RELIABILISM
AND
COSMIC OPTIMISM

Situating John Hick in
The History of Philosophy of Religion

Naoki Kitta,

M.A. (The University of Nottingham)

M.A. (Hitotsubashi University)

Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham

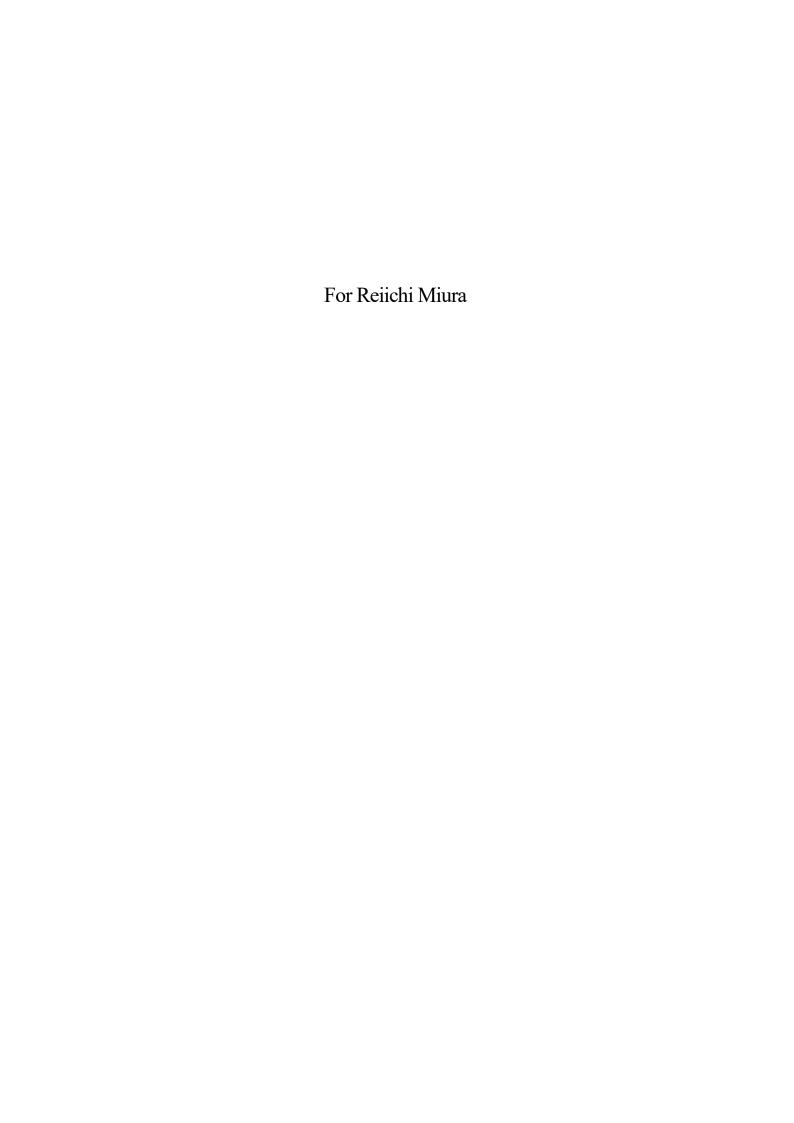for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

July 2016

Abstract

This dissertation aims to rehabilitate the reasonableness of Hick's religious pluralism by disclosing the deep structure of his philosophical system. To realize this aim, this dissertation will introduce a new philosophical method of *reliabilism*, which is proposed by Ernest Sosa and emphasizes *total balance* and *historical maturation*. As a result of the introduction of reliabilism, Hick's philosophical system is disclosed to be composed of Hick's own philosophy of *personhood*, combined with the philosophies of Wittgenstein, Kant, and Hume. Instead of emphasizing one of them, this dissertation will propose to read these different components of Hick's philosophical system as forming a total worldview, which are complementary with each other.

Also, this dissertation will situate Hick's philosophy in the history of philosophy of religion (e.g. *pre-analytical* paradigms of British Idealism and Critical Realism, and *analytical* paradigms of Logical Positivism, neo-Wittgensteinian philosophy, and Reformed Epistemology). Hick's project will be discussed as a recovery of a pre-analytical worldview from within analytical contexts.

As Hick's central philosophical works, this dissertation will focus on *Faith and Knowledge* and *An Interpretation of Religion*. *Faith and Knowledge* has not been examined in detail in past literature. But Hick's arguments about personhood, Wittgenstein, Kant, and Hume in *An Interpretation of Religion* originates in *Faith and Knowledge* (both the first edition and the second edition). A correct understanding of Hick's religious pluralism in *An Interpretation of Religion* is impossible without a detailed examination of *Faith and Knowledge*.

For Reiichi Miura

Contents

Acknowledgements

My gratitude goes first of all to my supervisor, Prof. Philip Goodchild. He has been an encouragement throughout my study in Nottingham. The theology department at Nottingham provided me a stimulating environment to study and live. I am deeply thankful to Conor Cunningham, Simon Oliver, Karen Kilby, John Milbank, Alison Milbank, and Agata Bielik-Robson. I am also grateful to other individuals for their support. I would like to thank Alan Darley, Lukas Theo Paul, Mark Warrener, Andy Hall, Derek Chandler, Mike Coep, Sam Townsend, Rachael Pain, Satoshi Ukai, Tomoko Takemura, Masami Narita, Hidetaka Fukazawa, Takaya Suto, Ikuo Tsuboko, Eijiro Hazama, Daisuke Arie, Ryuichi Yamaoka, Yoshiyuki Kato, Keisuke Sato, and Saori Makino.

Above all, I am deeply grateful to my parents for their unflinching support and encouragement. My academic education and formation would have been impossible without their help.

Introduction

The philosophy of John Hick has been accepted as a typical position in the field of philosophy of religion in the English-speaking world, especially with regard to the problem of religious diversity. However, Hick's position has generated considerable critical response.[1] This study will aim to clarify hidden philosophical methods that these critiques of Hick have been presupposing and propose an alternative philosophical method of *reliabilism* that is more appropriate to understand the contribution Hick makes to the philosophy of religion.

Therefore, the aim of this study is twofold. The first is a rehabilitation of Hick's philosophy against key criticisms. To realize this aim, this study will introduce a new philosophical method of reliabilism, which emphasizes *total balance* and *historical maturation*. As a result of the introduction of reliabilism, Hick's philosophical system is

---

[1] See, for example, Gavin D'Costa, *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000, pp. 24-29 and 45-52. S. Mark Heim, *Salvations: Truth and Difference in Religion*, Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1995, pp. 13-43. William P. Alston, *Perceiving God: The Epistemology of Religious Experience*, Ithaca and London; Cornell University Press, 1991, pp. 27-28, and 264-66. Alvin Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' in *The Philosophical Challenge of Religious Diversity*, ed. Kevin Meeker & Philip Quinn, New York: Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 172-92. John Milbank, 'The End of Dialogue,' in *The Future of Love: Essays in Political Theology*, Eugene, Oregon: CACADE Books, 2009, pp. 279-300. David Cheetham, *Ways of Meeting and the Theology of Religions*, Farnham: Ashgate, pp. 39-60.

disclosed to be composed of Hick's own philosophy of *personhood*, combined with philosophies of Wittgenstein, Kant, and Hume. Instead of emphasizing one of them, this dissertation will propose to read these different components of Hick's philosophical system as forming a total worldview, which are complementary with each other.

Second, this study will situate Hick's philosophy in the history of philosophy of religion. Various phases of Hick's philosophy can be understood as responses to his contemporary situations (e.g. the 'theology and falsification' debate, neo-Wittgensteinian philosophy, and Reformed Epistemology). However, the central insight of Hick's philosophy can be understood to be inherited from a *pre-analytical* paradigm, which had been almost wholly neglected in the latter half of twentieth century philosophical thinking. For example, in *Faith and Knowledge*[2], one can find an influence from British Idealism

---

[2] John Hick, *Faith and Knowledge: A Modern Introduction to the Problem of Religious Knowledge*, First Edition, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1957.

