

Topoi

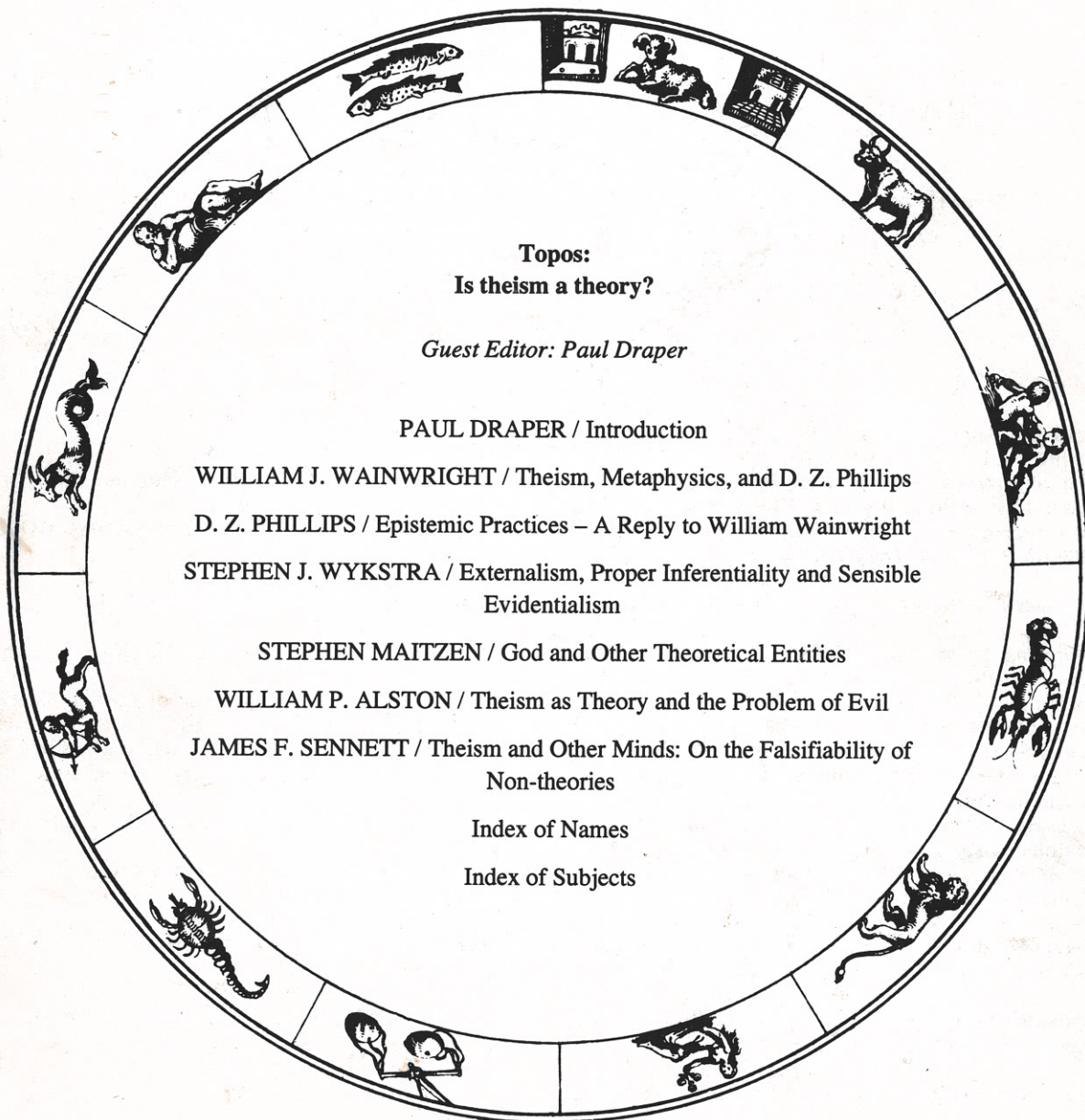
An International Review of Philosophy

Editor: Ermanno Bencivenga

Volume 14, No. 2

September 1995

*This issue completes
Volume 14*



CODEN TOPODL

ISSN 0167-7411

Kluwer Academic Publishers / Dordrecht, Boston, London

Externalism, Proper Inferentiality and Sensible Evidentialism*

Stephen J. Wykstra

Why don't you just scrap this God business, says one of my bitter suffering friends. It's a rotten world, you and I have been shafted, and that's that.

I'm pinned down. When I survey this gigantic intricate world, I cannot believe that it just came about. I do not mean that I have some good arguments for its being made and that I believe in the arguments. I mean that this conviction wells up irresistibly within me when I contemplate the world.

Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Lament for a Son*¹

Ma's account of how she happened to be in the yard with her shotgun at the very moment the Doberman attacked was quite simple: she reasoned that since Gadabout Gaddis's show had started I'd be hurrying, that in my hurry I might forget the Doberman, that hurrying children were its favorite prey, and that the world would be a better place without the Doberman; so she jumped up from the TV, grabbed the shotgun (it's always loaded), heard the tires and me shrieking as she rounded the house, took aim and squeezed the trigger. Given her martial skills, the rest was a foregone conclusion. Yet the fact that she could instantaneously assimilate and act upon these details implies a high degree of intelligence

David James Duncan, *The River Why*²

Is theism a theory? For the believer, to ask this question is, at least in part, to ask how God makes himself known or epistemically accessible to us. For the non-believer, it is to ask how God, if God exists, might do so. Either way, we usually envision two broad possibilities. On the first, the access is by some "basic" spiritual faculty, akin to our faculties of perception or memory. On the second possibility, the access is by inference – by reasoning from other things we believe, things constituting evidence for conclusions about God. We learn that dogs exist in the first way; we learn that electrons exist in the second. What about access to God? Is it by the first mode, or by the second? Or is it by something else – something between the two, or, perhaps, something utterly unlike either?

To ask whether theism is a theory, I thus take it, is

to ask whether belief in God³ needs evidence in something like the way that belief in electrons needs evidence. So taken, whether theism is a theory is precisely what has divided evidentialists and basicists in recent years.⁴ Evidentialists think that belief in God does need inferential evidence, rather like belief in electrons does. Basicists think it doesn't, urging that it can be, and at its epistemic best is, a "properly basic" belief akin to our beliefs in physical objects or the past or other minds. Such basic beliefs, as basicists see it, properly rest on non-inferential "grounds" rather than on inferential "evidence." Belief in God can be, Plantinga (1983, p. 17) thus urges, "entirely right, proper, and rational without any evidence or argument at all."

In an earlier essay (Wykstra, 1989), I argued that evidentialism can be put in a more sensible form than that usually considered. In (1990) I explored how, notwithstanding the skepticism expressed by D. Z. Phillips toward my earlier promissory note,⁵ one could be a "sensible evidentialist" while distinguishing between religious and scientific rationality: for although I find Phillips's antirealism entirely uncongenial, I quite agree that an adequate theory of religious rationality must illuminate our actual religious life. But to evaluate whether theistic belief is properly basic or properly inferential, we now need good epistemological accounts both of proper basicity and of proper inferentiality. Plantinga, Alston, Wolterstorff, and other basicists have developed accounts of proper basicity; they have also argued persuasively that our thinking about this has often been distorted by a tradition of strong foundationalism (and, behind that, of internalism) leading to overly narrow "criteria of proper basicity." I want here to do something similar for the other side. What is it, we must ask, to properly hold a belief in an inferential way? What must inference be, to confer epistemic propriety or merit on a belief? What, in short, should be

our “criteria of proper inferentiality”? Extending my earlier work, this essay will argue that internalism has led to impoverished answers to these questions, and will explore some ways that externalism might enrich our conceptions of proper inferentiality so as to give a more “sensible evidentialism.”

