 'religious studies' scholars. Because the

[33] See footnote 28 above for works addressing this issue.

development of the idea of religion is interrelated with the development of science, a historical context tracing the new modern science of the seventeenth century and forward, including its related philosophical foundation, will be established in the second and third chapters.

The second chapter will explore the intellectual developments through this period and show how changes in epistemological thought were instrumental in determining how the physical sciences were understood. Modern science, while having its roots in specific discoveries and theories, took a particular direction as a result of the intellectual climate of the day. Subsequent to the cultural crisis created by the Protestant Reformation, an environment consisting of questions surrounding the nature of authority, knowledge, reason, and certainty were of central concern. Consequently, the subject of epistemology, 'is knowledge possible' was a formidable question—one to which modern philosophy attempted to respond.

Chapter three will sketch the rise and development of Western modernity with particular emphasis on the move from science within a Christian theistic framework to a non-theistic philosophy of naturalism. As the new science transformed into a worldview philosophy and gained dominance, the once commanding Christian theistic view declined and was then marginalized and determined irrelevant for dialogue in the public square. Views incommensurate with the new empirical naturalism were categorized, beginning with Christianity, as religion, which would then ultimately become an expanded class and represented by the term, World Religions. These views opposing naturalism, these World Religions, needed their origins, beliefs, and practices interpreted and explained to which religion theorists responded with a new academic discipline—the science of religion. The

basic question of David Hume would then need to be addressed, from whence did these belief systems—these religions—arise?

The fourth chapter will bring this long standing issue to the present by exploring a contemporary challenge to modernity and its understanding of the religion / science dichotomy. It will specifically challenge naturalism's claim to exclusive knowledge. It will explain the epistemological strategy of non-foundationalism, the epistemic basis for postmodernity that has challenged the very idea of a foundation for objective knowledge that leads to certainty.

The fifth and final chapter will bring the project to its conclusion as well as argue that the category and the term, 'religion,' is no longer useful for a consistent and meaningful advancement of human knowledge and understanding. With the dichotomy deconstructed, the chapter will then develop a radical proposal for better understanding diverse worldviews. It will offer an alternative conceptual scheme that has the potential to avoid the difficulties and connotative baggage associated with the term 'religion' and the resultant theories about origin and nature (e.g. cultural, psychological, social, etc.). The proposed alternative term and concept is the German word, *Weltanschauung* (worldview), which, for starters, is definable, comprehensive, and distinguishable from what it is not. It will be argued that the concept, *Weltanschauung*, in conjunction with basic beliefs, offers a different framework by which to categorize the world's various understandings of reality and show how this can be done. In its most basic sense, worldview will be understood as a set of beliefs that give meaning to one's, or a culture's, experience. It will show how belief systems have analyzable formal structures that allow for grouping according to fundamental beliefs. These beliefs then produce the descriptive data of phenomenology.

Chapter 2

SCIENCE AND RELIGION – THE POPULAR PARADIGM

Two Categories of Belief

The diverse beliefs and practices of people that make up the cultures of the world have provided rich opportunities for scholarly research and discovery—the substance of science. Western scientific thought, as it gained momentum and expression in the eighteenth century Enlightenment era, recognized this diversity and sought to organize and categorize views different from its own, which would come to be understood as religion and, eventually, world religions.[34] The category of religion, which has been understood at least since the early eighteenth century to consist of distinct and explainable belief systems and practices that can be differentiated from non-religion, arguably arose from controversies of modernity in England. Historian, Peter Harrison, in his Gifford Lectures and subsequent book, *'Religion' and the Religions in the English Enlightenment* elaborated convincingly on this theme.[35] The scientific view produced by modernity has been variously characterized by terms such as materialism, metaphysical naturalism, philosophical naturalism, or simply, naturalism, and emphasized a perspective ultimately

[34] Wilfred C. Smith chronicles the evolution of the Latin term *religio* from its earliest usage to the present. For a detailed background explanation on this point, see his, *The Meaning and End of Religion*, 38-44.

[35] In his work on the rise of the idea of religion from the Enlightenment forward, Peter Harrison argues that "[t]he origins of the modern idea of religion can be traced to the Enlightenment. This study shows how the concepts 'religion' and 'the religions' arose out of controversies in seventeenth and eighteenth-century England. The birth of 'the religions', conceived to be sets of beliefs and practices, enabled the establishment of a new science of religion in which the various 'religions' were studied and impartially compared." Commenting on Wilfred C. Smith, Harrison states, "[i]t is Smith's contention that during the age of reason the name 'religion' was given to external aspects of the religious life, to systems of practices. Whereas in the Middle Ages the concern of the Christian West had been with faith—a 'dynamic of the heart'—in the seventeenth-century attention shifted to the impersonal and objective 'religion'. Increasingly this term came to be an outsider's description of a dubious theological enterprise." Harrison further examines this process of objectification, or reification, of religious faith, focusing particularly on the English contribution to the ideation of 'religion' and 'the religions.' '*Religion' and the Religions in the English Enlightenment* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 1-2. Tomoko Masuzawa traces the advent of world religions in her, *The Invention of World Religions* (The University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 2005). See also Talal Asad's, *Genealogies of Religion* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

and exclusively based on the deliverables of science. While each of these terms is associated with modernity in some way, naturalism will be most commonly used in this project and intended to be synonymous with the others. This new developing view functioned as a non-theistic alternative to the prevailing Christian theism.

As the naturalistic view progressed and the beliefs and practices of other cultures were explored in the nineteenth century, Christian theism became part of a larger general category and called religion. The religion category functioned as modernity's means to separate all other perspectives on reality from the naturalistic position, thus forming a dichotomy, or contradiction, between two mutually exclusive categories of belief. A polarity between theism and non-theism was the result. James Thrower, in his work on historic atheism, emphasizes this point and makes the following comment;

> There is, however, a way of looking at and interpreting events in the world, whose origins, as I hope to show, can be seen as early as the beginnings of speculative thought itself, and which I shall call naturalistic, that is atheistic *per se*, in the sense that it is incompatible with any and every form of supernaturalism.[36]

Non-theism, as an alternative to theism, established itself more clearly as a viable worldview during this time. It is now generally defined by the achievements of the empirical sciences, thus distinguishing and distancing it from the so-called religious views. As a result, the modern West has been forced to come to grips with how to understand the relationship between the ostensibly antithetical classical and medieval representations of what has come to be called a religious understanding of the world, particularly as expressed by Christian theism, and the new modern alternative outlook characterized by a

[36] James Thrower, *Western Atheism: A Short History* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2000) 3-4.

progressive, materialistic science. Thrower identifies the rise of the secularist attitude in Western Europe in the Middle Ages with the dissociation of faith and reason and the limitation placed upon the scope of reason. This then gave rise to the development of physical science as an exclusive and exhaustive way of looking at the world. He also notes the dynamic in naturalistic atheism as having "a consistency which makes it a genuine and alternative way of looking at the world from that which has inspired the religious believer."[37]

Christian theism, the predominant view with which modernity had to deal, was considered to be an entity having certain characteristics, such as belief in a transcendent, supernatural reality, which could be identified and placed in a separate generic category. Such a view was considered by some to be incompatible with and even in opposition to the emerging current of naturalistic ideas gaining momentum in Britain and Europe. It was soon considered a hindrance to intellectual advancement and knowledge.[38] The term 'religion,' having already been a part of Christian self descriptive language, was applied as a general label of classification. Christian theism, as a belief system, acquired the status of a religion and, as such, became rising naturalism's chief dialogue interlocutor and contender for primacy in the West.

Due to the dominant position of Christian theism in the West historically, this project focuses primarily on it as the representative for the category of religion, the primary interest of modernity and naturalism. The naturalistic view, as a distinct entity and category with its own identifiable characteristics that were separate from Christian

[37] Thrower, *Western Atheism*, 3.

[38] Thrower, *Western Atheism*, 96-116. See also, John Hedley Brooke, *Science and Religion: Some Historical Perspectives* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991) Chapter 7.

theism, became, and continues to be, the non-religious view. This alternative view, the non-religious and identified with science, developed somewhat historically parallel with the idea of religion. Thus we have two developing frameworks of belief and practice, religion and non-religion, each a product of Western modernity. The historical evolution and interrelationship of these two entities will be explored in the next two chapters, but first some comments on the perceived tension between them.

Category Tension

The idea of religion as it has developed is an on-going topic of endless dialogue and oftentimes tension over its place in the modern and, what has come to be called, the secular world. In response, a relatively new field of inquiry devoted specifically to issues related to the relationship between religion and science has gained interest and momentum in recent years. Scholars are frequently challenged with questions about how these two diverse perspectives should relate, if at all. Are these different ways of understanding the world actually in conflict with each other or are they two mutually exclusive disciplines of inquiry with no need for conflict or intersection? While the relationship issue has been a debated matter for at least the past two hundred years, several views have prevailed depicting the two as mortal enemies, friendly allies, or somewhere in between.[39] Most of the dialogue has been framed in these terms. However, as historian John Hedley Brooke has noted,

> Popular generalizations about that relationship, whether couched in terms of war or peace, simply do not stand up to serious investigation. There is no

[39] For a detailed discussion of the various views on this relationship see David C. Lindberg and Ronald L. Numbers, eds., *God and Nature: Historical Essays on the Encounter Between Christianity and Science* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1986). See also *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Science,* eds., Philip Clayton and Zachary Simpson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

> such thing as *the* relationship between science and religion. It is what different individuals and communities have made of it in a plethora of different contexts. Not only has the problematic interface between them shifted over time, but there is also a high degree of artificiality in abstracting the science and the religion of earlier centuries to see how they were related.[40]

As Brooke indicates, a normative prescription of how these two entities are to relate does not exist. Perhaps this is due to the fact that much of the dialogue has been largely undertaken without adequate assessment of the presuppositions held by each perspective. Additionally, the historical context is so important for properly understanding these two terms that attempts to reify them result in only artificial definitions. Brooke further notes that it would be a mistake to do this, "as if they could be completely abstracted from the social contexts in which those concerns and endeavors took their distinctive forms."[41] Conceptions of the natural world and how it is to be conceived and explained have been an integral part of human history, especially in its social and political application of scientific innovations. It is therefore imperative that the specific use of the terms, religion and science, be understood in their historical context as accurately as possible.

---

[40] John Hedley Brooke, *Science and Religion: Some Historical Perspectives* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 321. Brooke goes on to say that "Part of what was meant by natural philosophy in the seventeenth century involved a discussion of God's relationship to nature. Religious beliefs could operate within science, proving presupposition and sanction as well as regulating the discussion of method. They also informed attitudes toward new conceptions of nature, influencing the process of theory selection. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, despite vigorous attempts to separate scientific and religious discourse, the meaning attributed to scientific innovations continued to be reflected in the often conflicting social, religious, and political uses to which they were put." 321.

[41] Brooke, *Science and Religion,* 8.

The assumption, of course, in all of these relationship perspectives is that this inquiry has value and an ongoing dialogue of some type is worth the effort. A recent symposium sponsored by the International Society for Science and Religion focused on the importance of continued dialogue between the two disciplines. The end product of the work was a book entitled, *Why the Science and Religion Dialogue Matters*. In it, most of the contributors reflect the conviction "that the dialogue between science and religion is of wide social and cultural importance." Emphasizing this point, Fraser Watts, one of the editors and a contributor, comments that "religion and science each proceed best when they're pursued in dialogue with the other, and also that our fragmented and divided world order would benefit more from a stronger dialogue between science and religion."[42]

Implicit in these statements, at least minimally, is a perceived separation and tension between religion and science that many believe needs to be addressed in order to achieve some kind of cultural accord. The term, tension, may be too strong or too weak for some, but if not tension, then definitely a chasm that separates in some way according to the common conception. However, on the surface, to even speak of tension and separation seems odd if religion and science are understood in a straightforward manner. For instance, in a fundamental sense, religion, as delineated above, is often thought of as belief in a transcendent reality. It does not typically deny the existence of the physical world (in the West), but affirms a spiritual in addition to a material reality. Science, on the other hand, also in a fundamental sense, consists of counting, weighing, and measuring the data gathered by exploring the physical world. Fundamentally, it is a descriptive and not a

[42] Fraser Watts and Kevin Dutton, eds., *Why the Science and Religion Dialogue Matters* (Philadelphia, PA: Templeton Foundation Press, 2006) vii. The International Society for Science and Religion was organized in 2001 and is similar in purpose to the acclaimed Scottish Gifford Lectures where the focus is more on natural theology.

prescriptive process. Philosopher, W. V. Quine, puts it this way; "[w]hat makes for science is system, whatever the subject. And what makes for system is the judicious application of logic. Science is thus a fruit of rational investigation."[43] For science, whether a transcendent reality exists or not does not seem to be a primary concern for gathering data and producing fruit. The two appear to be complementary, as they were thought to be prior to the mid-nineteenth century.[44] So why the separation and / or the tension?

The tension arises at a different level, and in part, due to the ambiguity surrounding these two terms. It exists because the meaning and significance of the terms, religion and science, are embedded in a larger belief system, a worldview, or what some have termed an ideological construct. Belief systems provide the framework by which the data of experience and science is interpreted and explained. For meaning and significance, data needs to be interpreted. As comprehensive views of the world are formed and adherents become more consciously aware of their own beliefs, the differences between one view and another become more apparent. The terms religion and science have been transformed from their original meanings as *religio* and *scientia* and have become substantive elements of comprehensive worldviews. As Brooke noted, they become

---

[43] W. V. Quine, J. S. Ullian, *The Web of Belief*, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978) 3.

[44] Historian, Theodore Dwight Bozeman, explains in his detailed historical work on Protestants and science that "antebellum America, marked by a lively and growing interest in natural science and evangelical Protestantism, widely nurtured the comfortable assumption that science *and* religion, Baconianism *and* the Bible, were harmonious enterprises cooperating toward the same ultimate ends." Nineteenth century American Protestantism desired "to secure a broad harmonization of science with religion" and viewed Francis Bacon as a pious evangelical believer. This attitude "reflected a 'doxological' view of natural science, which styled the scientist a worshipful elucidator of the Divine creation. The conception of research as praise rested on a long tradition of scientific piety and concentrated on manifestations in nature of providential design, order, and care." He goes on to say, "the emergence of the issue in this predominant form—science versus religion—was a new and uncoveted experience for orthodox apologists. They had regarded their previous skirmishes with impious science as passing collisions that did not endanger the centraledifice of the holy alliance" *Protestants in an Age of Science: The Baconian Ideal and Antebellum American Religious Thought* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1977) xv, 161, 168.

contextualized. Religion and science, as presently understood, are separated not because they are fundamentally antithetical to each other, but because they have become embedded in, and identified with, worldviews that perceive, interpret, and explain experience, the nature of the world and reality, differently. So-called religions offer an interpretation in the form of a metanarrative that explains the meaning and nature of the world and reality. Included in that interpretation is a view of the physical world and the exploration of it.

For science, on the other hand, the gathering of so-called 'neutral' data does not stop there, but includes more. To use the oft-quoted phrase, *all data are theory-laden*. Like religion, the additional component for science, or rather philosophical naturalism, is that of interpretation, which precedes theory and explanation. Data by itself is insignificant—it has no meaning, and, therefore, must be incorporated into a larger framework. Philosopher of science and religion, Ian Barbour, has aptly noted, "[e]xpectations and conceptual commitments influence perceptions, both in everyday life and in science."[45] As rational beings, humans need meaning and significance in order to understand experience, and interpretation is part of the rational process that provides it. So religion and science, or rather, naturalism, both interpret and explain the data of experience, however, begin the process from different basic beliefs. More on this point will be discussed below.

Naturalism then, in addition to gathering data, also interprets the data and develops its own metanarrative (e.g. Darwinism) that, like so-called religion, explains the nature and meaning of the data, which reflects basic beliefs about reality itself. In other words, philosophical naturalism, the worldview that has come to represent modern science,

[45] Ian Barbour, *Myths, Models and Paradigms: A Comparative Study in Science and Religion* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1974) 95.

interprets and explains and, therefore, formally functions like a religion. Both are involved in interpretation, but affirm something different to be the most basic, or ultimate, reality. Each has a different starting point. Each interprets and explains in light of its most basic judgment about what is ultimately real—a metaphysical judgment. Whether explicitly acknowledged or not, naturalism makes, of necessity, a metaphysical statement. It cannot avoid it in spite of the postmodern argument to the contrary. It makes a metaphysical judgment when it affirms that reality is material existence only. So-called religion also affirms the existence of a material reality, but additionally affirms the existence of a non-material (spiritual) reality. The two categorical views, religion and naturalism, formally function the same, however, hold metaphysically opposed basic beliefs.

While the tension may not have been fully apparent by the mid-nineteenth century, as modernity matured and science transformed into a worldview based on philosophical naturalism, the separation and tension between the two perspectives became more pronounced. Awareness of metaphysical differences increased. Alvin Plantinga considers this point to be the major issue between religion and science. He does not contrast religion and science as such, but puts it more specifically, as does this present work, by framing it as worldview v. worldview, or theism v. philosophical naturalism. He identifies the worldview tension as "where the conflict really lies," and as one of our culture's biggest debates.[46]

When understood in this way, these two worldviews are contradictory to each other, which then demands explanation. Contradictory propositions cannot both be false

[46] Alvin Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Really Lies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). British philosopher of science, John Lennox, also makes the point that the conflict is not between science and religion, but "the real conflict is between two diametrically opposed worldviews; naturalism and theism. They inevitably collide." *God's Undertaker: Has Science Buried God?* (Oxford: Lion Hudson plc, 2009) 28-29.

and cannot both be true. Of logical necessity, one must be false and the other must be true. Arguments are made by each position and offered as evidence to justify belief. Due to the different beliefs regarding what is ultimate, the tension is often recognized as such and sides are taken forming a separation, or dichotomy, between these two categories of belief. While this work will address the reason for the tension, it will, however, frame it differently than the typical discourse. The approach will explore a more basic issue, the foundational presupposition of each category, which is seldom addressed. That is, science (or philosophical naturalism) and so-called religion have come to be understood as two separate ways of viewing reality, which then constitutes the two different categories of belief. Each belief system, or category, has a foundational belief that separates one from the other.

Much has been assumed in the making of these two categories and the presuppositions need to be identified. Whether or not the basis for the category distinctions as presently understood is valid needs to be assessed conclusively. For instance, what are the most basic beliefs of each category regarding what is ultimately eternal and what is the essential difference between, and support for, their claims? Each category claims 'to know' and to have exclusive knowledge about the ultimate nature of reality. One category claims that matter only is eternal and the other that a non-material spirit is the only eternal reality. But can each respective category rationally support its claims or can they merely dogmatically postulate belief and opinion? The commonly accepted view affirms that the philosophical naturalism representing science can claim knowledge, and religion cannot. But can this claim be demonstrated or has it just been assumed to be so? If the claim of naturalism can be demonstrated to be false or, as

postmodernity maintains, unknowable whether true of false, should the academy, for the sake of accurate scholarship, re-evaluate its approach to the relationship between religion and science?

It should be clear that the tension is not between so-called religion and science, but between the worldviews of theism and philosophical naturalism. As mentioned above, while the relationship between science and theism has been a debated topic, if a poll were taken today the average person, both inside and outside of academia, would most likely side with those who sense a tension. Militaristic adjectives such as conflict, warfare, battle, and weapons have been common terminology in writings describing the relationship since the late nineteenth century and continue to today. Given that each affirms a different conception of ultimate reality, it would be hard to see it in any other way. If understood from the conservative theist's perspective, it would be hard to conceive of the relationship from the end of the nineteenth century to the present as anything other than one of conflict. Since this project addresses the rise of philosophical naturalism and the marginalization of theism and, therefore, *prima facie* confrontational, the attention here will be directed at the conflict between the two.

At this point an effort to establish at least a minimal definition of the idea of religion and science to better differentiate the two is in order. Without an understanding of the fundamental difference between what is presently called religion and science, it is impossible to draw conclusions regarding the relationship. What this will reveal is that science, like religion, is an ambiguous idea and must be understood from within the hermeneutic of Western modernity. Additionally, if the category distinction promoted by modernity cannot be rationally substantiated, it can then be nothing more than a convenient

social construct of Western modernity. Some of the intellectual developments that have more or less consciously informed and shaped all academic fields of inquiry, including the field of religious studies, will be explored. This category tension forms the backdrop for what follows.

The Idea of Religion

After using the term religion numerous times above and discussing the tension surrounding it, it is significant to note again that today the term, religion, is considered undefinable by many religion scholars and has led to much confusion as to what religion is and just as important, what it is not. But is it necessary to define the term? Anthropologist, Talal Asad, has commented that "there cannot be a universal definition of religion, not only because its constituent elements and relationships are historically specific, but because that definition is itself the historic product of discursive processes."[47] In other words, any attempt at definition would need to be contextualized. As Brooke also noted above, the historical context is significant for understanding the idea of religion. What is meant by these scholars is that the term cannot be universalized. But the attempt continues. Arguably, additional confusion has been largely due to the efforts of religion theorists to negotiate in and around the dichotomy in question. To persist in using the term without an understanding of what it is, is to perpetuate the confusion. Some kind of workable definition seems imperative.

A term that cannot be accurately defined presents its own set of problems, one being that it cannot be a concept. A concept allows for differentiation from what it is not by getting to the term's essential meaning. The essence of something is identified by

[47] Asad, *Genealogies*, 29.

isolating the distinctive qualities that all members of a class and only members of that class always have. At present, the term religion does not allow this. As a result, many texts on the subject address, albeit reluctantly, a series of questions such as the following, but without a clear resolution. How are religions identified and what are their essential components? Do some beliefs and practices constitute a religion while others do not? Are all humans religious or are only some religious? How does a religious understanding of the world differ from a non-religious one? What is religious knowledge and what is religious belief?

Within the context of the current understanding, these analytical types of questions can be answered with only a relative degree of accuracy, if at all. Without a workable, sustainable definition that allows for at least a minimal consensus on the fundamentals makes a distinctive objective for religious studies virtually impossible. For instance, how do religious studies differ from cultural studies, anthropological studies, philosophical studies, political studies, theological studies, or scientific studies for that matter? Granted, there may be overlap and shared terms in all of these, but what is the essential difference between these disciplines and so-called religion? Some would argue that there is no difference and that so-called religions are nothing more than socially constructed ideologies that need to be researched as cultural phenomena, which will be discussed in more detail below.

Religion scholars have struggled with this most challenging demand for definition and its place in intellectual inquiry. For religion to be a concept it must have specific characteristics that all members and only members of the class 'religion' have in common. And as just mentioned, this allows the idea of religion to be differentiated from what it is

not. It is at this point that comprehensive definitions have stumbled. Consequently, many religion scholars accept as incontestable that the term, religion, is undefinable, considering it simply a collective name, and opt for something like William James' view that religion "consists in the belief that there is an unseen order, and that our supreme good lies in harmoniously adjusting ourselves thereto."[48] But this statement is exceedingly broad, contributing to and illustrating the problem. The difficulty here is that this expression is so broad that it could conceivably include all views, including naturalism. A naturalist may propose that "our supreme good lies in harmoniously adjusting ourselves" to the "unseen order" inherent in natural selection and the survival of the fittest. But if that is the intention of the statement, then the dichotomy would lose its meaning and dissolve. All views could be included in only one category, the religion category, or the non-religion category. If all is religion, then none is religion. But this, most likely, was not James' intention at all. However, an assertion like this when not clearly crafted loses its intended meaning. Though it does indicate the difficulty in identifying a common characteristic that allows for a comprehensive definition for all that is typically called religion. But perhaps, it is not as difficult as it may at first appear.

Expressing a possible cause for this difficulty is Jonathan Z. Smith in his now famous statement already quoted above, "[t]here is no data for religion…..Religion has no independent existence apart from the academy" If James' vagueness and Smith's judgment are correct, the dichotomy then collapses—the current paradigm is flawed. This, it will be shown, is the logical consequence and needs to be advanced further.

[48] Quoted in Lewis Hopfe, Mark Woodward, *Religions of the World*, 8th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentiss-Hall, 2001) 5.

Taking a similar position, religion historian, Timothy Fitzgerald makes a strong case that the idea of religion has been misconceived. He argues that there are either theological studies or cultural studies. The current idea of religion, he says, is that it "indicates some reality that is not already covered by 'society' and 'culture', that religion is something over and above and additional to society and culture. Outside of a specific theological claim, this implication is, I believe, a fallacy."[49] He goes on to say that many scholars hope to employ religion as an analytical concept, to distinguish religious institutions and values from non-religious ones. But, to do this, he contends, is a futile quest because "it either operates as a theological concept, though one disguised by the so-called science of religion; or alternatively it operates at a very general level of meaning that makes it virtually indistinguishable from 'culture.'"[50] He summarizes his thesis well with this statement:

> [T]he more the researcher distances himself or herself from the explicit or implicit theological domination of 'religion', adopting for example sociological or anthropological critical perspectives, the more irrelevant the concept of religion will become, except as an ideological construct of western and western-dominated societies from which the scholar has progressively freed him or herself and that itself requires critical analysis.[51]

Both J. Z. Smith and Fitzgerald reject the notion that the idea of religion has a trans-cultural essence—that it is something that can be isolated from cultural studies. The points they make strongly challenge the status of the idea of religion as a separate category of

---

[49] Timothy Fitzgerald, *The Ideology of Religious Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) 222.

[50] Fitzgerald, *Ideology,* 225.

[51] Fitzgerald, *Ideology,* 8

study. As a result, to identify religion as *sui generis*, a thing in itself and a separate category for inquiry, is a misguided endeavor. Some attempt to find a characteristic, or set of characteristics, that all of the diverse so-called religious views have in common, but Smith and Fitzgerald, as well as others, argue that they are searching in vain. Rather, cultures and their institutions and practices reflect the beliefs and values of agents making choices, personally and collectively.

Contrary to those like Smith and Fitzgerald who want to reduce religion to a more basic discipline, earlier scholars, like Mircea Eliade and Rudolf Otto, have contended that religion discourse cannot be reduced to any other form of discourse because it is a basic discipline—it is *sui generis*. That is, the idea of religion exists universally; it has an essence and is identifiable as distinct from all other types of inquiry. There is such a thing as 'religious' phenomena, they argue, and it is a part of the human experience—it is part of human nature. A classic argument for *sui generis* religion has been the argument from the *argumentum e consensu gentium*, the general consent of mankind, or from the Protestant Reformer, John Calvin's, *sensus divinitatis*, a universal sense of deity in all humans. The idea here is that within the human consciousness is an intuitive awareness of the 'sacred' (Eliade), the 'holy' (Otto), and of a transcendent God (Calvin). This intuitive awareness then qualifies as a 'religious' awareness.[52] Advocates of the *sui generis* idea argue that religion is something that is unique in its characteristics and this uniqueness needs to be researched and studied.

If religion has an essence, then it must be a concept and have a defining quality that all members of the class 'religion' share. It must have a universal, identifiable nature. A

[52] See chapter five for an alternative understanding of this idea.

plethora of ideas, such as the 'sacred,' the 'holy,' or the sense of deity have been offered as 'religious' phenomena and as *the* common and defining characteristic to give religion a unique status for inquiry. But what is the 'sacred' or the 'holy'? How is it determined and identified? Is sacredness and holiness discovered in human nature or is it arbitrarily determined by a particular cultural context? These ideas, however, presuppose beliefs about human nature that must be clearly stated and analyzed. The notions of 'sacredness,' 'holiness,' and the *sensus divinitatis* (innate awareness of God), are, as Fitzgerald argues, theological concepts and must be understood in light of the basic belief of theism. The discussion is then pushed back into the area of metaphysics and first principles, the essence of human nature, which will be addressed in subsequent chapters.

Putting the *sui generis* issue aside for now, the point can be made that even without a clear definition, the idea of religion is still applied to varied and contradictory belief systems, which then form a category of belief. What, then, holds these disparate views together? What is the common denominator, the common ground? This gets to the issue addressed by the scholars noted above. There is no commonality that can be identified as a trans-cultural object in need of discovery and investigation without presupposing a more basic belief concerning essences.

Smith and Fitzgerald have challenged the idea of religion as a separate entity that stands above the ordinary workings of culture. Rather, they see it as a subcategory of culture and as an ideological totalizing concept for analyzing the diverse values and strategies of power inherent within various cultures and societies. Works in anthropology and sociology are misleading when they suggest that they are about the 'religious' experience of a particular culture. They are really attempts, says Fitzgerald, "to study the

institutionalized values of specific social groups, the different ways in which values are symbolically represented, and the relation of those values and symbolic representations to power and other aspects of social organization."[53]

Variously understood as a theological, sociological, anthropological, psychological, or broadly cultural phenomenon, the idea of religion has managed to survive as well as elude a clarifying definition. Numerous attempts at comprehensiveness have been offered in order to delimit the idea. Nonetheless, this effort has been met with little success. The lack of an agreed upon definition has caused much perplexity and tension regarding how to understand the relationship between the idea of religion as it relates to the physical and social sciences. Consequently, the popular religion / science dichotomy is perpetuated. So the question continues to be asked, or avoided, what is this thing called religion and what does it do? To ask David Hume's question, how and why did it arise? Or, did it? Is it innate, an integral aspect of human nature? These are fair questions that have been asked historically and have captivated the creative imaginations of the social sciences and humanities.

So it does not seem to be asking too much to demand a working definition. If there is not a workable definition, then how does the scholar know what has purportedly arisen? The answer may be cloaked in irony. Perhaps it is imbedded in the worldview of modernity and is obvious. While a definition of religion from within the religion category may be impossible due to the diversity of views, however, modernity's naturalism easily defines religion as any belief system that is incommensurate with its own, which is essentially what modernity has done. For modernity, religion equals non-naturalism. If

[53] Fitzgerald, *Ideology*, 12

naturalism is rejected, then the specifics, the distinctive features, of the alternative views really do not matter. For instance, Freud's *The Future of an Illusion,* or more recently, Pascal Boyer's, *Religion Explained,* each operates from an explicitly naturalistic perspective and framework. They each presuppose a naturalistic frame of reference; the privileged view attempting to apply a naturalistic methodology for answering questions regarding the cause and origin of alternative views—the so-called religions. What is apparent is that the divide between so-called religion and non-religion has already been presupposed, implying, at least minimally, some sort of definition, which enables one view to be separated from others.