(through Norman Kemp Smith[3] and John Oman, etc.[4]). In *An Interpretation of Religion*[5],

---

[3] 'The philosophical reader can see in *Faith and Knowledge* the influence of Kant, received through Kemp Smith at Edinburgh.' See John Hick, *An Autobiography*, Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2002, p. 115.

Under the influence from Edward Caird and John Watson, Norman Kemp Smith defines Kant's position as 'objective idealism' and situates Kant in the traditions of 'Lotze, Sigwart, Green, Bradley, Bosanquet, Jones and Dewey.' See Norman Kemp Smith, *Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'*, London: Macmillan and Co., 1923, pp. l, 36, and 274. See also Edward Caird, *The Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant*, Glasgow: James Maclehose, 1889. John Watson, *The Philosophy of Kant Explained*, Glasgow: James Maclehose, 1908. Norman Kemp Smith, *Prolegomena to an Idealist Theory of Knowledge*, London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1924.

In various phases of his philosophy, Hick is also influenced by Kemp Smith's interpretation of Hume: 'we thus come to rest in something like the 'natural belief' that Hume – according to Norman Kemp Smith's interpretation … – adumbrated.' See John Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion: Human Responses to the Transcendent*, Basingstoke, Macmillan Press, 1989, p. 213. See also Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, pp. 124-25. John Hick, *Arguments for the Existence of God*, London: Macmillan, 1970, p. 110. Hick, *An Autobiography*, p. 314. John Hick, *The New Frontier of Religion and Science*, New York: Palgrave, 2006, pp. 128-29.

[4] 'Although I shall not refer to Oman's discussions in detail, either by way of exposition or of criticism, those who are acquainted with *The Natural and the Supernatural* (1931) will find in the present essay an attempt to work out Oman's basic standpoint in relation to the very different world of contemporary philosophy.' See Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. xix. The same passage can be found in the second edition. See John Hick, *Faith and Knowledge,* Second Edition, London: Macmillan, 1967, p. 7. The influence of Oman is more obvious in the first edition, but it develops into systematic unity in the second edition. See also Hick, *An Autobiography*, pp. 84-85, and 115. John Hick, 'A Voyage Round John Oman,' in *John Oman: New Perspectives*. ed. Adam Hood, Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2012. John Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1931. Gavin D'Costa, *John Hick's Theology of Religions: A Critical Evaluation*, Lanham: University Press of America, 1987, pp. 9-10.

In *Faith and Knowledge*, Hick also mentions other philosophers within the tradition of British Idealism. See James Ward, *Essays in Philosophy: with a Memoir by Olwen Ward Campbell*, W. R. Sorley and G. F. Stout (eds.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927. John Laird, *Knowledge, Belief and Opinion*, London: D. Appleton & Co, 1930. John Passmore, *A Hundred Years of Philosophy*, London: Duckworth, 1957, pp. 46-70.

one can find a further additional influence from Critical Realism (mainly through Roy Wood Sellars but also through Arthur Lovejoy, etc.[6]). This study will sort out these complicated relations and clarify the historical development of the philosophy of religion which Hick presupposes when he constructs his own position.

This introduction will first illustrate three fields of research to which Hick's philosophy can be related (philosophy of religion, epistemology, and Christian Theology). The first field is the analytical philosophy of religion and three different paradigms can be found in the field: the 'theology and falsification' debate[7] (this position will be methodologically

---

[5] John Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion: Human Responses to the Transcendent*, Basingstoke, Macmillan Press, 1989. Second Edition in 2004.

[6] 'The kind of religious realism that I shall advocate takes full account of the subjective contribution to all awareness. It is thus analogous to the epistemological 'critical realism' which emerged in the first half of the present century, and particularly to the type developed by R. W. Sellars, Arthur Lovejoy, A. K. Rogers and J. B. Pratt (as distinguished from the somewhat different type developed by George Santayana, Durant Drake and C. A. Strong).' See Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 174. See also Roy Wood Sellars, *Critical Realism: A Study of the Nature and Conditions of Knowledge*, Forgotton Books, 2012 (Originally published in 1916 by Rand McNally & Company). Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Revolt Against Dualism: An Inquiry Concerning the Existence of Ideas*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1930. George Santayana, *Reason and Religion*, New York: Charles Scriner's Sons, 1905. John Passmore, *A Hundred Years of Philosophy*, pp. 281-98.

[7] For example, Antony Flew, 'Theology and Falsification,' in *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*, ed. A. G. N. Flew and A. C. MacIntyre, London, 1955, pp. 96-98. R. M. Hare, 'Theology and Falsification,' in *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*, pp. 99-102. Basil Mitchell, 'Theology and Falsification,' in *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*, pp. 103-05.

Richard Swinburne developed this broadly foundationalist direction and provided an epistemic justification for the existence of God. Hick uses Swinburne's argument to support his position in *An Interpretation of Religion*. See Richard Swinburne, *The Existence of God*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, and New York: Oxford University Press, 1979. See Hick, An Interpretation of Religion, p. 214.

categorised as *foundationalism*), neo-Wittgensteinian philosophy[8] (this position will be methodologically categorised as *coherentism*), and Reformed Epistemology [9] (this position will be methodologically categorised as *reliabilism*, but the version of Ernest Sosa will be proposed as an alternative position). The philosophy of Hick is related to each of these three paradigms. But, among these three paradigms, the philosophy of Hick has often been discussed in relation to the previous two paradigms. On the contrary, this study suggests reading the philosophy of Hick as more akin to the last paradigm of Reformed Epistemology [10] . Furthermore, not only Reformed Epistemology, but also the pre-

---

[8] For example, John Wisdom, *Paradox and Discovery*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965. Peter Winch, 'Understanding a Primitive Society' in *Ethics and Action*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972. D. Z. Phillips, *The Concept of Prayer*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965. D. Z. Phillips, *Belief, Change and Forms of Life*, Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press, 1986.

Furthermore, Hick relates these Neo-Wittgensteinian philosophers with Don Cupitt under the category of Non-Realism. See Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, pp. 198-201. Don Cupitt, *Taking Leave of God*, London: SCM Press, and New York: Crossroad, 1980.

[9] For example, Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff (eds), *Faith and Rationality*, Notre Dame and London: Notre Dame University Press, 1983. William P. Alston, *Perceiving God*. Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

[10] Hick points out a similarity between his own theory on the nature of religious belief and that of William Alston: 'we have worked along parallel lines, though in different styles, he presenting his argument in the rigorous logical form favoured by many today, particularly in the States, and I more in the tradition of the English empiricists, Lock, Berkeley and Hume and, in the twentieth century, Russell and others. But we have in fact presented what is at root essentially the same defence of the rational permissibility of religious belief.' See Hick, *An Autobiography*, p. 314.

With more subtle conditions, Hick also points out a similarity between his discussion and the one by Alvin Plantinga. See Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 229. John Hick, *Dialogues in the Philosophy of Religion*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001, pp. 6-7.

In relation to the nature of religious belief, Hick defends William James' 'the will to believe' as well as Thomas Aquinas's 'the virtue of faith', Richard Swinburne's 'the principle of credulity,' and

analytical traditions of British Idealism and Critical Realism are also important to understand the philosophy of Hick. This point will be discussed later with the basic framework for the reading of Hick.

The second field is epistemology. A revival of epistemology in contemporary philosophy can be understood as a paradigm shift from the philosophy of *language* (methodological coherentism) to the philosophy of *knowledge* (methodological reliabilism). In the field of epistemology, reliabilism played an important role in the paradigm shift and the positions of Ernest Sosa [11] and Alvin Plantinga [12] can be understood as typical positions of reliabilism. One can see a parallel phenomenon in the field of the philosophy of religion and the one in epistemology. This study will apply the method of Sosa's reliabilism to the textual reading of Hick. This study will be mainly related with these two fields of research (philosophy of religion and epistemology), but

---

Norman Kemp Smith's interpretation of Hume's 'natural belief'. See Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, pp. 48-57. Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, Second Edition, pp. 19-20. John Hick, *Arguments for the Existence of God*, London: Macmillan, 1970, pp. 101-20. Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, pp. 158-59, and 213-14. See also, William James, *The Will to Believe and Other Essays*, New York, 1897, pp. 1-31, and 63-110. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II/II, Q. 1, art. 1 and art. 4. Norman Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume: A Critical Study of its Origins and Central Doctrines*, London: Macmillan, 1966, pp. 543-66. Swinburne, *The Existence of God*, p. 254.