1. Two types of evidentialism

The core intuition of evidentialism is that theistic belief “needs evidence”; the core intuition of basicism is that it doesn’t. But what is it, to “need evidence”? Common answers to this are fueled by the familiar. The truth of some claims seems to have a direct and immediate obviousness. That I have two hands is something I can just tell by looking and seeing; that 1 plus 1 is 2 is something immediately obvious to my reason. What properly convinces me of both things is something direct, immediate: call them “Type One claims.” But I may also believe things whose truth is not at all obvious in this way – that 17 times 139 is 2363, say, or that atoms are made of protons, electrons, and neutrons. Such claims, to be properly believed, need to be secured by inference, inference from other already-secured beliefs: call them “Type Two” claims.

To a first approximation, then, what divides evidentialists and basicists is whether theism is a Type Two claim. But in what sense do Type Two claims need evidence? Examples are not enough; we need an explanation. For this we must press three questions about the “needs evidence” notion:

- Q1: For the sake of what merit is inferential evidence needed?
- Q2: What relation to inferential evidence is needed?
- Q3: What sort of thing is inferential evidence?

The first thing we must see here is how certain ways of answering Q1 have led to associated answers to Q2. Q1 asks: for the sake of what does theistic belief allegedly need evidence? There are two broad ways of construing the evidentialists’ core intuition on this matter, an old way and a new way. On the old way, evidentialists take (or mis-take) it that evidence is needed for the sake of rationality – that is, in order for theistic believers to be rational (or at least avoid being irrational) in their believing. On the new way, evidence is needed for the sake not of rationality but of warrant, or epistemic adequacy. These two answers to Q1 give two

families of evidentialism and basicism, which I shall call rationality-evidentialism (and its denial, rationality-basicism), on one hand, and warrant-evidentialism (and its denial, warrant-basicism), on the other. Most discussion has focused on rationality-evidentialism; but warrant-evidentialism, I shall argue, is both more sensible and better captures the issue dividing evidentialists and basicists.

1.1. *Rationality-evidentialism*

Rationality-evidentialism says that evidence is needed for the sake of the theist’s being rational in her believing. What is it for a belief to be “rational” (or “irrational”)? Current thinking gives two main possibilities. The first takes rationality deontologically, as a matter of fulfilling our doxastic duties – our duties in matters of forming and regulating our beliefs. Calling someone “irrational” denotes violation of these duties; irrationality, on this construal, is doxastic sin.

The second takes rationality aretaically, as a matter of manifesting certain “excellencies” that we think appropriate to virtuous believing. Suppose Richard has a brain tumor; it is giving him paranoid beliefs that his wife is trying to kill him. We know that, given the tumor, Richard cannot help this. We thus do not blame him; we do not suppose he is failing to meet some duties. Nevertheless, we might call him irrational. (“How could Rich accuse me like that?,” his wife sobs. “Sue,” the doctor replies, “you’ve got to remember the tumor is making him irrational.”) We are still saying that Richard’s believing falls short of standards, but these standards are not of duties, but of desirable or excellent ways of functioning, akin to standards informing our judgments about health. On this approach, irrationality is not so much doxastic sin as doxastic sickness.

Both explications may capture important ordinary uses of the term “rational.” Moreover, they have an important commonality. On both, to deem a person irrational is to diagnose something as “going wrong” in the believing person, the subject holding the belief. It is something in this believing subject – whether a culpable sin or a nonculpable sickness – that needs changing or fixing, if things are to be brought up to snuff. Let us put this by saying that ascriptions of rationality and irrationality are (on either option)

subject-focused evaluations. So far as Q1 goes, then, what old-style evidentialists are claiming (and old-style basicists denying) is that theistic belief needs evidence in order for theistic believers to be free of irrationality (whether as doxastic sin or doxastic sickness) in their believing.

A subject-focused way of answering Q1 will determine an associated answer to Q2. Q2 asks: what relation to evidence do evidentialists claim (and basicists deny) that theistic belief "needs"? If we are taking evidence to be needed for the sake of the rationality of the subject, what is needed is, plausibly, that the believing subject herself be cognizant of the evidence, discern its bearing on her belief, and (perhaps) hold the belief partly on account of this.⁶ Putative evidence will not contribute to an individual's being rational in believing some proposition, unless this evidence and its bearing fall within that individual's cognizance, and this cognizance makes some causal contribution to her believing. The old answer to Q1 thus puts strong pressures on how one answers Q2. Putting these together, what old-style evidentialists affirm (and old-style basicists deny) about theistic belief is then something like this:

Any individual believing that God exists must, in order to be rational, hold this belief on the basis of his/her own inference of it from evidence.

This is the heart of what I call rationality-evidentialism.

1.2. *What Hansel and Gretel teach us*

But does rationality-evidentialism really capture the evidentialist's core intuition – the intuition that in some important sense theistic belief "needs evidence"? Here consider Plantinga's counterexample against evidentialism construed as rationality-evidentialism. Plantinga considers a fourteen-year-old who believes in God, having been raised in a community where everyone so believes. This young man, stipulates Plantinga (1983, p. 33),

doesn't believe in God on the basis of evidence. He has never heard of the cosmological, teleological or ontological arguments; in fact no one has ever presented him with any evidence at all. And although he has often been told about God, he doesn't take that testimony as evidence; he doesn't reason thus: everyone around here says that God loves us and cares for us; most of what everyone around here says is true; so probably *that's* true. Instead, he simply believes what he's taught.

Let's call this young man "Hansel." As Plantinga describes him, Hansel simply believes what his elders have taught him about God. Is he, in so doing, necessarily irrational? Rationality-evidentialism entails that he is; but surely, says Plantinga, it is quite implausible to think that in so believing, this youth is irrational in the sense of being in violation of his doxastic duties. Plantinga seems to me right about this; and he remains right, I think, even if we opt for an aretaic rather than deontological construal of irrationality. The case of Hansel, then, gives us reason to reject rationality-evidentialism. But does it tell against evidentialism? Does rejecting rationality-evidentialism mean rejecting the core intuition of evidentialism?

Here we might begin by noting that almost all of us are "evidentialist" about *some* things. Almost all of us would want to say, intuitively, that a claim like "electrons exist" needs inferential evidence in a way that "dogs exist" does not; most of us, intuitively, are thus evidentialist about electrons. And what we want intuitively to say about electrons is, we may presume, pretty close to what the evidentialist wants to say about God. But just what is this? In particular, in taking it intuitively that electron-belief "needs evidence," are we really endorsing rationality-evidentialism about electrons? Are we, that is, endorsing the claim:

Any individual believing that electrons exist must, in order to be rational, hold his/her belief that electrons exist on the basis of his/her own inference of it from evidence.⁷

I do not think so. For suppose we consider some fourteen-year-old who believes that electrons exist, having been raised in a community where everyone so believes. Gretel, as we may call her, doesn't believe in electrons on the basis of evidence. She has never heard of the Millikan oil drop experiment, of electron-diffraction, or of the quantum-theoretic explanations of spectroscopic data; in fact no one has ever presented her with any evidence for electrons at all. And although she has often been told about electrons, she doesn't take that testimony as evidence; she doesn't reason thus: everyone around here says that electrons exist; most of what everyone around here says is true; so probably that's true. Instead, she simply believes what she's taught.

So Gretel, like Hansel, believes what her elders have taught her, without knowing the evidence. Now in our intuitive evidentialism about electrons are we saying that she is necessarily irrational in this? One hopes not.

Only an epistemic Scrooge would immediately deem Gretel as doxastically sick or sinful in believing her teachers as she does. Gretel, like Hansel, need not be irrational; therefore, rationality-evidentialism about Gretel's electron belief is wrong.⁸ But does this mean that our intuitive evidentialism about electrons is wrong? Does admitting that Gretel might be okay entail admitting that we were wrong in our core intuition that electron theory "needs evidence"?