It should be clear at this point that naturalists understand alternative views to be either a psychologically or socially constructed category. It should also be apparent that what is called religion consists of various belief systems that can be understood, at least minimally, by what they believe and do. They attempt to interpret and explain a conception of reality, essentially how the world works, which includes the assorted practices associated with each. The common characteristic of the diverse views at the most basic level is that they all seek to make sense out of human experience. That is, they describe, interpret, and explain experience in order to maximize the meaning of it, and particular beliefs that form a system are what makes that happen.

It should also be clear that, similarly, naturalism is also a belief system that describes, interprets, and explains the nature of reality along with its various ways of practice and, therefore, also seeks to make sense out of human experience. The formal features, structure, and function of diverse belief systems are alike, but with different basic beliefs. That is, each belief system consists of, whether explicitly stated or uncritically

presupposed, a metaphysic, an epistemology, and an ethic. The belief categories of naturalism and so-called religion are similar in that each attempts to interpret and explain the meaning and significance of existence and the human experience of it. Each view inferentially derives from its basic beliefs an interpretation and explanation of the data of existence and experience. In other words, both philosophical naturalism and so-called religion construct systems of interrelated beliefs and propositions that serve to interpret and explain the nature of the world so as to make sense of it. Formally, structurally, and functionally, they are the same. So at the most basic level naturalism and the idea of religion are the same. As one philosopher of religion, Surrendra Gangadean explains it, "religion is the belief or set of beliefs one uses to give meaning to one's experience….since all give meaning to experience, all are religious."[54] James' attempt at definition, unwittingly, came to the same conclusion. All belief systems attempt to do the same thing. Once again, if all is religion, then none is religion. When understood in this way, the term 'religion' loses its distinctive and definitive characteristics and therefore cannot be a concept. It loses its meaning. All of the world's diverse belief systems then qualify as religion.

Whether so-called religion or naturalism, belief systems are constructed for the purpose of giving meaning to human experience. This includes determining the significance and meaning of data gathered from the physical world—what is typically

[54] Gangadean, *Philosophical Foundation,* 104. Gangadean states, "The definition of religion as an attempt to state the meaning of a term is bound up with one's larger framework of meaning, i.e., one's worldview. That is to say, one's definition of religion reflects one's religion (meaning framework) held more or less consciously and consistently. Insofar as one is not consistently skeptical and given to nihilism, common ground remains. There are commonly accepted examples of religion (Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam) from which common features of religion may be identified. Belief in a higher power is not a common feature of all of these, but giving meaning to one's experience in light of one's basic belief (true for both theism and atheism/secular humanism/naturalism) is common to all of these religions." 222, FN7.

called science. Inherent in the respective systems are beliefs concerning the nature of ultimate reality, how that reality is known, and how life ought to be lived. Sam Harris reflects the relationship between beliefs and practice with his comment, "[y]our beliefs define your vision of the world; they dictate your behavior; they determine your emotional responses to other human beings."[55] Beliefs and practice are causally connected and cannot be separated.

If all belief systems are formally and functionally the same and develop for the purpose of producing meaning, then, as Gangadean has stated, all views are essentially 'religious.' If all views are essentially religious, then the term 'religion' could easily be replaced with the term 'worldview.' Perhaps the term, worldview (*Weltanschauung),* is better suited as a general category to capture the world's belief systems. It is more comprehensive and more inclusive. Naturalism and religion would then be subsumed by a larger category heading—worldview. All belief systems, whether naturalism or so-called religion, interpret and explain existence and, therefore, constitute a view of the world.

The points just made address what belief systems fundamentally are and what they fundamentally do. The notion of 'meaningfulness' is the common denominator for all belief systems (religions / worldviews). All beliefs and belief systems, whether naturalism or so-called religion, function and are structured to achieve the same end—meaning. And as will be shown in what follows, the test for meaning is reason.[56] Beliefs are meaningful when they are consistent with each other and do not violate the laws of thought—they are not contradictory. With the 'definition' of religion just discussed, the popular paradigm,

[55] Harris, *End of Faith,* 12.

[56] Gangadean, *Philosophical Foundation,* 9.

the two categories of science and religion, collapses and the discussion shifts. The focus is now on a single category consisting of a multitude of worldviews that are structured in such a way as to achieve meaningfulness. But even with only a single category the question of differentiation still remains. Can the multitude of views in the single category still be grouped separately? How are they different? Some may argue that the popular divide is still valid because no substantive change has been effected. One view, naturalism, is still based on reason and knowledge and the others are not, it is claimed. This claim, however, still needs to be critically evaluated. The challenge to the popular paradigm and to naturalism as privileged is not quite complete. The first step was to clarify the issue of definition with respect to structure, function, and meaning, and the second is to address the claim to knowledge and privilege, which is to follow.

While the structure and function for all worldviews is the same, the content, or belief particulars, are not. This same critique would apply within the so-called religion category as well. The respective basic beliefs of each view are significantly different and even contradictory. Each view holds a different belief regarding what is ultimately real (eternal). That is, there are opposing beliefs with respect to what ultimately exists. Keep in mind that this whole issue of religion/science and worldview is over differences regarding which way is the correct way to understand existence. Moreover, the main difference in the various views is not primarily found in the familiar notion that one view believes in the supernatural and the other does not, as is commonly believed. Some views considered religious, such as Buddhism, affirm a non-material ultimate reality, but not necessarily a supernatural reality. It is at the most basic level of belief, beliefs about what ultimately exists and has always existed, that differences in worldviews ought to be

critically assessed. When this is done, the two popular categories dissolve allowing for a new, more objective and comprehensive, scheme.

As an example, naturalism (science) and Hinduism (religion) oppose each other in the popular paradigm. However, when their most basic belief about existence is examined they fall into the same belief category. Both views believe that something is eternal (our most basic belief) rather than nothing, and both views believe that 'all' that exists is eternal. They differ, however, on what it is that ultimately exists, which is an inferred and less basic belief. Naturalism believes that all that exists is eternal and that it is matter, whereas Hinduism believes that all that exists is eternal and that it is non-matter. What is significant here is that they are in the same category at the most basic level. The question of existence and eternality, as well as a new proposal for dividing belief systems, will be discussed in more detail in chapter five. In that chapter all three options regarding what is eternal will be examined—*all* is eternal, *none* is eternal, and *some* is eternal (some is not eternal).[57] Every worldview, functioning as an ideological concept, affirms explicitly or implicitly a belief about what is most ultimate and its adherents bear responsibility for the rational justification of that belief.

Explanation, Presuppositions, and Privilege

At this point it is becoming more clear that the idea of religion and non-religion is a fabrication of modernity. Modernity promotes a worldview grounded in a particular interpretation of the data of science and experience. Modernity's understanding of alternative, opposing views is embedded in the worldview of modernity. How alternative views are interpreted and explained is determined in light of the interpreter's most basic

[57] Gangadean develops these options in detail in his work *Philosophical Foundation*.

belief about what ultimately exists. Interpreting and explaining is not a neutral, objective enterprise. As an example, two renowned contemporary historians of religion demonstrate how interpreting and explaining reveals uncritically held presuppositions, which reflect a particular worldview and belief about existence.

In his work, *Explaining Religion*, J. Samuel Preus, presupposes the validity of the dichotomy in question.[58] He traces several significant religion theorists, such as Bodin, Vico, Hume, Durkheim, and Freud, with the intent to show how each accounts for, in Preus' estimation, "the key issue—that of origins" (cause and source) that eventually produced the naturalistic paradigm for the interpretation of religion.[59] From the work of these theorists, he articulates how the development of a modern naturalistic approach to the study of religion superseded a theological approach. He argues that a theological approach to understanding the world's belief systems may be acceptable from its limited perspective, but is not acceptable for the academy.[60] A naturalistic approach, he contends, is more objective and therefore ought to be the preferred method of study. Because a theological approach assumes a particular belief system it cannot be objective, he explains, and is, therefore, unacceptable for academic use. He challenges the popular notion "that the only proper approach to religions is 'from the inside,' and……argues that a clear distinction between a naturalistic approach—with its own explanatory apparatus—and religious approaches is necessary to achieve a coherent conception of what the study of religion is

[58] J. Samuel Preus, *Explaining Religion: Criticism and Theory from Bodin to Freud* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996).

[59] Preus, *Explaining*, ix, xxi.

[60] Preus, *Explaining*, 205-211.

about."[61] In Preus' judgment, a naturalistic explanation of non-naturalistic as well as supernatural belief systems is more fitting for the academy. He thus implicitly presupposes a definitive division in his explanation. That is, without explicitly defining religion, he reinforces the distinction between the natural and the supernatural, thus affirming the dichotomy as well as implying that non-natural worldviews equal religion. He identifies a difference and makes the value judgment that a naturalistic method of inquiry is superior to any alternative. He implies that the religion category consists of whatever is incommensurate with his own naturalistic worldview.

Another champion of this perspective is Donald Wiebe. In his work, *The Politics of Religious Studies*, Wiebe strongly contends for the "need to reconsider the value of a return to evolutionary theory to re-establish a unifying framework for the study of religion."[62] It is his contention that "[a] study of religion directed toward spiritual liberation of the individual or of the human race as a whole, toward the moral welfare of the human race, or toward any ulterior end than that of knowledge itself, should not find a home in the university."[63] His assumption is that knowledge is gained only by a unifying framework, naturalism. Additionally, he quotes Maurice Cowling as offering the only acceptable action for scholars of religion, "as scholars, are committed, the only moral action to which they are commanded and the only 'social responsibility' to which their professional position compels them, is to use their energies in order to explain."[64] But from what perspective ought the idea of religion be explained? He offers insight into his

[61] Preus, *Explaining*, xxi.

[62] Donald Wiebe, *The Politics of Religious Studies* (New York: Palgrave, 1999) 292.

[63] Wiebe, *Politics*, xiii.

[64] Wiebe, *Politics*, xiv.

position when he suggests that a fruitful application of this particular framework of explanation can be found in Pascal Boyer's, *Religion Explained: The Evolutionary Origins of Religious Thought.*[65] The materialistic evolutionary method advocated here is considered, by Boyer, to be a productive way to explain the source and cause of religion. The reason for this, according to Boyer, is that the human mind has been prepared by a material process. Our minds, he says, "are prepared because natural selection gave us particular mental predispositions"—a predisposition for the idea of religion.[66] The basic first principles of a naturalistic worldview are presupposed as the only acceptable methodology for explaining and interpreting the world's alternative belief systems. The worldview of naturalism is assumed to be true.

Once again, an explanation that presupposes a definition of religion as the non-natural, or supernatural, and as something that arises is offered. Both of these scholars propose a methodological naturalism for inquiry, interpretation, and explanation that is grounded in metaphysical naturalism. They each work within a prescribed worldview that allows them to interpret and explain those views that are contrary to their own. How is this approach any more objective, what Preus demands, than a theological approach? With these examples it is apparent that explanation for Preus, Wiebe, and Boyer includes, indeed presupposes, interpretation, which includes a basic belief about ultimate reality, the meaning of experience, and the data of science.

These scholars argue that their own naturalistic worldview offers the best perspective for the proper interpretation and explanation of all other worldviews and

[65] Pascal Boyer, *Religion Explained* (New York: Basic Books, 2001).

[66] Boyer, *Religion Explained*, 3.

therefore ought to be the preferred, privileged, position. The dichotomy for them is valid. They argue that naturalism is fundamentally different than alternative views, it is 'outside' of all other belief systems, as opposed to adherents on the 'inside,' and is, therefore, in a better position to be more objective. They assume that their position is value-neutral. The interesting thing here is that they do not see themselves as working from within a position—a worldview. They view their assessments, their value judgments, as neutral and objective.

Theism, however, could make the same claim. For instance, naturalism and Hinduism are belief systems that need to be explained. Theists could claim that they can assess these worldviews, as well as others, as an 'outsider,' and would therefore be just as objective as a naturalist. Can naturalism explain itself as an 'outsider?' Obviously, no. The naturalist would then counter the theist with a charge of metaphysical bias because the theist has presupposed something about the ultimate nature of reality, thus making his judgment biased. But has not the naturalist done the same thing? Methodological naturalism is promoted and defended as the only objective method of inquiry, while assuming metaphysical naturalism—a statement affirming the ultimate material nature of reality. The problem here, of course, is that naturalists want to claim neutrality, with no metaphysical bias, and, therefore, consider themselves more objective. They want to claim methodological naturalism only without recognizing their presupposed metaphysical foundation of naturalism.

A distinction has been made by Preus, Wiebe, Boyer and others and it appears to be based upon a natural / supernatural model. But this model, however, is inadequate. It does not take all views into account sufficiently. For instance, Buddhism, commonly believed

to be a religion, does not fit into the category of naturalism or supernaturalism. For Buddhism, the 'real' world is of a non-material (spirit) nature and the spirit world is all that ultimately exists—the material world is illusory. The spirit world is all that exists and has always existed—it is eternal. This could be called spiritual monism. Conversely, material monism would be the view that all that exists is the material world and it has always existed (naturalism). Each view believes that all that exists is eternal, but differs on what it is that eternally exists—spirit or matter. The contradictory to both of these views, spiritual monism and material monism, is theism. Theism believes that some (not all) that exists is eternal and some is temporal (came into existence). So the worldview model being proposed is based upon what is believed to exist eternally. That is, it is about the basic concept of existence and what ultimately exists. In other words, all worldviews believe either all is eternal or only some is eternal (some is not). This model more accurately categorizes the world's belief systems, which will be developed more in the final chapter.

The materialist metaphysical presuppositions of Freud, Preus, Wiebe, and Boyer, however, are quite clear. Just as it is demanded that the theist produce proof for its metaphysical presuppositions, so proof is required for the naturalist's metaphysical presuppositions. Naturalists need to prove rationally, or otherwise, that only the material world exists and that it has always existed, which has not been demonstrated.

This project, while it may be sympathetic to the concerns of Preus and Wiebe for wanting objectivity in scholarly inquiry, nonetheless, objects to their failure to recognize the presuppositions inherent in their own perspective. They not only implicitly define with their categories, but also determine the only acceptable method of inquiry. They argue that their own naturalistic worldview offers the best perspective for the proper interpretation

and explanation of all other worldviews and therefore ought to be the preferred, privileged, position. They argue that naturalism is fundamentally different than alternative views, it is neutral and 'outside' of a particular category of beliefs, as opposed to 'inside,' and therefore in a position to be more objective. But this cannot be substantiated. They defend and promote methodological naturalism as the only objective method of inquiry because they assume metaphysical naturalism to be true—a significant bias. Nineteenth century theists attempting to explain views contrary to Christianity and labeling them 'alternative religions,' were doing something similar. Theists wanted to understand opposing views through the lens of Christianity whereas non-theists wanted, and continue to want, to understand opposing views through the lens of naturalism. Basic intellectual honesty is at stake here.

Why should naturalistic presuppositions be assumed to be the privileged interpreter of all worldviews? From a theist's perspective, could it not also be asked, from whence philosophical naturalism, why did it arise? It seems to make sense that the privileged view needs to be the proven, rationally justified, view. A sound argument needs to be given in support of one approach over the other. Presuppositions need proof. It needs to be rationally demonstrated that naturalism is, if it is to be the privileged view, the only logical position to hold. But as it will be demonstrated in more detail in chapter five, this cannot be done.

Wiebe laments that the science of religion has not yet found a place, its own identity, in the academy.[67] Could this be due to the fact that the idea of religion has not yet been clearly identified as an object of inquiry and research? The real question is, is it

[67] Wiebe, *Politics*, 283-293.

even possible? So far, it seems that no evidence can be produced that justifies two separate categories for the world's belief systems as they are currently conceived, or that naturalism ought to be the privileged worldview.

The worldview subcategories can now be minimally understood as one group, which believes in a spirit reality only (Eastern views); a second group, which affirms a spiritual as well as a material reality (Western theism); and a third group, which affirms the existence of a material reality only. In this light, the differences at the most basic level and the basis for the categories becomes more apparent.[68] But more clarity is still needed. Since these opposing views, as stated, are contradictory, only one can be rationally justified. Either a spirit reality is most ultimate and eternal, or a material reality is most ultimate and eternal, but not both.[69]

The real issue now becomes, can the worldview that affirms the existence of a spiritual, non-material, reality be rationally justified or can the worldview of naturalism rationally justify that only a material reality exists? Put differently, can one of these perspectives give reasons (rational proof) for its claim to knowledge and truth, or can they each only make dogmatic claims? The ultimate challenge then is for one view to produce rational proof that defeats all others.

That the modern dichotomy has been erroneously constructed should be coming into focus with the issue of knowledge still needing more discussion. When naturalism and the idea of religion are understood as just explained, the relevance of the question, why

[68] These three categories of basic belief, spiritual monism, material monism, and theism along with a fourth, dualism, will be discussed further in chapter five.

[69] This is to be understood as a contradiction when naturalism presupposes that all that exists is matter and eternal while theism presupposes that some spirit is eternal (creator) and at the same time some spirit and some matter (creation) is not eternal. When framed this way the 'all' that exists is eternal is in contradiction to only 'some' that exists is eternal. 'All' contradicts 'some.' Therefore one proposition must be true and the other must be false. There will be more discussion on this in chapter five. See Gangadean's, *Philosophical Foundation* for a more detailed exposition.

does the science and religion dialogue even matter, becomes more explicit. It is a matter of truth and error, and as Sam Harris has argued, life and death. Beliefs have consequences.

Worldview Studies

If there is no basis for a 'religion' category and if no view has been rationally justified, then what is the role in the academy, if any, for what has come to be called 'religious studies?' With the dichotomy dissolved and the idea of religion undefinable, it would allow scholarly inquiry from a much broader base. Religious studies could be termed 'worldview studies,' which would include naturalism as one particular worldview. Naturalism would be understood as an alternative worldview consisting of beliefs and practices just as Christianity or Buddhism. If preferred, each of these belief systems could also be termed ideologies. If the world's belief systems, including naturalism, are understood as beliefs that inform and shape the varied cultures of the world for the purpose of attaining meaning, then progress in understanding can be made. Worldviews have differences at the basic level and will therefore influence cultures differently. What is believed to be ultimate reality will determine interpretation and explanation of existence and the experience of it. Naturalism will produce a different culture than, say, Taoism or Hinduism. The particular labels, for instance Christianity, would be retained as a general identification moniker.

University Religious Studies research programs could then be dedicated to the investigation of how worldviews function, interrelate, and influence cultures. Basic beliefs would be identified and the consequences of those beliefs could be traced through all the various academic disciplines. Researching and studying theories of religion, such as the classical theories, would be seen as irrelevant. In order to better facilitate that end, Arizona

State University has recently merged the disciplines of Philosophy, History, and Religious Studies. Perhaps, with this move, it could be conceived that, in a broad theoretical sense, History and Religious Studies would gather and describe data, whereas Philosophy would categorize for rational consistency and interpretation beginning with basic belief. Arizona State University's Religious Studies program has recognized this point, to an extent, and addresses it on its university webpage. Generally speaking, this present project follows this pattern by merging disciplines. ASU's webpage states;

> For a long while many westerners have tended to think that religions are either "dying out" or have been relegated to the private sphere where they have little public or political importance. Recent events in the United States and around the world, however, have made it harder and harder to sustain this view. In our increasingly cosmopolitan world, the need to understand the root beliefs and values of diverse cultures has become a political and moral imperative. The academic study of religion seeks to explore the deep intersections between religions and cultures which have shaped, and continue to shape, personal and collective identity.[70]

The implication here is that it is the mission, a 'moral imperative,' for religious studies to interpret and explain the meaning and significance of the diverse beliefs and practices of the views in the category—religion. Understanding "root beliefs" is important. Root beliefs establish the basis for worldviews, or paradigms, in the Kuhnian sense, that shape what is acceptable cultural life. As Barbour has noted, "[a]s scientific models lead to theories by which observations are ordered, so religious models lead to beliefs by which experiences are ordered. Beliefs, like theories, can be propositionally stated and

[70] https://shprs.clas.asu.edu/religious_studies. Jose Casanova addresses the issue of the deprivatization of religion in his book, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994).

systematically articulated."[71] The idea here is, as stated above, that beliefs produce consequences. Beliefs (metaphysics/epistemology) determine behavior (ethics).

The category of religion, once considered by secularism to have been relegated to the area of personal piety—back to the beginnings of its original meaning—or on its way to extinction, now seems to be experiencing a type of renewal. Put differently, it was believed that naturalism would eventually preclude the existence of all other views. Not only does the Religious Studies department acknowledge the perseverance of these other views, but also deems it a moral obligation to know them. But whether dying out or resurging, the category remains the same—distinct from what is perceived as the privileged, more rational view of naturalism, or non-religion. Nonetheless, perhaps this is a move in the right direction, one that recognizes the idea that both secularism and religion are social constructs with no *sui generis* status.

Given this context, university research programs in religious studies then, at least at ASU it would seem, serve the role of descriptive sciences for the purpose of understanding anthropological and sociological interrelationships. Beliefs and practices of the various so-called religions (worldviews) are critically analyzed through the work of these research programs with the goal of understanding the implications for cultural life. The same Arizona State University Religious Studies webpage says as much with its statement;

> Religious Studies brings together perspectives and approaches from history, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, and literature to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the individuals and traditions that constitute religions and cultures.

[71] Barbour, *Myths, Models and Paradigms*, 119.

This statement appears to suggest a conception of religion that is more than personal views expressed in private. It intends to approach the study of so-called religion as an integral component of culture or even as fundamental belief systems that inform and shape culture. This approach is a departure from the former norm that conceived of religion as an add-on component expressed in personal belief and practice. Therefore, to study religion would encompass a broader cultural study rather than simply the study of private beliefs. When considered in this light, religious studies could also be conceived as worldview studies. Understood in this way, however, would mean leaving the popular view of religion behind, along with the category dichotomy.

With ASU's revised mission statement, the door is open to understand all of the world's belief systems, theism as well as naturalism, as worldviews that inform and shape cultural life. As the statement above indicates, "[t]he academic study of religion seeks to explore the deep intersections between religions and cultures which have shaped, and continue to shape, personal and collective identity."[72] Could this statement not also apply to so-called non-religious views such as naturalism? Does not naturalism also shape personal and collective identity? Perhaps naturalism as a belief system or worldview should be included in the Religious Studies program. Beliefs at the most basic level, the metaphysical level, whether theistic or naturalistic, determine behavior and practice. While the mission statement offers a modicum of hope for a more objective approach to understanding diverse worldviews, the prevailing paradigm is, nonetheless, still well-entrenched and in need of reformulation.

Summary

[72] https://shprs.clas.asu.edu/religious_studies.

Though a theistic, or so-called religious, worldview dominated the West for well over a millennium, the past century has been one of continued decline for theism. This decline can be observed most significantly in the academy where the naturalistic view has ascended to supremacy. Naturalism, as one belief category, has been determined by modernity to be more rational, if not the only rational view, and, therefore, considered more authoritative and believable. As such, it is the privileged position. The idea of religion, on the other hand, is considered to be faith dependent and has not produced the proper evidence, or proof, to warrant any type of knowledge to substantiate truth claims suitable for dialogue in the public square. Religion is grounded in belief, and science is grounded in knowledge, it is said. Therefore, it is assumed that a religious view essentially fails to pass the bar of rationality. Hence the dichotomy, reason and naturalism v. faith and religion, developed forming two separate categories of belief, each having its own interpretation and explanation regarding the nature of existence. The category of religion, and eventually world religions, then became the group of beliefs, or belief systems, that were outside of, and incompatible with, the rational, naturalistic perspective and analyzable from that perspective.

This understanding has become so much a part of and so entrenched in Western thought life that to imagine an alternative is almost unthinkable. The divide is often viewed in terms of binaries such as the holy and the profane, nature and grace, faith and reason, sacred and secular, or fact and value, to mention a few. Talal Asad has noted that these binaries "pervade modern secular discourse, especially in its polemical mode" and adds that they express that which is in opposition to the secular.[73] In light of this,

[73] Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003) 23.

questions such as, what is fundamental to the dichotomy and how is it justified, are paramount. Can any current approach to understanding the relationship between religion and science be substantiated apart from careful analysis of presuppositions? The prevailing mindset, or 'modern conceptual scheme,' needs to be critically analyzed, and most specifically, the idea that naturalism is more rational and therefore has grounds for being the privileged position.

The point here is that the academy is aligned with this view and assumes it to be objective and neutral. So-called religion generally, and Christian theism specifically, no longer has the esteemed position of sole interpreter and explainer of reality in the public square of Western culture that it once did. Rather, it has been relegated to the area of personal piety. A naturalistic understanding of the world, particularly in the citadels of higher learning, has become dominant and has assumed the role once held by theism, thus marginalizing theism and determining it to be intellectually untenable and even irrelevant—hence, the assignment to the area of personal values only. Compared to the nineteenth century, theistic belief in the academy today and, indeed, belief in any transcendent reality has been virtually vanquished. The idea of two mutually exclusive categories with the claim to knowledge as the dividing factor appears to be permanently fixed in the Western cognitive structure.

With what has been said so far, it is clear that Western modernity has been successful at shaping how its own idea of religion ought to be conceived. Modernity's development of science has defined religion to satisfy its purposes making the two categories unavoidably related and mutually exclusive. Modernity has divided the world's belief systems in such a way that favors a naturalistic worldview and is perceived as the

rational view, against non-naturalistic worldviews that are perceived as non-rational. The perceived rational view is the favored or privileged view and, therefore, the preferred view in the academy. Because of the divide, tension between the views has been the result. If the rational view is the privileged and preferred view, as it should be, then it is requisite for the view holding that position to demonstrate its conformance to reason. If it cannot, then it ought to be abandoned as the privileged position. Theism lost this position and was replaced because it could not demonstrate its conformance to reason. But can its replacement do any better? The answer to this question will continue to be explored in subsequent chapters.

As emphasized above, the modern understanding of religion and science cannot be isolated from the general and overall rise of modern Western thought. The making of religion and philosophical naturalism were a part of, and products of, this historical process. The philosophical precursors will now be explored in the next chapter.

But before moving ahead, a clarification is first in order. The assessment regarding the decline of theism and the rise of naturalism is not to suggest that religion, as commonly understood, is losing adherents or disappearing, but rather, that its intellectual currency in the academy has lost its value as a truth claim. But in spite of the loss and the rise of the naturalistic worldview, alternative belief systems (religions) are, nonetheless, still thriving and even expanding.[74] Other worldviews continue as viable options, as ideas by which people shape their lives, in contrast to the exclusive claims to knowledge made by naturalism. As a topic for another project, a valid question could be, why is this occurring?

[74] See Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). Also see Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, *The Churching of America, 1776-2005: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005). These works show expansion of so-called religions in various parts of the world.

Chapter 3

PHILOSOPHICAL PRECURSORS TO MODERNITY'S MAKING OF RELIGION

There was a time when the idea of religion, more specifically Judeo-Christian theism, and science were considered complementary. Theologians and the new 'scientists' viewed all truth as God's truth and were engaged in the mutual pursuit of the same end. But by the end of the nineteenth century this relative harmony experienced an unparalleled breech that prevails to the present. What were the causes of this breech? How did the idea of religion end up as a distinct category separated from scientific inquiry and often considered at odds with it? The answers to these questions are in part due to an epistemological shift that took place in earlier centuries and subsequently paved the way for the nineteenth century growth of naturalism (the philosophical perspective of modernity) into a dominant worldview. The question of knowledge and how it was to be qualified as knowledge became the paramount question with which rising modernity would wrestle. This new worldview needed rational justification and that justification was to be found in its understanding of knowledge. From the Enlightenment forward, the view that believed that it possessed knowledge and could demonstrate it, would prevail as the true light for human culture and, therefore, qualify it to define reality. The theistic worldview, through a series of epistemologically related intellectual revolutions, beginning with the sixteenth century Protestant Reformation and extending through the early twentieth century, lost its exclusive position as the definer of reality for the Western world and was usurped by a naturalistic view. The claim to rational superiority by the new naturalistic view was resounding and appeared to be decisive. The following will explore some of the philosophical (epistemological) and theological precursors that made the transition from

the pre-modern period to the modern possible, which was necessary for producing the categories of religion and science.

From Pre-modern to Modern

The decline of the Christian theistic worldview in the West took place progressively on several fronts. As the predominant view, theism experienced a significant threat to its unity when the exclusive authority of the Roman Catholic Church was challenged. The crisis of authority precipitated by the Protestant Reformation made an absolutely radical break with the past seem mandatory.[75] Cultural upheavals in sixteenth century Europe severely eroded various concepts surrounding the prevailing theory of knowledge of the time—one rooted in authority.[76] With the collapse of traditional authority structures, explains religion historian, Jeffrey Stout, disintegration of the terms closely connected with knowledge such as certainty, demonstration, opinion, probability, and authority led to an epistemological crisis to which various philosophers sought to respond. This loss cannot be overstated with respect to its impact on the new modern mindset. A method by which to reconstruct normative standards for right judgment and regulation was necessary after the unsettling theological tensions of this time. One such philosopher was René Descartes (1596-1650) whose response was to avoid the terms associated in any way with 'authority' and reconstruct a foundation for knowledge based

[75] Henning Graf Reventlow, *The Authority of the Bible and the Rise of the Modern World* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985) 3. From the Protestant Reformation, says Reventlow, also came a new understanding of the authority of the Bible.

[76] Reventlow, *The Authority of the Bible.* Reventlow argues that biblical criticism and the departure from biblical authority precedes Cartesianism and goes deeper into the fabric of the history of Christian theology. A large-scale cultural movement throughout Europe must be set alongside the Reformation as the most powerful force in the formation of the modern world.

on demonstration and absolute certainty.[77] Stout views Descartes' quest for certainty as a "flight from authority" designed to release morals and politics from traditional Christian theism. A new starting point—one that would transcend the epistemic disparity of the situation and be independent of history—was the desired goal.[78] In rejecting authority, says Stout, "Descartes tried to make received opinion and conceptual inheritance inessential to thought."[79]

The philosophical climate of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with the major preoccupation with epistemological issues, unavoidably, had an impact on Christian theism and the development of the categories, religion and science. Issues concerning the certainty and starting point of knowledge, beliefs and their justification, and foundations for knowledge all came under critical analysis in the early modern era. The outcome was a distinctively modern cognitive structure for belief justification—commonly known as foundationalism. With this particularly Cartesian approach to knowledge, the epistemological assumptions of pre-modern authority were called into question and the subsequent implications for Christian theism and science were monumental. The dogmatic canons of the pre-modern mindset were no longer acceptable for knowledge. The transition from a pre-modern epistemology grounded in the basic beliefs of a received tradition to a rational structure built upon a foundation of self-evident first principles was a radical move. But in light of the cultural crisis of the time this is just what Descartes

[77] Jeffrey Stout, *The Flight From Authority*, (Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 1981) 6; In this work Stout seeks to excavate the numerous historical factors surrounding the sixteenth century crisis of authority that led to the rise of modern thought.