[11] See Ernest Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective: Selected Essays in Epistemology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991. Ernest Sosa, *A Virtue Epistemology: Apt Belief and Reflective Knowledge, Volume I*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. Ernest Sosa, *Reflective Knowledge: Apt Belief and Reflective Knowledge, Volume II*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

[12] Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant: the Current Debate*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993, and Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

another field of research (Christian Theology) is also important.

The third field is Christian Theology. Hick mentioned a number of proponents of philosophical theology[13] (e.g. F. R. Tennant[14] and William Temple[15]). For the purposes of this study, another two movements of theology are important for the problem of religious diversity. Post-Liberal Theology, which can be typically represented by George Lindbeck[16], and Radical Orthodoxy, which can be typically represented by John Milbank[17], can be understood as two typical opponents to the philosophical method developed by John Hick specifically about the problem of religious diversity. A systematic presentation of the problems formulated by Gavin D'Costa[18] and S. Mark Heim[19] became possible on the background of these broad theological atmospheres.

---

[13] Hick distinguishes philosophy of religion from philosophical theology: 'philosophy of religion is … not a branch of theology (meaning by "theology" the systematic formulation of religious beliefs), but a branch of philosophy.' See John Hick, *Philosophy of Religion*, First Edition, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1963, p. 1.

[14] F. R. Tennant, *Philosophical Theology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930.

[15] William Temple, *Nature, Man and God*, London: Macmillan, 1934.

[16] See George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: the Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age,* Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984.

[17] See John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1990. John Milbank, *The Word Made Strange: Theology, Language, Culture*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1997. John Milbank, 'The End of Dialogue'. John Milbank, *Beyond Secular Order: The Representation of Being and the Representation of the People*, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013.

[18] Gavin D'Costa, *Theology and Religious Pluralism: the Challenge of Other Religions*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1986. Gavin D'Costa, *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity*.

[19] S. Mark Heim, *Salvations*. S. Mark Heim, *The Depth of the Riches: A Trinitarian Theology of Religious Ends*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.

Secondly, this introduction will describe the basic framework for the reading of Hick. The main difficulty for the interpretation of Hick is that Hick provides a lot of different – even apparently contradictory – standpoints, and so different standpoints have been emphasized by different interpreters. For example, when Hick discusses 'eschatological verification', Hick provides a *cognitive* standpoint.[20] However, when Hick discusses the mythical interpretation of religion, Hick provides a *non-cognitive* standpoint.[21] These two standpoints are different and even contradictory.[22] Not only these two standpoints, but a number of other mutually-contradictory standpoints are present in Hick's philosophy.

---

[20] See Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, Second Edition, pp. 169-99. John Hick, *Death and Eternal Life*, London: Collins, 1976, pp. 450-66. Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, pp. 172-89.

[21] See Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, pp. 343-61. John Hick, *The Metaphor of God Incarnate*, London: SCM Press, 1993. Sarah Coakley defends Hick's mythical interpretation of religion: 'neither 'liberal' nor 'conservative' opponents showed any cognizance of the wealth of illuminating literature from cognate social science subjects on the nature and significance of 'myth'.' See Sarah Coakley, *Christ Without Absolutes: A Study of the Christology of Ernst Troeltsch*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988, p. 196.

[22] Sumner B. Twiss argues that Hick's theory has both 'cognitive' and 'non-cognitive' aspects and its multi-dimensional character requires the examination which is apart from one-sided readings. See Sumner B. Twiss, 'The Philosophy of Religious Pluralism: A Critical Appraisal of Hick and His Critics,' in *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 70, No. 4, The University of Chicago Press, 1990, pp. 533-68.

According to Yujin Nagasawa, John Hick, on the one hand, maintains that reality consists of two distinct types of entities – the physical and the mental – and, on the other hand, Hick maintains that there is a single indivisible whole. Nagasawa suggests 'to reconcile this apparent tension between the dualistic and monistic elements in Hick's metaphysical system by proposing a unique form of pantheistic or panentheistic monism.' See Yujin Nagasawa, 'John Hick's Pan(en)theistic Monism,' in *Religious Pluralism and the Modern World: An Ongoing Engagement with John Hick*, ed. Sharada Sugirtharajah, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, pp. 176-89.

Because of this multi-dimensional character of Hick's philosophy, it has generated a lot of critical responses.

For example, Alvin Plantinga sees Hick as advancing a non-cognitive, neo-Wittgensteinian position[23], while Gavin D'Costa sees Hick as developing a cognitive meta-theory and a non-evidentialist position[24]. This study will propose reliabilism as a method for the systematic reading of the mutually-contradictory standpoints of Hick's philosophy. As the result of the application of the method of reliabilism, this study will emphasize the standpoint of cosmic optimism as the central standpoint of Hick[25]. Cosmic

---

[23] As an example of a neo-Wittgensteinian position, Plantinga quotes the argument of Hick about cultural context: 'Someone born to Buddhist parents in Thailand is very likely to be a Buddhist, someone born to Muslim parents in Saudi Arabia to be a Muslim, someone born to Christian parents in Mexico to be a Christian, and so on.' See Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 2, quoted in Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' in *The Philosophical Challenge of Religious Diversity*, p. 187. See also Peter Byrne, 'John Hick's Philosophy of World Religions,' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 35, 1982, pp. 289-301. Peter Byrne, *God and Realism*, Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate, 2003. Paul Griffiths and Delmas Lewis, 'On Grading Religions, Seeking Truth, and Being Nice to People – A Reply to Professor Hick,' in *Religious Studies* 19, 1983, pp. 75-80. Paul Griffiths, *Problems of Religious Diversity*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2001. David Basinger, *Religious Diversity: A Philosophical Assessment*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002.

[24] As an example of non-evidential pragmatic position, D'Costa quotes the argument of Hick about myth: 'the truth of a myth is a practical truthfulness; a true myth is one which rightly relates us to a reality about which we cannot speak in non-mythological terms.' D'Costa argues that the non-evidential pragmatic position violates the cognitive contents of religion. See Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 248, quoted in D'Costa, *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity*, p. 26. See also George A. Netland, 'Professor Hick on Religious Pluralism,' in *Religious Studies* 22, 1986, pp. 249-61. Richard Corliss, 'Redemption and the Divine Realities: A Study of Hick and an Alternative,' *Religious Studies* 22, 1986, pp. 235-48.

[25] S. Mark Heim argues that the central intention of Hick is the inclusion of both the cognitive and the non-cognitive particularities within a common total reality. This understanding of Hick can be

optimism can be understood as a *cosmic* version of mysticism, which is distinguished from an *individual* version of mysticism that is theorized by George Lindbeck as the experiential-expressive standpoint[26]. This study will trace the origin of Cosmic Optimism back into Norman Kemp Smith and John Oman's British Idealism and Roy Wood Sellars' Critical Realism.

Regarding the works of Hick, this study will focus on more philosophical and more systematic works of Hick rather than more theological and more particular works of Hick. In *The Universe of Faiths: A Critical Study of John Hick's Religious Pluralism*, Christopher Sinkinson suggests that 'the seeds of his pluralism were already shown in his theory of knowledge, and … there has never been a radical change in Hick's theological framework. Certainly, various theological beliefs have undergone revision but these were only ever peripheral to his basic philosophical commitment.'[27] Then, Sinkinson points out the importance of *Faith and Knowledge* to understand Hick's religious pluralism: '"Hick notes in his preface to the 1966 second edition of *Faith and Knowledge* that despite the revision he has made to his work, the book remains 'an exposition of the view of faith which seemed to me, and still seems to me, most adequate.' In 1988 there was a reissue of the second edition in which Hick wrote a new preface. Here he continues to maintain that

---

understood as cosmic optimism. See S. Mark Heim, *Salvations*, pp. 15-23.