I don't think so. What Gretel teaches us is not that our intuitive evidentialism about electrons is wrong, but that this evidentialism is not captured by rationality-evidentialism. And this, I believe, is also the real moral of the case of Hansel. For what evidentialists want to say about theistic belief is what all of us want to say about electron-belief.

1.3. *The evidentialist's real intuition*

What, then, do we mean, when we intuitively take electron-belief to "need evidence"? Begin with Q2: what relation to evidence do we take electron-belief to need? Hansel and Gretel give a clue here. For they believe on the say-so of their elders, by way of testimonial grounding; but a chain of testimonial grounding must somewhere have an anchor in some other sort of justification. Neils may believe in electrons by trusting the say-so of Ernst; and Ernst, by trusting the say-so of Wolfgang. But ultimately this chain of testimonial justification must somewhere have an anchor in someone's believing in electrons on a non-testimonial basis. When we insist that electron-belief needs evidence, it is this ultimate anchoring that we have in mind. Our intuition is that the relation to evidence needed includes:

- (a) any such chain of say-so being somewhere anchored in appropriate non-testimonial justifiers; and
- (b) for electron-belief, these terminating anchors being inferential ("evidence," not "grounds").

In answer to Q2, then: at the heart of our evidentialism regarding electrons is the intuition that inferential evidence for electrons needs to be available to the community of electron-believers. This does not mean, however, that each individual electron-believer needs to have availed himself of this evidence – or even that he be able to do so. Hansel and Gretel may be so deficient in mathematical ability that the evidence for electrons will forever be beyond their grasp. What is needed is

that such evidence be available to an electron-believing community to which they are appropriately related, and that some appropriate segment of that community have processed this evidence.⁹ The relation to evidence needed to their belief is communitarian, rather than individualistic.

But this raises a perplexity about question Q1. For the sake of what is this communitarian relation to evidence needed? On the old construal, evidence is needed for the sake of being rational. Is it for this that a communitarian "available evidence" relation is needed? Consider again Gretel, believing in electrons on the say-so of her fifth grade teacher, Mrs. Billings. Let us first assume that evidence for electrons is indeed available to the community of which she and Mrs. Billings are part. Is it the rationality of her belief that is enhanced by this assumed availability? Well, suppose we learned that our assumption was mistaken – that there is no good evidential case for electrons, and that the entire presumed case for electrons was an elaborate hoax perpetrated by clever con-men in Copenhagen in the 1920s. Would learning this give us reason to revise our judgement that Gretel is not irrational, and instead deem that she is, and all along has been, irrational in believing Mrs. Billings? Surely not. It is not for the sake of the rationality of her electron-belief, that we deem the availability of this case essential.

For the sake of what is it needed, then? In earlier papers, I suggested that were we to discover a Copenhagen Con, we would regard the belief of Gretel and others, while rational, as nevertheless in "Big Doxastic Trouble." But this, if correct, poses the question: what sort of defectiveness is "Big Doxastic Trouble"? How can a person's believing be "deeply doxastically defective" even if the person is entirely rational in so believing? One might think that its defectiveness lies simply in the person's believing something that it is false; but this surely is not the crux here. For suppose, after learning of the Copenhagen Con, we much later found the last laugh to be on the con men: contrary to their intentions, they had built a fraudulent case for a theory that, by sheer luck, turned out to be true. We would still, I think, deem Gretel (and everyone else during the reign of the Copenhagen Con) as having had an epistemically defective belief, even though what they believed was true. In what, then, does the defectiveness consist?

1.4. *The externalists' insight*

To see deeper into this, we need an epistemological perspective that has emerged in recent years as "externalism." While externalists differ in details, their common theme is that the "epistemic additive" turning true belief into knowledge consists in the knowing subject and known object being in a certain type of relationship – a relationship I shall call "successful epistemic hook-up". For our purposes, the externalists' thesis here can be illustrated by reference to "reliabilist" accounts of this relation. On these accounts, a true belief has positive epistemic status when it is produced by a "reliable process," a process that produces, or would produce, true beliefs with high frequency. And what matters, say reliabilists, is the "external" fact that the process is reliable – not that the subject has any awareness or knowledge of this. Reliabilists thus reject the traditional "internalist" assumption that the additive that turns true belief into knowledge must be something to which the subject has special access, something, that is, that is accessible within the subject's perspective.

Let us make the difference vivid with a standard type of scenario. Cheech and Chong are waking to the sound of their alarm clocks. Cheech is woken by his real alarm clock ringing. Chong, in contrast, has been abducted during the night by technologically-advanced Alpha Centaurians, who have drugged him (needlessly), taken him to Alpha Centauri, and put his brain in a vat, wiring it to a computer able to replicate precisely the brain's being in its old body back in the Haight. Chong's "virtual reality" will, by their advanced technology, be as vivid and complete as Cheech's real experience. The wiring completed, the computer now sends Chong's brain the same electrical signals it would have received waking up to the sound of his alarm clock. By coincidence, a child Alpha Centaurian has wandered into the lab, carrying Chong's alarm clock, which her father had brought back as a little present. She drops the alarm, and it goes off at just the moment that Chong, groggily waking up to the computer-generated sound of an alarm clock, forms the belief "My alarm clock is ringing." By coincidence, Chong is thus forming a true belief.

Though Chong's belief is true, most of us would intuitively say that in this situation he does not have knowledge that his alarm clock is ringing. The revealing question is what saying this will incline us to say about Cheech, waking up back on earth to the real sound of his alarm clock ringing. If we say that Chong's belief

is *not* knowledge, can we still affirm that Cheech's belief *is* knowledge?

Internalism creates a strong conceptual pressure to answer "No, we cannot affirm this." For internalism holds that what makes true beliefs "knowledge" are justifiers to which the subject has access. But in our scenario, Cheech has access to no more than does Chong. Given that Chong's "justifiers" do not make his belief knowledge, it will then strongly seem, if we are internalists, that Cheech's justifiers cannot make his belief knowledge either. Both Cheech and Chong, after all, have the same range and quality of sensations, sensations of waking in a room to the sound and sight of their familiar alarm clocks. There is nothing in his experience to which Cheech can point, not also available to Chong. Internalistically, the two are on epistemic par; the internalist will thus want to treat them identically.

Externalism, in contrast, allows one to treat the two cases differently. For Cheech's belief is in fact produced by the normal causal process, whereas Chong's is not. Externalists can thus say that Cheech has knowledge while Chong does not, due to some evaluatively-relevant difference (say, in their objective reliability) that in fact obtains between the two processes. Whether this difference was accessible within the perspective or experience of Cheech or Chong is, for externalists, not decisive: what matters is that the difference actually obtains. If it does obtain, then, by the externalist's lights, it is possible for Cheech and Chong to have access to the same range of justifiers, yet for Cheech's true belief to be knowledge even though Chong's is not.

Would externalists then see Cheech as justified in his belief, but Chong as unjustified? Here we must be careful. We might of course simply stipulate that "being justified" is our technical term for the epistemic additive, whatever it is, that turns belief into knowledge; in that event the answer would be "Yes." But as Alston and Plantinga have taught us, the term "justification" smacks of the subject-focused dimensions of duties and virtues. Externalists need not deny that beliefs can be evaluated with respect to these dimensions; externalists can even insist that with respect to these dimensions a strictly internalist account is in order. The externalist insists only that what turns true belief into knowledge is not just these dimensions, but something further. Perspicacious externalists thus will give a new name for this further thing ("warrant" or "epistemic adequacy" are as good as any), and may well retain the

old terms (rationality, reasonableness, being justified, etc.) for the other subject-focused dimensions. Externalists then are offering, not a rival account of the old thing (being rational, justified, etc.), but an account of a new thing ("warrant"); and they are then arguing that it is this new thing that turns true belief into knowledge. In this way, externalists can see Chong as well as Cheech as entirely justified and rational in their true beliefs about their alarm clocks: Chong's true belief fails to be knowledge, not because it lacks justification, but because it lacks warrant.¹⁰

I am suggesting, then, that a sensible externalism will see warrant as distinct from rationality. But will the two be entirely unrelated? Here, I think, many externalists have gone overboard. Externalism says that what soups a true belief up into knowledge is warrant – a relationship of "positive epistemic hook-up" between the knowing subject and the known object. But a right-headed externalism, as I see it, will insist that this positive epistemic hook-up depends on things going sufficiently right at *both* the subject pole and object pole – not just at the latter. Things going right at the subject pole – especially with respect to how epistemically mature subjects can be expected to perform, given what they have access to – are matters of rationality and justification. On a right-headed account, I am proposing, Chong's being sufficiently rational in his believing will remain a necessary condition for his belief's being knowledge; it is just not a sufficient condition.