[78] Stout, *The Flight From Authority*, 67.

[79] Stout, *The Flight From Authority*, 6.

proposed. So what is foundationalism and what is its significance for the categories of religion and science?

Epistemological Foundationalism

Foundationalism, explains philosopher, Nicholas Wolterstorff, is a characteristically Western phenomenon and essentially a theory of knowledge and rationality, that is, "a theory of what is rational for a given person to accept, to believe."[80] The fundamental issue underlying foundationalism is one of belief justification. Beliefs are based, or grounded, on something. Beliefs need to be justified and foundationalism is a system that justifies or warrants beliefs. It is one particular epistemic logic or structure designed to provide a support or 'ground' for beliefs which, by themselves, have no support. An appropriate metaphor here would be a building. Foundational beliefs for epistemic foundationalists are considered to be directly held self-evident truths that form the foundation for the superstructure of knowledge and are not inferred from any other belief or proposition. They are one's most basic beliefs and constitute direct or immediate knowledge and are usually considered bestowed by intuition. Through intuition the knower grasps with certainty 'clear and distinct ideas' (Descartes), 'impressions' (Locke), or 'sensations' (Russell). These foundational propositions are then true by correspondence with states of affairs in the physical world (modern empiricism). The foundation stops the otherwise infinite regress of reasons and inevitable skepticism. If beliefs are to be justified then the regress must end in a foundation of beliefs that require no additional reasons for their justification. Philosopher, Robert Audi, states it simply, "foundationalists tend to

[80] Nicholas Wolterstorff, "Introduction," in *Faith and Rationality*, eds. Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff (Notre Dame, London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983) 2. Wolterstorff also states that foundationalism has been formulated as a theory of knowledge and as a theory of authentic science (scientia, Wessenschaft) 2.

hold that justification belongs to a belief, whether inferentially or directly, by virtue of its grounding in experience or reason."[81] Beliefs held inferentially are considered rational if they are logically consistent with a more basic belief. Inferred beliefs are ultimately supported by the most basic belief or set of beliefs. What makes these beliefs rational is that the inferred beliefs provide adequate evidence for the more basic beliefs and the more basic beliefs provide adequate evidence for those inferred. This approach to knowledge is attractive due to the human need for certitude and meaning. "What lures and inspires the typical foundationalist," notes Wolterstorff "is the conviction that it is possible for us human beings to have direct insight into certain facts of reality—to have direct awareness."[82]

Not just any proposition, however, is considered basic and foundational. Only those propositions that meet certain criteria qualify. The history of foundationalism has been extensive—from Aristotle to the present—and has modified the included definitive tenets. Ancient and medieval foundationalists tended to hold that a proposition is basic if it is either self-evident (e.g. 2+2=4) or evident to the senses. Modern foundationalists—Descartes, Locke, Leibniz, and others—tended to think of a basic belief as one that is either self-evident or incorrigible. An incorrigible belief is one of which a person is immediately and indisputably aware, such as a feeling of hunger. The consensus seems to be that these three categories constitute what has been termed *classical foundationalism*.[83] Wolterstorff identifies the goal of the classical foundationalist as to secure a sense of

[81] Audi, *The Structure of Justification*, 149. This description is given in contrast to the alternative structure for epistemic justification, coherentism, which says that justification belongs to a belief by virtue of its coherence with one or more other beliefs.

[82] Nicholas Wolterstorff, *John Lock and the Ethics of Belief* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) xi.

[83] Alvin Plantinga, "Reason and Belief in God," in *Faith and Rationality*, eds. Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff (Notre Dame, London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983) 58-9.

certainty and to "form a body of theories from which all prejudice, bias, and unjustified conjecture have been eliminated."[84] This was to be achieved by constructing a theoretical structure of knowledge on a foundation of certitude. Historian, Peter Gay, makes the point that pre-Enlightenment antecedents concerning the certainty and starting point of knowledge, beliefs and their justification, and the foundations for knowledge, were the means for modernity to accomplish that end.[85]

It is this type of belief justification that has become the distinguishing feature of modernity and a principal Enlightenment ideal. The concept became the basis for autonomy in human critical reflection and was designed for determining universal standards that all humans could reasonably believe**.** Epistemologically, the transition from pre-Enlightenment to modernity finds its principal perpetrators in Descartes and John Locke (1632-1704), whom Audi identifies as the beginning of two great traditions regarding reason, its capacities and its modes of activity.[86] With his interest in reason and his intention to depart from traditional authority, perhaps Descartes was more a product of his cultural history than he realized. Philosopher, Stephen Toulmin, has observed that European thinkers, particularly the French, have had a recurrent preoccupation with the idea of "starting again with a clean slate." Toulmin calls it "the myth of the clean slate."[87] The quest for certainty and the equation of rationality were important for Descartes and the rationalists, but they were convinced that "the modern, rational way of dealing with

---

[84] Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Reason Within the Bounds of Religion*, 2nd edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1976) 28.

[85] Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopt, 1966) 17, Peter Gay says "It has been traditional to delimit the Enlightenment within a hundred-year span beginning with the English Revolution and ending with the French Revolution." This places the pre-Enlightenment era prior to 1689.

[86] Robert Audi, *The Structure of Justification* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 459.

[87] Stephen Toulmin, *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity* (New York: The Free Press, 1990) 175.

problems is to sweep away the inherited clutter of traditions, clean the slate and start again from scratch." This notion has played a significant part in the intellectual and political history of France with the most spectacular illustration being the French Revolution.[88] Undoubtedly, Descartes, in keeping with French tradition, was seeking a clean slate with his intuitive turn to the subject.

Audi understands Descartes' paradigm for rationality as intuition stressing the intellect's insight into truth, its deductive power, and its active character. From an internal starting point, he seeks to build a knowledge of the world based upon the foundational notion of clear and distinct perceptions. As the mind surveys the field of experience and clearly fixes itself on an object, it then elicits the will's natural assent to the manifest truth. Knowledge acquired from perception, then, is an intuition of the mind.[89] We will later see that it is at this point of intuitive principles that the postmodern philosophers will object.

Descartes' motivations for achieving certitude were essentially apologetic in nature—an attempt to defend Christian theism particularly against skepticism. With his method of "universal doubt," he sought certainty through securing a foundation for knowledge that would lead to logically unchallenged first truths and thus fortify his position against skepticism. "Cartesian epistemology," according to Stout, "begins by embracing the challenge of radical skepticism as sufficiently cogent to call for serious attention."[90] Descartes argues for the acceptance of the truth claims of Christian theism by

[88] Toulmin, *Cosmopolis*, 175.

[89] Audi, *The Structure of Justification*, 459.

[90] Stout, *The Flight From Authority*, 26. Additionally, that Descartes was responding to skepticism was certainly the case, says Stout. However, Descartes was also responding to the epistemic disintegration of the categories established by the scholastics and their division between "knowledge" and "opinion." *The Flight From Authority*, 39-40. The Protestant scholastics were actually engaged in the same battle with the Cartesians, but not over unbelief, rather over

those without faith with an appeal to natural reason "for they might suppose," he says, "that we were committing the fallacy that logicians call circular reasoning."[91] Faith, for Descartes, is useless to persuade those who do not believe. Reason alone provides appropriate means to bring one to accept either religion or a moral life. Knowledge based on certitude alone, not probability, is acceptable to discredit unbelief. Therefore, according to Descartes, all knowledge that is considered only probable is rejected as knowledge.

The inevitable question before Descartes was, what constituted certitude and by what method could it be obtained? His answer was universal mathematics. With mathematics he believed he had found the means to achieve an objective viewpoint and grasp certitude. With this affirmation, theologian, Trevor Hart, contends that Descartes, in effect, "drove a wedge between the categories of faith on the one hand and knowledge on the other."[92] Hart is undoubtedly correct for the history of modern Western theoretical thought followed Descartes' lead and accentuated the dichotomy, which continues in the religion / science divide.

John Locke took a different approach to certainty and knowledge. For Locke, knowledge of the external world arises not through the inferential assent from the internal to the external, but through the multitude of perceptions from the outside that reach the receptive mind within. The attentive subject receives perceptual knowledge as a normal product of sensitivity to the causal powers of objects, rather than through an act of the will

---

whether rationalism was the proper response to unbelief. See Richard Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics, vol. 1* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987) 241-49.

[91] Descartes, *Discourse of Method and Meditations* (Indianapolis: The Library of Liberal Arts) 61.

[92] Trevor Hart, *Faith Thinking: The Dynamics of Christian Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1995) 31.

and the active pursuit of clear and distinct truth.[93] Whereas Descartes' epistemology tended to be actively influenced by the will and, therefore, took the form of a voluntaristic rationalism, Locke's was mainly naturalistic and involuntarist empiricism.[94] Though different in epistemic approach (rationalism versus empiricism) the common philosophical goal of an indubitable universal foundation for knowledge and certainty was fervently and judiciously pursued by both.[95] A foundational type cognitive structure was the result.

Theologian, Ron Thiemann, a student of the transition from the pre-modern to modern, views the move by Descartes and Locke as a monumental shift away from the biblical epistemology of the Protestant Reformers and their belief that knowledge is presupposed as the gift of God's grace, to an epistemology in need of an 'indubitable foundation' and 'demonstration.'[96] A key feature of the new foundationalist epistemology was that beliefs needed to be justified by argument appealing to convictions held independently of Christian scripture, or special revelation. With this turn was the introduction of non-biblical referents being appealed to for belief justification. For Thiemann, epistemology and modernity are causally linked. Epistemology is the transporting vehicle and identifying quality of modernity. By rejecting authority, he argues, Descartes was in need of a new basis for belief justification, a neutral universal,

---

[93] Audi, *The Structure of Justification*, 460.

[94] Audi, *The Structure of Justification*, 461.

[95] Nicholas Wolterstorff argues that Descartes' foundationalism was far more restricted and traditional in its scope and designed specifically for *scientia*, whereas Locke's was meant for a broader application with evidentialist implications for religious belief. Locke's foundationalism, more than Descartes', has shaped the modern mind. *John Locke and the Ethics of Belief* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[96] Ronald Thiemann, *Revelation and Theology, The Gospel as Narrated Promise* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985) 9-15. Thiemann argues in this work that the knowledge of God as understood by the Protestant Reformers is contrary to Cartesian epistemology.

which became rational demonstration.[97] This is clearly in contrast to the theologians of the Reformation who held that knowledge is given by God and is believed as a basic conviction and background belief.[98] Descartes and Locke were arguing that these 'background beliefs' needed rational justification. The fideism of the Reformers, the mere affirmation of belief without rational demonstration, was no longer adequate. With foundationalism, a basis for knowledge was now established that was not dependent upon testimony and authority. Historically, this is a significant epistemological shift and turn toward a broader application and use of the term religion. What was not grounded in a foundation that was rationally derived was not considered knowledge. This condition precluded claims to knowledge that were grounded in tradition or authority, thus the beginning of a divide—religion and science.

The Rise of Modernity

What is called modernity is much more than simply what is current. Enlightened modernity, grounded in the wider epistemological phenomenon of foundationalism, has clearly produced a way of viewing the world that is in sharp contrast to the way it was viewed in the pre-modern period. The former way of viewing the world was eclipsed and replaced with a new one—the modern. Following the European Renaissance, Protestant Reformation, and the work of Descartes and Locke, the time was right for the dissolution

[97] Thiemann, *Revelation and Theology*, 12,13. For a thorough study of the Protestant scholastics and the rise of rationalism see Richard Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003).

[98] Thiemann, *Revelation and Theology*, 11, In contrast to an epistemology of neutral rationalism and demonstration, Reformation theology believed that knowledge was a gift of God and, particularly, knowledge of God functioned as a basic conviction or background belief. Background beliefs, as axiomatic convictions assumed to be true, formed the basis of the coherence of a whole framework of other beliefs. On p. 160 FN 7, Thiemann states that a background belief is derived from various "holistic" treatments of the justification of beliefs. Three of his several references are; Clark Glymour, *Theory and Evidence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980; W.V.O. Quine and J.S. Ullian, *The Web of Belief* (New York: Random House, 1970); Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Reason Within the Bounds of Religion* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmanns, 1976).

of accepted institutional, authoritative, norms and a restructuring with contrasting individualism and subjectivism in view. The new cognitive structure, foundationalism, emerged as the predominant distinguishing feature of the shift from pre-modern to modern thinking. Modernity became definitively characterized by a foundational type knowledge theory inextricably linking the intellectual mindset and trends of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the modern era. The transition from pre-modern to modern occurs in the immediate post-Reformation, or pre-Enlightenment, period and it is in the pre-Enlightenment era that the rise of the modern cognitive structure has been identified.[99]

The changes expressed themselves in a *modern* outlook and to properly define modernity is not an easy task. The most famous attempt is arguably Immanuel Kant's. With Descartes as his philosophical father,[100] Kant characterized the whole Enlightenment age as the emergence of humanity from its self-imposed "indecision and lack of courage to use one's own mind without another's guidance." What this meant for Kant was freedom—"freedom to make public use of one's reason in all matters."[101] Endorsing Kant's view, Georg W. F. Hegel (1770-1831) followed with a similar statement when he said, "The greatness of our time rests in the fact that freedom, the peculiar possession of mind whereby it is at home with itself in itself, is recognized."[102] For Hegel, the principle

[99] See FN 11 above for dating the pre-Enlightenment era.

[100] Toulmin notes that Kant's work did not come out of "blue sky," but was rooted in the rationality formulated by Descartes, *Cosmopolis*, 175.

[101] Immanuel Kant, "What is Enlightenment," in *The Enlightenment*, ed. Peter Gay (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973) 384-5.

[102] G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy, vol. III* (New York: from Phil. disc., Habermas, 16) 423. Hegel believed that the principle of the modern era, the Protestant principle, was autonomous individual thinking and its philosophical beginning was with Descartes. 131-2.

of the modern era was the Protestant principle of autonomous individual thinking and its philosophical beginning was with Descartes.

Beginning with the premise that knowledge constructed on a self-evident foundation is autonomous, Kant and Hegel developed the idea that human beings had the capability to re-form their rational faculties within their ostensible limitations. With the shackles of tradition and authority of the Christian Church gone, an exhilarating sense of liberation emerged. Unrestrained by the strictures of medieval conventions and empowered by the individualism spawned during the Protestant Reformation, autonomous human reason was free to explore all the putative bastions of previous eras and view the future optimistically from a new perspective. Philosophy received a new stature. In Kant, says Toulmin, "the French Enlightenment's social ideals found philosophical expression."[103] Traditional ways of understanding the world and the organization of it, which had previously been determined by the medieval Church, were rejected in favor of ways that were believed to be better and more effective—and essentially, modern.

With the eclipse of traditional authority, those better ways were determined and guided by autonomous Reason, which became the guiding light for knowledge and truth for modern enlightened humanity. The idea here, as philosopher, Colin Brown, puts it, was "to strip Christianity of such extras as faith and belief in a supernatural God who personally intervenes in human affairs."[104] The result, says Brown, was "universal human reason as the supremely commanding principle and, hence, 'a fully attenuated Deism.'"[105]

---

[103] Toulmin, *Cosmopolis*, 8.

[104] Colin Brown, *Philosophy and the Christian Faith* (London: Tyndale Press, 1969) 103.

[105] Brown, *Philosophy and the Christian Faith*, 103.

For Kant, Hegel, and others, offering autonomous Reason as a viable alternative to traditional authority seemed most tenable. After all, Wolterstorff comments, it is an intrinsic faculty and not an external authority. It is common to all people and it belongs to the very essence of what it is to be human. To follow the voice of Reason is to follow one's own leading and is not submitting to anyone—true freedom.[106]

Theologian, William Placher, describes this period as a movement toward objective standards that are determined in isolation from the value and practices of the culture in which they are made and as a way to understand the reasonableness and meaning of assertions.[107] The shift in perspective was viewed by many in the West as a positive move away from an oppressive authoritative tradition grounded in the Bible as divine special revelation that had shaped the understanding of the world and the nature of ultimate reality until that time. It was during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that philosophers and theologians began to change their thinking about God, that is, their language about God and God's relation to the created world and human moral effects.[108] These thinkers, he argues;

> [G]rew more confident about human capacities—about their ability to understand God and God's role in the world and to contribute to human salvation—and narrowed their understanding of what counted as reasonable articulation of and argument for faith. That combination of a kind of confidence in human abilities and constricting definitions of acceptable reasoning led theology astray.[109]

---

[106] Nicholas Wolterstorff, "Introduction" in *Faith and Rationality*, 5.

[107] William Placher, *Unapologetic Theology* (Louisville: Westminster / John Knox Press, 1989) 74, 75.

[108] William Placher, *Domestication of Transcendence* (Louisville: Westminster / John Knox Press, 1996) 2.

[109] Placher, *Domestication*, 2-3.

Starting with the late seventeenth century and leading to the present, several philosophical and theological perspectives precipitated by the Cartesian / Lockean paradigm can be identified that influenced and shaped intellectual trends and the future of a theistic worldview. Rationalism, empiricism, idealism, materialism, and ultimately philosophical naturalism, the fruit of the Enlightenment project and its ideals, all contributed to the eventual fall of the prevailing authoritarian culture and ushered in modernity and the movement toward what has come to be called a secular culture. This period is characterized by Enlightenment thought and represents a progressive move toward a radical naturalism, one devoid of divine intervention and relevance.

John Locke and Evidentialism

With pre-modern tradition no longer considered a reliable source for modern knowledge and wisdom, the inescapable cultural agenda became apparent. Essentially, it consisted of two basic questions to which Locke addressed his epistemic efforts, 'how do we go about deciding what to believe?' and 'how do we conduct our understandings?'[110] Locke, of course, did not realize it at the time, but what he was devising would shape and direct not only Christian theism's defense strategies, but a scheme for modern thought for the next three hundred years. Nicholas Wolterstorff's penetrating analysis of Locke offers valuable insight into the early stages of his knowledge theory. Locke's unique contribution to the growth of modern thought was, according to Wolterstorff, the introduction of an ethical aspect to the pursuit of knowledge and belief.[111] Whereas

[110] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Great Britain: Wordsworth Classics, 1998).

[111] Wolterstorff, *John Locke and the Ethics of Belief*, xiv.

Descartes established a new cognitive structure by revising the boundaries and ground rules for proper epistemic analytical reflection, Locke added the governing aspect of *oughtness,* the ethics of belief, for imperative participation and culpability.

Locke, argues Wolterstorff, was the first to develop and defend the thesis that we are all responsible for our beliefs, and that to do one's duty with respect to one's beliefs one must listen to the voice of Reason rather than that of tradition. Tradition, after all, says Locke, "is filled with error" and should not be considered the bar of truth for the elimination of falsehood.[112] In all things Reason was to be the guide. More so than Descartes, "Locke was the great genius behind our modern ways of thinking of rationality and responsibility in beliefs."[113] Locke's epistemology was his response to the cultural crisis of the day. He introduced to the modern Western world that belief, particularly religious belief, must first be rational and to be rational a belief must be supported by evidence. Wolterstorff has termed Locke's axiom the "evidentialist challenge."[114] What he did, in effect, "was take the classical foundationalist demands that Descartes had laid for scientific belief and lay them down for rational belief in general."[115]

The problem, however, was that rationality needed to be defined and criteria for right belief established. If the goal was to be rational, then parameters for rational belief needed to be set. No area of belief was left exempt and unexamined. Given the historical context and the skeptical view regarding biblical dogma and authority, theism, particularly biblical theism, also needed to meet the rational (evidential) standard. With such a strong

---

[112] Wolterstorff, *John Locke and the Ethics of Belief*, 226.

[113] Wolterstorff, *John Locke and the Ethics of Belief*, xiv; Wolterstorff qualifies this assertion by also stating that Locke had forbears and cohorts in this line of thought.

[114] Wolterstorff, "Can Belief in God be Rational?" 136.

[115] Wolterstorff, "Introduction," in *Faith and Rationality*, 6.

view of rationality and rational belief it was imperative that standards be set that would qualify the evidence.

Locke met the epistemological challenge for evidence with a proposal that would govern the belief forming faculty. His formulation consisted of three principles, which, applied in succession, would lead to certainty, or knowledge. When confronted with a proposition for belief one must first begin with satisfactory evidence. The principle of evidence requires the acquisition of "evidence for and against the proposition such that each item of evidence is something that one knows and such that the totality of one's evidence is satisfactory."[116] Once satisfactory evidence is secured, that evidence determines the "probability" of the proposition, which is the second principle. The third principle then, the "principle of appraisal," "examines the (satisfactory) evidence one has collected so as to determine its evidential force, until one has 'perceived' what is the probability of the proposition on that evidence."[117]

The ultimate goal for Locke was to address the issue of proper, or rational, belief and determine a method of assurance that would counter the enthusiasts and the notion that "anything goes." What belief is one justified in having? Underlying Locke's theory was the idea of possession. The evidentialist challenge consisted in possessing the proper beliefs: "Some beliefs we ought not to have. Some we ought to *have*. Some we are permitted to *have*. Some we are permitted not to *have*."[118] Propositions with proper

[116] Wolterstorff, *John Locke and the Ethics of Belief*, 67.

[117] Wolterstorff, *John Locke and the Ethics of Belief*, 73.

[118] Wolterstorff, "Can Belief in God Be Rational?" 143.

evidence call for obligatory belief, and beliefs without proper evidence call for obligatory dismissal.

Locke's view was persuasive enough to influence epistemology for the entire modern era down to the present day. The fruit of Locke's work is abundant and his disciples are plentiful. The now famous comment by W.K. Clifford "To sum up, it is wrong always, everywhere, and for anyone, to believe anything upon insufficient evidence" is a clear commitment to Locke's principles.[119] Bertrand Russell, the renowned twentieth century philosopher, was emphatic with his proclamation that there is not enough evidence to justify belief in God.[120] And Brand Blanchard in his Gifford Lecture series is unambiguous about the ethical character of belief when he comments, "everywhere and always belief has an ethical aspect…There is such a thing as a general ethics of the intellect."[121] Thus, for Locke, the right kind of beliefs must be in place, those that can be justified in a particular way.

Toward the Natural

With its new found epistemic tools in hand, modernity was equipped to repair the disintegrating knowledge structure and construct a new methodology independent of the authority of tradition. Beliefs would now be tested by an objective standard. The breach between the new *scientia* and the old authority gradually became more apparent with key proponents emerging.

[119] W.K. Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief," in *Lectures and Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1879) 345.

[120] Bertrand Russell,"Why I am not a Christian," in *Why I Am Not A Christian* (New York: Simon & Schuster,1957) 32.

[121] Brand Blanchard, *Reason and Belief* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1974) 401.

Historian, Peter Gay, has noted that though characteristic Enlightenment ideas existed long before, they achieved their revolutionary force only in the eighteenth century. The era had a history with overlapping closely associated generations of philosophes each drawing from the work of its predecessors. With the work of Newton and Locke at the foundation, Montesquieu and Voltaire represented the first group, Hume, Rousseau, and Diderot, the second, and Lessing, Kant, and Jefferson the third.[122] These were the dominant figures, but by no means an exhaustive accounting. It was the work of the second group, says Gay, "who fused the fashionable anticlericalism and scientific speculations of the first generation into a coherent modern view of the world."[123] Of these, Newton, Locke, Hume, and Kant are of particular interest here.

In addition to Descartes' *scientia* and Locke's concern for credible belief, the scientific work of Newton, a contemporary of Locke, and the empiricists posed major challenges for philosophy and theism. Scientific achievements were soon translated into a mechanistic and materialistic world view through literary works that captured the attention of the educated public. With the impetus of enlightened modernity this new world view progressed to become the paradigm for all human knowledge. Scholarly disciplines had to be 'scientific' in order to be acceptable. Science defined what was reasonable and, therefore, true on the grounds of Lockean foundationalism.

With the work of Newton, Descartes, and Locke firmly in place, it did not take long until the basic tenets of traditional theism, particularly the doctrine of creation and the traditional authority of the Bible, were openly attacked. Any view not in compliance with

[122] Gay, *The Enlightenment,* 17.

[123] Gay, *The Enlightenment*, 17.

the strictures of the new science was precluded from the category of what was reasonable. So-called religions, such as historic Christian theism, would only be acceptable if it met the standards of the natural. Foundationalism led thinkers to make a sharp distinction between "natural" religion—those beliefs that were thought to be demonstrable by reason—and 'revealed' religion—the beliefs and doctrines taught by the Bible and held by faith.

What soon evolved, following natural philosophy, was a form of natural theology, Deism, which supported the idea of universal beliefs determined by rational deduction and a common ground underlying various cultural and religious practices.[124] With natural theology, the rationalism of the Enlightenment found an acceptable alternative to biblical theism that would also satisfy the critical enlightened mind. By the end of the seventeenth century it was apparent that a shift in the relationship between revelation and reason was occurring.

Though Locke's epistemology was heavily directed by the power of natural reason, it still allowed for special divine revelation. Jeffrey Stout points out that the Deists' even stronger emphasis on reason undermined Locke and granted reason a more significant role, such that only those tenets of traditional theology that could be established independent of special revelation ought to be accepted.[125] Thus, what was considered reasonable became the criterion and ultimate arbiter for acceptable theological belief. Rational demonstration

[124] Some, for example philosopher Colin Brown, have considered Deism to be a revival of Thomistic natural theology, *Philosophy and the Christian Faith* (London: Tyndale Press, 1969) 74, It needs to be noted here, however, that the natural theology of the medievals was quite different than what was being proposed by the Deists and Enlightenment thinkers. Nicholas Wolterstorff convincingly argues that "the medieval project of natural theology was profoundly different from the Enlightenment project of evidentialist apologetics." See "The Migration of the Theistic Arguments: From Natural Theology to Evidentialist Apologetics," in *Rationality, Religious Belief & Moral Commitment,* eds. Robert Audi, William Wainwright (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1986) 38.

[125] Stout, *Flight From Authority*, 117.

was the only acceptable evidence for biblical credibility. Theologian, Hans Frei, anticipates the implications of this position when he comments, "[o]nce the Deist raised the question for external evidence for revelation the status of factuality for the meaning of revelation became a permanent item on the agenda of religious argument."[126] With Deism, the formidable place of a divine authoritative scripture became questionable and confidence in Locke's original program, which included a place for special revelation, was shaken.

Deists, considering themselves part of the Christian tradition, raised two key issues, according to Frei, that would fan the apologetic flame and be the precursor for greater changes to come. The first was whether the very idea of historical revelation was even intelligible. Why God would reveal himself to only a small faction of the human race seemed odd when truth and human happiness could be attained through rational reflection. The second issue questioned the likelihood of whether such a thing as special revelation had actually taken place. How well attested are the biblical accounts, especially the miracle claims, they contested? The naturalism of the 'scientific age' and the weight of David Hume's skepticism would eventually cast doubt on their reliability.[127]

Though natural theology was devised to support the Christian worldview, its general approach stirred loss of confidence in the idea of special revelation.[128] Locke's earlier work *The Reasonableness of Christianity,* followed later by William Paley's (1743-1805) *Natural Theology*, were both attempts to establish the credibility of Christian theism

[126] Hans Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974) 138.

[127] Frei, *The Eclipse*, 52-53.

[128] Deists were not anti-Christian or outright skeptics. Their intent was to divest the Christian religion of meaningless notions such as the 'mystery' of revelation. See Frei's, *Eclipse,* 117.

to the Deists apart from special revelation, through appeal to demonstrable evidence and natural reason. Locke's work in particular argued that "a good deal of the content of revelation lies within the reach of our unaided natural faculties."[129] Paley, building on Locke's empiricism, proposed an argument justifying belief in God by appealing to the apparent evidence of design found in the universe. He, like every other English-speaking thinker of the era, displayed an implicit trust in empirical investigation to accurately mirror reality.

The work of the Deists fueled the evidentialist challenge—that rational beliefs must be justified by sufficient demonstrable evidence. But the most significant development was to come during the eighteenth century with philosophers David Hume and Immanuel Kant. The work of these two giants was another key factor that undermined the credibility of biblical theism. Their effect on theism and theology cannot be overstated. The defense of the credibility of the Bible against naturalism and the demand for evidence faced a radical new challenge. Following Hume and Kant, the apologetic methods of Paley, and others such as Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) and Joseph Butler (1692-1752) would no longer be intellectually acceptable.

No Access to the Transcendent

The Deists asked the question whether special revelation of God had actually taken place. Hume and Kant asked the more basic question, whether knowledge of God and a transcendent realm was even possible. Though different in approach, their conclusions were the same. And while not willing to deny the existence of God, their work, explicating

[129] Wolterstorff, *John Locke and the Ethics of Belief*, 128.

their answer to knowledge question, has left a legacy of skepticism down to the present day.

Theologian, Ron Nash, critically assesses the impact of Hume and Kant on Christian theism in his work *The Word of God and the Mind of Man*. In it he speaks of the 'gap' caused by David Hume and the 'wall' created by Immanuel Kant, both metaphors indicating their effect on epistemology.[130] Hume's major threat to Christian theism, argues Nash, was not from the theories for which he gained notoriety, that is, his views on theistic arguments and miracles, but his undermining its claims to knowledge and objective truth. "Hume's gap is the rejection of the possibility of a rational knowledge of God and objective religious truth," thus continuing Descartes' effort of divorcing faith and knowledge.[131]

For Hume, beliefs are not determined by rational reflection, but rather, by instinct, habit, and custom. These experiences, which are essentially non-rational, lead us to believe in an external world. Reason has no power of persuasion toward a position of faith based on knowledge. Too much emphasis had been placed on reason and philosophers had been entirely too optimistic when assessing its claims, thus also undermining Locke and the Deists.[132] Hume was clearing the ground, as it were, for the construction of a new edifice in the intellectual metropolis. His success in decimating empiricism stirred the architectonic intellect of Kant.

---

[130] Ronald Nash, *The Word of God and the Mind of Man: The Crisis of Revealed Truth in Contemporary Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1982) His primary goal with this work is to explore the extent to which the human mind can receive and understand divine revelation as understood by Hume and Kant.