[26] See Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, chapter 2.

[27] Christopher Sinkinson, *The Universe of Faith: A Critical Study of John Hick's Religious Pluralism*, Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2001, p. 25.

the work is foundational to everything else he has written and notes that his subsequent writings 'proceeded in a natural trajectory from the [earlier] epistemology' … 'the theology, whether old or new, does not affect the basic epistemological argument'."[28]

On the basis of Sinkinson's suggestion, this study will give special attention to *Faith and Knowledge* from the early period and *An Interpretation of Religion* from the late period. *Faith and Knowledge* has not been examined in detail in past literature. But Hick's arguments about personhood, Wittgenstein, Kant, and Hume in *An Interpretation of Religion* originate in *Faith and Knowledge* (both the first edition and the second edition). A correct understanding of Hick's religious pluralism in *An Interpretation of Religion* is impossible without a detailed examination of *Faith and Knowledge*.

There are a number of other crucially important books of Hick's own (*Philosophy of Religion*[29], *Evil and the God of Love*[30], *Christianity at the Centre*[31], *Arguments for the Existence of God*[32], *God and the Universe of Faith*[33], *Death and Eternal Life*[34], *God has*

---

[28] Christopher Sinkinson, *The Universe of Faith*, p. 25. The quotation is from Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, preface to the second edition, and Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, preface to the reissue of the second edition.

[29] John Hick, *Philosophy of Religion*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1963. Second Edition in 1973. Third Edition in 1983. Fourth Edition in 1990.

[30] John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, First Edition, London: Macmillan, 1966. Second Edition in 1977.

[31] John Hick, *Christianity at the Centre*, London: Macmillan, 1968.

[32] John Hick, *Arguments for the Existence of God*, London: Macmillan, 1970.

[33] John Hick, *God and the Universe of Faiths*, London: Fount/Collins, 1977.

[34] John Hick, *Death and Eternal Life*, London: Collins, 1976.

Many Names[35], *Problems of Religious Pluralism*[36], *Disputed Questions in Theology and the Philosophy of Religion*[37], *The Metaphor of God Incarnate*[38], *The Rainbow of Faiths*[39], *The Fifth Dimension*[40], *Dialogues in the Philosophy of Religion*[41], *An Autobiography*[42], *The New Frontier of Religion and Science*[43], *Who or What is God?*[44], and *Between Faith and Doubt*[45]). Different versions of these books show constant changes of Hick's position and each provides uniquely important arguments. As a basic principle, all of these books will be discussed with their relation to *Faith and Knowledge* and *An Interpretation of Religion*. There are also a number of books Hick edited[46] and Hick's independent papers which were presented on various occasions. Some of them also include crucially important arguments (for example, different versions of *Classical and Contemporary Readings in*

---

[35] John Hick, *God has Many Names: Britain's New Religious Pluralism*, London: Macmillan, 1980.

[36] John Hick, *Problems of Religious Pluralism*, London: Macmillan, 1985.

[37] John Hick, *Disputed Questions in Theology and the Philosophy of Religion*, London: Macmillan, 1993.

[38] John Hick, *The Metaphor of God Incarnate*, London: SCM Press, 1993. Second Edition in 2005.

[39] John Hick, *The Rainbow of Faiths*, London: SCM Press, 1995.

[40] John Hick, *The Fifth Dimension*, Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1999.

[41] John Hick, *Dialogues in the Philosophy of Religion*, New York: Palgrave, 2001.

[42] John Hick, *An Autobiography*, Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2002.

[43] John Hick, *The New Frontier of Religion and Science*, New York: Palgrave, 2006.

[44] John Hick, *Who or What is God?*, London: SCM Press, 2008.

[45] John Hick, *Between Faith and Doubt*, New York: Palgrave, 2010.

[46] For example, *Faith and the Philosophers*, ed. John Hick, London: Macmillan, 1964. *The Existence of God*, ed. John Hick, London: Macmillan, 1964. *Truth and Dialogue in World Religions: Conflicting Truth Claims*, ed. John Hick, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974. *Christianity and other Religions*, ed. John Hick and B. Hebblethwaite, Glasgow: Fount, 1980.

the Philosophy of Religion [47] are very good materials for knowing Hick's own

understanding of his contemporary situation of the philosophy of religion, and independent

papers such as 'A Voyage Round John Oman' provide a unique information for knowing

Hick's own understanding of his background). However, where a similar argument can be

found in Hick's own book, this study will focus on the argument in his own book rather

than the one in his edited books or independent papers on various occasions. This is

because one of the central aims of this study is the analysis of the *internal* structure of

Hick's whole philosophy rather than how Hick's independent response was stimulated by

external situations. Therefore, for example, this study will focus on *The Metaphor of God*

Incarnate rather than *The Myth of God Incarnate*.[48]

Lastly, this introduction will provide an outline of the argument in each chapter.

---

[47] *Classical and Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Religion*, First Edition, ed. John Hick, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964. *Classical and Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Religion*, Second Edition, ed. John Hick, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970. *Classical and Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Religion*, Third Edition, ed. John Hick, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1990.

[48] *The Myth of God Incarnate*, ed. John Hick, London: SCM Press, 1977. Hick himself says that Hick's own *Metaphor* is better than the original *Myth*, because the former is 'by the same author and so is able to present a sustained argument'. See Hick, *An Autobiography*, p. 237.

Related Fields of Research

I. THREE PARADIGMS IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

A landmark in the development of analytical philosophy of religion is a collection of essays entitled *New Essays in Philosophical Theology* (first published in 1955). Logical Positivism, launched into the English-speaking world by Bertrand Russell[49] and A. J. Ayer[50] from 1910s to 1930s, was rapidly fading in Britain in the 1950s. However, after the influence of Logical Positivism with its strident polemic against the cognitive content of religious claims, some philosophers in Britain took up philosophy of religion in a way that forced others to take notice. Influenced by Karl Popper's falsificationism[51], Antony Flew presented a parable that challenged theists to state the conditions under which they would give up their belief, using a principle of Logical Positivism that unless one can do so, one does not have a belief with any cognitive content. R. M. Hare and Basil Mitchell responded with their own parables of the situation of the Christian, and John Wisdom

---

[49] Bertrand Russell, *Our Knowledge of the External World as a Field for Scientific Method in Philosophy*, London: Open Court, 1914.

[50] A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*, London: Gollancz, 1936.

[51] Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, London: Hutchinson, 1959. (Originally published in 1934.)

independently developed his own parable. *Faith and Knowledge* (first published in 1957) can be understood in this context of 'theology and falsification' debate.[52] Hick continues to pay attention to the cognitive content of religious claims and Hick's 'eschatological verification' is an example of this line of argument. Even in *An Interpretation of Religion* (first published in 1989), Hick still keeps his defence of the principle of eschatological verification.[53]

The emphasis on language, which had a *cognitive* influence on Logical Positivism, had another effect towards a *non-cognitive* direction in the field of philosophy of religion, and neo-Wittgensteinian philosophy of religion can be seen as the typical non-cognitive position. What has been called 'neo-Wittgensteinian philosophy of religion' became a recognizable phenomenon in the 1950s and 1960s due to the work of several writers – principally John Wisdom, Rush Rhees, Peter Winch, and D. Z. Phillips – and they rejected the idea that a religious belief has cognitive content. Instead, they suggested that a religious belief must be seen as a 'language game', tied to a particular 'form of life', and its language is *confessional* rather than *referential*.[54] Because of its confessional character, a religious

---

[52] Hick, 'The Logic of Faith,' in *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, pp. 134-63. See also, Hick, *Dialogues in the Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 5-6. Chester Gillis, *A Question of Final Belief: John Hick's Pluralistic Theory of Salvation*, London: Macmillan, 1989, pp. 54-59. David Cheetham, *John Hick: A Critical Introduction and Reflection*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003, pp. 20-36, and 138-39.

[53] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, pp. 178-80.