1.5. Two types of evidentialism

Returning to our question: when we intuitively regard some belief as "needing evidence" (that is, as in need of having an evidential case for it available to the community), for the sake of what is this needed? The answer is: for the sake of warrant, or epistemic adequacy. And a belief can lack warrant, or be epistemically defective, due to malfunction either at the subject pole or the object pole of successful epistemic hook-up. For a victim of the Copenhagen Con the malfunction arises at the object pole; such a person can thus be entirely rational and justified in believing in electrons, even though – due to a dreadful malfunction in the tradition leading to her belief – her belief is epistemically defective.¹¹

In summary, then, there are two types of evidentialism and of basicism. When of the first type, they

divide over the issue: Does theistic belief need evidence in order for each theistic believer to be rational? Rationality-evidentialists answer "yes" to this question; rationality-basicalists answer "no." Rationality-evidentialism concerning theism, I have urged, is an extravagant position: basicalists like Plantinga are right in rejecting it. But we should also abhor rationality-evidentialism concerning electrons, concerning the distance between the earth and moon, and concerning innumerable other things that almost all of us intuitively agree *do* need evidence. Rationality-evidentialism thus entirely fails to capture what we intuitively mean by "needs evidence." And for this reason, the *denial* of rationality-evidentialism – that is, rationality-basicalism – is a somewhat trivial truth, telling us nothing about whether theistic belief needs evidence in the ordinary (though hard to explicate) intuitive sense. Rationality-basicalism is as uninteresting as rationality-evidentialism is extravagant.

But evidentialism and basicism of the second type divide over a very different issue: does theistic belief "need evidence" in order for each theistic believer to have a warranted, or epistemically adequate, belief? Warrant-evidentialists answer "Yes"; warrant-basicalists answer "No." Warrant-evidentialism is not so extravagant, provided that it recognizes that evidence can contribute to the warrant of a person's belief by being available to, and processed in an appropriate way by, the epistemic community of which that person is a member. This is, in part at least, how our beliefs on scientific matters get warrant from evidence that we do not individually know; it is also why warrant-evidentialists need not be epistemic Scrooges regarding Hansel and Gretel. Whether theistic belief needs evidence in this sense is a live issue, an issue which plausibly captures what evidentialists and basicalists continue to have conflicting intuitions about. To affirm that theistic belief needs evidence in this sense is not extravagant; and to deny it is not trivial. Warrant-evidentialism is a more sensible evidentialism; and warrant-basicalism is a more interesting basicism.

2. On Q3: What is inferential evidence, that we may need it?

So what does it mean, to claim – or deny – that theistic belief "needs evidence". Sensible evidentialists and interesting basicalists, I have so far argued, will agree

that on the relevant construal of this notion, beliefs which "need evidence" need it:

- (A1) for the sake of epistemic adequacy, not for the sake of rationality; and
- (A2) need it in a communitarian way, not an individualistic way.

This illuminates what it is to "need evidence," but not what it is to need *evidence*; I now turn from Q1 and Q2 to Q3: what is "inferential evidence," that we may need it? I first look at how some basicists construe inferential evidence when denying that theism needs it. These basicists, I shall suggest, are much too restrictive, possibly because they are unconsciously influenced by the same bankrupt "strong foundationalism" that has, in their view, corrupted past thinking about properly basic beliefs. I then explore how externalism and Reid might enlarge our notions of inferential evidence.

2.1. *The standard strictures on proper inferentiality*

What, then, is it, for a belief to be inferentially held, or held on the basis of inferential evidence? This is an under-discussed topic in epistemology. So far, we have been bandying the term "inferential evidence" about in the usual unexamined way. We must now try to do better. I shall use some remarks of basicists to this end, but I am not concerned with precise attribution. I use their remarks to stalk a common way of thinking.

Consider again Plantinga's fourteen-year-old theist, brought up to believe in God in a community where everyone so believes. Hansel, Plantinga says (1983, p. 33), believes what people tell him about God, but he "does not take what people say as evidence." For

he does not reason thus: everyone around here says that God loves us and cares for us; most of what everyone around here says is true; so probably that's true. Instead, he simply believes [in a basic way] what he's taught.

Hansel "does not reason thus." What conditions would need to be met, for the belief of some subject S to be founded on an inferential process in which he did "reason thus"? Plantinga's comments suggest three conditions:

- C1. S must explicitly and occurrently believe the propositions that constitute his evidence;
- C2. S must have some insight or putative insight into

a support-relation between these occurrently-believed propositions and the belief he holds on their basis;

- C3. This insight or putative insight must play a significant causal role in generating or sustaining S's belief that God exists.

Each condition needs adumbration. C1 amplifies how Plantinga tends to use the term "believe." Consider his recent discussion of two sixth-graders, both believing that the earth is round. One of them – we might as well call her Gretel – believes this on the basis of evidence. (Perhaps she has, like Aristotle, noticed how sailing ships drop over the visual horizon on a clear day: judging that this is best explained by supposing the earth is round, she concludes that, probably, the earth is round.) The other one – let's keep calling him Hansel – also believes the earth is round, but he, in his usual credulous way, just trustingly believes what his teacher tells him. Now the beliefs of both children, Plantinga says, may have warrant, but they get this warrant in quite different ways. Gretel's belief B gets warrant by way "of being believed on the (evidential) basis" of some other belief, A, and to get warrant in this *evidential* way, she "must believe A as well as B." Hansel's belief, in contrast, gets warrant in a different *testimonial* way, a way for which, Plantinga avers (1993b, p. 138), Hansel "need not explicitly believe that the testifier testifies to what he does." That thought, Plantinga explains, "may never cross his mind; he may be paying attention only to the testimony."

Let's clarify this by imagining someone listening anxiously to a radio broadcasting a baseball game on which he has bet heavily. His team is behind by one run; it is the bottom of the ninth; there are two outs with a man on third. The announcer screams "It's a long fly ball in deep left field . . . it's going, going, GONE. ITS A HOME RUN, FOLKS, THE REDS HAVE WON THE WORLD SERIES." Now, Pete (as I shall call him) immediately forms the new belief "The Reds have won" on grounds of the announcer's testimony. Pete may do so without consciously entertaining and assenting to anything like "The radio announcer has just testified to a home run." For Pete is so absorbed by what is being reported, it never crosses his mind that it has been reported, that he has heard the report on the radio, and so on. Plantinga's point, likewise, is that due to his teacher's testimony, Hansel may warrantably believe – in a basic way – that the earth is round, without ever

forming the belief that his teacher has told him this. And it is in exactly this respect that Plantinga is contrasting the warrant of Hansel's belief with Gretel's. Being triggered by the testimony, not inferred from it, Hansel's belief A can get warrant from testimony B "without any explicit belief" on Hansel's part concerning B. But Gretel's belief gets its warrant evidentially (or inferentially) from B, so, as Plantinga sees it, Gretel "must believe B" – believe it explicitly, his contrast suggests. We might, then, call condition C1 "the explicit belief condition."