[131] Nash, *The Word of God*, 22.

[132] Nash, *The Word of God*, 17-24.

Not willing to accept Hume's skepticism, Kant, like Descartes earlier, set out to make room for knowledge. His system for acquiring knowledge places the human mind as the formulator of the external world. The mind is structured to categorize experience and this gives knowledge its form and structure. The altering effect of the mind has the unfortunate consequence of causing a radical disjunction between the world as it appears (and is known) and the world as it really is. Since the mind mediates and edits the sense data from the external world by its categories of understanding, the real world (the *noumenal*) is never contacted. All that can be known is the *phenomenal* world, the world known by the senses. That which is in the noumenal realm (the metaphysical) is forever unattainable. Reason is restricted to the world of sense experience. Only the phenomenal can be known and since God is by definition not a possible object of sense experience, but transcends the mind's categories, God, therefore, is unknowable.

Kant's system, says Nash, "had the effect of erecting a wall between the world as it appears to us and the world as it really is…Hume had his Gap: Kant had his Wall."[133] God, for Kant, is cognitively both unknown and unknowable.[134] If Christian theology was led astray by Enlightenment thought, then Kant applied the blindfold.

With his distinction between the noumenal, to which human access was denied, and the phenomenal, Kant believed he was making room for faith. Reason dealt with the facts of sense experience while engagement with God was not an item for factual consideration with respect to proof or disproof, but a matter of faith. Reason functioned within the realm of certainty, and faith with those things of an intuitive nature, thus further dividing any

[133] Nash, *The Word of God*, 27.

[134] The term "cognitive" here is meant as propositional knowledge as opposed to an awareness or feeling.

perceived compatibility between natural science and Christian theology.[135] Kant's transcendental categories were so convincing for modern thought that they have been a virtual insurmountable obstacle for metaphysics to overcome.[136]

Critical of this bifurcation, theologian, Trevor Hart, accurately assesses its implications when he says, "This distinction effectively removed theology from the sphere in which rational discourse and argument is deemed appropriate."[137] Theologian, Gordon Kaufman, and his imaginative construction of God is a contemporary example of the effect of Kant's wall and a representative of Hart's point. For Kaufman, "God is mysterious and beyond all human knowing."[138] The only possible way of any reflection on the idea of God is through "the mind's supreme imaginative construct."[139] God is not known cognitively, but only through the non-rational faculty of the community imagination in history. In Kaufman's view, comments Hans Frei, it is the task of philosophical theology, through the academy, to adduce "the underlying criteria of meaningfulness and universality that would justify the deployment of this type of concept."[140] The two functions of the

---

[135] Historian, George Marsden, observes that Kant's distinction between the phenomenal and noumenal led to the restricted meaning of the term 'science' to mean only the physical sciences contrary to its etymological meaning of 'knowledge.' Kant's distinction also led to the eventual decline in metaphysics and ultimate relegation to the realm of 'mystery' and insusceptible to scientific inquiry. "The Collapse of American Evangelical Academia," in *Faith and Rationality,* eds. Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff (Notre Dame, Ind.: Notre Dame Press, 1983) 245-6.

[136] The works of the "Vienna Circle" and logical positivism including A.J. Ayer and the early Ludwig Wittgenstein have been representatives of Kant's influence on the metaphysics of the twentieth century. See *The Revolution in Philosophy*, ed. Gilbert Ryle (New York: Macmillan, 1960).

[137] Hart, *Faith Thinking* (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press,1995) 43.

[138] Gordon Kaufman, *The Theological Imagination: Constructing the Concept of God* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1981) 35.

[139] Kaufman, *The Theological Imagination*, 22.

[140] Hans Frei, *Types of Christian Theology*, eds. George Hunsinger and William Placher (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992) 28-9 Frei notes that Kaufman's type of philosophical theology "takes complete priority over Christian self-description within the religious community called the Church." 28.

concept 'God,' for Kaufman, thus "are the relativizing and the humanizing of the world."[141]

George Lindbeck takes Hart's thought a step further by pinpointing the basic problem with Kant's epistemology. Kant, explains Lindbeck, paved the way for the experiential tradition in theology by his "demolishing the metaphysical and epistemological foundations of the earlier regnant cognitive-propositional views."[142] Kant left no access to God. Lindbeck further argues that Kant left religion impoverished, and Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) filled the breach with what he called "the feeling of absolute dependence," but the new ideas would be given a variety of different names as the tradition developed.[143]

An Alternative Theism

One of the new names for Christian theism associated with the effect of Kant and Schleiermacher is liberal Christianity. With rational access to the noumenal closed by Kant, Schleiermacher pursued a new avenue for Christian theism and apologetic expression. Reacting in part to the dogmatic emphasis of the day and to romanticism, Schleiermacher's focus on the idea of religion was as an anthropocentric activity of the emotions.[144] Religion, for Schleiermacher, was more than a reductionism of knowing (per German philosopher, Christian Wolff, Kant's predecessor) and doing (Kant's ethical

[141] Frei, *Types of Christian Theology*, 28.

[142] Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1984) 20.

[143] Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, 21, Lindbeck has termed it "experiential-expressivism."

[144] See Hans Frei's *Eclipse*, 282-306 for a discussion of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics.

emphasis).[145] The essence of religion, he argues, is "feeling" and "Christian doctrines are accounts of the Christian religious affections set forth in speech."[146] J.K.S. Reid, with Christian apologetics in mind, says that Schleiermacher "deflects theological thought into a new and uncharted channel."[147] Whether his later interpreters understood him correctly or not, he became identified in a practical way with religion as feeling as opposed to religion as doctrinal propositions.[148] With Schleiermacher, theism moved away from the pursuit of rational justification for theistic belief and embraced a subjective and intuitive awareness—a move into non-cognitivism.

Reflecting his theology, Schleiermacher's apologetic approach was to persuade religion's "cultured despisers" (the young romanticists and intellectuals of Germany) that true religion is a matter of universal human "feeling" and has little to do with dogma and even rational thought. He represented liberation from outmoded authoritarian dogmatics, favoring a truly modern form of Christian faith that appealed to the modern secular culture without conflicting with science.[149] This was a type of fideism—where no rational defense of the worldview is offered, but rather is supported with arbitrary intuitive principles. Schleiermacher's fideism represented an overt move away from direct confrontation with modernity's intellectual advances in favor of a position not attempting a support with rational proof.

---

[145] Schleiermacher viewed theology more as Christian self-description than a philosophical endeavor. See Hans Frei, *Types of Christian Theology*, 34-8.

[146] Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith* (title to para 15).

[147] J.K.S. Reid, *Christian Apologetics* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1969) 208.

[148] Nash, *The Word of God*, 31.

[149] Stanley Grenz and Roger Olson, *Twentieth Century Theology* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1997) 42.

With the theological views of Schleiermacher, the center of Christian theism progressively moved away from a transcendent view of God and more toward an immanentism and a focus on the subject rather than an objective metaphysics. Though the eclipse of rationalism was pending, the movement toward a more consistent naturalistic philosophy and theology was on course. Schleiermacher's emphasis on human experience embodying the essence of divine revelation and manifestation propelled subjective theology to the more radical views of Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872).

Feuerbach, Hegel's student, inverted the view of his professor and maintained that the infinite is in reality a projection of the finite. As a result, he changed the deterministic idealism of Hegel to a humanistic materialism. What Feuerbach implemented for his 'theology' Karl Marx adapted to history as a whole. His materialism emphasized the naturalistic movement from being to becoming without Hegel's Absolute Spirit and placed man's temporal life at the center of the process.[150] The idealism of Hegel was turned upside down allowing the mind of God to become synonymous with the mind of humanity.

Humanity, for Feuerbach, was the central point of natural process. He proclaimed, "I, on the contrary while reducing theology to anthropology, exalt anthropology into theology."[151] The effect of this maneuver, in keeping with modern Enlightenment thinking and a progression towards naturalism, is a materialistic view of humanity. For Feuerbach, "Man has his highest being, his God, in himself; in his essential nature, his species."[152] Thus, with the undermining of biblical anthropology by naturalistic anthropology,

[150] Gordon H. Clark, *Thales to Dewey* (The Trinity Foundation, 1997) 474-5.

[151] Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books,1989) xviii.

[152] Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, 281.

naturalism achieved its goal of proclaiming divine intervention and even divine existence irrelevant and unnecessary. Feuerbach inverted the Creator / creature relationship and transformed theology into anthropology, making theology a mere projection. The divine attributes became idealizations of human aspirations and capacities. Thus, the next step, Friedrich Nietzsche's proclamation "[t]he most important of more recent events—that 'god is dead,' that the belief in the Christian God has become unworthy of belief—already begins to cast its first shadows over Europe," was a relatively simple move.[153]

With the preponderance of philosophical developments from the time of Locke, an epistemological consensus regarding the place of theistic beliefs that were once shared in the Western world rapidly deteriorated. In addition, the belief in metaphysics as a transcendent reality that governed the affairs of the world fell under serious criticism. The new philosophic knowledge inspired by Hume's skepticism, Kant's phenomenalism, Hegel's dialectic, as well as the subjectivism of the religion theorists, Schleiermacher, and Feuerbach, called into question the truth claims of a variety of Christian theistic beliefs. The belief in miracles, the creation of mankind and the world, the literal reading of the Bible as the authoritative word of God, the hope of life after death with rewards and punishments, heaven and hell, conscience as the inner voice of God, the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, were replaced with a naturalistic explanation. In brief, beliefs that had not been questioned for centuries were now under the scrutiny of higher criticism and the enlightened intellect of modernity.

So predominant in the history of Western thought is the work of Hume and Kant that Nancey Murphy has convincingly argued that in the wake of Hume's skepticism two

[153] *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed. Oscar Levy, Vol. 9, *The Joyful Wisdom* (Edinburgh: T.N. Foulis, 1911) 275.

major philosophical and theological trajectories emerged that further impacted epistemological developments. In reaction to Hume, two separate traditions developed following either Kant or Scottish philosopher, Thomas Reid (1710-1796). From Kant's reaction came Schleiermacher and the Christian liberal tradition that followed. From Reid, a contemporary of Hume and Kant, came Old Princeton theology and the American conservative evangelical tradition.[154] Reid, building on Butler and Paley, challenged Hume's skepticism with his 'Common Sense Realism.' Wolterstorff notes that Reid viewed Hume as continuing the crisis of faith and action caused by Descartes' proposed solution to the crisis he had identified. He was readily aware that Descartes introduced the 'way of ideas' and Locke and Hume followed them.[155]

Kant's idealism and Reid's realism, being diametrically opposed, forced a division.[156] This split, explains Murphy, has been exacerbated by the philosophical developments of modern thought and is primarily responsible for the present divisions in Protestant Christianity.[157] Each approach sought to develop and appropriate their own unique theological agendas. Liberal theology constructed a view of the immanence of God and revelation, "not as an intrusion, but as a correlative to human discovery and God

---

[154] Nancey Murphy, *Beyond Liberalism and Fundamentalism: How modern and Postmodern Philosophy Set the Theological Agenda* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996) 4-7, In this work Murphy argues that liberalism and fundamentalism have developed in parallel to each other. Also see Murphy's *Anglo-American Postmodernity: Philosophical Perspectives on Science, Religion, and Ethics* (Valley Forge, PA: (Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 1997) 113-14, 87-112.

[155] Nicholas Wolterstorff, "Thomas Reid on Rationality," in *Rationality in the Calvinian Tradition*, eds. Hart, Vanderhoeven, Wolterstorff (Boston: University of America Press, Inc., 1983) 44.

[156] For more critical interpretation of Reid's realism see Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Thomas Reid And The Story Of Epistemology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[157] Murphy, *Anglo-American Postmodernity*, 87.

disclosing himself through human means and processes."[158] Conservatives built their understanding on belief in the intervening work of God through special revelation, which conveys authoritative information about human and divine realities. It is the Bible and not experience that functions, for conservatives, as the data for theology.[159]

With the redirection in theology, prompted by Hume, Kant, and Schleiermacher, came a different method for appropriating the Christian worldview. Christian liberalism, following Schleiermacher's lead, addressed the cultural application of Christian theism through a reconstruction of the Christian worldview accommodating it to a growing secularism. Liberalism's theological, as well as apologetic, method was designed around the experience of 'the believing subject' as the ultimate criterion and subject matter for theology. Conservatives on the other hand, standing with traditional orthodoxy, rejected this approach in favor of objective authoritative propositions about God and the world as the ultimate criterion for theology. Both liberal and conservative theologies, Murphy contends, have shared the assumptions of modernity. Neither strategy was able to avoid the powerful influence of modernity and epistemological foundationalism. The image of a structure with an immovable foundation was too appealing. They have both constructed their theologies on a theory of knowledge that justifies belief to a foundation.[160]

The distinction between liberal and conservative theology has essentially been their respective choice of foundations—universal experience for liberals and the Scripture for conservatives. Murphy appeals to Old Princeton theologians, Charles and A.A. Hodge, as

[158] Murphy, *Anglo-American Postmodernity*, 88.

[159] Murphy, *Anglo-American Postmodernity*, 88.

[160] Murphy, *Anglo-American Postmodernity*, 89.

well as A.H. Strong, all greatly influential in the American evangelical movement, for support of her view. On the liberal side, Schleiermacher is her selection pointing to his use of the 'awareness of absolute dependence,' common to all religions and available in principle to all people, as his foundational experience. She contends that an attempt to show that the Christian Bible "is in fact the expected revelation…Conservative apologetics from Locke's day to the present have attempted to shore up the basement…for a *foundationalist* use of Scripture."[161] Instead of a universal that is derived from experience, the conservative approach placed an inerrant and infallible Bible as the epistemic foundation. Both of these foundations would prove to be inadequate in the face of Kantian metaphysics.

Murphy's conclusions affirm that both liberal and conservative theologies and apologetic methods appropriated the assumptions of modernity.[162] She has also concluded that the appropriation of Christianity, constructed on the foundationalism of modernity, has been ineffective in its challenge of naturalism. The next chapter will illustrate how naturalism usurped the role of guiding light to the nations once held by theism.

Summary

The progression delineated above shows some of the critical philosophical developments related to modernity's making of religion. It begins in the world of the early seventeenth century with Descartes' 'flight from authority' and ends in the mid-nineteenth century with Feuerbach's 'deified humanity' culminating in the marginalization of Christian theism and the birth of a new naturalistic view of the world. During this period,

[161] Murphy, *Anglo-American Postmodernity*, 90.

[162] Murphy, *Anglo-American Postmodernity*, 90-97.

biblical authority is supplanted by a new sense of the proper use of reason and the confident optimism of Baconian science reaching fruition. Enlightenment ideals, and specifically epistemic foundationalism as a key distinctive of modernity, have been identified and explored. Certainty was now believed to be found in universal norms or standards for truth, which could be determined either empirically (Locke), with uninterpreted sensations, or rationally (Descartes), with logically unchallengeable, self-evident first truths, and accessible by all rational thinkers. The idea of special revelation, scripture from God, was considered superfluous. The Enlightenment dream of a universal standard of rationality, a single method for determining what is true and what is false, and universally acceptable common ground for conversation, are Enlightenment ideals of modernity rooted in epistemic foundationalism ushered in and offered the segue for a naturalistic view of culture and the universe.

Chapter 4

THE MODERN DECLINE OF CHRISTIAN THEISM AND THE RISE OF NATURALISM

With the philosophical precursors having already paved the way, the greatest opposition to Christian theism and the idea of religion in general in the latter part of the nineteenth century came from the philosophical outlook that emerged from the natural sciences. The naturalistic view of the world, as outlined in the previous chapters, defined and informed the on-going philosophical and theological debate that has extended into the twentieth-first century. Whether explicit or assumed, a theory of knowledge was employed by modern philosophers of naturalism as well as by their critics. Epistemological foundationalism and its requirement for empirical evidence continued to function as the exclusive theory of knowledge for modernity as well as for all challenges to modernity's steady movement toward a naturalistic view during this period.

Conservative Western theologians, claiming to place their belief in the ultimate authority of the Bible and disdaining any type of natural theology, were no less immersed in the subtleties of the prevailing evidentialist belief structure of the era. Natural science, promoting itself as neutral with respect to metaphysics, was not, however, exempt from also employing the same theory of knowledge to achieve its desired ends. The Cartesian / Lockean epistemology of modernity served natural science's purposes well. Additionally, the emerging secular ethos, constructed on a foundation of natural science, had shaped the

cultural consciousness, including conservative theology, by solidifying a common monolithic epistemology for analytical inquiry and reflection.[163]

By this time the self-evident outlook of the once dominant theistic view had been severely challenged and forced into a defensive position. While Christian theism was not yet a minority view, it nonetheless, could no longer be assumed as the normative view. Theism's arguments from miracles and prophecies, the wisdom of God in creation, and the analogy between nature and Scripture continued to be employed. But these arguments, predicated on the ostensible evidence for an intelligent designer or an appeal to 'common facts' of experience as theistic proof, were no longer convincing.

The Maturation of Naturalism

Naturalism emerged as a plausible alternative interpretive scheme—one based on the Baconian scientific method—and ultimately presented itself as the exclusive view of modernity. Facing the challenge, traditional theistic defensive strategies proved themselves deficient and inadequate to overcome the momentum of the new science and the inevitable naturalistic outlook. The overwhelming strength of this movement initiated a radical reassessment of the viability of those strategies.

As mentioned above, while the relationship between science and theism has been a debated topic for at least the past two centuries, several views have prevailed depicting the

[163] According to Stow Persons, the end of the nineteenth century in America has been depicted as a time when the religious community was "at bay before a secular culture with which it was unwilling or unable to come to grips." To a large extent, he further states, this can be attributed to three ideological currents that were merging to form the intellectual matrix of the modern age. The Protestant Reformed tradition was the oldest, the democratic social ideology that had become firmly fixed in the American ethos during the nineteenth century was the second, and the most recent was the strong current of naturalistic ideas—a kind of popularized scientific philosophy arising out of positivism and evolutionary theory. These three streams formed a synthesis producing modernity as a worldview. Essentially, Enlightenment ideals found their way into the mainstream of modern life. Stow Persons, "Religion and Modernity," in *The Shaping of American Religion*, eds. James Ward Smith and A Leland Jamison (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961) 369-70. For this assessment Persons cites, Arthur M. Schlesinger, "A Critical Period in American Religion, 1875-1900," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 64, June, 1932, pp.523-547; Henry F. May, *Protestant Churches and Industrial America*, N.Y., 1949, 91-111; Thomas T. McAvoy, *The Great Crisis in American Catholic History*, 1895-1900, Chicago, 1957.

two as mortal enemies, friendly allies, or somewhere in between. But if a poll were taken today, the average person both inside and outside of academia would, most likely, side with those who sense a tension. Militaristic adjectives such as conflict, warfare, battle, and weapons have been common terminology in writings describing the relationship. Given that each affirms a different conception of ultimate reality, it would be hard to view in any other way.

Two of the most famous past promoters of the conflict, John W. Draper (1811-1882) and Andrew Dickson White (1832-1918), tended to magnify the tension that did exist, nurturing at least the perception of warfare. Draper, son of a Methodist minister and member of the science faculty of New York University, stated that "[t]he ecclesiastic must learn to keep himself within the domain he has chosen" and that "[r]eligion must relinquish that imperious, that domineering position which she has so long maintained against Science."[164] Draper's scathing sentiment was principally directed at the Roman Catholic Church for its repressive treatment of scientific achievement, though it was intended for Protestants as well.

White, professor of history at Cornell, echoed Draper's attitude and was no less adversarial with his assessment. In his *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom* he wrote the following,

> More and more I saw that it was the conflict between two epochs in the evolution in human thought—the theological and the scientific….an evolution, indeed, in which the warfare of theology against science has been one of the most active and powerful agents.[165]

---

[164] John W. Draper, *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1874) 367.

[165] Andrew D. White, *History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom* (Albany, OR: Ages Software, [1896] 1997) 12, 14.

Since this project is about the rise of philosophical naturalism and the marginalization of theism and, therefore, *prima facie* confrontational, the attention here will be directed at the conflict between the two. If understood from the conservative Christian apologist's perspective, it is hard to conceive of the relationship at the end of the nineteenth century as anything other than one of conflict. Of course, even that proposition is predicated on how science is defined and understood as well. Though some scientists and even historians (e.g. White) objected to a 'religious' view having any influence on the natural sciences, the objective here will be to explore why many conservative Christian theists came to view science, at least the variety that was propounded during the last half of the nineteenth century, as a threat and how they responded. It is worth noting, however, that not all conservative theologians were opposed to the naturalistic theory of evolution in total. For example, Benjamin Warfield (1851-1921) and Augustus Strong (1836-1921), both Americans, and James Orr (1844-1913), a Scotsman, all eminent Protestant theologians, saw nothing problematic with the theory and adopted some version of it.

Whereas the eighteenth century proclaimed freedom from ecclesiastical authority in the name of enlightened reason, the nineteenth century produced a viable system for interpreting experience and the world apart from any kind of theism or divine revelation and, thus, marginalized Christian theism even further within the trend toward modern secularization. Clearly, the tendency of modernity was to distance itself from divine necessity. The theistic hypothesis, proclaimed Pierre Simon Laplace (1749-1827), was indeed no longer needed. Laplace helped substantiate this position with his nebular

hypothesis for the origin of the universe, which precluded God as the necessary first cause.[166]

This new developing tradition, or secular view of the world, was permeated with optimism. John Draper enthusiastically expounds on the virtues of the new perspective with these comments;

> The ecclesiastical spirit no longer inspires the policy of the world…The intellectual night which settled on Europe, in consequence of that great neglect of duty, is passing away; we live in the daybreak of better things. Society is anxiously expecting light, to see in what direction it is drifting. It plainly discerns that the track along which the voyage of civilization has thus far been made, has been left; and that a new departure, on an unknown sea, has been taken.[167]

Draper's attitude was not unique but was representative of much of the academic mentality. Christian theism rapidly lost its position of authority concerning creation, the nature of mankind, and the doctrine of sin and was beginning to feel the undercurrents stemming from the new developments in the academy.

The line drawn by Descartes and Locke between faith and reason now also extended to natural science and specifically Christian theism. Effectively, it was faith and theology relegated to one domain, as Draper had demanded, and reason and science to another. The result of this move, says Frederick Gregory, "was to redefine the domain and prerogatives of religion in such a way that scientific explanations did not clash with

[166] Roger Hahn, "Laplace and the Mechanistic Universe," in *God and Nature,* 256.

[167] Draper, *History of the Conflict*, v-viii.

religious expression."[168] With this understanding, gaining knowledge of the physical world was perceived to be an objective endeavor and did not involve a religious dimension.[169] The product of scientific investigation was believed to be value neutral 'brute facts' and its success perpetuated the faith / knowledge dichotomy reminiscent of Kant's 'wall.' Undoubtedly, the fruition of this development led to Martin Marty's observation that secularization took place through a peaceful separation of 'religious areas' from the secular and scientific. The harmonious coexistence continued as long as true science was always the base of proof for true religion.[170]

Moreover, theology, pressed by concerns of relevancy stemming from the influence of Protestant scholasticism and the positive move by the new science, offered an accommodating alternative with the work of Schleiermacher. While the theological ingenuity of Schleiermacher refused to be bound by a doctrinaire concept of nature, his insight was both poignant and prophetic when he wrote;

> The further elaboration of the doctrine of creation in dogmatics comes down to us from times when material even for natural science was taken from the Scriptures and when the elements of all higher knowledge lay hidden in theology. Hence the complete separation of these two involves our handing over this subject to natural science, which, carrying its researches backward into time, may lead us back to the forces and masses that formed the world, or even further still.[171]

---

[168] Frederick Gregory, "The Impact of Darwinian Evolution on Protestant Theology," in *God and Nature*, 385-6.

[169] Gregory, "The Impact," 386.

[170] Martin Marty, *The Modern Schism: Three Paths to the Secular* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969) 98.

[171] Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith, Vol. 1* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers,1963) 150; cf. *On the "Glaubenslehre"; Two Letters to Dr. Lucke*, trans. J. Duke and F. Fiorenza (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981).

By this statement Schleiermacher affirms an authoritative position for natural science in theological inquiry concerning origins and the nature of humanity. That special revelation is the exclusive source for knowledge of origins was eclipsed by the growing belief in the autonomy of scientific investigation as the only valid interpreter of the world and not the Bible or any other so-called religious text. Scientific historical criticism became the normative mode of inquiry for religious knowledge. The higher critics implemented a type of empirical investigation to evaluate the credibility and trustworthiness of the biblical documents, which oftentimes conflicted with traditional Christian beliefs. The dichotomy was being strengthened; the naturalistic view built on neutral brute facts in one category and contrary views would fall into the category of religion.

In an attempt to "penetrate behind the concrete issues…to the underlying problems which exercised the major parties in the debates," historian, John Dillenberger, has identified at least two achievements implicit in the new science that initiated the eclipse.[172] The first, says Dillenberger, is that "[a]ll aspects of faith or of revelation had finally to be as clear or as self-evident as the order of nature." It was this widely held assumption which gradually led to the demise of revelation as understood in its traditional form. Conservative theology failed to see the implications and did not rethink the concept of revelation, but merely continued their traditional methodologies for defending the credibility and veracity of the Bible.[173] The second achievement, Dillenberger argues, was that the new science had in fact become a philosophy and he explains the effect in this way;

---

[172] John Dillenberger, *Protestant Thought And Natural Science: A Historical Interpretation* (London: Collins Clear- type Press, 1960) 13.

[173] Dillenberger, *Protestant Thought And Natural Science,* 164.

> The achievement of the movement was that of bringing the ideas associated with the new science into a coherent world view and of popularizing the results. Its task was that of organization and of interpretation. The new ideas were brought into the orbit of a shared culture, and thereby indirectly into the orbit of the common man.[174]

Science, as Schleiermacher had surmised, replaced scripture's once exclusive right to the interpretation of nature. A clear methodological principle for understanding revelation (in nature) had emerged with a philosophical direction to delineate the content of that revelation. As a result, an entirely new tradition of reason and nature became a substitute for what was once considered the exclusive domain of special revelation.[175]

But just exactly how objective is the inquiry of natural science was the question that some began to ask. The position of neutrality by the naturalists was a thinly veiled cover-up—a misunderstanding of the true nature of science, it was argued. Though they are often unrecognized, states British scientist C.A. Coulson, moral convictions are an integral aspect of the project of science. In his *Science and Christian Belief,* Coulson comments that "science itself must be a religious activity."[176] Scientists are God's heralds employed in the task of exposing God's revelation of himself in nature and thus avoid "an unbearable dichotomy of experience."[177] When science is properly understood the fact that it is constructed on inherent religious presuppositions (a metaphysical scheme) becomes

---

[174] Dillenberger, *Protestant Thought And Natural Science,* 133.

[175] Dillenberger, *Protestant Thought And Natural Science*, 187.

[176] Charles A. Coulson, *Science and Christian Belief* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1955) 57, 30.

[177] Coulson, *Science,* 31.

readily apparent. The legacy of science betraying its religious convictions include three assumptions; a search for common truth, the unexamined belief that facts are correlatable and cohere in a scheme, and a belief in the order and constancy in nature. For Coulson, these assumptions are enough to carry science into the realm of metaphysics.[178]

Dillenberger and Coulson were precursors, of sorts, to Thomas S. Kuhn and his monumental work, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. In his work Kuhn recognized and developed the theory-laden nature of natural science. Phenomena are typically defined and interpreted in different ways depending on core beliefs and perspective. Phenomena, says Kuhn, are interpreted by "some implicit body of intertwined theoretical and methodological belief that permits selection, evaluation, and criticism."[179] The interpretive enterprise presupposes and articulates a paradigm, and the operations and measurements of scientists are paradigm determined.[180] Thus, the notion of value neutral science so ardently held by the Western epistemological tradition has been shown to be highly debatable, since the work of science is in fact predicated upon presuppositions, or core beliefs, regarding the nature of reality. Kuhn, following the philosophical thought of the early twentieth century, will be discussed more in the next chapter. How this understanding came about, and the related theistic apologetics, will be discussed in the following.

While theism was losing its exclusive position in the Western world through the nineteenth century, American Christian conservatives, still wanting to hold to Locke's vision, had until this time continued to view the Bible as authoritative for science and

---

[178] Coulson, *Science*, 57.

[179] Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Second ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970) 17.

[180] Kuhn, *The Structure*, 126.

history in spite of the growing move toward naturalistic explanations. The Bible, for them, still had the authority to speak to science as well as to areas that science could not address. But what they did not quite understand was that the intellectual revolution in nineteenth century America, which resulted in scientific positivism, pragmatism, and historicism, also provided explanations that fit many social trends toward secularization. Whether Christian conservatives were willing to accept it or not, the strength of the movement toward naturalism and modern secularization was against them.

In spite of the incriminating speculative geologies of Charles Lyell (1797-1875) and James Hutton (1726-1797), science and biblical theism were relatively compatible until the scientific revolution associated with biologist, Charles Darwin (1809-1882). An alternate explanation for the apparent order and purpose in reality, other than the cosmological argument from design, was now available. The raw data acquired from empirical investigation, the naturalists argued, could be understood best in terms of mechanistic natural forces. Explanations of a 'plan of creation' or 'unity of design,' according to Darwin, provided no actual information but merely served to hide ignorance.[181] Darwin's intention was to promote a positivist epistemology that limited science to mechanistic explanations. His rejection of special creation, explains Neal Gillespie, "was part of the transformation of biology into a positive science, one committed to thoroughly naturalistic explanations based on material causes and the uniformity of nature."[182]

[181] Nancy R. Pearcey and Charles B. Thaxton, *The Soul of Science: Christian Faith and Natural Philosophy* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1994) 116.

[182] Neal Gillespie, *Charles Darwin and the Problem of Creation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979) 19.

The Bible, as well as theism in general, was no longer viewed as a necessary component for accurate assessment in the phenomenal realm and, therefore, what was believed to be neutral, scientific methodology, with the help of talented exponents, Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919) and Thomas H. Huxley (1825-95), turned its forces directly against Christian theistic thought.[183] The learner, says popularizer Huxley, needs to "seek for truth not among words but among things."[184] "Moreover this scientific 'criticism of life,' appeals not to authority, nor to what anybody may have thought or said, but to nature."[185] Huxley's prophetic utterances characterized the growing philosophical perspective and movement toward the replacement of a theological interpretation of the world with a naturalistic and secular one.