[54] 'There is no question of a *general* justification of religious belief, of giving religion a 'sound foundation'. If the philosopher wishes to give an account of religious belief he must begin with the contexts in which these concepts have their life.' See Phillips, *The Concept of Prayer*, p. 27.

belief is not something that should be proved but it should be just accepted as it is. Not

only in the context of Logical Positivism, Hick's *Faith and Knowledge* (especially its

second edition in 1966) can also be understood in this context of neo-Wittgensteinianism.

Hick's neo-Wittgensteinian direction can be found in his argument about 'experiencing-

as'.[55] Hick continues to keep his neo-Wittgensteinian argument of 'experiencing-as' in *An*

Interpretation of Religion.[56]

   Another influential landmark in the development of analytical philosophy of religion

is a collection of essays titled *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God* (first

published in 1983). After the trend of Logical Positivism and neo-Wittgensteinian

philosophy, Calvinist philosophers who came to be known as Reformed Epistemologists

presented an argument that religious belief in God can be entirely rational even in the

absence of propositional evidence that had been required by Logical Positivism as the

---

[55] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, Second Edition, pp. 141-44. See also Hick, *Dialogues in the Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 4-5. Gillis, *A Question of Final Belief*, pp. 52-54, and 59-67. Cheetham, *John Hick*, pp. 10-16.

[56] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, pp. 140-42. Also, in *An Interpretation of Religion*, Hick uses another Wittgensteinian concept of 'Religion as a Family-Resemblance concept'. See Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, pp. 3-4.

   Furthermore, Hick mentions Steven Katz when he points out that experience and linguistic interpretation cannot be separated: 'all conscious experience is interpretive in the sense that it has specific meaning for us in virtue of the concepts which function in the process by which it is brought to consciousness. I am thus in agreement at this point with Steven Katz in his influential paper 'Language, Epistemology, and Mysticism'.' See Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 169. See also Steven Katz, 'Language, Epistemology, and Mysticism,' in *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis*, ed. Steven T. Katz, New York: Oxford University Press, 1978, pp. 22-74.

cognitive content of religious claims. Both neo-Wittgensteinian philosophers and Reformed Epistemologists are against the evidentialist orientation of Logical Positivism, but the difference is that neo-Wittgensteinian philosophers have a *non-realist* orientation and defend faith as *linguistic grammar*, whereas Reformed Epistemologists have a *realist orientation* and defend faith as *epistemic rationality*. Reformed Epistemology uses philosophy of *knowledge* instead of philosophy of *language* and this change in the philosophy of religion is rooted in the change in epistemology. The philosophy of John Hick has not been discussed in relation to this trend of the revival of epistemology, but this study suggests that the complexity and subtlety of Hick's philosophy can truly be revealed in the context of this trend of the revival of epistemology.[57]

II. FROM THE PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE
TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF KNOWLEDGE

These paradigm changes in the field of the philosophy of religion are related to a change of trend in analytical philosophy in general and it can be summarized as a move from the philosophy of language to the philosophy of knowledge. The rise of analytical philosophy in the beginning of the 20th century was connected with the emphasis on

---

[57] See, for example, Hick, *Dialogues in the Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 6-7.

language and the influence of its main contributors (Wittgenstein[58], Quine[59], and Sellars[60]) resulted in the neglect of the importance of epistemology. Because of the intermediary nature of language, these philosophers had an inclination to doubt any direct relationship with reality. Instead of a direct relationship with reality, these philosophers emphasized a context within which a particular knowledge is situated. According to these philosophers, knowledge cannot be independent and the meaning of knowledge is always determined by its context. Therefore, all knowledge depends on further knowledge for its status, and this argument presupposes methodological coherentism[61].

The theory of reliabilism was proposed to restore direct relationship with reality and what reliabilism offered to recover through direct relationship with reality was the *specific* nature of knowledge, which reliabilism calls '*reliability* of knowledge'. According to reliabilism, there are a lot of different kinds of knowledge and each kind of knowledge has its own reliability. The idea of reliability distinguishes reliabilist epistemology from

---

[58] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, Oxford: Blackwell, 1958.

[59] Willard Van Orman Quine, *From a Logical Point of View: Logico-Philosophical Essays*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1953.

[60] Wilfrid Sellars, *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*, Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 1997.

[61] 'What distinguishes a coherence theory is simply the claim that nothing can count as a reason for holding a belief except another belief. Its partisan rejects as unintelligible the request for a ground or source of justification of another ilk.' See Donald Davidson, 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge', in Dieter Henrich, ed., *Kant oder Hegel?*, Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1983, p. 426, quoted in Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 108.

classical epistemology. According to classical epistemology exemplified by Descartes or Hume, one knows only what is indubitable and what can be deductively proven from the indubitable. Therefore, Descartes's rationalism presupposes a universality of rational intuition as its ultimate premise and Hume's empiricism presupposes a universality of inference and experience. Reliabilism gives up the universality of knowledge and instead focuses on the partial reliability of knowledge. Therefore, according to reliabilism, one does not need to choose among rational intuition, inference, and experience. All of these have a qualitatively different reliability and one can use not only perfectly reliable rational intuition but also inference, experience, memory, testimony, introspection … etc.[62]

Ernest Sosa and Alvin Plantinga can be seen as typical representatives of reliabilism. However, the methods of Sosa and Plantinga have different orientations. Sosa emphasizes the second-order balance among different specific kinds of knowledge. According to Sosa, knowledge has its meaning only as a balance between different specific kinds of reliable knowledge. Therefore, a particular kind of knowledge cannot be separated from other kinds of knowledge.[63] On the contrary, Plantinga emphasizes a specific reliability of knowledge. According to Plantinga, knowledge has its meaning only within a particular

---

[62] This explanation of reliabilism largely depends on that put forward by John Greco. See John Greco, 'Introduction: Motivations for Sosa's Epistemology,' in *Ernest Sosa and his Critics*, ed. John Greco, Malden, Mass.; Oxford: Blackwell, 2004, pp. xv-xvi.

[63] 'Reliabilism requires for the epistemic justification of belief that it be formed by a process reliable in an environment normal for the formation of such belief … Every bit of knowledge still lies atop a pyramid of knowledge. But the building requirements for pyramids are now less stringent.' See Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 89.

environment. Therefore, Plantinga denies the relevance of second-order balance, and instead prioritises the clarification of the specific reliability of knowledge. To develop the specificity of the reliability of knowledge, Plantinga invents new concepts of *proper function* and *proper basicality*. Belief in God, according to Plantinga, could count as knowledge if it was produced by properly functioning cognitive faculties.[64] Furthermore, belief in God can be properly basic with respect to warrant and one may hold a warranted belief about God not on the evidential basis of other propositions, but grounded on or occasioned by an appropriate experience.[65]

This study suggests that the method of reliabilism developed by Ernest Sosa can be used in an original way to rehabilitate Hick's philosophy in contemporary context.

III. PARADIGM SHIFTS IN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

To understand the background of John Hick's philosophy, it is necessary to understand not only the philosophy of religion and epistemology, but also Christian Theology. This

---

[64] 'A belief has warrant for you only if your cognitive apparatus is functioning properly, working the way it ought to work, in producing and sustaining it.' See Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function*, p. 4.

[65] 'In the typical case … Christian belief is immediate; it is formed in the *basic* way. It doesn't proceed by way of an argument from, for example, the reliability of Scripture or the church … My Christian belief can have warrant, and warrant sufficient for knowledge, even if I don't know of and cannot make a good historical case for the reliability of the biblical writers or for what they teach.' Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, p. 259. The italics is in the original.

study can examine Christian Theology only in its relation to Hick and his philosophy of religion. But one can still find a broad similarity between the paradigm shift in philosophy and the one in Christian Theology, even though there is no direct correspondence.