Next, C2: for S's belief to be inferential, S must have insight or putative insight into a support-relation between the belief and its evidential basis. But what is it to take some belief to support (or be good evidence for) some other belief? Basicists typically construe this as a matter of having some argument that derives the one from the other. I earlier quoted Nicholas Wolterstorff (1987, p. 76):

When I survey this gigantic intricate world, I cannot believe that it just came about. I do not mean that I have some good arguments for its being made and that I believe in the arguments. I mean that this conviction wells up irresistibly within me when I contemplate the world.

Now of course Wolterstorff sees his conviction as due to his apprehending certain features of the world; he even specifies – and so has explicit beliefs about – what these features are. It is, he says, a "gigantic intricate world"; it is (he says a few lines later) "full of beauty and splendor," and so on. His belief in God thus satisfies C1. Still, he does not see it as inferential, for he does not "have good arguments" that get him from these features of the world to theism. For this reason, I suspect, Wolterstorff would not regard his theistic conviction as evidentially or inferentially based on his beliefs about the world's intricacy, splendor, and the like. For this would require him to have rational insight into support-relations between the world's being intricate, full of beauty and splendor, etc., and its being made by God, and so to have "a good argument" from one to the other.

Finally, C3. C3 can be illustrated by an example I heard some years ago from Plantinga concerning his calculator. Plantinga believes that his calculator is reliable; he also perceives that his calculator indicates (under appropriate digital manipulation) that $1 + 2 = 3$. And he takes these two things to support, by a good argument, that 1 plus 2 does indeed equal 3. C1 and

C2 are thus met for belief that $1 + 2 = 3$. Nevertheless, this belief is basic, not inferential. For his "calculator argument" is, in Robert Audi's terminology, a reason *for what* he believes (that $1 + 2 = 3$) without being a reason *for which* he believes that $1 + 2 = 3$.

2.2. Internalist roots of the standard strictures

On fairly standard ways of thinking, I have urged, a person's belief is a non-basic or inferential one only if that person holds it because they have some insight or putative insight into a support-relation between it and some other propositions that they explicitly believe. Since having such putative insight is tantamount to possessing an argument for the belief, inferential beliefs are, on this way of thinking, beliefs one holds because one takes oneself to have good arguments for them. Now there is, no doubt, a class of beliefs that has this feature. But is this feature what makes a belief "inferential"? That is to say, if we are going to carve our beliefs into those that are basic and those that are inferential, is this the feature that should guide our carving?

Whether we think so, I now propose, will be deeply affected by whether we are internalists or externalists. It will be affected, because what makes "inferentiality" of interest is that it is something that can confer, or help to confer, epistemic adequacy on a belief. Let us refer to a belief as "properly inferential" when it has the relevant part of its epistemic adequacy conferred on it by being held in an inferential way. (Being "properly inferential" will then be the counterpart to what basicists speak of as being "properly basic," with the proviso that it is warrant rather than deontological justification that is now connoted by the word "proper.") In asking what it is for a belief to be "inferential," then, we must have one eye on a concept of epistemic merit (that is, epistemic adequacy): what, we must ask, must inference be, in order to confer on a belief this merit? How we answer this question will thus be strongly shaped by what merit we are picking out, and what our conception of it is.¹² So we here come back to the option between internalist and externalist theories.

The work of Plantinga has made it a familiar thesis that one version of internalism (namely, strong foundationalism) lies behind overly stringent constraints on what beliefs can count as properly basic. What I now suggest is that internalism has also generated overly stringent constraints on what can count as properly

inferential beliefs – that is, on the sort of thing inference must be, if it is to confer epistemic adequacy on a belief. In its strongest forms, internalism holds that for something to confer positive epistemic status on a belief, it must meet two requirements:

- R1. It must be something to which the subject has privileged access – something the presence of which is evident from within the subject's perspective.
- R2. It must be something whose relevance to truth is evident to the subject, so the subject can see that the presence of this feature makes a claim worthy of assent.

R1 and R2 say that positive epistemic status is conferred only by things to whose presence and truth-relevance, respectively, we have privileged access. Both requirements can be seen as lurking in Descartes's *Meditations*. In *Meditation One*, the narrator cannot find anything distinguishing waking experience from vivid dreams: from this he concludes – relying on R1 – that he does not know that he is awake rather than dreaming. When the narrator later finds such features, this turns his belief that he is not dreaming into knowledge, rather than showing that he knew this all along. R2 lurks in the *Dedication*, when Descartes says that atheists cannot know the truth of the axioms or theorems of geometry. They can apprehend the claims in the requisite clear and distinct way, so R1 is met, but without knowledge of a perfect God, Descartes thinks they are not in an epistemic position to affirm – with the requisite level of certitude, at any rate – the relevance of clarity and distinctness to truth.

R1 and R2, I now want to suggest, will generate strictures on what can be believed in a properly inferential way, just as they do on what can be believed in a properly basic way. For by internalistic lights, an inferential process, every bit as much as a "basic" process, will give warrant to a belief only if it meets requirements R1 and R2. And of course, having a good argument, on traditional conceptions, meets both requirements nicely. For good arguments, in the Cartesian – Lockean tradition, rest on rational insight into "relations of ideas" (that is, into support-relations). Such rational insight is something one can tell one has (meeting R1), and since it is insight into support-relations, its relevance to truth is also evident, meeting R2. Internalism, then, makes it natural to think that inference, to confer warrant, must rest on rational insight into support-relations. If a process does not do

this, internalism will incline us to regard it as non-inferential – for it is of the essence of inferentiality that it be something that can confer warrant on its products.

Return, then, to Wolterstorff. The conviction that God made all this "wells up irresistibly" in him as he surveys the world. And Wolterstorff supposes this conviction to be basic, rather than inferential. The intricacy and splendor seen in the world, he thinks, are triggers of the conviction, without generating it as an inferential conclusion. But why does he think this? He tells us that he does not pretend to "have some good arguments, and believe in the arguments." Having good arguments would mean having rational insight into logical relations; Wolterstorff claims no such rational insight. This, at least, might be why he regards his conviction as non-inferential. Regarding it this way would, at any rate, make a great deal of sense – if one is under the spell of internalism.

2.3. *How externalism loosens the strictures*

But what if one is an externalist instead? Here one holds that what generates warrant is, at least in part, something like Goldman's "being produced by a reliable process," or like Plantinga's "working in accord with a design plan in appropriate circumstances." Being externalist, we drop the requirement that something can confer warrant only if the believing subject has privileged reflective access to its presence or truth-relevance. Can we not, in this event, drop the old strictures on proper inferentiality as well? Can not the "premises" that generate inferential conclusions now be much less explicit, perhaps even be barely conscious – since we no longer require that the inference involve rational insight into their bearing on the conclusion?

To make this suggestion more plausible, consider how we evaluate scientific theories. It is widely agreed that, given two incompatible theories, T1 and T2, which both fit the empirical data, T1 can be more rational to accept on account of its being more simple than T2. This consensus, as I see it, reflects a widely-shared "instinctive" disposition. Give science students a set of pressure-volume data, and ask them to select between several proposals about how the pressure of a gas varies as a function of its volume. Usually, given a simpler function and more complex ones that also fit the data, they will judge that the simpler function is more likely to be true.

But what sort of judgement is this? Many of these same science majors, in a philosophy of science class, will initially dismiss a proposed simplicity criterion with disdain. Theories, they will say, must be based on observed facts, not on some wish for simplicity. In particular cases, they instinctively choose hypotheses on account of their simplicity; but presented with a general proposal they may deny any role for simplicity. Only on reflection do they slowly come to an articulate awareness of their simplicity instinct, and come to endorse an articulated simplicity criterion. And they may continue to endorse it even on learning how hard it is to justify philosophically.