Philosophy, science, and theology were all unavoidably involved in the pervasive influence of Darwin's, *The Origin of Species*. By 1859, the date of *Origin's* publication, the way forward had already been philosophically prepared and the spirit of the times was receptive to Darwin's ideas. The philosophical development was instrumental in ushering in the empirical climate to receive the evolution hypothesis. Hegel's immanentistic developmentalism accompanied by Feuerbach's denial of the Creator / creation distinction and total rejection of a transcendent reality were both timely developments ushering the way for Darwin's speculative theory.

---

[183] George Marsden notes that "Only strongly institutionalized authority, as in the citadels of Roman Catholicism, was able to withstand such tendencies on a large scale, and then at the cost of sacrificing some academic respectability. "The Collapse of American Evangelical Academia," in *Faith and Rationality*, eds. Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983) 220.

[184] Thomas H. Huxley, "Science and Culture", *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1968) 1313.

[185] Huxley, "Science and Culture," 1313.

What was still needed, however, for the world to be better understood in naturalistic terms, was a system to integrate philosophy and science into a comprehensive system. Though some forms of philosophical and scientific evolution existed prior to Darwin, there was no plausible system explaining how it takes place. Darwin simply provided the naturalistic mechanism to the anti-transcendent processes already at work in speculative philosophy and theology. Darwin and Alfred R. Wallace (1823-1913) posed natural selection, or as it is commonly described, survival of the fittest, as the missing mechanism. In November of 1859, their position was made public in, *The Origin of Species*. As a result, within a decade, evolution became the accepted scientific orthodoxy. Naturalistic evolution, originally devised by Darwin to interpret his biological data, became the all-encompassing system by which numerous aspects of the universe could be explained.

The indomitable force of Darwinism soon transcended its biological beginnings and, as Dillenberger has noted, took upon itself the makings of a philosophical worldview. Huxley already understood his role as the champion of naturalistic evolution proposing "the application of scientific methods of investigation to all the problems of life."[186] Another popularizer, Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), working in conjunction with Huxley, promoted Darwinism to the masses through the social sciences. It was largely through Spencer that Darwinism reached the person on the street. Spencer applied the Darwinian struggle for existence to every sphere of life. The power of the evolutionary process convinced him that nature ought not to be interfered with, and, therefore, he ought to

[186] Huxley, "Science and Culture," 1314.

oppose state education, poor laws, and housing reform.[187] Societies were viewed as organisms and social adaptation amid group struggle was the key to its survival. If humanity has evolved from animals, then it could be analyzed in biological categories.

The areas of acceptance increased. Not only did scientists entertain the plausibility of naturalistic evolution and its implications for all the sciences, but it drew the attention of biblical theologians as well. As the comprehensive concept of naturalism and evolution enlarged its circle of influence, it became clear that it was more than a biological theory. The broader implications expressed in the interpretation of scientific data led to serious concerns from the Christian community. Naturalism's inherent features presented themselves as principles for explaining the cause of existence, principles which the Christian tradition had claimed exclusive rights to for centuries. These were all worldview issues, rooted in presuppositions, and Christian theologians were not prepared or equipped to address them effectively. Consequently, the response to the new science and naturalism was hotly debated, leading to divisions in the Christian community not experienced since the sixteenth century.

By the time of the publication of Darwin's next work, *The Descent of Man*, in 1871, the unacceptable implications of speculative evolution for traditional Christianity had become apparent. To a large extent the issue had been reduced to the place of God within the naturalistic scheme, or if the God concept was even necessary at all. While the Newtonian view of a mechanical universe had a place for a Creator, the Darwinian view conceived nature as an unfinished process, thereby, eliminating the need for a Creator. Pearcey and Thaxton explain,

[187] Colin Brown, *Philosophy and the Christian Faith*, 149.

> By the end of the nineteenth century, mechanistic philosophy had become radically materialistic and reductionistic. It pictured living things as automata in a world governed by rigidly deterministic laws—with no purpose, no God, no significance to human life.[188]

Many recognized, through the successful efforts of Huxley, Spencer, Draper, and others, that the central doctrines of traditional Christian theism, the Genesis creation account, the nature of mankind, sin, the authority of the Bible, and even of God, were under serious attack.

As the debate expanded into the theological realm, sides were taken. Many just did not know how to deal with the concept of evolution and the naturalistic movement. Because presuppositions were involved that contained far-reaching theological implications, it was not easy to disentangle the various issues encountered. Polemics, which preceded any apologetic activity, dominated the theological discussion and eventually led to divisions.

With the exception of Benjamin Warfield and James Orr's adoption of a modified, or 'soft,' view on evolution, conservative theologians, however, resisted any compromise to the claims of naturalism. They did not concede that Christian theism involved only the aspects of things beyond scientific and historical inquiry. The influential Presbyterian theologian, Charles Hodge (1797-1878) of Princeton, arose as one of the few apologists able to confront Darwinism. Hodge, having studied the naturalists' work, understood their position and narrowed the real issue to a matter of whether one believed in the intellectual

[188] Pearcey and Thaxton, *The Soul of Science*, 116.

process guided by God or a material process ruled by chance.[189] His understanding of the limitations of science was also apparent when he said, "science, as soon as she gets past the actual and the extant, is in the region of speculation, and is merged into philosophy, and is subject to its hallucinations."[190] His primary focus was on Darwin's view of natural selection without design. The idea that chance could generate design was, Hodge determined, rationally self-contradictory and, therefore, impossible. The heralded champion for the conservative Christian community concluded his masterful argument with the comment, "the denial of design in nature is virtually the denial of God."[191]

Warfield's adoption of evolution brought a great deal of credibility to the side of the new science. Along with Warfield (Hodge's successor at Princeton), Calvinists, Strong and Orr, also strengthened the position, but brought further division to the Christian community. Warfield's view of evolution, though modified, was, nonetheless, a form of evolution. He attempts to soften his view when he comments, "[t]he upshot of the whole matter is that there is no necessary antagonism of Christianity to evolution, provided that we do not hold to too extreme a form of evolution."[192]

Warfield clearly wanted to hold an evolutionary view and maintain the sovereignty of God within the process. James Orr, like Warfield, took a similar position when he remarked, "[o]n the general hypothesis of evolution, as applied to the organic world, I have nothing to say, except that, within certain limits, it seems to me extremely probable, and

---

[189] Gregory, "The Impact," 376.

[190] Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology, Vol. II* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., [1873] 1968) 22.

[191] Hodge, "Systematic Theology," 21.

[192] Benjamin B. Warfield, "Lectures on Anthropology" (Speer Library, Princeton University, 1888) quoted in David N. Livingstone, *Darwin's Forgotten Defenders* (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987) 118.

supported by a large body of evidence."[193] Later in the same work he declared, "[w]e need not reject the hypothesis of evolution within the limits in which science has really rendered it probable."[194]

But, as Frederick Gregory has noted, conservatives in general failed to develop a positive theology that effectively dealt with the issue after Darwin. As a result, attention increasingly shifted away from the conservative and evangelical groups and toward a more liberal treatment and acceptance of the evolutionary theory.[195] This harmonious acceptance was not going totally unnoticed by Christian conservatives, however, but few were willing to take on the momentum that had begun. Others were uninterested, believing that the Christian message would not or could not be affected by the changing scientific views. Gregory comments;

> As the scientific revolution progressed and a compromise seemed inevitable, numerous middle positions appeared attempting to reconcile Christian faith with modern intellectual trends. Three reconciliation views emerged. The first view held that by importing evolution into theology, while it would change some things, would not alter orthodoxy substantially. Others were less concerned about maintaining traditional Christian doctrine, but more in favor of adapting doctrine to the changing times. And still others made evolution the cornerstone of their theological perspective and Christian expression.[196]

---

[193] James Orr, *The Christian View of God and the World* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1989) 99.

[194] Orr, *The Christian View of God*, 182.

[195] Gregory, "The Impact," 378.

[196] Gregory, "The Impact," 379.

For modernity, the naturalistic paradigm became the interpretive scheme applicable for all experience including the biblical tradition. The light of current knowledge was necessary to properly arrive at the essence of Christian doctrine. Naturalistic hermeneutics and higher historical criticism were adopted and employed to achieve that end. Within this context, the Genesis account of creation was understood to be a poetic account of the goodness of God and the dependence of mankind upon God. Since humanity is in the process of change and development through an increase in knowledge, sin was viewed as mythological and identified with immaturity and insufficient knowledge. Humanity, for the naturalist, is essentially good, but due to the lack of knowledge, unfortunate things happen in the world. Additionally, scripture was no longer considered the authoritative word of God, as traditional Christian theism had believed and taught, but a record of growing religious awareness accomplished through an evolutionary process, which would ultimately lead to the kingdom of God on earth.

Because it encouraged investigation into a society's processes of change and development, the evolutionary model gained immediate acceptance in the academy. The result was an interpretive scheme in which institutions, cultures, and belief systems (religions), were also viewed as evolving. Within twenty years Darwinism and the evolutionary philosophy dominated all academic disciplines. It was an absolute triumph of a radical new idea that captured the minds of scholars and eventually the masses. The evolution hypothesis became the structural framework and the mechanism from which to interpret all of cultural life. It became the presuppositional principle for explaining organic relationships as well as behavioral causes. Sociologist, Robert Bellah, notes that though religious evolution was evident in classical times it was not until the nineteenth century

that elaborate schemes of religious evolution with copious empirical illustration were developed by Hegel, Comte, and Spencer. In more modest and judicious form, evolutionary ideas provided the basis for the early sociology of religion of Emile Durkheim and Max Weber.[197]

The theistic worldview, fractured from the effects of Enlightenment thought, was overwhelmed by the impact of the forceful new naturalistic philosophy. Evolutionary Darwinism split traditional Christianity rendering it ineffective and virtually unable to defend the traditional view against the momentum of this formidable foe. Though its decline had already begun, nineteenth century Christian theism as the reigning cultural beacon was progressively conquered and replaced by modernity's new speculative theory. In Kuhnian terms, Darwinism produced a genuine paradigm shift.

For the most part, modern Christian theology appropriated naturalism and the concept of evolution, resulting in new vitality and expansion. The theological ethos was different, however. Until the end of the nineteenth century, Christian theism was the dominant theology and intellectual force in most areas of life in Western culture. It was the view of the majority and not a marginalized minority. It was, in effect, the public religion and world view of the West. But after the turmoil of the late nineteenth century, the Christian view lost its hold as a shared, public commitment and retreated to the realm of private, individual belief.[198] As Dillenberger has rightly assessed, Christian theism had been superseded by an alternative philosophical worldview, which had won the exclusive

---

[197] Robert Bellah, *Beyond Belief: Essays on Religion in a Post-Traditional* World (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1970) 16. See Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious L*ife, trans. Karen Fields (New York: The Free Press, 1995 [1912]) and Max Weber, *The Sociology of religion*, trans. Ephraim Fischoff (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964 [1922]).

[198] Pearcey and Thaxton, *Soul of Science*, xii.

right to delineate and interpret nature and experience. All views in opposition to naturalism were viewed as similar to Christian theism, that is, supernatural, and therefore relegated to the category of religion. Naturalism was clearly successful, but the question can be asked, was it due to the soundness of its argument or the weakness of the opposition? Was naturalism demonstrated to be rationally justified or did the 'climate of opinion'[199] overwhelm theism? These questions still need to be answered.

Christian Theism's Response to Naturalism

Historian, George Marsden, would not disagree with Dillenberger, Coulson, and Kuhn, but goes a step further by attempting to uncover the reasons why the theistic worldview was replaced and what part apologetics played, or failed to play, in the process. He notes that recent historians of Darwinism largely agree that the early decades after *Origin of Species* the 'warfare' framework for understanding the relationship between Christianity and Darwinism was promoted primarily by ardent opponents of Christianity. In spite of the fact that earlier in the century Christians had been supporters of scientific progress, the anti-Christian polemicists claimed this to be another instance of the long-standing war between faith and science.[200]

In his incisive essay, *The Collapse of American Evangelical Academia,* Marsden discusses the intellectual components that led to the late nineteenth century demise of conservative evangelical academia and scholarship in the face of progressing modern

[199] This phrase was borrowed from chapter one of Carl Becker's, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932).

[200] George Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991) 122-52.

naturalism.[201] He underscores the severity of the issue with the question, "Why was the severance of evangelicalism from the main currents of American academic life so total?"[202] The answer Marsden gives is complex, but centers on epistemology, particularly classical foundationalism, and the effect it had on theistic apologetics and its confrontation with nineteenth century modernity.[203] He argues that with the rise of modern natural science two alternative apologetic responses developed; the approach of Old Princeton, which Marsden believes aligned itself with evangelical evidentialism, and the presuppositional approach of Dutch theologian, Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920). These traditions, says Marsden, "are two of the strongest influences on current American evangelical thought on faith and reason."[204] A response to the rise of Naturalism came from both of these traditions and the following will briefly delineate how they each fared. Both responses contributed to the further development of the modern religion / science dichotomy and paradigm.

By the mid-nineteenth century two separate strands of Protestant theology impacted Christianity's defensive strategies against naturalism and emerged within the conservative

[201] George Marsden, "The Collapse of American Evangelical Academia," in *Faith and Rationality*, eds. Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983) For additional discussion on this topic see D.G. Hart, ed., *Reckoning With the Past: Historical Essays on American Evangelicalism from the Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), George Marsden and Bradley Longfield, eds., *The Secularization of the Academy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), Mark Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1994).

[202] Marsden, "The Collapse of American Evangelical Academia," 221.

[203] Marsden's thesis is not without opposition. See Donald Fuller and Richard Gardiner, "Reformed Theology At Princeton And Amsterdam In The Late Nineteenth Century," *Presbyterian: Covenant Seminary Review*, (21/2, 1995): 89-117 and Paul Helseth, "B. B. Warfield's Apologetical Appeal To 'Right Reason': Evidence of a Rather Bald Rationalism?" *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology, 16.2* (Autumn 1998): 156-77. Marsden's view on Old Princeton's "alleged" agreement with Enlightenment apologetic methodologies has been much debated. Marsden considers Old Princeton to be aligned with evangelical evidentialism. It is not the purpose of this essay, however, to enter this debate, but rather to show that the Dutch tradition perceived a difference and approached apologetics accordingly attempting to break from any type of evidentialism.

[204] Marsden, "The Collapse," 247.

tradition—one American and the other Dutch. These strands were an addition to the apologetic work previously developed and employed within conservative theology. The American strand, as we have already seen in the discussion of Nancey Murphy, found paramount expression in the organization of Princeton Theological Seminary in 1812, which, through the influence of Scottish philosopher / theologians, Thomas Reid (1710-1796), and James McCosh (1811-1894) became the center of conservative American theology.[205] The Scottish Enlightenment, with its opposition to skepticism and revolution, promoted a Common Sense commitment to science, rationality, order, and the Christian tradition that dominated American academic thought for most of the nineteenth century.[206] Professors Archibald Alexander, Charles and A.A. Hodge, and Benjamin Warfield embraced this epistemic Common Sense Realism as the philosophical underpinning for the Old Princeton theology and specifically apologetics. Abraham Kuyper, following the Dutch, or continental Reformed tradition, inspired the other strand that eventually led to his founding of the Free University of Amsterdam in 1880. His immediate successors and legacy included Herman Bavinck and G.C. Berkouwer.

The significance of these two developments within the conservative theological tradition is in their respective dealings with modernity, particularly with their apologetic methodologies. Just as the larger movements—liberal and conservative—found it necessary to confront the culture differently due to philosophical perspectival differences, philosophical, or perhaps more appropriate, theological, assumptions also divided conservative Christians even further.

---

[205] See J. David Hoeveler, *James McCosh And The Scottish Intellectual Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981).

[206] Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism*, 128.

Marsden offers a plausible explanation as to why this split on defensive strategies occurred. He argues that the epistemic foundationalism of Thomas Reid guided Old Princeton's confrontation with the emerging naturalistic worldview. With this development Old Princeton had essentially aligned itself with the epistemic evidentialism of evangelicalism. The Kuyperian alternative, however, was not influenced by Reid and, therefore, did not encounter the same methodological issues.[207] They each addressed the naturalism of modernity differently, from their respective epistemologies. How each expression worked itself out will be summarized in the following.

As discussed above, originally theism and scientific reasoning were not at odds, but were complementary. But, "[w]hy was this view," asks Marsden, "once dominant in American higher education, so preemptively banished from most of American academia?"[208] The answer, he concludes, was that "their accommodation of Protestantism to science…was 'superficial.'" They did not "closely examine or challenge the speculative basis on which the modern scientific revolution was built."[209] Marsden draws heavily from an essay by Princeton philosopher, James Ward Smith, "Religion and Science in American Philosophy,"[210] to make the point of Protestantism's superficiality. In this essay Smith argues that their accommodation amounted to uncritically adding the findings of science to the existing corpus of biblical theology. The conclusions of modern science were simply viewed as additional support for the theistic argument from design.

---

[207] See Marsden, "The Collapse," and Nancey Murphy, *Anglo-American Postmodernity*, 87-112, Nancey Murphy, *Beyond Liberalism and Fundamentalism.*

[208] Marsden, "The Collapse," 222.

[209] Marsden, "The Collapse," 223.

[210] James Ward Smith and A. Leland Jamison, eds. *The Shaping of American Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961) 402-42.

This approach was superficial because compatibility between Christian theism and modern science was assumed without challenging modern science's first principles. Rather, Christian theists adopted them insisting that objective scientific inquiry would only confirm Christian truth.[211] They failed to understand the shift in the metaphysical base that had taken place. The failure to recognize the inherently different foundational first principles and the need for the rational justification of them, as well as for their own, eventually led to the conclusion that a biblical or theological perspective was irrelevant for the empirical sciences.

A Common Sense Response

The evangelical apologists believed that provided reason, or common sense, was allowed to prevail, the raw data of nature could be interpreted in an unbiased manner and thus establish the credibility of the Bible. For instance, the moral laws observable in nature serve to confirm the moral laws found in the Bible; hence, the author of the natural laws of the universe is also the author of the Bible.[212] But in doing so, Marsden argues, they assumed the naturalist's view of neutrality in their approach to empirical principles. Marsden explains that the leading evangelical spokesmen of the day, Francis Wayland, president of Brown University, and evangelical teacher, Mark Hopkins, led the charge with their two level approach to truth.

Wayland, who was a popular textbook author, claimed that rational moral science operating independently of Scripture will, unmistakably, reveal congruent principles. God's special revelation will always harmonize with natural law. Additional written

[211] Marsden, "The Collapse," 223.

[212] Marsden, "The Collapse," 230-3.

revelation is necessary to supplement what reason already uncovers in principle. The approach was to assume the total objectivity of the scientific program and then point to the harmonies of scientific truth and the truth in the higher realms of religion and morality, thus "proving" Christianity's truth claims.[213]

Mark Hopkins' method was virtually identical to Wayland's. He believed and taught that the Bible reveals the same God that is known in nature. If the 'facts are properly authenticated' and viewed impartially, then the clear evidence will produce the certain proof of the Christian religion. So, in effect, the congruence of the biblical truth claims can be tested with this intuitive and indisputable knowledge. Hopkins held to the prevailing opinion that our minds were endowed with innate powers that inevitably lead to certain beliefs. The commonality of these powers and beliefs throughout the race, which also included reason, established the 'common ground' from which philosophy and the proof of Christianity could proceed. Showing that what the Bible reveals is fully consistent with what we already know through natural revelation was the basis for Hopkins' apologetic. Hopkins' argument is similar to Joseph Butler's in pointing to the many analogies between the two revelations.[214]

The evangelical evidentialists claimed to start with a neutral objective epistemology upon which all could agree by common sense. This view worked as long as there was cultural consensus on metaphysical presuppositions. It was presumption,

[213] Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism*, 132-3. Marsden argues that American Protestants of all sorts adopted a two-tiered worldview, founded on an empiricist epistemology, with laws of nature below, supporting supernatural belief above. He considers this a modern version of the Thomistic synthesis of reason and faith. He also points to H. Richard Niebuhr's "Christ above culture" intellectual framework in which the realism of science and faith could not conflict. 130-1.

[214] Marsden, "The Collapse," 235.

however, by the evangelical apologists to assume that these first principles were apparent to the entire human race and that everyone should agree to them.

It was also assumed that any rational investigation of the scientific data would prove theism and the biblical truth claims. The problem is there are a number of different interpretive constructs that could qualify as rational. The difference, of course, is the starting point. A case in point was Darwinism's removal of the presumed intelligent design of nature and hence the intelligent designer. Assuming a different starting point, Darwinism interpreted the data without an intelligent designer. Naturalists, following Laplace, had no need for the God hypothesis.

The principal Old Princeton apologists, Charles Hodge and B.B. Warfield, revealing their dependence on Locke, Joseph Butler, William Paley, and Reid (and following the evangelical trend), insisted that the relationship between special and general revelation must coincide and any scientific investigation and accumulation of evidence would overwhelmingly attest to that harmony.[215] But, once again, to argue along these lines is begging the question. The evidence is gathered and interpreted to support a given hypothesis—a hypothesis which has already been assumed. With an alternative hypothesis, the same evidence could be interpreted differently. Darwinism is an example of interpreting the data from an alternative hypothesis. The real issue is how to adjudicate between the two mutually exclusive views.

Hodge believed Darwin had denied design and first causes in the universe and was adamant in his affirmation that the denial of design in nature is virtually the denial of God. In Hodge's thinking natural selection precluded the need for design and first causes.

[215] Marsden, "The Collapse," 244.

Darwin's rejection of final causes, led Hodge to conclude "it is this feature of his system which brings it into conflict not only with Christianity, but with the fundamental principles of natural religion, it should be clearly established."[216] The dictates of common sense would prove the congruence of Christian claims with this intuitive and indisputable knowledge establishing the 'common ground' from which philosophy and the proof of Christianity could proceed. Hodge further maintains in his definition of theology that the Scriptures contain the *facts* and *truths* about the physical world and it is the task of theology "to collect, authenticate, arrange and exhibit in their internal relation to each other."[217]

The problem was that Hodge argued his position from within a cultural context that was generally metaphysically uniform. The public consciousness for the era was decisively Christian and accepted the idea of a rational God who created an intelligent world governed by natural law. Additionally, Christopher Kaiser explains, it is because humans reflect the same rationality by which God ordered creation that they can understand that order.[218] The conviction that nature is intelligible came from biblical principles and as Carl Becker has noted; "[s]ince God is goodness and reason, his creation must somehow be, even if not evidently so to finite minds, good and reasonable. Design in nature was thus derived *a priori* from the character which the Creator was assumed to have."[219] Becker continues to explain that the idea of natural law for Christians was derived from belief in God prior to observation and was not derived *from* observation.

[216] Hodge, *What is Darwinism*?, 48,52.

[217] Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, *Vol.1*, 1.

[218] Christopher Kaiser, *Creation and the History of Science* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991) 127.

[219] Carl Becker, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932) 55.

That natural law exists was a fact of faith and not of experience.[220] Building on this point, Pearcey and Thaxton note, whereas formerly the existence of God was regarded as so certain that it could serve as the starting point for argument, now it was the orderliness of nature, discovered by science that was regarded as more certain. Order in nature became the starting point of argument, and the existence of God became an inference from it, hence, the argument from design. This points to the massive intellectual shift that had taken place.[221]

The weakness of the evidentialist apologetics of Old Princeton, explains Marsden, was not in their "common sense assumptions and principles, but in their failure to recognize that a good many other assumptions were in fact functioning in their thought."[222] These other foundational assumptions were the points at which the apologetic method was constructed and the points where most vulnerable. Marsden contends that the apologetic response to this development from Old Princeton involved a defect in the American evangelical method of reconciling faith and science. The defects became apparent in three specific areas. The first was the immense confidence they had in the possibility of establishing most of one's knowledge objectively. Second, they were sure that the common sense certainties of Baconian science could achieve certain conclusions compelling to any unbiased observer in most areas of human inquiry. Their third assumption was that nature is ordered, intelligible, and meaningful.[223] These assumptions (essentially the list Coulson ascribed to natural science) were manifest in Old Princeton's

[220] Becker, *The Heavenly City*, 56-7.

[221] Pearcey and Thaxton, *Soul of Science*, FN 28, 252.

[222] Marsden, "The Collapse," 243.

[223] Marsden, "The Collapse," 224, 241-2.

appeal to evidence in the world and they failed to address, or indeed even recognize, their interpretive and perspectival nature.

Marsden's criticism of Old Princeton and the evangelicals is essentially that there is no wholly neutral epistemic foundation or universally accepted rational scheme from which to judge reality objectively. All such judgments unavoidably contain metaphysical presuppositions by which a rational structure is constructed.[224] Neither of these points was recognized by the Christian evidentialists.

The Netherlands on the other hand, not having been influenced by enlightened modernity to the same degree as other western countries, experienced the least loss in traditional and evangelical Protestantism to intellectual science and secularism.[225] Hendrikus Berkhof explains that the Netherlands had remained somewhat isolated from modern theology until the mid-nineteenth century. At about the same time the Neo-Confessional theology of Kuyper appeared as a late response to the intellectual challenge of the Enlightenment.[226] Consequently, the Dutch Calvinists did not make the same philosophical assumptions with respect to foundationalism and evidential apologetics. Wolterstorff notes their "revulsion against arguments in favor of theism or Christianity" and their tendency to be "antievidentialist."[227]

Kuyper also recognized the need for first principles, but his approach was different than Reid and Old Princeton. It was his intention to distance himself from the evidentialists. He had difficulty accepting the concept of an objective scientific knowledge

[224] Marsden, "The Collapse," 246-7.

[225] Marsden, "The Collapse," 247 See also James D. Bratt, ed., *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader* (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998) 3.

[226] Hendrikus Berkhof, *Two Hundred Years of Theology* (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Co.1989) 97-114.

[227] Nicholas Wolterstorff, "Introduction," in *Faith and Rationality*, 7, 8.

universally accessible to all intelligent humans. He did, though, accept that subjective perceptions of reality can correspond to an actual reality external to the individual, but the acceptance of a more primal belief must come first—belief in God as Creator.[228] God as Creator and sustainer was Kuyper's first principle.

Aware of Old Princeton's shortcomings, Kuyper noted that Hodge was choosing "*the facts of the Bible* as the object of his theology" and seeking authentication for them rather than constructing his theology on God the Creator as his first principle.[229] The problem with this approach, says Kuyper, is that "The authentication of his 'facts' brought him logically back again under the power of naturalistic science."[230] "His combination of 'facts and truths' overthrows his own system. He [Hodge] declares that the theologian must *authenticate* these truths. But then, of course, they are no *truths*, and only become such, when I authenticate them."[231] Kuyper's point here is that there exists a deep boundary line between theology and all other sciences. The object of the natural sciences is the creation, but the object of theology is the Creator, and the data of natural science does not authenticate the knowledge of the Creator, but the knowledge of the Creator is necessary for the authentication of science.[232]

Contrary to Hodge and Warfield and the evangelical evidentialists, Kuyper does not understand belief in God and objective reality to be the conclusion of an inductive argument. The issue is the starting point. Any harmonious scientific correspondences

---

[228] Abraham Kuyper, *Principles of Sacred Theology*, Trans. J. Hendrik De Vries (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980 [1898]) 241-292, 319-19.

[229] Kuyper, *Principles*, 318-19.

[230] Kuyper, *Principles*, 319.

[231] Kuyper, *Principles*, 318.

[232] Kuyper, *Principles*, 319.

between the subject and the external world must first *begin* with the Creator / creature distinction, as the presupposition. For Kuyper, "doing science…presupposed a whole theory about the fundamental structures of the universe."[233] His was what W.V.O. Quine would later call a "holistic" approach.[234]

Kuyper not only believed that Christian theism begins with first principles, but alternative life-systems do as well. An illustration of this point is Kuyper's understanding of the naturalist's theory of evolution. Prior to the dogma of evolution, says Kuyper, Christianity was the only life-system that bound all things into a single unity. But, with evolution and its absolute principle, monistic mechanics, its adherents could explain the entire cosmos, including all life processes within that cosmos, to the very earliest origins. This alternative is an all-encompassing system, a world-and-life view derived from a single principle.[235] The adherents, explains Kuyper, "now have a ground-dogma, and they cling to that dogma with unshakeable faith."[236]

Thomas Kuhn would consider this revolution as a change of worldview and a paradigm shift on a grand scale. As a result, says Kuhn, "scientists with different paradigms engage in different concrete laboratory manipulations."[237] Additionally, it should not be considered possible that these two life-systems can share and work from common principles. On the contrary, says Kuyper, "[t]he Christian religion and the theory

---

[233] Marsden, "The Collapse," 253.

[234] See W.V.O. Quine and J.S. Ullian, *The Web of Belief* (New York: Random House, 1970) and Quine's "Two Dogmas of Empiricsm," in *From a Logical Point of View*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1953).

[235] Abraham Kuyper, "Evolution," in *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader*, ed. James Bratt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998 [1899]) 405-6.

[236] Kuyper, "Evolution," 406.

[237] Kuhn, *The Structure*, 126.

of evolution are two mutually exclusive systems…antipodes that can be neither reconciled nor compared."[238] This antithesis formed the basis for much of Kuyper's thought.

Kuyper maintained that there are two kinds of people and two kinds of science. What he meant by this was that there are Christians and non-Christians in the world and "sin creates a widespread abnormality" affecting orientation and perspective. His apologetic represented more of an implementation of perspective, or "life system," as he called it, within the culture, rather than an appeal to evidence and argument.[239] As Prime Minister of the Netherlands between 1901 and 1905 he attempted to put his views into practice as the antidote to modern naturalism.

The difference between these two kinds of people and two kinds of science is in their faith. Not that one has faith and the other does not, but faith is a common denominator with the difference consisting in the content of the faith. Kuyper universalizes the concept of faith with the assertion that faith is a structural part of universal human nature.[240] In other words, Kuyper understood that all people begin their science with a first principle based in faith. First principles are basic beliefs held by faith and without demonstration. So the Christian as well as the naturalist begins his science from a first principle believed by faith. The first principles of these two kinds of people, however, are radically different. The Christian begins with the presupposition that God is and he has created the world. The naturalist begins with an abstract notion of contingency—that the evidence may possibly point to a Creator—or may not.

[238] Kuyper, "Evolution," 412.

[239] Kuyper, *Principles*, 150-180.

[240] Kuyper, *Principles*, 125-6.