According to Hick, 'during the closing years of the nineteenth century, and during the twentieth century as it has thus far elapsed, there has been an abundant stream of thought in the Irenaean tradition.'[66] In the earlier works of this Irenaean tradition[67], there is an influence of the dominant and pervasive idea of the nineteenth century, the concept of *evolution* or development taking place in all life. The idea of evolution is reflected in British theology of that period, in the conception of the created order, centring upon man, as moving towards a divinely appointed end. There is also, in many of the British works of the later years of the reign of Queen Victoria and the expansive Edwardian period, an air of *optimism* which contrasts sharply the more pessimistic outlook of so many of the writings produced during and after the First World War. Thereafter a new note of

---

[66] Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, First Edition, p. 242.

[67] Among the 'Irenaean tradition', Hick mentions Nicholas Berdyaev, Alexander Campbell Fraser, Alexander Balmain Bruce, Robert Flint, Henry Drummond, James Martineau, James Iverach, A. S. Pringle-Pattison, Leonard Hodgson, J. S. Whale, H. H. Farmer, D. S. Cairns, Oliver Chase Quick, Nels F. S. Ferré, Charles E. Raven, Geddes Macgregor, and Hugh Montefiore. See Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, First Edition, pp. 242-61.

Eric McKimmon categorizes Alexander Campbell Fraser as Scottish Realist in the tradition of William Hamilton and categorizes A. S. Pringle-Pattison as Personal Idealist. See Eric McKimmon, 'Oman and Scottish Philosophical Traditions,' in *John Oman: New Perspectives*, p. 99-101, 108-114. See also Alexander Campbell Fraser, *Philosophy of Theism*, Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1895-96. A. S. Pringle-Pattison, *The Idea of God in the Light of Recent Philosophy*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1917.

pessimism in the position of Protestant Neo-Orthodoxy was heard, in Europe above all

from Karl Barth, in the United States from Reinhold Niebuhr, and in Britain from Peter

Taylor Forsyth.[68]

Therefore, there is a difference between evolutional/optimistic theologies in the

nineteenth century (regarding the nineteenth century as a cultural epoch that ended in

1914) and their twentieth century pessimistic successors.[69] According to Hick, his

theological position belongs to the former one of evolutional and optimistic theology and

F. R. Tennant and William Temple can be seen as typical exponents of the Irenaean

tradition in the twentieth century.[70] Under the influence from James Ward[71], etc., Tennant

says, in *Philosophical Theology*, that the human being is still in process of being created

as a free moral being: 'moral goodness cannot be created as such … It is the outcome of

freedom, and has to be acquired or achieved by creatures. We cannot imagine a living

world, in which truly ethical values are to be actualized, save as an evolutionary cosmos

---

[68] Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, First Edition, pp. 242-43, and 246-50. See also Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1936-. Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, London: Nisbet & Co, 1941-43. Peter Taylor Forsyth, *The Justification of God*, London: Duckworth, 1916.

[69] About the paradigm shift in Christian theology during the First World War, see Otto Piper, *Recent Developments in German Protestantism*, London: S.C.M. Press, 1934, pp. 40-47.

[70] See Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, First Edition, pp. 250-55, and 261. See also Hick, *Classical and Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Religion*, First Edition, p. 478.

[71] 'Many books and articles have … been drawn upon; but in outstanding degree, the *Psychological Principles* of the late Prof. J. Ward.' See Tennant, *Philosophical Theology*, Vol. I, p. vi.

in which free agents live and learn, make choices and build characters.'[72] Under the influence of Edward Caird[73], etc., Temple says, in *Nature, Man and God*, that the divine Being and the divine communication are known in a single apprehension which is the awareness of God as acting self-revealingly towards us, and the revelation consists in the self-revealing actions from within events in human history: 'there is no imparting of truth as the intellect apprehends truth, but there is event and appreciation; and in the coincidence of these the revelation consists.'[74] Temple says that the events are always in themselves ambiguous, capable of being seen either simply as natural happenings or as happenings through which God is acting towards us.[75] When the revelatory events are seen and responded to as divine actions, the human being exists in a conscious relation to, and with knowledge of, God: and this total occurrence is revelation. According to Hick, both Tennant and Temple stress 'the idea that divine creativity is still at work in relation to man and drawing him towards a perfection not yet realized.'[76]

In addition to Hick's understanding of the history of Christian theology as the move

---

[72] Tennant, *Philosophical Theology*, Vol. II, p. 185, quoted in Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, First Edition, p. 251.

[73] Temple names his position as 'Dialectical Realism' and says that his position 'is almost identical with such an Idealism as that of Edward Caird or of Bernard Bosanquet.' See Temple, *Nature, Man and God*, p. 498. See also Robert Craig, *Social Concern in the Thought of William Temple*, London: Victor Gollancz, 1963, pp. 10-11.

[74] Temple, *Nature, Man and God*, p. 314, quoted in Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, Second Edition, p. 28. See also Hick, *Faith and Knowedge*, First Edition, pp. xv-xvi.

[75] Here one can find an origin of Hick's concept of 'religious ambiguity of the universe'.

[76] Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, First Edition, p. 245.

from Irenaean tradition to Neo-Orthodoxy, two other movements of more recent Christian

theology are important for the purpose of the present study: Post-Liberal theology and

Radical Orthodoxy. Instead of the popularity of Neo-Orthodoxy until around 1940s and

1950s among American universities, what has been called 'Post-Liberal Theology'

became a recognizable phenomenon in the 1970s and 1980s with the publications of Hans

Frei's *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative*[77] in 1974 and George Lindbeck's *The Nature of*

Doctrine in 1984.[78] However, the relation between Neo-Orthodoxy and Post-Liberal

theology is not simple. On the one hand, Neo-Orthodoxy and Post-Liberal theology share

a rejection of an individual type of liberalism such as the one of Friedrich Schleiermacher.

On the other hand, from the view of religious pluralism, Neo-Orthodox theologians have

an orientation towards a more exclusive/conservative position, and Post-Liberal

theologians have an orientation towards a more pluralist/liberal position.[79] Therefore, it is

better to understand Post-Liberal theology as a recovery of a *narrative* type of liberalism

after Neo-Orthodoxy's criticism of an *individual* type of liberalism, and the method used

for the recovery of the narrative type of liberalism is *Wittgensteinian philosophy of*

---

[77] Hans Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1974.

[78] See Paul J. DeHart, *The Trial of the Witnesses: The Rise and Decline of Postliberal Theology*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2006, pp. 1-56. There are a number of other proponents and advocates of Post-Liberal theology. See also David Burrell, *Aquinas: God and Action*, Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1979. Stanley Hauerwas, *Character and the Christian Life*, San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1985. Nicholas Lash, *Theology on the Way to Emmaus*, London: SCM Press, 1986.

[79] See, for example, Paul F. Knitter, *Theologies of Religions*, Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 2002, pp. 23-26, 178-185.

language.

According to George Lindbeck, the innovation introduced by Neo-Orthodox theologians such as Karl Barth lies in its rejection of subjective individualism that is implicit in the method of liberal theologians such as Schleiermacher.[80] What Barth offered, instead of individualism, was an emphasis on narrative, and Lindbeck connects the influence from Barth with his understanding of Wittgenstein: 'Karl Barth's exegetical emphasis on narrative has been at second hand a chief source of my notion of intratextuality as an appropriate way of doing theology in a fashion consistent with a cultural-linguistic understanding of religion.'[81]

Lindbeck's understanding of Wittgenstein is explicit in his understanding of 'cultural-linguistic' understanding of religion: 'a religion can be viewed as a kind of cultural and/or linguistic framework or medium that shapes the entirety of life and thought.'[82] Lindbeck proposes that it is the words and images that are given by religion that give shape to religious thought and convictions. Without religious words, we would not have religious experience: 'just as a language (or 'language game,' to use Wittgenstein's phrase) is correlated with a form of life, and just as a culture has both cognitive and behavioral

---

[80] Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, p. 24.

[81] Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, p. 135. About the narrative theology of Barth, see also David Ford, *Barth and God's Story: Biblical Narrative and the Theological Method of Karl Barth in the Church Dogmatics*, Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1981.

[82] Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, p. 33.

dimensions, so it is also in the case of a religious tradition.'[83] Therefore, an individual

identity is not individual at all, but is determined by the communal and religious worldview

that we are born into. Given this understanding of cultural language in general and religious

language in particular, Lindbeck suggests that there is nothing that can be truly declared

'common' to all religions.