And now the question: when someone like Copernicus, apprehending the simplicity of his theory over its rival, "instinctively" believes that his is more likely, can this belief still be inferential? Can the inferential include such "instinctive" dispositions? I believe it can. Copernicus's theory-preference was certainly not merely a matter of perception or memory or introspection; it was a conclusion, based upon apprehended considerations. But these considerations are often tacit and inarticulate. Moreover, we often form beliefs in accord with simplicity, though we lack explicit belief about a principle of simplicity. Moreover, even after we articulate and reflect on a principle of simplicity, we may have nothing resembling "rational insight" into a support-relation between the simplicity and the verisimilitude of a theory. The process by which we form theory-convictions from apprehending simplicity does not, by internalist lights, meet plausible conditions of proper inferentiality.

Externalism, however, enables us to loosen these strictures on inferentiality without compromising the capacity of inference to contribute to warrant. A belief might well gain warrant, even though it is a conclusion triggered by earlier tacit beliefs (or "apprehendings") that are not consciously formulated, and that lead one to a conclusion even when one has nothing like rational insight into "support relations" between them and the conclusion. Calling such a process "inferential" thus would not – if we are externalists – violate the conditions that inference must meet in order to be the sort of thing that can confer warrant. By making these conditions less restrictive, externalism can do for proper inferentiality what Plantinga's critique of strong foundationalism does for proper basicity.

3. On preserving the difference

I have urged that a belief can be inferential even though it is triggered by a tacit belief in accord with a rule one does not recognize. But will not this make the category of the inferential uselessly broad? If we define inference so broadly, will it not include everything that basicists call grounds, leaving evidentialism different from basicism in name only? And if Nicholas Copernicus's heliocentrism rests on his "tacit inference" from a "tacit apprehending" of its relative simplicity, does not Forrest Gump's belief in trees rest on his tacit inference from the tacit belief that he is being "appeared to treely"?

There are two objections here. The first is that broadening the notion of the inferential along the lines I have suggested will make everything "inferential." The second is that it will make too much inferential – in particular, that it will make inferential some paradigmatic cases of basic beliefs.

The first objection is easier. Consider a truly paradigmatic case of a basic belief: a distance-judgement based upon visual cues to which the subject has no access whatever. Perhaps, looking straight up into the sky one night from my home just off Country Club Drive in Holland, Michigan, I see an extraordinary flying object – a set of rotating saucer-like objects, let us say. I immediately judge them to be about a thousand feet overhead. Suppose, further, that this distance-judgment is in fact due to highly subtle cues from the muscular sensations as my eye focuses on this object, and that there are, in this particular situation, no other cues present that would allow me to judge this distance. Here, it seems to me, it would not make any sense at all to say that my distance-judgement is inferential. The cues behind the judgement are not accessible to me at all; it is not possible for me to formulate the basis of my judgement to myself, nor to communicate it to another even partially. Of course, I can say "The saucers just look about a thousand feet away to me," or "I am being appeared to a-thousand-foot-away-ly" – but these both come to saying only, "Something or other, I know not what, gives me a strong inclination to believe that the saucers are about a thousand feet away." This type of grounding is not sufficient to make a belief inferential. For in part, what makes certain beliefs usefully categorized as "inferential" is that they have a basis which we can describe (independently of the conclusion which we take it to be evidence for), and describe in ways that afford distinctive possibilities for intersubjective

communication and critical evaluation. An inferentially-held belief is held on the basis of something that has a propositionally-codifiable information content, which as such can be reflected upon, communicated, and subjected to distinctive types of challenge and defeaters. Not all beliefs have such a basis; so this approach does not make all beliefs inferential.

The second objection remains. It does seem that many paradigmatically basic beliefs do have bases which have such independent codifiability. Our beliefs concerning the inner mental life of other human beings, for example, seem founded on our beliefs or apprehendings concerning their physical motions and gestures and vocal tones; if you ask me why I believe some student was unhappy, I can reply that he sat in my office and wept. But have I inferred that he is unhappy – or have I, instead, simply perceived this?

Thomas Reid, addressing this issue, urges that the boundary between perceptual truths and the inferential conclusions of science is a blurred zone, not a sharp line. To be sure, Reid says (1970, p. 211) “perception ought be distinguished . . . from that knowledge of the objects of sense which is got by reasoning.” Such conclusions “got by reasoning” belong either to theoretical “science,” when they are remote from the perceptual truths from which they are inferred, or to “common understanding,” when they are fairly immediate inferences from these perceptual truths. (Reid (1970, p. 213) illustrates: “When I see a garden in good order . . . , I immediately conclude from these signs the skill and industry of a gardener.”) But Reid immediately goes on to insist (p. 213) that the line between inferred conclusions and truths of perception (particularly acquired perception) is not a sharp one: some conclusions of common understanding, says Reid, “dwell so near to perception that it is difficult to trace the line which divides the one from the other.” Reid’s point, in these concluding paragraphs of the important section 20 of Chapter 6 of his *Inquiry*, seems to me quite right. If so, it may not be a drawback that my approach tempts us to see as “inferential” some beliefs that we had considered “properly basic.” For perhaps these beliefs are just those cases that lurk in what Reid recognizes as a blurry boundary-zone.

In some cases, then, sensible evidentialists may regard as inferential “evidence” for theism the very things that sensible basicists call non-inferential “grounds.” Even then, however, being an evidentialist will make a difference. For basicists, being able to

identify what triggers the belief is a luxury: one can always fall back on: “I have no idea; it just seems that way.” This is not so for evidentialists, even given the externalistically-broadened sense of “inferential” for which I have been plumping here. For even in this broadened sense, a conviction will be inferential only if there is at least a partial specifiability to both the specific triggering circumstances, and the general principles by which these generate the conviction at issue. What externalism does is underscore the recognition that the specifiability may be only partial, and that our considered assent to the general principles will often rest not on rational insight into their truth, but on our reflective discovery that they are, and have been, part of our constitutional make-up, as exhibited in our pre-reflective judgements.

Current basicists are eager and willing to allow that our basic perceptual processes do not need to rest on “rational insight” in order for them to be worthy of trust, and to confer epistemic adequacy on the beliefs they generate. Sensible Evidentialism is here just asking that inferential processes get parity of treatment. Our epistemic access to electrons is clearly inferential; but the inference reflects dispositions – e.g. the simplicity disposition – which cannot be reduced to rational insight into support-relations. To ignore this feature of inferentiality will blind us even to how we gain inferential access to electrons; it is not likely to help us discern how God may give us broadly inferential access to Himself.

I opened this paper with a quotation by Wolterstorff. When he surveys the world, Wolterstorff writes, he cannot believe it “just happened”; he is convinced it was made by God. This conviction “wells up irresistibly.” But welling-up can come from our inferential powers as well as our perceptual ones. Wolterstorff relates his to the presence of intricacy, splendor, and beauty of the world; others might cite a sense of the significance of justice and love and grace. These are specifiable features of our world; is it really so clear that they trigger the conviction in a purely non-inferential way? To be sure, Wolterstorff may feel he “lacks good arguments” – arguments that would persuade his bitter friend asking “Why don’t you just scrap this God business?” But does this establish non-inferentiality?

When Copernicus apprehended the relative simplicity of heliocentrism relative to the data, the conviction that heliocentrism is true welled up within him. The simple-making features were specifiable, at least in part; he

could point them out to fellow astronomers. But did he have a good argument from them – an argument that would persuade a skeptical friend like Osiander? He could make sure Osiander was looking at the same features; if Osiander questioned even the relevance of simplicity, he could perhaps point to other cases in which simplicity moved Osiander to conviction. But he could not, I think, give a “good argument” that simplicity is a sign of truth. Externalism, I have argued, allows us nevertheless to see Copernicus’s conviction as inferential, as resting on evidence, not solely on grounds. For properly inferential beliefs, like properly basic ones, can rely on other dispositions besides our capacity for “rational insight” into logical relations.