As a precursor to Coulson, Dillenberger, Kuhn, and others who have recognized that knowledge and theoretical thought is grounded in metaphysical presuppositions, Kuyper argues for the concept of faith as a formal function of epistemology. He builds his case on three points. His first point is whether sense data received through empirical investigation of the world accurately corresponds to reality. Since there is no way to prove this proposition absolutely, then to believe that it does, as most, if not all scientists do, is an act of faith. Secondly, axioms are presupposed as valid concepts for the construction of theoretical knowledge. For example, the notion of non-contradiction as a basic rule of logic cannot be proven true or false without assuming the rule in the proof. Therefore, axioms of logic are assumed to be trustworthy without demonstration.

Kuyper's third point for establishing the universal nature of a faith structure is that universal statements derived from specific investigation and determined to be a general law are not based on the conclusions of the investigation, but are in fact presupposed prior to the investigation. "Without faith in the existence of the general in the special, in laws which govern this special, and in your right to build a general conclusion on a given number of observations," argues Kuyper, "you would never come to acknowledge such a law."[241] Faith provides the basis for certitude with respect to sense data, axiomatic inferences or deductions, and the application of general laws deduced from specific demonstrations.

From Kuyper's perspective, faith, then, as a general category, is a formal function and is the prerequisite for all knowledge and understanding. With this position, Kuyper is voicing St. Augustine's dictum "I believe in order to understand." Contrary to the

[241] Kuyper, *Principles*, 139.

naturalist's belief, the scientific method is not value neutral and objective with respect to the data of investigation, but begins with a faith based judgment. Faith then, for Kuyper, is not categorically relegated to the domain of religious, unverifiable knowledge only.

Neither of the theistic responses just discussed presented a significant challenge, or defeater, for naturalism. At best with these two responses, theism and naturalism may be considered equivalent, but with no way to determine one or the other to be more rational or privileged. Kuyper's argument established all views as fideistic in their most basic beliefs and, therefore, incommensurate. A means to determine which view has knowledge and certainty is not to be found in any view. Faith is not knowledge, however. If first principles are derived from faith, as Kuyper maintains, then how is it determined which first principles produce knowledge and certainty? It appears that skepticism is the only logical conclusion. A valid argument could be made that Kuyper had already anticipated the intellectual trend that would come to be called postmodernity.

Summary

The preceding has highlighted how Enlightenment ideals found their way into the mainstream of modern life and how some key Christian theologians responded. As Stow Persons has noted, the synthesis formed by the three ideological currents of the Protestant Reformed tradition, democratic social ideology, and naturalistic philosophy has resulted in an intellectual matrix that produced the modern secular age. An effort was made in the above to focus primarily on the third aspect of this multi-faceted movement—the rise of naturalism—and its transformational effect in producing the modern worldview. The impact was controversial indeed and not without a diverse reaction from the philosophical and theistic communities.

The extraordinary success of new scientific hypotheses in the nineteenth century had truly ushered in the age of positivism characterized by a supreme 'faith in science' which, according to physicist/philosopher, C.F. von Weizsacker, had replaced faith in religion.[242] Faith in science was merely another way of stating the exclusive role science had achieved as the authoritative producer of certainty and knowledge building on the foundation set by Descartes and Locke. This knowledge was experienced in the practicality of modern science as it acquired more and more relevance for everyday life. What was originally considered a war of principles ultimately gave way to the practical and an empirically rooted philosophy of pragmatism. In keeping with the vision of French philosopher, Auguste Comte (1798-1857), the intellectual revolution had entered its third phase—the positive stage, following theology and metaphysics of earlier ages—where observation and measurement of phenomena is the highest development of the intellect. Whether this particular understanding of the scientific revolution is accepted or not, the empiricism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, nevertheless, generated a substantive redirection in philosophy and theology.[243]

Naturalism brought about change in the intellectual climate. The natural sciences had a way of subsuming all other disciplines. The strength of empiricism challenged the meaning and purpose of philosophy and even the existence of a metaphysical reality.

[242] C.F. von Weizsacker, *The Relevance of Science* (London: Collins, 1964) 13.

[243] For additional discussion on this issue in philosophy during this period see Ayer, Kneale, Paul, Pears, Strawson, Warnock, and Wolleim, eds. *The Revolution in Philosophy* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1960, and in theology see Flew and MacIntyre, eds. *New Essays in Philosophical Theology* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1955).

Theology, of course, was on the endangered species list.[244] Natural science initiated a host of new critically reflective thought that influenced both philosophy and so-called religion.

The new science created a cultural consciousness receptive to the idea that an empirical test as verification for knowledge was a logical conclusion in the quest for a normative science. Thus, the later developments of the Vienna Circle and A.J. Ayer, building on the progression of nineteenth century positivism in science, concluded that anything other than the empirical is non-verifiable. Essentially, observation was deemed the only solid foundation for all knowledge. This proposition led Ayer to expound that no type of speculative knowledge about the world is, in principle, beyond the scope of empirical science. Analytical reflection on metaphysics, therefore, is nothing short of a delusion.[245] With the relegation of the exploration of empirical fact to the various special sciences, the investigation of a transcendent metaphysical realm becomes fruitless and illusory. The task of the new philosophy was to only clarify propositions of language since traditional philosophy could not report on matters of fact and satisfy the newly formulated requirements of either inductive or deductive science.[246] Discovery of the profound truths of the universe no longer needed the insights of theoretical philosophical thought. Metaphysics was deemed irrelevant due to the belief that knowledge of ultimate reality was not possible. Needless to say, naturalism as a life-system and worldview had reached hegemonic proportions and had a radical impact on philosophy and theology.

---

[244] For a summary of the new direction of philosophical theology see Flew and MacIntyre, *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*, (New York: Macmillan & Co., 1964).

[245] Alfred J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc. ND) 48 Also, see John Macquarrie, *Twentieth Century Religious Thought* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1963) 301-3.

[246] See the introduction by Gilbert Ryle in *The Revolution in Philosophy*, 4-6.

Having taken this direction, philosophy and theology then lost their ability to speak authoritatively on questions about the being of God and the universe and became simply an analysis of the logical procedures of language and description.[247] Ayer's particular brand of empiricism was short-lived, however. Many saw what John Macquarrie observed, "'[n]aturalism' is itself a metaphysic—it is the identification of reality with nature."[248] In spite of its critics, logical empiricism and analytical philosophy continued well into the twentieth century challenging the legitimacy of contemporary theology, apologetics, essentially the religion idea, and eventually philosophy itself. Logical positivism / empiricism was clearly an attempt to move away from Christian theistic principles and toward a more distinct philosophical naturalism.[249] As the discussion above attempts to show, with the progression of a naturalistic worldview the marginalization of Christian theism became more evident with little help from apologetic strategies.

Opposed to the notion that philosophy is solely the analysis of language, metaphysical realists looked for an explanation of reality that included more than just the human component claiming that metaphysics still has an important role. Accepting the speculative evolutionary process of the positivists, but unwilling to exclude God altogether, they developed a metaphysical model with God as part of the process. With the supernatural existence of God challenged, a non-supernatural theism inevitably emerged, replacing the idea of an immutable God with a God who is mutable and *becoming*. In keeping with the naturalist outlook, Alfred N. Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne,

[247] Macquarrie, *Twentieth Century Religious Thought*, 301.

[248] Macquarrie, *Twentieth Century Religious Thought*, 96.

[249] Macquarrie notes that logical empiricism and the earlier version, logical positivism, shifted from a question of truth to the prior question of meaning. The question of God's existence became an issue about the 'meaning' of the word existence. For the non-Christian philosopher, propositions about the existence of God were not meaningful and therefore neither true nor false. *Twentieth Century Religious Thought*, 302.

metaphysical realists who identified God with the natural processes in the world, initiated various forms of a process concept. One popular theological expression is Hartshorne's proposal that God is an unchanging essence, but who completes himself in an advancing experience.

Since the emergence of Darwinism, the traditional concept of God has been all but vanquished. The understanding of God as infinite, eternal, and immutable as expressed in the seventeenth century's Westminster Confession of Faith has been removed from the public domain. The emphasis shifted to a type of natural theology that synthesized temporal processes with an eternal essence.[250] Alvin Plantinga has identified logical positivism and particularly its subsequent allied streams of naturalistic thought as the most influential and most negative of theism's opponents in the early twentieth century.[251]

Though intense polemics subsided, subtle tension continued between naturalism, philosophy, and traditional theism about the question of knowledge—is it possible and what perspective can claim to have it. The faith versus reason controversy has been an on-going issue. For centuries the intellectual debate has tended to place faith in opposition to reason so it is not surprising that the distinction between religion and science has taken the representative roles of religion (faith) and science (reason). In keeping with Enlightenment ideals, modernity sided with the autonomy of natural science and placed faith on the irrelevant periphery, thus reinforcing the ostensible impenetrable dichotomy.

This new authoritative position of naturalism carries with it the responsibility of justifying its privileged position to the culture. It must rationally justify its claim to

[250] Macquarrie, *Twentieth Century Religious Thought*, 267-277.

[251] Alvin Plantinga, "Christian Philosophy at the End of the Twentieth Century," in James F. Sennett, ed. *The Analytic Theist: An Alvin Plantinga Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998) 329.

exclusive knowledge and truth. It must be more than a dogmatic claim—the charge leveled against theism. In keeping with modernity's conception of knowledge, it must demonstrate its truth claims, its foundational first principles, that the material world is all that exists and is the sole basis for understanding the nature of reality. This foundational basic belief provides the basis for the system of knowledge affirmed by philosophical naturalism. The naturalistic worldview is constructed on a type of 'first philosophy,' a Cartesian / Lockean foundation of 'clear and distinct' ideas that must be demonstrated. The next two chapters will explore how this effort fared in the twentieth century.

Chapter 5

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF A MODERN DICHOTOMY

As the twentieth century has clearly shown, naturalism has gained predominance in the Western academy. Theism was unable to successfully defend itself against formidable challenges. The need for God and the supernatural (commonly understood as the religious view), in the minds of many, could not be substantiated. As a result, an alternative explanation of the nature of the world and experience won the day at the end of the nineteenth century. Naturalism claimed reason and verifiable evidence to make its case. Theism, on the other hand, with its strong appeal to the special revelation of God (scripture) had difficulty establishing a rational basis for its first principles. It had to settle for a notion of faith. If there is a God, how is this God known? If it is by scripture, then which scripture, if any, is correct? For naturalists, theism was thought to be rationally unjustified belief without proof—fideism. And, at least since Hume, fideism had not only lost its credibility, but also its relevance.

As emphasized in earlier chapters, the fundamental issue between science and so-called religion is one of epistemology, how reality is known. Which view can claim knowledge and, therefore, truth? The issue is about the nature of these concepts. Is reason capable of grasping knowledge and truth, and what qualifies as evidence of such? Descartes' notion of self-evident clear and distinct perceptions and ideas that form a foundation of certainty replacing Reformation fideism continues to be naturalism's answer. The naturalistic belief system is constructed on a foundation that maintains matter is all that exists. Sense data, then, is the exclusive source of knowledge. Remnants of logical positivism still persist. If it cannot be sensed by empirical analysis, then it cannot exist.

A materialist vision of the universe is not new.[252] From the ancient Greeks to the present the belief that the universe is in no need of divine guidance or origin has persisted. Naturalism's fundamental claims are that alternative non-material perspectives of the universe cannot be supported by reason or evidence. The charge against theism and religion in general has been, and still is, that they are non-cognitive and have no foundational first principle that can be supported with substantive evidence or proof. The idea of a transcendent reality is a human fabrication and projection, it is argued. These kinds of claims in the modern era range from Ludwig Feurerbach's projectionist theory, to renowned twentieth century philosopher, Bertrand Russell's comment, "[t]he whole conception of God is a conception derived from the ancient Oriental despotisms" to eminent biologist, Richard Dawkins' repeat of the famous Laplace declaration, "there is no evidence to favour the God Hypothesis."[253]

Naturalism and its foundation of matter would not go unchallenged for long, however. Since the end of the nineteenth century at least two epistemological challenges have been put forth. Both question the foundation upon which naturalism is constructed. The first challenges the very idea of a foundation for knowledge and translates into what has come to be known as postmodernity. The postmodern ethos, mostly found in the academic disciplines of the social sciences and humanities, has found itself at odds with the physical sciences, which still holds to a foundation. This tension came to a head in what was called the 'science wars' of the 1990's. This is an on-going issue and has yet to

[252] James Thrower traces this thought progressively as an expression of atheism from the ancient times to the present in, *Western Atheism*.

[253] Bertrand Russell, *Why I Am Not a Christian* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1957) 23. Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006) 83.

be resolved.[254] The second challenge retains a foundation, but challenges naturalism's particular foundational beliefs. While this second challenge is significant, it will need to be addressed in another project due to the space limitations here.

Deconstructing Modernity's Foundational Epistemology

By the estimation of many, modernity has run its course and has given way to philosophic challenges that have impacted all world view narratives. That the present era is in some sense 'postmodern' appears to be the consensus. But as important as it may seem, no attempt at a definition of postmodernity will be made here other than to describe those features broadly related to epistemology.

Epistemic nonfoundationalism,[255] a philosophical criticism resulting from work in metaepistemology, precipitated new philosophical strategies in the twentieth century. Pluralism and deconstructionism are two ideologies that characterize the new era and are contending for an authoritative voice in the history of thought. Postmodernity is part of a continuum informed by the matured modern era and so must be examined in light of the modern. Though modernity can be assessed from many angles and intellectual disciplines, it is clear from the foregoing discussion that a central philosophical feature of modernity is epistemic foundationalism. It should be no surprise then that a nonfoundational epistemology represents a major tenet of the postmodern perspective. Since the late nineteenth century much philosophical work from the naturalist tradition has, ironically, been offered in an effort to undermine the Cartesian / Lockean view of rationality and the

[254] For an informative summary of this issue see Keith Parsons, ed. *The Science Wars: Debating Scientific Knowledge and Technology* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2003).

[255] In his work, *Nonfoundationalism*, John Thiel comments that nonfoundationalism is not a position or stance in its own right but a judgment about what is *not* philosophically tenable. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994) 2.

assumptions of an epistemology of absolute knowledge.[256] All available philosophical artillery has been aimed directly at the foundation of noninferentially known certitudes upon which Locke's superstructure of knowledge was constructed. Naturalism needs a foundational belief so it is ironic that inferences consistent with the foundational belief are being made by naturalist philosophers that are actually intent on undermining the position. Locke and his foundation of certainty (and all subscribers to it) has become the target for the arsenal of twentieth century philosophers like Willard Van Orman Quine, Wildred Sellars, and Richard Rorty, each of whom approaches the subject with empiricist inclinations.[257] For them, indubitable foundations are in fact dubious, if not impossible, and have been replaced with a paradigm of practical contextuality. Though these three figures have had predecessors, they, arguably, form the nucleus of the twentieth century assault on epistemic foundationalism upon which the current naturalistic view is constructed. While the distinguished position of philosophy has been challenged by postmoderns, its conclusions, nonetheless, have formed the basis for the philosophy of science and religion.[258]

---

[256] Alvin Plantinga has noted that in the last quarter of the twentieth century naturalism has taken an increasingly aggressive and explicit stance. Naturalistic accounts are given on various philosophical topics and phenomena including epistemology, intentionality, morality, teleology, proper function, language, meaning, thought, and much more. "Christian Philosophy at the End of the Twentieth Century," in *The Analytic Theist: An Alvin Plantinga Reade*r (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998) 330.

[257] For works addressing foundationalism see Quine's *The Web of Belief*, Sellars' *Science, Perception and Reality* (New York: Humanities Press, 1963) and Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*.

[258] The editors of *After Philosophy: End or Transformation*, Baynes, Bohman, and McCarthy have made some insightful comments in their introduction about the contemporary status of philosophy and themes representing the postphilosophical era. The rise of the modern sciences of nature, they say, removed—forever, it seems—vast domains from the authority of philosophical reflection. Postphilosophy is characterized by opposition to strong conceptions of reason and of the autonomous rational subject, the contingency and conventionality of the rules, criteria, and products of what counts as rational speech and action at any given time and place. They oppose the irreducible plurality of incommensurable language games and forms of life, the irremediably "local" character of all truth, argument, and validity, to the a priori the empirical, to certainty fallibility, to invariance historical and cultural variability, to unity heterogeneity, to totality the fragmentary, to self-evident givenness ("presence") universal mediation by differential systems of signs, to the unconditioned a rejection of ultimate foundations in any form, transcendental conditions of possibility no less than metaphysical first principles. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1988) 1, 3.

With the favored epistemology of postmodernity underscored, a cursory review of other related key features of this phenomenon will also be of value here. An overview will highlight some salient modern and postmodern characteristics. Typically, postmodernity is identified by terms like; 'relativism' with respect to ethics, truth, and meaning; a 'decentered' humanity; and 'pluralistic' worldviews. In a broad sense these are reasonably accurate, however, a little more explanation will be helpful.

The first point that needs clarification is the present status of modernity. While modernity may be considered bankrupt by many today, it is not clear as to whether it has been superseded. The present is a time of cultural transition processing the inherent features and benefits of modernity against the genuinely novel postmodern elements. The extent to which postmodernity differs from modernity, in addition to the epistemic issue, is a topic of current debate. Is there a difference in kind or only in degree? Scholars such as Jurgen Habermas of the philosophical world, Wolfhart Pannenberg in theology, and John Rawls in moral and political theory have worked diligently to preserve the solvency of the modern project. More will be said below on the idea of preserving the modern project.

The Enlightenment's call to autonomous individuality has known no boundaries. The phenomenon seems to be omnipresent. Philosopher/theologian, Nancey Murphy, claims that the individualism of the Enlightenment manifested itself in the atomistic and reductionistic tendencies of early natural science and ultimately pervaded all aspects of modern thought. "The fragmented 'postmodern self,'" she argues, "is but a further atomization of the modern individual and was already discussed by David Hume."[259] Postmodern individualism is nothing new. Perhaps the decentered or "fragmented" self is

[259] Murphy, *Anglo-American Postmodernity*, 209.

the product of human autonomy and is, therefore, an abiding continuum regardless of whether it manifests itself in modernity or postmodernity. Murphy goes on to say "what is called postmodern in contemporary Western culture is nothing but pure modernity finally hitting the streets."[260]

The idea of a continuum between modernity and postmodernity is also found with contemporary philosopher, Richard Rorty. Based on his contention that "postmodernity is characterized by the rejection of the Cartesian ideal and the radicalization of the Baconian,"[261] there seems to be strong justification for saying that "the postmodern is a continuance and *intensification* of (one aspect of) the modern."[262] The work of Descartes and Bacon converged to form an optimistic vision of the world and reality. What emerged was Descartes with his indubitable rational foundation for a science that corresponds to the external world, and Bacon, the popularizer, who saw knowledge as a powerful tool for controlling nature and improving the human condition. The combination offered the optimism of utopian values through objective realism and human autonomy.[263] What Rorty seems to be saying is that with the collapse of foundationalism the Cartesian ideal went along with it leaving Bacon's vision—the optimistic progress myth—except in a more radical form.

This progress myth is another overarching psychological characterization of modernity that continues to have considerable influence. Modernity still holds the appeal

---

[260] Murphy, *Anglo-American Postmodernity*, 209.

[261] Richard Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism and Truth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 33, n.16. See the essays in part 1 for his critique of the Cartesian ideal and in part 2 for his defense of the Baconian ideal.

[262] J. Richard Middleton and Brian J. Walsh, *Truth Is Stranger Than It Used to Be: Biblical Faith in a Postmodern Age* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1995) 41.

[263] Middleton, *Truth Is Stranger Than It Used to Be,* 41.

and promise of Cartesian realism and Baconian natural science. In his proposal for a philosophical interpretation of history, Gordon Graham argues that despite the twentieth century decline in optimism due to the world's wars and the collapse of the old colonial empires, "an argument can be advanced to show just how difficult it is to avoid some sort of progressivism."[264] A view that considers itself *better* than previous ones, which is the twentieth century opinion with respect to the nineteenth, is, in fact, a progressive view. Moreover, modern relativists cannot avoid considering their own view an improvement on the narrower thinking of the past.[265] Progressivism, even with its perspectival aspect, is, nonetheless, difficult to deny, affirming Graham's claim that "some sort of progressivism is hard to resist."[266]

But there is more to modernity than the self-centered subject and the progress myth. The modern outlook has been shaped, not only by a spirit of individual freedom and optimism, but also by the autonomous quest for certitude, the absolutizing of the laws of nature (including reason), and the relegation of authority to the periphery, to mention just the major points.[267]

Postmodernity, however, is a phenomenon to reckon with in its own right. Theologian, Diogenes Allen, sees the present postmodern situation as "[a] massive intellectual revolution" where "[t]he foundations of the modern world are collapsing" and

---

[264] Gordon Graham, *The Shape of the Past: A Philosophical Approach to History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) 46.

[265] Graham, *The Shape of the Past*, 46-9.

[266] Graham, *The Shape of the Past*, 49.

[267] For modernity's quest for certitude see Stephen Toulmin, *Cosmopolis;* For God and the laws of nature in modernity see Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern;* and for modernity and authority see Jeffrey Stout, *Flight from Authority.*

"[t]he principles forged during the Enlightenment…are crumbling."[268] In the postmodern environment much of contemporary intellectual inquiry has been shaped decisively by fragmentation, indeterminacy, and intense distrust of all universal or 'totalizing' discourses.

But, in the midst of the confusion surrounding postmodernity some believe that there are prominent signs that give reason for hope. Theologian, Stanley Grenz, argues that two aspects of the postmodern ethos are particularly significant; "the fundamental critique and rejection of modernity, and the attempt to live and think in a realm of chastened rationality characterized by the demise of modern epistemological foundationalism."[269] As diverse as the postmodern phenomenon is, there is unity among postmodern thinkers in their rejection of the modern project's quest for certain, objective, and universal knowledge, along with the hesitation to form rational paradigms for replacing the modern vision.

Grenz's first item, the unity in the rejection of modernity, plays out in various ways. Radical aspects can be found in continental deconstructionism, a literary theory, as represented by French critics Jacques Derrida and Jean-Francois Lyotard. Deconstructionism confronts the world with the claim that all order and convention is strictly arbitrary. This sounds like Toulmin's account of the French "clean slate" theory again with all vestiges of Descartes having been, ironically, authoritatively deconstructed. Any criteria for determining such characteristics as order and convention, explains Rorty,

---

[268] Diogenes Allen, *Christian Belief in a Postmodern World: The Full Wealth of Conviction* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1989) 2.

[269] Stanley Grenz / John Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism*: *Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context* (Louisville: Westminster John Know Press, 2001) 19.

is itself a human construction—and there is "no standard of rationality that is not an appeal to such a criterion, no rigorous argumentation that is not obedience to our own conventions."[270] Even the very convention of language, a favorite topic for the deconstructionists, does not escape subjectivism, which undermines the biblical medium as a metanarrative. Lyotard has expressed his distrust of language to convey meaning and his related disdain for the metanarrative as a medium for meaning with his pointed definition of postmodernity, "[s]implified to the extreme, I define *postmodern* as incredulity toward metanarratives."[271]

Anthropologically, deconstructionists tend to celebrate human decenteredness (no essence to human nature) and view it as a virtuous attribute. The irony, once again, in keeping with the tenets of postmodernity, is the decentered self. While perspectival in nature, decenteredness, still derives some sort of meaning, only within a particular context. Mark C. Taylor views the dissolution of the individual self as giving rise to "anonymous subjectivity" in which "care-less sacrifice takes the place of anxious mastery."[272] With the recurring appearance of Nietzsche, arguably the original deconstructionist, in the work of Taylor and the French deconstructionists, decenteredness could, perhaps, even be the line to the will to power and the *Ubermensch*. Deconstructionists, existentialists, and

[270] Richard Rorty, "Pragmatism and Philosophy," in *After Philosophy: End or Transformation?* ed. Kenneth Baynes, James Bohman and Thomas McCarthy (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987) 60.

[271] Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. G. Bennington and B. Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984) xxiv.

[272] Mark C. Taylor, *Erring: A Postmodern A/Theology* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press,1984) chap. 6.

poststructuralists in general have drawn heavily from Nietzsche's thought, which opens the possibilities for various deconstructionist anthropologies.[273]

Though the term 'postmodern' has been most typically associated with continental thinkers and deconstructionism, it is, however, becoming more prevalent in other contexts. More 'conservative' or 'constructive' versions of postmodernity are emerging in America with philosophers and theologians such as Thomas Kuhn, Alistair MacIntyre, Stephen Toulmin, Jeffrey Stout, George Lindbeck, Ronald Thiemann, and Nicholas Wolterstorff, to name just a few. In the rejection of the tenets of modernity there is unity. The range in congruence, Grenz observes, "extends from Derrida to the so-called post-conservative evangelicals."[274]

The second aspect identified by Grenz as at the heart of the postmodern ethos, and of particular interest here, is the attempt in the aftermath of modernity to rethink the nature of rationality. He calls the result of the attempt, *chastened rationality*.[275] In retrospect, he argues, the faculty of reason, the exalted trademark of the Enlightenment, was given more power than it was due. Theologian, Wentzel van Huyssteen, similarly understands the need to reconsider the limits of rationality when he says "postmodern thought also challenges us again to explore the presupposed continuity between Christian theology and the general human enterprise of understanding the world rationally."[276] Although postmodernity does not reject the concept of rationality, it does reject the Cartesian /

[273] For a detailed work on Nietzsche and the Deconstructionists see Alan D. Schrift, *Nietzsche's French Legacy: A Genealogy of Poststructuralism* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

[274] Grenz, *Beyond Foundationalism*, 21.

[275] Grenz, *Beyond Foundationalism*, 22-3.

[276] J. Wentsel van Huyssteen, *Essays in Postfoundationalist Theology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997) 217.

Lockean starting point for it—an evaluative norm accessible to the mind. But in spite of Richard Rorty's objections, in this post-metaphysical age, epistemology continues to be the focus of attention.[277] Rationality, its place and function, even if chastened, is inseparable from the pursuit of knowledge. Theoretical reason, Robert Audi has remarked, "is roughly the topic of epistemology."[278] The next chapter will further explore the popular idea of 'chastened reason' and whether it is a viable position.

Grenz identifies three categories affected by chastened rationality. The first is that humans do not view the world from an objective vantage point, but structure an understanding of it through the social convention of language. But due to the various perspectives of the speaker and the lack of a universal language for describing the 'real world,' no single linguistic description is adequate. The second is that the metanarrative is no longer credible as a universal shaper of the cultural ethos, but functions in a local context only. Diversity and plurality has replaced the notion of a grand scheme into which all particular stories must fit. The third, and possibly the most significant and prominent category of chastened rationality, is the collapse of epistemological foundationalism.[279] The Enlightenment view that rationality is determined by, and grounded in, self-evident, indubitable foundational beliefs that are trans-historical and fixed metaphysical entities, is not tenable in the postmodern context.

While it is the topic of epistemology, the difficulty in discussing reason or rationality in any absolute or reductionistic sense is as philosopher, Hilary Putnam,

[277] Rorty rejects the traditional integrity of philosophy and particularly epistemology. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979).

[278] Robert Audi, *The Architecture of Reason: The Sturcture and Substance of Rationality* (Oxford: Oxford Universtiy Press, 2001) 4.

[279] Grenz, *Beyond Foundationalism*, 23.

explains, "the 'standard' accepted by a culture or a subculture, either explicitly or implicitly, cannot *define* what reason is, even in context, because they *presuppose* reason (reasonableness) for their interpretation.[280] On the one hand, Putnam continues, reasonableness is shaped by cultures, practices, and procedures and on the other hand, it has a universal aspect to it. For it is "both immanent (not to be found outside of concrete language games and institutions) and transcendent (a regulative idea that we use to criticize the conduct of all activities and institutions)."[281] In other words, reason is used to postulate anything about reason. It can be used incorrectly, but not denied without using it. Recognizing this dilemma and others, a new philosophy, pragmatism, was offered as a resolution.

The Rise of Coherentist Epistemology

An epistemological revolution, which began with the maturation of naturalism and represented by the philosophical pragmatism of Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) and William James (1842-1910) of the early twentieth century, has continued through the logical empiricism of Bertrand Russell, Gottlob Frege (1848-1925), and Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951), and finally to Willard Van Orman Quine, Wilfred Sellars, and Richard Rorty of the last half of the twentieth century. This trajectory of empirically based epistemology has impacted and left its mark with implications for naturalism and its foundation.

A postmodern precursor, pragmatic philosophy, initiated by Peirce and James and further developed in the twentieth century, reexamined the Enlightenment constitution of

[280] Hilary Putnam, "Why Reason Can't be Naturalized," in *After Philosophy: End or Transformation?* eds. Baynes, Bohman, and McCarthy (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987) 228.

[281] Putnam, "Reason," 228.

rationality. Pragmatism in philosophy undermined the prevailing Cartesian / Lockean tradition in three crucial areas, which represented the beginnings of nonfoundationalism as a philosophical criticism. The first was the rejection of the Cartesian method of establishing the first principles of philosophy as a necessary propaedeutic to philosophical inquiry itself. Second, the accepted metaphysics of understanding were rejected. As the foundation for the truth of a philosophical system, neither sense experience nor ideas were considered privileged as an authoritative basis of knowing. Thirdly, the rationalist or empiricist definition of truth as an isolated correspondence between self and world was also rejected. In its place was the understanding that truth is found in a social context of meaning shaped by the practical implications of ideas. The contextual and foundationless aspect of pragmatism then led to disparate epistemological expressions including Wittgenstein's 'linguistic turn' in which language was viewed as the vehicle for meaning,[282] and, additionally of particular importance for naturalism, Thomas Kuhn's 'normal science' working within a framework of an accepted paradigm.

Directing his charge at the spirit of Cartesianism in an 1868 essay, Peirce concluded that "[w]e have no power of Intuition," that "every cognition is determined logically by previous cognitions," and that, because there is "no power of thinking without signs," there is no logical reason for positing some foundational point of departure for this intellectual process.[283] Along similar lines of argument Wittgenstein observed in his later work that philosophy "may in no way interfere with the actual use of language; it can only

[282] Thiel, *Nonfoundationalism*, 10. Thiel's critique of the historical development of foundationalism is helpful and will be utilized throughout much of the following discussion. For a discussion of Dewey, Wittgenstein, and J.L. Austin from a different, Christian, perspective see Greg Bahnsen, "Pragmatism, Prejudice, and Presuppositionalism," in *Foundations of Christian Scholarship*, ed. Gary North (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1976) 241-292.