A recent development of religious pluralism which emphasises diversity rather than

identity (e.g. Gavin D'Costa, S. Mark Heim, and etc.) can be understood from the context

of this broadly post-liberal atmostphere which emphasises diversity of linguistic grammar

rather than identity of religious experience.[84]

Instead of the popularity of Post-Liberal Theology around 1970s and 1980s among

American universities, what has been called 'Radical Orthodoxy' became a recognizable

phenomenon in British universities during the 1990s and 2000s with the publications of

John Milbank's *Theology and Social Theory*[85] in 1990 and Catherine Pickstock's *After*

---

[83] Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, p. 33.

[84] See Paul F. Knitter, *Theologies of Religions*, pp. 173-237. See also William A. Christian, *Oppositions of Religious Doctrines: a Study in the Logic of Dialogue Among Religions*, London: Macmillan, 1972. John B. Cobb, *Transforming Christianity and the World: a Way Beyond Absolutism and Relativism*, ed. Paul F. Knitter, Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1999. James L. Fredericks, *Faith among Faiths: Christian Theology and Non-Christian Religions*, New York: Paulist Press, 1999.

[85] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1990. John Milbank argues that the method of Lindbeck is 'settled simply by recourse to a more exact reading of preceding practices and narratives' and it remains 'merely safeguarding what is properly implicit in the narrative'. What is lacking in the method of Lindbeck is the 'breaking out of this frame to project a new one through the temporal course of event.' In this sense, according to Milbank,

Writing[86] in 1998.[87] From the perspective of this study, Radical Orthodoxy can be understood under the characteristic of a rejection of individual liberalism, overcoming of Wittgensteinian philosophy of language, a defence of cosmic ontology, and a tendency towards Christian exclusivism.

Regarding the rejection of individual liberalism, John Milbank agrees with Lindbeck. Milbank argues with a slightly political orientation that modern philosophy created the idea of the individual that is independent from society: "unrestricted' private property, 'absolute sovereignty' and 'active right', which compose the 'pure-power' object of the new politics, are all the emanations of a new anthropology which begins with human persons as individuals and yet defines their individuality essentialistically, as 'will' or 'capacity' or 'impulse to self-preservation'." [88] According to Milbank, individual liberalism, invented by modern philosophy, suggests that society is not real and there are

---

the method of Lindbeck has only a paradigmatic setting and it lacks syntagmatic development: 'because he [Lindbeck] fails to see the tension in any narrative between the assumption of a paradigmatic setting, and the unfolding of a syntagmatic development, he proceeds to graft the paradigmatic function inappropriately onto the narrative structures as such.' See John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990, pp. 383 and 386.

[86] Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing: on the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1998.

[87] There are a number of other proponents and advocates of Radical Orthodoxy. See Graham Ward, *Cities of God*, London: Routledge, 2000. Simon Oliver, *Philosophy, God and Motion*, London: Routledge, 2005. Conor Cunningham, *Darwin's Pious Idea: Why the Ultra-Darwinists and Creationists Both Get it Wrong*, Grand Rapids, Mich.; Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans, 2010.

[88] Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, p. 14.

only individuals who happen to coalesce in certain contingent ways and harbor different desires, needs, skills and the like, in pursuing their own self-interest which is not linked in any necessary way to the collective interest of society.

About Wittgensteinian philosophy of language, Radical Orthodoxy has an ambiguous attitude. For example, Conor Cunningham accepts some aspects of Wittgensteinian philosophy of language. But, because of its weakness (which limits itself within first-order description), he proposes to complement it with metaphysical realism (which acts as second-order explanation and gives actuality and specificity to first-order language): 'Wittgenstein is obliged to refuse philosophy the right to posit an objective reality, since it must not speak from a place 'before' description … A reality would provide a 'place', logically speaking, outside language, even though the concept is developed from within language.'[89] According to Cunningham, the first-order philosophy of language must be complemented by the second-order realism.[90]

---

[89] Conor Cunningham, 'Language: Wittgenstein after theology,' in *Radical Orthodoxy: a New Theology*, ed. John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock, and Graham Ward, London: Routledge, 1999, p.73.

[90] This understanding of the second-order realism is practically connected with Radical Orthodoxy's understanding of Christian theology, which does not have its own special subject matter, but it's much more a question of the way in which Christian theology makes a difference to everything. See Nicholas Lash, 'Ideology, Metaphor and Analogy,' in *Theology on the Way to Emmaus*, p. 95-120. See also, 'Radical Orthodoxy: A Conversation,' in *The Radical Orthodoxy Reader*, ed. John Milbank and Simon Oliver, London: Routledge, 2009, p. 30. Furthermore, about the complementation of first-order Wittgensteinian philosophy of language with the second-order metaphysical realism, see David Burrell, *Aquinas: God and Action*, pp. 167-75.

What Milbank proposes, instead of the individualist anthropology and Wittgensteinian philosophy of language, is the Augustinian ontology of Mediaeval Christendom. The Augustinian ontology is characterized by '1 Micro/macro cosmic isomorphism; 2 the non-subordination of either part to whole or whole to part; 3 the presence of the whole in every part; and 4 positioning within an indefinite shifting sequence rather than a fixed totality.'[91] Also, as a defence of the Augustinian idea of cosmos, Catherine Pickstock argues that the totality of cosmos is not something that is added to the rest of the world but it is the total series of worldly interactions: 'for Augustine the entire cosmos itself is not a total 'thing' to which one could accord a size, even a maximum size. On the contrary, it is rather an assemblage of all the relations that it encompasses, in such a way that since there is nothing else with which it can be compared or to which it is related, it cannot in itself be accorded a size, measure, or rhythmic modulation.'[92]

---

[91] Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, p. 409.

[92] Catherine Pickstock, 'Music: Soul, City, and Cosmos after Augustine,' in *Radical Orthodoxy: a New Theology*, p. 247.

These understandings of cosmic ontology by Milbank and Pickstock are influenced by Henri de Lubac. According to De Lubac, one can only specify human nature with reference to its supernatural end, and the human nature is only fully defined when it is referred to certain privileged historical events and images. See Henri de Lubac, *The Mystery of the Supernatural*, trans. Rosemary Sheed, New York: Crossroad, 1998. See also John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, pp. 219-220. Conor Cunningham, *Darwin's Pious Idea,* pp. 407-10.

The same relation between the natural and the supernatural can also be seen in the works of Eric Voegelin, see John Milbank, *Beyond Secular Order: The Representation of Being and the Representation of the People*, Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2013, p. 6. See also Eric Voegelin, *Order and History*, Baton Rouge and London: Lousiana University Press, 1954-74.

Furthermore, as the works of Graham Ward show, the movement of Radical Orthodoxy is not ignorant of the diversity of religions: 'the uncompromising assertion of Christianity will be matched by similar assertions from other faiths, other theological practices. And as long as each resists the fear of encountering the other and the different within itself, and the fear also of welcoming the stranger who is now the neighbor, then these communities will not cultivate but transfigure their resistance identities. Neither will they reify and fossilize the truth that is shared and dynamic among them.'[93] However, most of the works of Radical Orthodoxy are limited within an exclusively Christian, or broadly 'Catholic', perspective and a religiously pluralist perspective is yet to come.[94]

To rehabilitate the reasonableness of John Hick's philosophy, this study has illustrated an original intellectual mapping and introduced a new division of four periods in the history of philosophy and Christian theology (in the case of philosophy, (1) British

---

[93] Graham Ward, *True Religion*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2003, p. 153. See also William Cavanaugh, 'A Fire Strong Enough to Consume the House: The Wars of Religion and the Rise of the Nation State,' in *The Radical Orthodoxy Reader*, pp. 314-37.