Externalism, I am suggesting, allows us to broaden the notion of inferential evidence. How to broaden it without making it too broad remains for further inquiry. But it is my hope that when it is appropriately broadened, we philosophers will find ourselves more able not only to develop good inferential arguments for many theistic beliefs, but also to discern and endorse inferential considerations which have, all along, been playing a major role in the historical belief-formation process of the theistic community.¹³ Even sensible theistic basicists might be grateful to discover these considerations; but sensible theistic evidentialists will be particularly eager to discover them, since, as they see it, the warrant of theistic belief depends upon such considerations having played an appropriate historical and communal role.

But which is *more* sensible – sensible evidentialism, or its denial, sensible basicism? As in my earlier paper (Wykstra, 1989), my primary aim here has not been to settle the issue dividing evidentialists from basicists, but to *relocate*¹⁴ it, by clarifying what should – and should not – be at issue when we ask whether some belief “needs evidence.” This clarification is crucial regardless of which side one is on: a basicist who denies that belief in God “needs evidence” stills needs to know what she is denying. And such a basicist, while denying that belief in God needs evidence, may nevertheless recognize that certain other more specific theistic doctrines do “need evidence”: she will then want to make sure her evidentialism regarding these more specific doctrinal claims is of the sensible rather than extravagant variety.

I am, myself, still somewhat inclined toward sensible evidentialism regarding theism. This is, I think, consistent with believing that God has made humans with

what Calvin calls a *Sensus Divinitatis*. Partly this is because even a non-inferential *Sensus Divinitatus* may, in our fallen world, stand in need of what my earlier essay called “discriminational evidence.”¹⁵ But it is also because, as we expand our concept of inferentiality, it becomes less clear that a *Sensus Divinitatus*, of the sort to which the Bible attests, is non-inferential. God, Paul says in Romans 1:20, has made his power and deity evident to us through the things he has made. But how are these things supposed to make this evident to us? It seems to me – as it seemed to Reid – that it may well be by the same broadly inferential processes by which we apprehend intelligent or sublime creativity in things made by humans. Wolterstorff may feel he lacks good arguments, but like Ma going for the Doberman, the way he assimilates the details “implies a high degree of intelligence.”

This is not to say, however, that inferential considerations provide us with our *only* epistemic access to the person of God. Jesus came, Paul says in Ephesians 2:18, that through him we might “have access in one Spirit to the Father.” This access, and the love which is poured upon us in the Spirit, has an experiential and noninferential dimension and might make its own extremely weighty contribution to the warrant of our beliefs. Sensible theistic evidentialists will not deny or deprecate this contribution. They may instead simply suggest that for this experiential component to make its most effective contribution to warrant, there needs to be, available to the community, inferential evidence for other larger theistic claims, for these provide the framework within which we interpret the Spirit’s experiential work in our lives. And what is this “inferential evidence,” that we may need it? An externalist approach opens the possibility that inferential evidence, discerned as we use our minds in reasoning about God or electrons, engages more than our capacity for rational insight into support-relations. It suggests that it is not only our heart that has reasons of which reason does not know. Perhaps our reasoning does as well.

Notes

* I wish to thank both Calvin College and the Centre for the Philosophy of Religion at the University of Notre Dame for funding a sabbatical year during which many of the ideas in this paper were incubated and drafted. During this sabbatical I read John Henry Newman’s *Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, and some of Newman’s ideas no doubt rubbed off on what follows. For helpful

comments on the paper, I am grateful to Alvin Plantinga, Fred Suppe, Paul Draper, James Sennett, Scott Davison, Stephen Evans, and numerous colloquia participants both at Notre Dame and Calvin College.

¹ Wolterstorff (1987), p. 76.

² Duncan (1983), p. 53.

³ Some terminological stipulations are in order here. The term "theory" has many connotations in English: I focus only on whether theism is theory-like with respect to "needing evidence." Being theory-like in this sense need not mean that belief in God is uncertain, speculative, abstract, or anything like that. I shall here use "belief in God" to mean "belief that God exists," although in other contexts I would reserve the former term for trust in God. I use "needs" in a broad sense not implying "lacks" – as in "humans need water," not as in "I need a drink." And I use "evidence" in a narrow sense of inferential evidence, not in the broad sense that includes epistemic justifiers of any type.

⁴ Important expositions of evidentialism are Mitchell (1973) and Swinburne (1979). By "basicalism" I have in mind especially the so-called "Reformed epistemology" that emerged in the early 1980s in Plantinga (1983), Wolterstorff (1983), and Alston (1983). Further developments are contained in Wolterstorff (1986), (1988) and (1992), in Alston (1988a, b), (1991), and (1993a, b), and in Plantinga (1986), (1991) and Plantinga (forthcoming), which will build on the general epistemology of Plantinga (1993a, b). Kelly Clark provides both an accessible overview and impassioned defense of Reformed epistemology in Clark (1990) and Dewey Hoytenga gives a historical overview in Hoytenga (1991). Critical analyses are provided by Mavrodes (1983), Audi (1986), Konyndyk (1986), Hasker (1986), Phillips (1988), Wykstra (1989), Quinn (1991), Kretzmann (1992), Sennett (1993), and Williams (1994), and further relevant essays found in Zagzebski (1993), Evans and Westphal (1993), and Radcliffe and White (1993).

⁵ D. Z. Phillips (1988, pp. 78–80) discusses an unpublished ancestral version of Wykstra (1989), which suggested that sensible evidentialism is compatible with religious evidence being such that the "capacity to apprehend it might well depend in part upon knowing God existentially, upon living one's life in that project of redemptive love that only his grace makes possible." Though my suggestion did not appear in the final published version of the paper, it is given central place in Wykstra (1990), which may be regarded as providing the "considerable further argument" that Phillips says it needs.

⁶ Though I favor a causal condition, this is somewhat controversial, and space prevents discussing it here. Important distinctions are made in Pappas (1979).

⁷ Of course, by holding it "on the basis of inference of it from the evidence," one need not mean that the individual has, as it were, discovered the theory himself, much less that he has generated it by some logic of discovery from a body of data. One means only that the person holds the theory because he apprehends a certain putative evidential relation between the data and the theory. "Putative" here signals that "apprehend" is used in a weak sense of purported apprehending, akin to the weak sense of "remembering" which is compatible with mistakenly remembering. Given this, the overall claim of rationality-evidentialism is here put as a necessary condition, not a sufficient one.

⁸ Might we say that though Gretel is not faulty in so believing, she

nevertheless falls short of a more excellent way in which we might hope she would believe? I do not think even this is quite right. Bertrand Russell recounts how he, as a child, would not believe his teachers when they told him the size of the earth, and began digging a hole to China to test their claim. It is not at all clear that Russell's quest for evidence on this point is a more excellent way than Gretel's trust in her teacher's authority. Still, as Stephen Evans and Scott Davison have independently pointed out to me, a critic might urge that, as described, Gretel, even if not doxastically sick or sinful, is still "cognitively immature," or in some other way in a less than optimal epistemic state with respect to the proposition. There is certainly more to be explored here, some of it broached in my discussion of discriminational evidence in Wykstra (1989). The question of the epistemic status of beliefs held by trust in testimony requires more discussion than space here permits.

⁹ As I am thinking of it, one way of meeting the communitarian evidence-requirement is by meeting it oneself, for one may, oneself, be a member of "the appropriate subset" of the community. The terms "appropriate" would, of course, have to here be spelled out in any full-fledged theory of warrant for beliefs of this sort. Again, the proposal here lays down a necessary condition, not a sufficient one.