[283] Charles S. Peirce, "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities [1868]," in *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, vol.5, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960) 158.

describe it…[and] it cannot give it any foundation either."[284] Language, for Wittgenstein, is the vehicle for meaning and is context specific. Just as the meaningfulness of a language is governed by its grammar, so too are the activities of thinking defined by the particular frame of reference in which it is functioning. Thus, the rules for constructing meaning are products of the coherent system they regulate, rather than the starting points for the play of meaning that engenders them.[285]

Building on the tradition of pragmatism, Quine and Sellars, who both reject the traditional integrity of philosophy as a special discipline for discovering truth, have worked to expose the groundlessness in Cartesian / Lockean assumptions of the theorizing in virtually all disciplines to explain their subject matter. In other words, they reject foundations of certitude, whether rationally or empirically determined, as the basis for knowledge in all types of theoretical thought. Philosophy, for Sellars, rather than being the discipline for determining objective truth, is "the reflective knowing one's way around in the scheme of things."[286]

Sellars also recognizes that it is not just the rationalists who hold to the idealist epistemology of noninferential knowledge as first principles—empiricists do the same. The most basic of axiomatic fallacies identified by Sellars is the 'myth of the given.' This myth, he explains, is "the idea that knowledge of episodes furnishes *premises* on which empirical knowledge rests as on a foundation."[287] His targets here, of course, are the

[284] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 3rd ed., trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (New York: Macmillan, 1968) 49.

[285] Wittgenstein, *Investigations*, 138.

[286] Sellars, "Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man," in *Science, Perception and Reality* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963) 2.

[287] Sellars, "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind," in *Science, Perception and Reality*, 140.

internal episodes, or principles, used as a theoretical foundation for interpretive schemes. He takes for granted that the rationalist versions of the myth are obvious as logical fallacies. But these internal episodes are not problematic, as such, but are part of the human condition. It is only when certain aspects of experience are viewed as authoritative and regarded as a foundation for other claims to knowledge within a conceptual scheme that a problem arises. John Thiel makes the comment that, according to Sellars, "this myth does not preserve a benign or higher truth but perpetuates a logical fallacy that distorts our expectations about what knowledge is and how it functions."[288]

Sellars sets the contextual parameters for the knowledge issue and the dilemma surrounding it by asking the question, "[i]f knowledge is justified true belief, how can there be such a thing as self-evident knowledge? And if there is no such thing as self-evident knowledge, how can *any* true belief be, in the relevant sense, justified?"[289] What he is building on here, of course, is the notion that knowledge is in fact 'justified true belief.'[290] Though the definition has been debated, it seems to be the generally accepted one. By taking it as the acceptable definition, Sellars exposes the inherent problems of knowledge for the philosopher with the notion of the self-evident, or as he calls it, 'the given.'

He challenges the doctrine of 'the given' precisely on the issue of the epistemological status of foundational beliefs. In his essay, *Epistemological Principles*,

---

[288] John Thiel, *Imagination and Authority: Theological Authorship in the Modern Tradition* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991) 174.

[289] Wilfrid Sellars, "Epistemic Principles," in *Epistemology: An Anthology*, eds. Ernest Sosa and Jaegwon Kim (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2000) 125-133.

[290] This explication of knowledge is, however, questionable after Edmund Gettier's strong argument rejecting it, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" in *Epistemology: An Anthology,* eds. Sosa and Kim.

Sellars critiques philosopher, Roderick Chisholm, on the points of reported knowledge and the authority of foundational beliefs. Foundational beliefs and reported knowledge, to qualify as knowledge, must, Sellars argues, be supported by an authority of some type. And the person making the report of knowledge must, in some sense, recognize the authority to be such.[291] Authority, for the empiricist, can only lie in the reliable connection between what is observed and the generalization that what has been reported by the observation is in fact true.[292] But, how is the truth of the generalization determined? To make that determination, would, of course, imply, as Sellars has noted, that there is a level of *cognition* more basic than *believing* and would consist of a sub-conceptual awareness of certain facts.[293]

As a solution to the problem, he proposes a holistic perspective. His holistic approach to the justification of knowledge is placed in a naturalistic setting, whereby, the authority of his epistemic principles is construed in terms of "the acquisition of relevant linguistic skills."[294] While he acknowledges the authoritative nature of 'self-evident' or 'intuitive' knowledge, and that, in the final analysis, it rests on authoritative non-inferential propositions, it is, nonetheless, on his view, not to be construed as a foundation.[295]

Quine similarly holds an empirical approach to knowledge, but also rejects the notion that truth is deduced from sense data through empirical analysis. More

[291] Sellars, Epistemic Principles," 125-133; cf. "Does Empirical Knowledge have a Foundation?" in *Epistemology*, 120-124.

[292] Sellars, "Epistemic Principles," 131.

[293] Sellars, "Epistemic Principles," 128-9; Sellars also recognizes that to speak of a "fact' assumes an entire theory of fact.

[294] Sellars, "Epistemic Principles," 131.

[295] Sellars, "Epistemic Principles," 127, 132.

appropriately, he argues, empirical analysis has the task of piecing together ad hoc theories derived exclusively from sensory evidence.[296] Since knowledge and philosophy's pursuit of knowledge is grounded in sense experience, there is no role for philosophy to play as an "a priori propaedeutic or groundwork for science." Philosophy provides no external vantage point from which to appropriate knowledge. But, rather, philosophy is "continuous with science" and functions as a type of empirical investigation that critically describes the process by which sensory evidence is formed into the web of concepts that make up knowledge.[297]

In his essay "*Two Dogmas of Empiricism*" Quine called into question the belief that each justifiable belief could be traced to special foundational beliefs derived directly from experience.[298] The error in this, he argues, is that the attempt to salvage a special indubitable kind of knowledge based on concepts and their relations, fails, because we are always able (and sometimes willing) to adjust the meanings of terms in order to maintain the truth of the claims. Building on this, Quinean holism requires that the whole of conceptual knowledge face the tribunal of experience, thus allowing for shifts in the meaning of concepts due to the pressure from new discoveries and theoretical changes.

Theoretical knowledge, for Quine, is context bound. That is, meaningful theories are not context-free, but are limited by their particular disciplines and unable to transcend their conceptual schemes to a universal explanation. Theories are not fully interpreted

---

[296] Roger Gibson, Jr., *The Philosophy of W.V. Quine: An Expository Essay* (Tampa: University Presses of Florida, 1982) 1.

[297] W.V.O. Quine, "Natural Kinds," in *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969) 126-7.

[298] W.V.O. Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism," in *From a Logical Point of View* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953).

sentences and determinate explanations of their subject matter because they are always located within ever widening language contexts. Quine views this approach as holistic epistemology. The metaphor that best describes this position is a web. This web of concepts, for Quine, is a metaphor to counter the foundation metaphor. A sympathetic student and supporter of Quine, Nancey Murphy understands his holism as a belief "supported by its ties to its neighboring beliefs and, ultimately, to the whole."[299] Additionally, coherence within the web is critical for justification of belief. Justification within the web "consists in showing that problematic beliefs are closely tied to beliefs that we have no good reason to call into question."[300]

While Sellars and Quine focused on philosophical issues in general, Rorty has directed his efforts at subverting the epistemological tradition in particular. Also interested in exposing the illusion of foundations for knowledge and rationality, he takes as his investigative field the history of philosophy, unlike Sellars and Quine who address the logical framework of theories.[301] Rorty, nonetheless, acknowledges his dependence on the work of Sellars and Quine when he says;

> I interpret Sellars's attack on 'givenness' and Quine's attack on 'necessity' as the crucial steps in undermining the possibility of a 'theory of knowledge.' The holism and pragmatism common to both philosophers,

[299] Murphy, *Beyond Liberalism*, 94.

[300] Murphy, *Beyond Liberalism*, 94.

[301] John Thiel has remarked that "[a]lthough Rorty's critique of foundationalism has been one of the best known and most influential in recent years, its originality lies largely in its attention to the rhetoric of foundationalist assumptions and to the ways in which that rhetoric has perpetuated the foundationalist fallacy. Rorty's actual conclusions about the errors of foundationalism differ little from the principal criticisms of foundationalism that have been offered by a host of philosophers in the course of the past century. *Imagination*, 173.

> and which they share with the later Wittgenstein, are the lines of thought within analytic philosophy which I wish to extend.[302]

In his work, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Rorty sets out to, in his words, "undermine the reader's confidence in 'the mind' as something about which one should have a 'philosophical' view, in 'knowledge' as something about which there ought to be a 'theory' and which has 'foundations,' and in 'philosophy' as it has been conceived since Kant."[303] He commences his deconstruction project by exposing the erroneous attempt by rationalist and empiricist epistemologies to privilege some aspect of mental life, or experience that grounds claims to genuine knowledge. This scheme, then, portrays thinking, or experience, as an activity with the capability to mirror reality and is the avenue for establishing a certain foundation for knowledge and belief. Rorty's argument, explains John Thiel, is that modern philosophy's ocular metaphor of the mind as a mirror reflecting the objective truths of reality encouraged the supposition that knowledge possesses a basis as immediate and as certain as a visual representation in an experience of optical perception.[304]

In his assessment of the history of epistemology, Rorty contends that two clearly distinguishable components to knowledge emerged. The first is the factual element given to consciousness and the second is the constructive, or interpretative, element contributed

---

[302] Rorty, *Philosophy*, 10.

[303] Rorty, *Philosophy*, 7, Robert Audi has remarked that "[i]t is strong foundationalism, especially the kind found in Descartes' *Meditations*, that is influentially criticized by Richard Rorty in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Many of Rorty's criticisms do not hold for… moderate foundationalism. His doubts about the very idea that the mind is a 'mirror of nature,' however, cuts against at least the majority of plausible epistemological theories." *Epistemology: A Contemporary Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1998) 209 FN14.

[304] Thiel, *Imagination*, 172.

by the mind, or by language. But Rorty's contention is that Sellars' critique of the 'myth of the given' and Quine's skepticism about the language-fact distinction constitute a decisive rejection of these, mistakenly, indispensable ideas.[305] Rorty's principle argument against foundations, however, is in its use of metaphorical undercurrents for epistemic theorizing that have prejudiced the conceptualization of how knowing occurs.[306]

Equally important to the neo-Kantian epistemic project, argues Rorty, is the proposition that the aim of thought, or language, is correspondence to reality and the accuracy of representation. But in light of Wittgenstein's argument that approaches language through the notion of 'use' rather than that of 'picturing,' this proposition has also been soundly undermined.[307] The attempt to affirm the mind as the measure of certainty and to privilege philosophy as the seat of veridical authority is, according to Rorty, a misguided Cartesian desire.

Pragmatism, analytic philosophy, and the philosophy of science have successfully exposed the sorts of foundationalism espoused by the Cartesian / Lockean and neo-Kantian projects as unwitting expressions of a rationalist variety of dogmatism, which, according to many, cannot pass the test of close rational analysis. Particularly, the work of Sellars, Quine, and Rorty has been so effective and compelling that Thiel has remarked that "a consensus has been reached in the scholarly community that at least any naïve or 'strong' form of foundationalism is philosophically untenable."[308]

---

[305] Michael Williams, "Richard Rorty," in *A Companion to Epistemology*, eds. Jonathan Dancy and Ernest Sosa (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, LTD, 1992) 450.

[306] Thiel, *Imagination*, 172.

[307] Williams, "Richard Rorty," 450.

[308] Thiel, *Imagination*, 175 It also needs to be noted here that some form of foundationalism as a theory of justification continues to be a viable epistemic position within the community of philosophers. Several philosophers have cogently

With the ostensible collapse of foundationalism as the justificatory basis for beliefs, the obvious question then becomes—how are beliefs justified? Or, are they at all? The answer to this question is critical, not only for knowledge, but for any kind of explanation of rationality. For if what Robert Audi says is accurate, that "[b]eliefs are the basic elements of theoretical rationality," then what constitutes a justified belief is inseparable from a view of rationality. A rational belief is a justified belief.[309] And if Sellars's assumption that knowledge is 'justified true belief,' is true, then what constitutes knowledge and how it is acquired has much to do with the grounding or justification of propositions. The main concern for this project, then, is raised again—can naturalism's foundational belief that only a material reality exists for certain be considered knowledge? According to the leading twentieth century critical thinkers above, it may be proposed, but cannot be considered a universal certainty, rather, only contextualized 'knowledge.' If this is the case, how then does naturalism qualify as the privileged view?

Knowledge and Justification

Understanding the fundamental bases for the categories religion and science has come under the scrutiny of the philosophy of religion and the philosophy of science. These relatively new disciplines exist because of the many basic questions that religion and science have not made clear. Despite the above discussion, philosophy has attempted to

---

argued the case. See Roderick Chisholm, "The Myth of the Given," in *Epistemology: An Anthology*, eds. Sosa and Kim; and in *Theory of Knowledge*, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice- Hall, Inc., 1977) Hilary Putnam, "Why Reason Can't be Naturalized," in *After Philosophy: End or Transformation?* eds. Baynes, Bohman, and McCarthy (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987) and William Alston, "Has Foundationalism Been Refuted?" *Philosophical Studies* 29 (1976) 300-302; and "Two Types of Foundationalism," *Journal of Philosophy* 73 (1976) 171; Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Robert Audi, *Belief, Justification, and Knowledge* (Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1998).

[309] Audi, *The Architecture of Reason,*195-6.

solve that. Philosopher of science, Alex Rosenberg, makes this comment about philosophy and science;

> Philosophy deals with two sets of questions: First, the questions that science – physical, biological, social, behavioral cannot answer now and perhaps may never be able to answer. Second, the questions about why the sciences cannot answer the first lot of questions.[310]

How much progress is being made is questionable, however. The current transformation in the discipline of philosophy is making continued dialogue with religion and science regarding knowledge even more difficult.[311] Some contemporary philosophers take the view that philosophy is at a turning point in need of transformation, and some are simply calling for its end as a specialized discipline questioning the value of the 'philosophy' of anything. One thing is certain, the classical philosophical categories of metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics have all come under critical scrutiny. The editors of *After Philosophy: End or Transformation?*, Kenneth Baynes, James Bohman, and Thomas McCarthy, have categorized contemporary philosophers into two groups; the end-of-philosophy thinkers and the transformation-of-philosophy thinkers.[312]

All of these philosophers, or postphilosophers as they have been termed, reject Cartesian and neo-Kantian epistemology on several counts, which include: regarding the

---

[310] Alex Rosenberg, *Philosophy of Science* (London: Routledge, 2000) 4.

[311] Much of the following discussion on the status of contemporary philosophy was gleaned from Baynes, Bohman, and McCarthy, "General Introduction," *After Philosophy*.

[312] Representatives of the end-of-philosophy group are Rorty, Derrida, Foucault and Lyotard. The transformation-of-philosophy group is sub-divided into herneneutics, which includes Ricour and Gadamer, and systematic philosophers, which includes Putnam, Habermas, MacIntyre and Davidson.

subject of knowledge and action as punctual, atomistic, and disembodied; rational autonomy in terms of an ideal of total disengagement; appeals to immediate, intuitive self-presence as the basis of self-knowledge; and full self-transparence as a sensible ideal of self-knowledge.[313] Additionally, they have all made the 'linguistic turn,' pursuing Nietzche's idea that philosophical texts are rhetorical constructs. While all start from the pluralism of language games and forms of life, not all agree that this is an *irreducible* pluralism of *incommensurable* language games.[314]

These disagreements are manifest in at least three areas, the first being the area of truth. The end-of-philosophy group understands truth to be totally immanent and contextually derived while the transformation group understands it to have a transcendent aspect. The second area is that of knowledge. The transformers want to continue inquiry and critical reflection, which, in their minds, will bring about greater understanding. Those who want to see an end to philosophy claim, however, that the notion that true meaning is discoverable through inquiry is a fallacy due to the essential undecidability of meaning. And the third area dividing the end / transformation of philosophical approaches is the role of theory in philosophy generally, and philosophy's relation to the human sciences particularly. The end-of-philosophy advocates oppose the continuation of theoretical philosophy while the transformation group conceives of their work to be a continuation of *practical,* and not *theoretical,* philosophy.[315]

[313] "General Introduction," *After Philosophy,* 8.

[314] "General Introduction," *After Philosophy,* 7.

[315] "General Introduction," *After Philosophy*, 7-16.

The end-of-philosophy thinkers, who will be the main focus here, include Sellars, Quine, and Rorty.[316] Several distinctive features affecting epistemology in particular, characterize this group of philosophers. Opposition to strong conceptions of reason and the autonomous rational self, contingency, and conventionality, are fundamental to their view. The first significant implication of this position is the decenteredness of the human rational subject as discussed above. The rational subject for this group is decentered with the most poignant expression in the area of knowledge. Knowledge for this group is "essentially embodied and practically engaged with the world, and the products of our thought bear ineradicable traces of our purposes and projects, passions and interests…[T]he epistemological and moral subject has been definitely decentered and the conception of reason linked to it irrevocably desublimated."[317] In this view reason and knowledge have lost their transcendent nature.

Another salient implication is that the traditional notion of *knowledge as representation* has been replaced with the concept that "the object of knowledge is always already preinterpreted, situated in a scheme, part of a text, outside which there are only other texts." From this perspective, then, "the subject of knowledge belongs to the very world it wishes to interpret." The condition for forming disinterested representations of the world is engagement with it and the kinds of representations formed will depend on the kind of dealings experienced with it. Thus, underlying propositional knowledge "is a largely inarticulate and unarticulatable grasp of the world that we have as agents within it…who are essentially embodied and the locus of orientations and desires that we never

[316] The editors of *After Philosophy* do not specifically list Quine and Sellars in their groupings.

[317] "General Introduction," *After Philosophy*, 4.

fully grasp or control." The idea of a knowing subject disengaged from the body and from the world, therefore, makes no sense. For there is no knowledge without a background, and that background can never be wholly objectified.[318]

The picture revealed here clearly represents a discipline that is experiencing a radical departure from Cartesian / neo-Kantian philosophical reflection. Descartes looked for intuitive certainty in his cultural crisis while today's postphilosophers question that wisdom and find the very idea of certitude unacceptable. The shift in epistemic emphasis has not only chastened rationality, but also undermined Kant's critique of pure reason.

Rationality, then, for postmodernity seems to reside within particular contexts and is significant, pragmatically, for the purpose of finding one's way around within them. It also seems clear that modernity's claim to a privileged position for autonomous reason has come to an end. As an alternative to autonomy, Quine offers the beginnings of a more modest proposal for an appropriate contemporary description of knowledge and rationality when he writes;

> Much that we know does not count as science [knowledge], but this is often less due to its subject matter than to its arrangement. For nearly any body of knowledge that is sufficiently organized to exhibit appropriate evidential relationships among its constituent claims has at least some call to be seen as scientific. What makes for science is system, whatever the subject. And what makes for system is the judicious application of logic. Science is thus a fruit of rational investigation.[319]

---

[318] "General Introduction," *After Philosophy*, 4-5.

[319] Quine, *The Web*, 3.

If Quine's understanding can be taken as representative of the postphilosophers,[320] then rationality includes the employment of normative logic for the organization of knowledge in order to "exhibit appropriate evidential relationships among its constituent claims." Another way to express it is that rationality is conformity to the relationships of knowledge organized by the deductive laws of logic and has an 'instrumental' function only. Not that this notion is necessarily new, but it reflects a more moderate (chastened) perspective with respect to the limitations of reason. In the following schema, Sellars addresses the function of deductive logic in producing inferential knowledge. On his account "logical implication transmits reasonableness" with the transmission via 'probabilistic' implication. He explains;

> It is reasonable, all things considered, to believe *p*; So, *p*; *p* probabilistically implies *q* to a high degree; So, all things considered, it is reasonable to believe *q*.
>
> Probabilistic justification of beliefs in accordance with this pattern would, presumably, be illustrated by inductive arguments and theoretical explanations. In each case, we move from a premise of the form:
>
> It is reasonable, all things considered, to believe *E*, where '*E*' formulates the evidence, to a conclusion of the form:

[320] Not all postphilosophers agree with Quine's view of rationality. Hilary Putnam contends that Quine's conflicting views on epistemology confuse his position on normative rationality. Quine, explains Putnam, rejects metaphysical realism and affirms bivalence (the principle that every sentence in the ideal scientific language is either true or false). Quine's position on metaphysical realism and bivalence is incoherent, argues Putnam. Quine confuses the epistemological issue with his version of a "naturalized epistemology," which attempts to reduce mentalistic notions to materialistic ones. This position, says Putnam, "is sheer epistemological eliminationism," which attempts to abandon "notions of justification, good reason, warranted assertion, and so on," in favor of the evidence of sensory stimulation. Quine's "naturalized epistemology," attempts to eliminate the normative, which, in Putnam's words is "attempted mental suicide." Putnam, "Reason," 239-242; The postphilosophers do not necessarily want to rule out the normative, but they do want to define its limitations.

> It is reasonable, all things considered, to believe *H*, where '*H*' formulates in the first case a law-like statement and in the second case a body of theoretical assumptions.[321]

This simple formulation demonstrates the extent of the function of logic for Sellars. Quine and Sellars hold similar views on reason, at least in terms of its linear deductive function. Reason, or logic, is the method that deduces one belief from another and forms a coherent system of beliefs, which, then, constitutes rationality. But the question of justification still remains unanswered.

If there is no indubitable foundation for grounding beliefs, then what constitutes justification for the postphilosophers? The answer is that although many postphilosophers hold to a weak foundationalism, most hold to some type of coherentist theory of belief justification.[322] With the coherentist account, beliefs are not grounded to a base of noninferentially known certitudes. But what distinguishes a coherence theory from a foundationalist theory? Donald Davidson answers that it "is simply the claim that nothing can count as a reason for holding a belief except another belief."[323] In other words, the justification of a belief depends on its coherence with the other beliefs one already holds to be true. For the coherentist, nothing exists outside the totality of one's beliefs with which to test or compare new propositions. All that counts as evidence or justification for a proposed belief, explains Davidson, "must come from the same totality of belief to which

[321] Sellars, "Epistemic Principles," 126-7.

[322] For the numerous types of coherentism see Robert Audi, *Epistemology*, 178-208 and Keith Lehrer, "Coherentism," in *A Companion to Epistemology*, eds. Jonathan Dancy and Ernest Sosa (London: Blackwell Publishers, 1992) 67-70.

[323] Donald Davidson, "A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge," in *Epistemology*, eds. Sosa and Kim, 156.

it belongs."[324] The authority for justification resides not in the certainty of "the given," or the "self-evident," but in a network of mutually supportive beliefs.

The postmodern outlook has adopted cultural context, or conceptual scheme, as the necessary and exclusive reference point for reflection and analysis.[325] What is rejected is the Cartesian / Kantian ideal of an objective perspective outside of one's particular context as the vantage point for evaluation. No transcendent universal exists, or at least none that is accessible, by which to objectively evaluate one belief against another. As Rorty explains it, "nothing counts as justification unless by reference to what we already accept, and that there is no way to get outside our beliefs and our language so as to find some test other than coherence."[326] So, in postmodern thought, the interpreting subject is context bound, and what is considered reasonable depends on the orientation of the viewer or interpreter.

Of course the immediate claim by foundationalists is that nonfoundationalism (coherentism) is an infinite regress of beliefs that ultimately ends in relativism, circular reasoning, or skepticism.[327] In the absence of foundations, they maintain, the task of justifying belief would lead to an infinite regress in the logic of justification and Locke's fear of the enthusiasts' "anything goes" attitude would certainly be a legitimate conclusion.

---

[324] Davidson, "Coherence Theory," 162.

[325] See Donald Davidson, "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme," in *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984).

[326] Rorty, *Philosophy*, 178.

[327] Robert Audi discusses four ways in which to understand the epistemic regress problem—infinite epistemic chains, circular epistemic chains, epistemic chains terminating in belief not constituting knowledge, and epistemic chains terminating in knowledge. *Epistemology*, 182-6.

The thought is that without a terminal point to ground beliefs, then no final authoritative claim could be reached and opinion would multiply endlessly.

This claim, though a viable one, has been addressed by the coherentists. The assumption in the claim, then, is that justification must be finite and a foundation provides the only means for insuring it. From a practical standpoint, the notion of an infinite regress is highly unlikely simply due to time and human patience. Davidson comments that, "giving reasons never comes to an end,"[328] but the regress eventually stops when sufficient warrant (whatever that might be) for the belief in question is reached. Though the possibility of an infinite set of beliefs is unlikely, having a sufficient quantity to warrant a finite regress is not. Coherentist Michael Williams explains that "at any given time we must have some stock of beliefs which are not thought to be open to challenge, though any one of them may come under fire."[329] But this is not unusual; it is as per design. All beliefs within a conceptual coherent scheme are susceptible to criticism. As Sellars once put it, basic beliefs are vulnerable, "though not *all* at once…because it is a self-correcting enterprise which can put *any* claim in jeopardy."[330]

The remaining issue is the one of the incommensurability of conceptual schemes, which is inherent within postmodern coherentism. How are conceptual schemes (worldviews) to be compared and contrasted with respect to value and truth? If all worldviews are independent, self-contained systems of belief with no common ground between them, then no means exist for making value judgments between one view and

---

[328] Davidson, "Coherence Theory," 156.

[329] Michael Williams, *Groundless Belief: An Essay on the Possibility of Epistemology* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1977) 83-4.

[330] Sellars, "Epistemic Principles," 132.

another. Once reason is denied its transcendent capabilities, judgments then become intuitive, relative, and subjective assertions. Judgments regarding truth and error, good and evil, right and wrong, in any absolute sense, cannot be made. If this is the case, then what difference does it make what anyone, individually or collectively, believes?

All worldviews, then, are ultimately of equal value and equally meaningful. Philosophical naturalism, for instance, has no rational basis for making its exclusive claim to knowledge and truth, but it still makes it. From Hume to Nietzsche to Freud, to Russell, to the contemporary 'new atheists,' philosophical naturalists have affirmed that only the material world is knowable. Many have additionally asserted that not only is the material world all that is knowable, it is all that exists. A non-material reality does not exist, they maintain. These are epistemological and metaphysical claims, which qualify as clear and distinct ideas positioned as foundational beliefs. A foundation is necessary for naturalism. These beliefs are the presuppositions, the first philosophy, the 'givens' for philosophical naturalism. Many agree with Carl Sagan's now famous proclamation, "the cosmos is all that is or ever was or ever shall be."[331] This is a truth claim about existence and the nature of reality—a claim to knowledge. However, no proof or evidence is offered for these most basic postulated beliefs. Rather, the claims are, in the words of philosopher of science, John Lennox, "not a statement of science, but of his personal belief."[332]

Summary

The purpose of the foregoing discussion was twofold; one, to reveal the general and contemporary philosophical context in which naturalism is situated, and two, to explore

[331] Carl Sagan, *The Cosmos* (New York: Random House, 1980) 4.

[332] John Lennox, *God's Undertaker: Has Science Buried God?* (Oxford: Lion Hudson plc, 2009) 30.

this context in some detail as it relates to questions of epistemology, the concept of rationality, and the religion / science dichotomy. To be sure, current philosophical debate includes more than just the topic of reason and epistemology. However, the discussion was delimited intentionally in order to highlight the fundamental philosophical elements facing naturalism and the idea of religion. It was necessary for a greater understanding of naturalism's position by exploring the philosophical developments and specific philosophers from the late nineteenth century to the present, with an emphasis on epistemology. The twentieth century philosophical ethos has left its mark not only on Kuhn and his views on paradigm shifts and normal science, but also on theism and the so-called religious views. As was noted above, the collapse of epistemological foundationalism has left modernity bankrupt.

If the current state of philosophy is reasonably close to the above characterization, then any possible application of its conclusions by philosophical naturalism or theism may seem extremely remote. Justified knowledge, therefore, depends on epistemic assumptions that classical foundationalism and current nonfoundational criticism alike have rendered unwarranted. Previous chapters explored modern theism's commitment to the principles of Cartesian / Lockean epistemology and its eventual failure due to its inability to produce satisfactory evidence that met the criteria for knowledge required by classical foundationalism. As a consequence, theism was relegated to an irrelevant non-science and put out of the mainstream of intellectual dialogue. This chapter explored the impact of the postmodern project on philosophical naturalism and it, similar to theism, was found to be lacking rational justification.

Moreover, modern empirical positivism and postmodern versions of 'naturalized' epistemology find any claims to knowledge from privileged assumptions, whether empirically or rationally generated, unwarranted. That philosophical naturalism is inextricably bound to propositions that are epistemically foundational presents an obvious problem. It seems that the philosophy of naturalism as a worldview has based its concept of knowledge on a 'metaphysical' naturalism that cannot withstand current critical thought.

A critical analysis of the influences of twentieth century thought on naturalism is overdue. Philosophy has critiqued itself and found that it was lacking. As a result, postmodern philosophers, like their Cartesian predecessors, have placed a challenge before all who claim to have knowledge. But the rules that now qualify acceptable knowledge have changed and naturalists need to be aware of that. However, awareness is only part of the program of self-evaluation. Position adjustments also need to be made. How can exclusive knowledge and truth continue to be claimed by naturalists without forfeiting consistency and, therefore, integrity? According to twentieth century critical thought, truth claims cannot be universal without a foundation of certainty, but are relative to a particular context. Truth claims only apply within a particular context, or conceptual scheme, or worldview. Different worldviews are, then, incommensurate. Within the postmodern context there is no common ground from which to judge the truth or error of the belief system as a whole. Any worldview claiming exclusive knowledge and privilege would, therefore, be misinformed and misguided. To be rationally justified, philosophical naturalism, as well as theism, need to prove their first principles—the presuppositions to their worldviews. As philosopher, David Naugle, has rightly stated, "[t]he struggle over

first principles marks the human condition."[333] For theism, the existence of God must be rationally demonstrated, and for philosophical naturalism, that matter only exists and is eternal are presuppositions that must also be rationally demonstrated. If neither can do this, then skepticism or fideism (a type of skepticism) must be affirmed. Both skepticism and fideism assume that basic things are not clear to reason (not readily knowable) and each, then, fails to rationally justify knowledge, which therefore ends in meaninglessness. In other words, if one cannot determine which view is based on knowledge and which is not, how does one make a meaningful choice? What criteria are used to choose one view over another? If one cannot know, then the choice is based on feelings. If one cannot know, then the choice makes no ultimate difference—it is essentially a meaningless choice.

In summation, the demise of epistemic foundationalism, of the Cartesian and Lockean variety at least, seems for many thinkers in the twentieth century to be a foregone conclusion. What were thought by Enlightenment standards to be 'givens' and foundational building blocks for knowledge no longer retain that privileged position. Self-evident truths and certainty once believed to be found in universal norms or standards, which could be determined either empirically (Locke) with uninterpreted sensations, or rationally (Descartes) with logically unchallengeable ideas, is now suspect. What has become clear to the postphilosophers is that the Enlightenment dream of a universal standard of rationality, a single method for determining truth and error and universally acceptable common ground for conversation, are Enlightenment ideals of modernity rooted in epistemic foundationalism that have been undermined by twentieth century criticism. Stout's pronouncement that the basis for a foundational type cognitive structure seems to

[333] David K. Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002) xvii.

have truly come undone, has been taken seriously.[334] Foundationalism, born of enlightened critical philosophic reflection, has been determined to have missed the mark and has, indeed, been declared bankrupt.

Postphilosophers have argued that this type of knowledge theory has led to the erroneous view that beliefs are justified by an objective demonstration of proof and evidence. There is no god's eye view from which to objectively make value judgments. There is no way to objectively judge between truth and error. The current epistemic atmosphere precludes it. Proof and evidence are perspectival in nature and epistemological relativism has determined that what can be considered 'true' is true only for a specific context.

The epistemological movement in the twentieth century undermined the entire structure, foundation and all, upon which naturalism has been constructed. Privileged assumptions postulated as starting points for rational reflection were challenged and reduced to presumptive subjectivism by pragmatic philosophers. Cartesian axiomatic givens as certain truths, objective vantage points, knowledge as a subjugation of reality by the mind, and true statements as a direct and exhaustive mirroring of reality in propositional form are all ideals determined to be unattainable. These and many other attempts by Western philosophy to achieve indubitable knowledge about the nature of reality have all collapsed under the heavy scrutiny of contemporary intellectual thought. Achieving an objective perspective for a privileged view of reality and for grasping truth,

[334] Jeffrey Stout argues that Cartesian epistemic foundationalism is now an historical fact and finished as a philosophical issue, *The Flight From Authority*, Parts 1, 2.

which naturalism claims, is not to be had, according to many of the most influential voices in recent critical thought.

In the world of postmodernity, metanarratives as grand interpretive strategies with a universal rationality to appropriate them, such as Islam, Christianity, or Darwinian evolution, have not fared well, but have been replaced with contextualized stories and contextualized rationality. Conceptual schemes, framed by 'culturally derived' sociology, psychology, economy, or history that have shaped and formulated traditions by which reality is defined, make up the postmodern perspective. Human reason as the primary privileged capacity once considered able to autonomously discover knowledge of reality has been chastened and a more modest view has emerged.

In light of these twentieth century conclusions, it appears that naturalism has no rational basis, or proof, for claiming exclusive knowledge. At best, it can only claim contextual, circular, consistency. It is only one view among many, incommensurate with all others, and unable to claim privilege. Epistemological relativism allows all views to have their day. None can be determined to be right or wrong, true or false, good or evil. The postmodern ethos has removed, at least theoretically, the ostensible conflict between science and religion. The popular paradigm and dichotomy collapse due to lack of evidence on each side. If there is no rational proof to favor the God hypothesis, what rational proof is there, then, to favor the matter only hypothesis? Why should one view be believed rather than the other? How, then, can naturalism justify its claim to exclusivity? Privilege has been reduced to feelings and power. But whose feelings and whose power qualifies as the authority?

Additionally, the implications of applied postmodernity can be, arguably, culturally detrimental. As just noted above, with no rational basis for making distinctions between true and false, good and evil, and right and wrong, then choices, whether individually or culturally, lose their meaning and significance. All perspectives on reality are of equal value. If all choices are ultimately of equal value then they are equally meaningful. If all choices are equally meaningful then they are all equally meaningless. How do cultures survive when faced with a relativistic, meaningless existence—when all views are of equal value? With these statements a relativized pluralism is magnified to its logical conclusion.

Some 'transformation of philosophy' scholars, however, have attempted to salvage the modern project due to the unacceptable implications of postmodern thought, like the ones just mentioned. They believe that a foundation for knowledge of some type is imperative for knowledge and that coherentism (non-foundationalism) is unable to avoid a skepticism that inherently leads to various forms of subjectivism, relativism and ultimate loss of meaning—nihilism. Some of these philosophers who affirm the need for a foundation for knowledge also argue that philosophical naturalism cannot defend its first principles and is therefore untenable. The early part of this chapter mentioned two challenges to naturalism. The first was to challenge the very idea of a foundation for knowledge, which has just been explored. The second was to defend the validity of a foundation for knowledge and to challenge the basic foundational beliefs of philosophical naturalism, which unfortunately will need to be considered in a different project.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION AND PROJECT SUMMARY

Much of Western scholarship has subscribed to the naturalistic philosophy assuming it is objective and neutral. Many scholars in the area of religious studies have approached their research from what they believe to be a neutral position not recognizing that their uncritically presupposed naturalistic first principles preclude that neutrality. Examples include the 'classical theories of religion' where scholars like Hume, Tylor, Freud, and Durkheim attempted to interpret and explain the origin of belief systems that were understood to be non-naturalistic. Continuing the tradition, contemporary scholars such as Samuel Preus, Donald Wiebe, and Pascal Boyer, as discussed in chapter one, also approach their research using the same naturalistic methodology that assumes objectivity and neutrality as well as the common religion / science paradigm. But if naturalism has no rational justification for its position, then it becomes just another opinion and methodology from which scholarly inquiry is made. Why should it be the privileged methodology? The popular approach can no longer be supported. It is inaccurate, inadequate, and therefore unacceptable. Perhaps it is time for a Kuhnian paradigm shift.

It has already been introduced above that there is perhaps a better way to understand the world's diverse belief systems, rather than the typically assumed natural / supernatural model. While the natural / supernatural divide is relevant, it leaves too much unclear. The notion of natural or supernatural is not comprehensive enough or basic enough. There are views that do not fall into one of these categories. A more accurate and satisfying approach divides belief systems at a more basic level—at the level of the nature of existence. Our most basic concept is about existence, whether something exists or does

not exist and whether it has always existed or came into existence.[335] All views have a belief about the nature of existence. This approach reveals the most basic presuppositions of belief systems.

The proposed alternative approach eliminates the term 'religion' as the delimiting label for a particular category of belief, and replaces it with the term, *Weltanschauung*, a more inclusive term for the world's belief systems. The term *Weltanschauung* is a German word that means 'worldview' and functions as a concept that describes a perspective of the world. All humans, individually and collectively, affirm beliefs about the nature of the world and how it works. The idea of 'worldview' offers a different framework by which to categorize the world's various understandings of reality. In its most basic sense, worldview can be understood as a set of beliefs that give meaning to one's, or a culture's, experience. Just below is a chart (a worldview model) that shows how belief systems have analyzable formal structures that allow for grouping according to fundamental beliefs. These beliefs then produce the descriptive data of phenomenology.

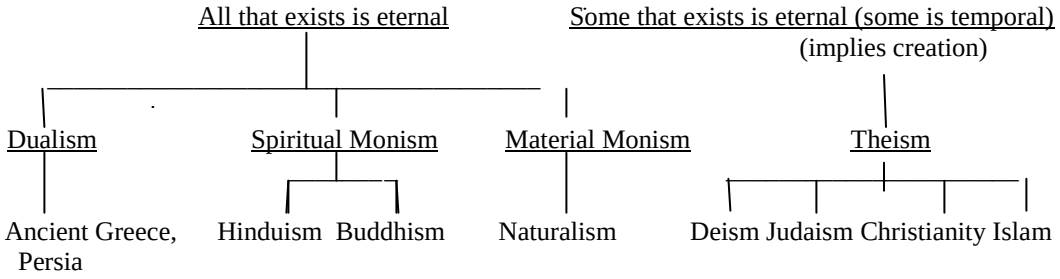
The idea of 'worldview' encompasses a broad range of concepts, which includes metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics.[336] It is used to express a unified comprehensive system of concepts that form a metanarrative and attempts to present a coherent view of existence by interpreting and explaining the meaning and purpose of the world and life in its totality. As human beings, we tend to subscribe to and place ourselves into a grand, or master, narrative that forms a type of cultural and/or linguistic framework or medium that

[335] Some believe only a material world exists and has always existed, some believe that only a spiritual reality exists and has always existed, some believe that both matter and spirit exist and have always existed, and some believe a spiritual reality has always existed that brought into existence a material reality. Gangadean, *Philosophical Foundation*, 40.

[336] David Naugle, in his *Worldview: The History of a Concept* explains this point on worldview as "a semiotic system of world-interpreting stories also provides a foundation or governing platform upon or by which people think, interpret, and know." (291).

shapes the entirety of life and thought. As such, it is unavoidably a metaphysical system and is interconnected to epistemology and ethics. The term 'religion' has become confusing regarding its specific referent. It does not have characteristics that distinguish it from what it is not and therefore lacks clarity in scholarly works. For this reason the term 'religion' ought to be replaced by the term 'worldview.'

As just discussed above, wȍrldviews can be divided into two separate and contradictory categories. These categories are determined by what is believed to be eternal—ultimate reality. If a chart is developed that shows how the world's diverse views relate and how they are different based on their most basic belief of what is eternal, it would look something like the following;[337]



This chart indicates the primary division of beliefs between worldviews based not on natural / supernatural, or spirit / matter, but on the basic belief about eternal existence. The fundamental divide is between all that exists is eternal and only some that exists is eternal. The mind, logically, cannot ask a more basic question than; what has always existed? Given the belief that something is eternal, all or some, less basic beliefs are then deduced regarding what it is that is eternal. Is it matter or non-matter or both that ultimately exists? Answers to these metaphysical questions regarding the nature of existence are the answers

[337] The concepts and divisions here were formulated by Surrendra Gangadean in his *Philosophical Foundation*.

that make up worldviews. These beliefs then produce less basic beliefs and then, as a system of beliefs, produce particular practices (ethics). Beliefs about what is real (eternal) result in behaviors that provide meaning to the respective believers. Much more could be said here, but due to the constraints of the project this will need to suffice.

Project Summary

This project has argued that the category distinction between science and religion, as the current paradigm conceives it, is a fabrication by modernity and needs to be deconstructed and reformulated. The grounds for the two categories have been examined and were found to be insufficient. Additionally, there is no rational basis for considering naturalism a privileged view—the only view constructed on knowledge. As it is, the dichotomy is perpetuated and confusion implicitly reigns.

This confusion, both inside and outside of academia, abounds. In a recent speech concerning terrorism and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, the President of the United States, Barack Obama, made this statement, "ISIL is not 'Islamic.' No religion condones the killing of innocents, and the vast majority of ISIL's victims have been Muslim."[338] What is the point of this statement? The President seems to be making a judgment regarding what religion is and what it is not. How clear is this statement? Is the President reflecting a universally understood concept or his personal opinion regarding the idea of religion and ISIL? While he is certainly free to express his opinion, it is offered authoritatively, highly nuanced, and at the expense of clarity of thought.

This project has argued that the reason for the confusion is due to the way modernity has defined and framed the relationship between belief systems. According to

[338] http://www.cnn.com/2014/09/10/politics/transcript-obama-syria-isis-speech/

what has been proposed in this project, a more accurate assessment of ISIL is that it is a worldview (or ideology) with beliefs that give meaning and significance to its experience. Like naturalism, ISIL, regardless of whether it is considered a religion or not, is interpreting and explaining the nature of the world and how it works. Formally and functionally, naturalism and ISIL are the same. Each view, however, has a different most basic belief from which it begins its reasoning process. They each presuppose a different 'given,' a different first principle as their starting point. Belief systems, ideologies—essentially worldviews—are competing for the hearts and minds of humanity. Worldviews are built on foundational beliefs and result in full-orbed cultural expression. The issue of religion or non-religion does not contribute, but detracts from the fruitful understanding of cultural expression.

The confusion over how to understand the religion category is only part of the problem, however. Enlightened modernity has sought rational clarity and knowledge against the dictates of dogmatism and personal opinion. While the value of reason and empirical investigation has been highlighted as modernity's exclusive means to achieve certainty, clarity, and truth; naturalism as the method to achieve it has fallen short.

The cause of the tension between the religion / science categories has been explored with workable definitions offered. It was argued that all belief systems formally function for the purpose of giving meaning to experience. All views then, whether considered 'religious' or not, serve the same function and purpose. This point alone should be enough to dissolve the dichotomy; however, naturalism has resisted this thought, which necessitates a stronger argument. Historical support was needed.

The category dichotomy between science and religion developed in conjunction with the intellectual developments through the modern period with an emphasis on epistemology. As a result of the intellectual climate of the day, modern science took a particular direction. Subsequent to the cultural crisis created by the Protestant Reformation, an environment consisting of questions surrounding the nature of authority, knowledge, reason, and certainty were of central concern. Consequently, the subject of epistemology, 'is knowledge possible' was a formidable question—one to which modern philosophy attempted to respond.

The rise and development of Western modernity with its particular emphasis on the move from science within a Christian theistic framework to a non-theistic philosophy of naturalism was explored. As the new science transformed into a worldview philosophy and gained dominance, the once commanding Christian theistic view declined and was then marginalized and determined irrelevant for dialogue in the public square. Views incommensurate with the new empirical naturalism were categorized, beginning with Christianity, as religion, which would then ultimately become an expanded class and represented by the term, World Religions. These views opposing naturalism, these World Religions, needed their origins, beliefs, and practices interpreted and explained to which religion theorists responded with a new academic discipline—the science of religion. The basic question of David Hume would then need to be addressed, from whence did these belief systems—these religions—arise?

The religion / science paradigm was assessed by a twentieth century challenge. It specifically challenged naturalism's claim to exclusive knowledge. It explained the epistemological strategy of non-foundationalism, the epistemic basis for postmodernity

that has questioned the very idea of a foundation for objective knowledge that leads to certainty.

This work also argued that the category and the term, 'religion,' is no longer useful for a consistent and meaningful advancement of human knowledge and understanding. It argued that the category and term have been misappropriated by modernity in order to advance a particular epistemology and worldview—a particular philosophy of science and religion.

With the dichotomy and paradigm deconstructed, the project then developed a radical proposal for better understanding diverse worldviews. An alternative conceptual scheme was offered that has the potential to avoid the difficulties and connotative baggage associated with the term 'religion' and the resultant theories about origin and nature (e.g. cultural, psychological, social, etc.). The alternative term and concept is the German word, *Weltanschauung* (worldview), which is definable, comprehensive, and distinguishable from what it is not. It was argued that the concept, *Weltanschauung*, in conjunction with basic beliefs, offers a different framework by which to categorize the world's various understandings of reality and showed how this can be done. Gangadean's presuppositional approach was proposed as a method and conceptual scheme that establishes the basic beliefs of particular worldviews and then deduces less basic beliefs from them. When viewed as a whole it forms a system of beliefs. In its most basic sense, 'worldview' can be understood as a set of beliefs that give meaning to one's, or a culture's, experience. It shows how belief systems have analyzable formal structures that allow for grouping according to fundamental beliefs. These beliefs then produce the descriptive data of phenomenology.

This approach also calls for the presuppositions of the researcher and theorist to be identified. While an objective and fair assessment of the various worldviews is the desired goal, it must be understood that no particular approach to the interpretation and explanation of these views is neutral. A naturalistic approach is not a neutral approach. All worldviews and the worldviews of 'religious studies' students and researchers assume something about the nature of what is ultimate, how it is known, and 'the good' for human beings. The conclusions drawn from these studies reflect the perspective of the interpreter / explainer. The significant question that needs to be clarified is if the understanding has been informed by and constructed on a foundation of knowledge or on one of opinion and dogma.

REFERENCES

Abraham, William. *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1985.

Alston, William P. "Two Types of Foundationalism," *Journal of Philosophy* 73 (1976).

_____ "Has Foundationalism Been Refuted?" *Philosophical Studies* 29 (1976)

Asad, Talal. *Genealogies of Religion*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.

_____ *Formations of the Secular*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003.

Audi, Robert. *The Structure of Justification*. Cambridge: Cambridge UniversityPress,1993.

_____ *The Architecture of Reason: The Structure and Substance of Rationality.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

_____ *Belief, Justification, and Knowledge*. Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1998.

_____ *Epistemology: A Contemporary Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge*. London: Routledge, 1998.

_____ eds. William Wainwright. *Rationality, Religious Belief & Moral Commitment.* Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1986.

Ayer, Alfred J. *Language, Truth and Logic*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc. ND.

Ayer, Kneale, Paul, Pears, Strawson, Warnock, and Wolleim, eds. *The Revolution in Philosophy*. London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1960.

Barbour, Ian. *Myths, Models and Paradigms: A Comparative Study in Science and Religion*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1974.

_____*Religion and Science: Historical and Contemporary Issues.* San Francisco: Harper Collins Publishers, 1997.

Baynes, Kenneth, James Bohman, and Thomas McCarthy, eds., *After Philosophy: End or Transformation*? Cambridge, Mass., 1988.

Becker, Carl. *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932.

Bellah, Robert. *Beyond Belief: Essays on Religion in a Post-Traditional* World. NewYork: Harper and Row Publishers, 1970.

Berger, Peter. *The Heretical Imperative.* Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday,1980.

Berger, Peter, and Thomas Luckman. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967.

Blanchard, Brand. *Reason and Belief.* London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1974.

Boyer, Pascal. *Religion Explained*. New York: Basic Books, 2001.

Bozeman, Dwight. *Protestants in an Age of Science: The Baconian Ideal and Antebellum American Religious Thought.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1977.

Bratt, James D., ed. *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader.* Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998.

Brooke, John Hedley. *Science and Religion: Some Historical Perspectives*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Buckley, Michael J. *At the Origins of Modern Atheism*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987.

Burtt, E.A. *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science*. New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1954.

Casanova, Jose. *Public Religions in the Modern World*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994.

Clayton, Philip and Simpson, Zachary, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Science*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Clifford, W.K. *Lectures and Essays*. London: Macmillan, 1879.

Clouser, Roy. *The Myth of Religious Neutrality*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005.

Coulson, Charles A. *Science and Christian Belief*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1955.

Dancy, Jonathan, and Ernest Sosa, eds. *A Companion to Epistemology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, LTD, 1992.

Davidson, Donald. *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*. Oxford: Clarendon Press,1984.

Davies, Paul. *The Mind of God: The Scientific Basis for a Rational World*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992.

Dawkins, Richard. *The God Delusion*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co. 2006.

Dennett, Daniel. *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon*. London: Penguin Books, LTD, 2006.

Descartes, Rene. *Discourse of Method and Meditations*. Indianapolis: The Library of Liberal Arts, ND.

Dillenberger, John. *Protestant Thought And Natural Science: A Historical Interpretation.* London: Collins Clear- type Press, 1960.

Draper, John W. *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1874.

Dubuisson, Daniel. *The Western Construction of Religion*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.

Durkheim, Emile. *The Elementary Forms of Religious L*ife, trans. Karen Fields (New York: The Free Press, 1995 [1912])

Eliade, Mircea. *The Sacred and the Profane*. New York: Harcourt Brace &Co., 1959.

Evans-Pritchard, E.E. *Theories of Primitive Religion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963.

Feuerbach, Ludwig. *The Essence of Christianity*. Buffalo: Prometheus Books,1989.

Fitzgerald, Timothy. *The Ideology of Religious Studies*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Fuller, Donald, and Richard Gardiner, "Reformed Theology At Princeton And Amsterdam In The Late Nineteenth Century," *Presbyterian: Covenant Seminary Review*, (21/2, 1995).

Gangadean, Surrendra. *Philosophical Foundation: A Critical Analysis of Basic Beliefs*. Lanham: University Press of America, Inc., 2008.

Gay, Peter. *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*. New York: Alfred A. Knopt, 1966.
_____ ed. *The Enlightenment*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973.

Gergen, Kenneth. *The Saturated Self: Dilemmas of Identity in Contemporary Life*. New York: Basic Books, 1991.

Gibson, Roger, Jr. *The Philosophy of W.V. Quine: An Expository Essay*. Tampa: University Presses of Florida, 1982.

Gillespie, Neal. *Charles Darwin and the Problem of Creation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.

Graham, Gordon. *The Shape of the Past: A Philosophical Approach to History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Grenz, Stanley. *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context.* Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.

Grenz, Stanley, and Roger Olson. *Twentieth Century Theology*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1997.

Habermas, Jurgen. *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*. Cambridge: The MIT Press,1987.

Harris, Sam. *The End of Faith*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2005.

Harrison, Peter. '*Religion' and the Religions in the English Enlightenment*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Hart, Trevor. *Faith Thinking: The Dynamics of Christian Theology*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1995.

Hart, D.G., ed. *Reckoning With the Past: Historical Essays on American Evangelicalism from the Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995.

Hartshorne, Charles, and Paul Weiss, eds., *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, vol. 5. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960.

Harvey, David. *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989.

Hawking, Stephen and Leonard Mlodinow. *The Grand Design*. New York: Bantam Books, 2010.

Helseth, Paul, "B. B. Warfield's Apologetical Appeal To 'Right Reason': Evidence of a Rather Bald Rationalism?" *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology, 16.2* (Autumn 1998).

Hick, John. *An Interpretation of Religion: Human Responses to the Transcendent.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005.

Hodge, Charles. *Systematic Theology, Vol. II*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., [1873] 1968.

_____*What is Darwinism? And Other Writings on Science and Religion*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, [1874] 1994.

Hoeveler, David. *James McCosh And The Scottish Intellectual Tradition*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981.

Hume, David. "An Enquiry Concerning the Human Understanding," in *Dialogues and Natural History of Religion*, ed. J.C.A. Gaskin. Oxford: Oxford University Press, [1748] 1993.

Huxley, Thomas H. "Science and Culture", *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1968.

Jenkins, Philip. *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Kant, Immanuel. *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*. New York: Bobbs-MerrillCo., [1783] 1950.

_____*Reason Within the Limits of Reason Alone*. New York: Harper Row Publishers, [1793] 1960.

Kaufman, Gordon. *The Theological Imagination: Constructing the Concept of God*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1981.

Krauss, Lawrence. *A Universe From Nothing*. New York: Free Press, 2012.

Kuhn, Thomas S. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Second ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970.

Kurtz, Paul, ed. *Science and Religion: Are They Compatible?* New York: Prometheus Books, 2003.

Kuyper, Abraham. *Calvinism: Six Stone-lectures*. Amsterdam-Pretoria: Hoveker & Wormser LTD., N.D.

_____*Principles of Sacred Theology*, Trans. J. Hendrik De Vries. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, [1898] 1980.

Lennox, John. *God's Undertaker: Has Science Buried God?* Oxford: Lion Hudson plc, 2009.

Levy, Oscar, ed. *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, Vol. 9, *The Joyful Wisdom.* Edinburgh: T.N. Foulis, 1911.

Lindberg, David C., and Ronald L. Numbers, eds. *God and Nature: Historical Essays on the Encounter Between Christianity and Science*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1986.

Livingstone, David N. *Darwin's Forgotten Defenders*. Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987.

Locke, John. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Chatham, GB: Wordsworth Editions LTD, 1996.

Lyotard, Jean-Francois. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. G. Bennington and B. Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

Machen, J. Gresham. *Christianity and Liberalism*. Grand Rapids: Wm. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1923.

MacIntyre, Alasdair. *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition*, Gifford Lectures. London: Gerald Duckworth, 1990.

_____ *Whose Justice? Which Rationality*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988.

Macquarrie, John. *Twentieth Century Religious Thought*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1963.

Marsden, George. *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991.

_____ *The Soul of the American University*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.
Marsden, George, and Bradley Longfield, eds. *The Secularization of the Academy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Marty, Martin. *The Modern Schism: Three Paths to the Secular*. New York: Harper & Row, 1969.

Masuzawa, Tomoko. *The Invention of World Religions*. The University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 2005.

McCutcheon, Russell. *Manufacturing Religion*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Middleton, J. Richard, and Brian J. Walsh. *Truth Is Stranger Than It Used to Be: Biblical Faith in a Postmodern Age*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1995.

Mitchell, Basil. *The Justification of Religious Belief.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1981.

Muller, Richard. *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics, vol. 1*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987.

Murphy, Nancey. *Anglo-American Postmodernity: Philosophical Perspectives on Science, Religion, and Ethics*. Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 1997.

_____ *Beyond Liberalism and Fundamentalism: How Modern and Postmodern Philosophy Set the Theological Agenda.* Valley Forge, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 1996.

Nash, Ronald. *The Word of God and the Mind of Man: The Crisis of Revealed Truth in Contemporary Theology*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1982.

Naugle, David. *Worldview: The History of a Concept*. Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002.

Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1958.

Pals, Daniel. *Seven Theories of Religion*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Pannenberg, Wolfhart. *Theology and the Philosophy of Science*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd., 1976.

_____ *Basic Questions in Theology*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971.

Parsons, Keith. ed., *The Science Wars*. New York: Prometheus Books, 2003.

Passerin d'Entreves and Benhabib, eds. *Habermas and the Unfinished Project of Modernity*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1997.

Pearcey, Nancy R., and Charles B. Thaxton. *The Soul of Science: Christian Faith and Natural Philosophy*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1994.

Phillips, D.Z. *Faith After Foundationalism*. New York: Routledge, 1988.

Placher, William. *Unapologetic Theology*. Louisville: Westminster / John Knox Press, 1989.

_____ *The Domestication of Transcendence*. Louisville: Westminster / John Knox Press, 1996.

Plantinga, Alvin. *Warrant and Proper Function*. Oxford: Oxford University Press,1993.

_____ *Warranted Christian Belief*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

_____ *Where the Conflict Really Lies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

_____ Nicholas Wolterstorff, eds. *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God.* Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983.

Preus, J. Samuel. *Explaining Religion: Criticism and Theory from Bodin to Freud* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996.

Quine, W.V.O. *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1969.

_____ *From a Logical Point of View*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953.

Quine, W.V.O., and J.S. Ullian. *The Web of Belief*. New York: Random House, 1970.

Reventlow, Henning Graf. *The Authority of the Bible and the Rise of the Modern World.* Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985.

Rorty, Richard. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979.

Rosenberg, Alex. *Philosophy of Science* (London: Routledge, 2000.

Ruse, Michael. *Mysteries of Mysteries: Is Evolution a Social Construction?* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Russell, Bertrand. *Why I Am Not A Christian*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1957.

_____ *The Problems of Philosophy.* London: Oxford University Press, 1959.

Ryle, Gilbert, ed. *The Revolution in Philosophy*. New York: Macmillan, 1960.

Sagan, Carl. *The Cosmos*. New York: Random House, 1980 4.

Schleiermacher, Friedrich. *The Christian Faith, Vol. 1*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1963.

_____ *On the "Glaubenslehre"; Two Letters to Dr. Lucke,* trans. J. Duke and F. Fiorenza. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981.

_____ *Brief Outline Of Theology As A Field Of Study*, trans. Terrence N. Tice. Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Press, 1988.

Schrift, Alan D. *Nietzsche's French Legacy: A Genealogy of Poststructuralism*. New York: Routledge, 1995.

Sellars, Wilfred. *Science, Perception and Reality.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul,1963.

Sennett, James F., ed. *The Analytic Theist: An Alvin Plantinga Reader*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998.

Smart, Ninian. *Worldviews: Crosscultural Explorations of Human Beliefs*. New Jersey: Prentiss Hall, Inc., 1995.

Smith, James Ward, A. Leland Jamison, eds. *The Shaping of American Religion*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961.

Smith, Jonathan Z. *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.

Smith, Wilfred C. *The Meaning and End of Religion*. New York: New American Library, A Mentor Book, 1962.

Sosa, Ernest, and Jaegwon Kim, eds. *Epistemology: An Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2000.

Stark, Rodney and Roger Finke. *The Churching of America, 1776-2005: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005.

Stenger, Victor. *The New Atheism*: *Taking a Stand for Science and Reason*. New York: Prometheus Books, 2009.

_____ *God The Failed Hypothesis: How Science Shows That God Does Not Exist*. New York: Prometheus Books, 2007.

Strenski, Ivan. *Thinking About Religion: An Historical Introduction to Theories of Religion.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

Stout, Jeffrey. *The Flight From Authority*. Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 1981.

Taylor, Charles. *A Secular Age*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007.

Taylor, Mark C. *Erring: A Postmodern A/Theology*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984.

Thiel, John. *Imagination and Authority: Theological Authorship in the Modern Tradition.* Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1991.

_____*Nonfoundationalism*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1994.

Thiemann, Ronald. *Constructing a Public Theology*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991.

_____ *Revelation and Theology, The Gospel as Narrated Promise*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985.

Thrower, James. *Western Atheism: A Short History*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2000.

Toulmin, Stephen. *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity*. New York: The Free Press, 1990.

Tweed, Thomas. *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2006.

Tylor, E. B. *Anthropology. An Introduction to the Study of Man and Civilization*. Vol. 1, 2. London: Watts & Co. 1946.

Vasquez, Manuel. *More Than Belief: A Materialist Theory of Religion*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Warfield, Benjamin B. *Studies in Theology*. NY: Oxford University Press, 1932.

_____ *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*. Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1970.

Watts, Fraser and Kevin Dutton, eds. *Why the Science and Religion Dialogue Matters*. Philadelphia, PA: Templeton Foundation Press, 2006.

Weber, Max. *The Sociology of religion*, trans. Ephraim Fischoff. Boston: Beacon Press, [1922] 1964.

Weizsacker, C.F. von. *The Relevance of Science*. London: Collins, 1964.

Welch, Claude. *Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century, Vol.2*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985.

White, Andrew D. *History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*. Albany, OR: Ages Software, [1896] 1997.

Wiebe, Donald. *The Politics of Religious Studies*. New York: Palgrave, 1999.

Williams, Michael. *Groundless Belief: An Essay on the Possibility of Epistemology*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1977.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Philosophical Investigations*, 3rd ed., trans. G.E.M. Anscombe. New York: Macmillan, 1968.

Wolterstorff, Nicholas. *Reason Within the Bounds of Religion*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1984.

_____ *John Locke and the Ethics of Belief*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

_____ *Thomas Reid And The Story Of Epistemology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.