¹⁰ Some externalists – mistakenly, in my view – claim simply to be giving alternative explications of justification, failing to see that there is a legitimate concept of justification that might best be explicated in internalist terms. Though distinct, I am nevertheless taking both warrant and rationality as applying in the primary sense to S's believing that p. I thus reject the compatibilist thesis of Mylan Engel, Jr. (Engel, 1992) that internalists are in effect explicating a concept of S's being epistemically justified in believing that p, while externalists are explicating a concept of S's belief that p being epistemically justified. For a good critique of Engel, see Reiter (1994).

¹¹ In Wykstra (1989), pp. 431–432, I argue that the malfunction might make it entirely rational for the person not only to believe the proposition, but also to take it that there does not need to be evidence available for it.

¹² The issues here deserve to be thought about more in connection with the theses of Alston (1993b); this will have to be saved for another occasion.

¹³ In other words, freeing our notion of proper inferentiality from the restriction that it rest solely on rational insight into support-relations opens up possibilities for developing more appropriate norms of inference, allowing us to both illuminate and amplify what Stephen Evans, following Newman, calls the "natural inferences" that play a role in ordinary (but mature) theistic conviction. It thus opens possibilities for what Evans calls "natural theology in a new key": see Evans (1990) for a brief but suggestive treatment of this topic.

¹⁴ Verbal communication from Alvin Plantinga: "Consider it relocated."

¹⁵ See Wykstra (1989), pp. 434–437, as well as Williams (1994).

References

- Alston, Williams: 1983, 'Christian experience and Christian belief', in Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff (eds.), *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, pp. 103–134.

- Alston, William: 1988a, 'Religious diversity and perceptual knowledge of God', *Faith and Philosophy* 5, 433-448.
- Alston, William: 1988b, 'The perception of God', in Michael Beaty and Richard Lee (eds.), *Philosophical Topics* 16, Fall 1988, 23-52.
- Alston, William: 1991, *Perceiving God: The Epistemology of Religious Experience*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York.
- Alston, William: 1993a, 'On knowing that we know: the application to religious knowledge', in C. Stephen Evans and Merold Westfal (eds.), *Christian Perspectives on Religious Knowledge*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, pp. 15-39.
- Alston, William: 1993b, 'Epistemic desiderata', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* LIII, 527-551.
- Audi, Robert: 1986, 'Direct justification, evidential dependence, and theistic belief', in Robert Audi and William J. Wainwright (eds.), *Rationality, Religious Belief, and Moral Commitment*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, pp. 139-166.
- Clark, Kelly James: 1990, *Return to Reason: A Critique of Enlightenment Evidentialism and a Defense of Reason and Belief in God*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan.
- Clark, Kelly James, ed.: 1992, *Our Knowledge of God*, Kluwer, Dordrecht.
- Duncan, David James: 1983, *The River Why*, Sierra Club Books, San Francisco.
- Engel, Mylan Jr.: 1992, 'Personal and doxastic justification in epistemology', *Philosophical Studies* 67: 133-150.
- Evans, C. Stephen: 1990, 'Apologetics in a new key: relieving protestant anxieties over natural theology', in William L. Craig and Mark S. McLeod (eds.), *The Logic of Rational Theism*, Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, N.Y., pp. 66-75.
- Evans, C. Stephen, and Westphal, Merold, ed.: 1993, *Christian Perspectives on Religious Knowledge*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan.
- Hasker, William: 1986, 'On justifying the Christian practice', *The New Scholasticism* 60, 139-155.
- Hoitenga, Dewey: 1991, *Faith and Reason from Plato to Plantinga: An Introduction to Reformed Epistemology*, SUNY Press, Albany, New York.
- Konyndyk, Kenneth: 1986, 'Faith and evidentialism', in Robert Audi and William J. Wainwright (eds.), *Rationality, Religious Belief, and Moral Commitment*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, pp. 82-108.
- Kretzmann, Norman: 1992, 'Evidence against evidentialism', in Kelly James Clark (ed.), *Our Knowledge of God*, Kluwer, Dordrecht, pp. 17-38.
- Mavrodes, George: 1983, 'Jerusalem and Athens revisited', in Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff (eds.), *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, pp. 192-218.
- Mitchell, Basil: 1973, *The Justification of Religious Belief*, Seabury, New York.
- Pappas, George S.: 1979, 'Basing relations', in George Pappas (ed.), *Justification and Knowledge*, D. Reidel, Dordrecht, pp. 51-63.
- Phillips, D. Z.: 1988, *Faith After Foundationalism*, Routledge, New York.
- Plantinga, Alvin: 1983, 'Reason and belief in God', in Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff (eds.), *Faith and Rationality*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, pp. 16-93.
- Plantinga, Alvin: 1986, 'Coherentism and the evidentialist objection to belief in God', in Robert Audi and William J. Wainwright (ed.), *Rationality, Religious Belief, and Moral Commitment*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, pp. 109-129.
- Plantinga, Alvin: 1991, 'The prospects for natural theology', in James E. Tomberlin (ed.), *Philosophical Perspectives 5: Philosophy of Religion, 1991*, Ridgeview Publishing, Atascadero, California, pp. 287-316.
- Plantinga, Alvin: 1993a, *Warrant: The Current Debate*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Plantinga, Alvin: 1993b, *Warrant and Proper Function*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Plantinga, Alvin: (forthcoming), *Warranted Christian Belief*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Pojman, Louis: 1987, 'Can religious belief be rational?', in Louis P. Pojman (ed.), *Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology*, Wadsworth, Belmont, California, pp. 480-490.
- Quinn, Philip L.: 1991, 'Epistemic parity and religious argument', in James E. Tomberlin (ed.), *Philosophical Perspectives 5: Philosophy of Religion, 1991*, Ridgeview Publishing, Atascadero, California, pp. 317-341.
- Radcliffe, Elizabeth S., and White, Carol J., eds.: 1993, *Faith and Practice: Essays on Justifying Religious Belief*, Open Court, Chicago.
- Reid, Thomas: 1970, *An Inquiry into the Human Mind*, ed. Timothy J. Duggan, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Reiter, David: 1994, 'Engel on internalism and externalism in epistemology', forthcoming.
- Sennett, James: 1993, 'Reformed epistemology and epistemic duty', in Elizabeth S. Radcliffe and Carol J. White (eds.), *Faith and Practice: Essays on Justifying Religious Belief*, Open Court, Chicago, pp. 196-207.
- Swinburne, Richard: 1979, *The Existence of God*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Williams, Clifford: 1994, 'Kierkegaardian suspicion and properly basic beliefs', *Religious Studies* 30, 261-267.
- Wolterstorff, Nicholas: 1983, 'Can belief in God be rational if it has no foundations?', in Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff (eds.), *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, pp. 135-186.
- Wolterstorff, Nicholas: 1986, 'The migration of the theistic arguments: from natural theology to evidentialist apologetics', in Robert Audi and William J. Wainwright (eds.), *Rationality, Religious Belief, and Moral Commitment*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, pp. 38-81.
- Wolterstorff, Nicholas: 1987, *Lament for a Son*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan.
- Wolterstorff, Nicholas: 1988, 'Once more: evidentialism - this time, social', in Michael Beaty and Richard Lee (eds.), *Philosophical Topics* 16, Fall 1988, 53-74.
- Wolterstorff, Nicholas: 1992, 'What reformed epistemology is not', *Perspectives* 7, November, 14-16.
- Wykstra, Stephen J.: 1989, 'Toward a sensible evidentialism: on the notion of "Needing Evidence"', in William L. Rowe and

- William J. Wainwright (eds.), *Philosophy of Religion: Selected Readings*, second edition, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, pp. 426–437.
- Wykstra, Stephen J.: 1990, 'Reasons, redemptions and realism: the axiological roots of rationality in science and religion', in Michael D. Beaty (ed.), *Christian Theism and the Problems of Philosophy*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, pp. 118–161.
- Zagzebski, Linda, ed.: 1993, *Rational Faith: Catholic Responses to Reformed Epistemology*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana.
- Calvin College,
Michigan, USA*