Furthermore, under the influence from David Burrell, John Milbank offers a defence of Al Ghazali, Sourawardi, Ibn Arabi, and Mulla Sadra in Islamic tradition, who are 'in potential harmony with the metaphysics of the Church Fathers, Aquinas, and the 'Dominican' legacy.' See Milbank, *Beyond Secular Order*, p. 14. See also David Burrell, *Faith and Freedom: an Interfaith Perspective*, Malden, Mass.; Oxford: Blackwell, 2004.

[94] See John Milbank, 'The End of Dialogue,' in *The Future of Love: Essays in Political Theology*, Eugene, Oregon: CASCADE Books, 2009, pp. 279-300.

David Cheetham rightly points out that a weakness of Radical Orthodoxy is to limit its position within an exclusively Christian perspective. Cheetham compares John Hick and John Milbank, and proposes to read each from each other's position. See Cheetham, *Ways of Meeting and the Theology of Religions*, pp. 39-60.

Idealism/American Critical Realism, (2) Logical Positivism, (3) Wittgensteinian philosophy of language, (4) Reliabilism, and in the case of Christian theology, (1) what Hick calls 'Irenaean' tradition (2) Neo-Orthodoxy, (3)Post-Liberal theology, and (4)Radical Orthodoxy). The illustration of these four periods is not the only possible explanation of the development of philosophy and theology, and other illustrations must be possible as well. However, to rehabilitate Hick's intentions in a contemporary context, this study tentatively proposes to use the illustration of four periods.

A Framework for the Reading of John Hick

In 'The Philosophy of Religious Pluralism: A Critical Appraisal of Hick and His Critics,' Sumner B. Twiss pointed out the multi-dimensional nature of Hick's philosophy.[95] Twiss says that he 'has a rather favorable view of Hick's theory and its prospects; this is in large part due to my belief that Hick's theory constitutes a rich organic web of more than one theoretical strand, giving it considerable resilience and subtlety in dealing with difficult philosophical challenges.'[96]

Twiss points out that, in the very basement of Hick's theory, there is a striking tension. On the one hand, Hick's theory 'adheres to a Wittgensteinian view of religious language and belief, which is usually understood to conceive of divine reality as internally related to practices and to construe religious discourse as grammatical rather than referential.'[97] On the other hand, Hick's theory 'adheres to the view that religious language and belief are properly understood as presupposing an independent and ontologically real ultimate

---

[95] Sumner B. Twiss, 'The Philosophy of Religious Pluralism: A Critical Appraisal of Hick and His Critics,' in *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 70, No. 4, pp. 533-68. See also Cheetham, *John Hick*, pp. 16-20, and 132-169.

[96] Twiss, 'The Philosophy of Religious Pluralism,' p. 534.

[97] Twiss, 'The Philosophy of Religious Pluralism,' p. 535.

divine.'[98] Twiss says that Hick's account of religious pluralism is composed from at least

two different theoretical threads – cultural-linguistic and propositional-realist, respectively.

Furthermore, Twiss also says that a number of others may be present as well: 'the

tendency to regard religious language and doctrine as metaphoric and mythic and to see

all religions as expressions of a common core experience or soteriological orientation is

suggestive of what Lindbeck would call an experiential-expressive thread, while the final

development of a pragmatic epistemology of religious belief is reminiscent of William

James and suggestive of a pragmatic theory of religion. And, of course, there is no denying

the fact that Hick's ontological postulate reflects a Kantian thread.'[99] As a result of the

multi-dimensional nature of Hick's philosophy, Twiss recommends 'to examine Hick's

theory apart from one-sided readings in order to be in a position to appreciate and assess

the function, effect, and significance of its multidimensional theoretical strands.' [100]

According to Twiss, when one looks at the actual arguments and the crucial points of

theoretical tension in Hick's account, one finds that Hick's views fare pretty well and are

not in any obvious way implausible.

This multi-dimensional character of Hick's philosophy is also pointed out by

Christopher Sinkinson: 'Hick makes eclectic use of his sources, and cannot thus be labelled

as the follower of any one school of thought. Where helpful, he draws upon Kant or

---

[98] Twiss, 'The Philosophy of Religious Pluralism,' p. 535.

[99] Twiss, 'The Philosophy of Religious Pluralism,' p. 538.

[100] Twiss, 'The Philosophy of Religious Pluralism,' p. 539.

Wittgenstein or Hume or Ayer in order to advance his work.'[101] However, in spite of the recognition of the multi-dimensionality, Sinkinson understands Hick mainly as Kantian: 'yet I think it can be easily shown that the mature statement Hick gives of his position is strikingly similar to that of Kant.'[102]

Like Sinkinson, other critics of Hick also focus on Kantian aspect of Hick's philosophy. Paul R. Eddy understands Hick mainly as neo-Kantian ('Hick's neo-Kantian subjectivist moment ultimately undermines his religious realism'[103]), and Gerard Loughlin criticizes Hick's use of Kantian distinction of noumenon and phenomena ('if religious pluralism is a tentative theory, a piece of philosophical speculation, and not something which arises out of the dynamics of the Christian life, it must be unacceptable to Christian theology as reflective attention to that life. It simply is not credible to suppose that Christian theology could advocate abandoning divine revelation in favour of a theoretical postulate – Hick's noumenal Real.'[104])

This study recognizes the importance of Kantian aspect of Hick's philosophy and will examine the validity of Kantian position. However, this study will mainly follow the direction of Twiss's argument and, on the basis of Twiss's argument, this study suggests

---

[101] Sinkinson, *The Universe of Faiths*, p. 84.

[102] Sinkinson, *The Universe of Faiths*, p. 84.

[103] Paul R. Eddy, 'Religious Pluralism and the Divine: Another look at John Hick's Neo-Kantian Proposal', in *Religious Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 4, 1994, p. 493.

[104] Gerard Loughlin, 'Noumenon and Phenomena,' in *Religious Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 4, 1987, pp. 493-508.

that the multi-dimensional nature of Hick's philosophy can also be understood from situations within which Hick's philosophy is contextualized. In response to the movement of Logical Positivism, Hick takes a *cognitive* position and provides a theory of eschatological verification. In response to the movement of neo-Wittgensteinian philosophy, Hick takes a *contextual* position and provides an argument about experiencing-as. Hick later adds an argument of mythical interpretation of religion and this argument can be understood as a *non-cognitive* standpoint. For example, D'Costa interprets Hick's philosophy as a non-cognitive position which prioritises the mythical interpretation of religion.[105] However, this non-cognitive interpretation contradicts Hick's defence of the cognitive standpoint of eschatological verification and the contextual argument of 'experiencing-as'. Even in his later position Hick keeps his cognitive standpoint and contextual standpoint as well as non-cognitive standpoint.

To interpret appropriately the multi-dimensional nature of Hick's philosophy, this study uses a method of *reliabilism* which focuses on the balance among different kinds of particular standpoints. Furthermore, as a result of the method of reliabilism, this study pays a special attention to Hick's standpoint of *cosmic optimism*. The idea of cosmic optimism can be understood as a kind of cosmic mysticism which can be clarified by making a comparison with individual mysticism. A typical example of individual mysticism can be

---

[105] 'It [Hick's mythologizing hermeneutic] seems to ignore or deny the really difficult conflicting truth claims by, in effect, reducing them to sameness: i.e., they are all mythological assertions.' See D'Costa, *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity*, p. 27.

found in George Lindbeck's explanation of the experiential-expressive standpoint. What is important to understand in this approach is that it presupposes an *individual* viewpoint. According to Lindbeck, 'thinkers of this tradition all locate ultimately significant contact with whatever is finally important to religion in the prereflective experiential depths of the self and regard the public or outer features of religion as expressive and evocative objectifications (i.e., nondiscursive symbols) of internal experience.'[106] What is presupposed in this explanation of the experiential-expressive standpoint is a situation that an individual has a contact with reality and the individual experience is located within the *internal* part of the self because experience cannot be objectified and in this sense it is beyond cognitivity. As Lindbeck argues, this experiential-expressive standpoint is a modern invention which was made against a cognitive-propositional approach to religion, and both of them presuppose an individual viewpoint: 'this pattern was already well established in American Protestantism by the nineteenth century, but in the past both conservative and liberals generally thought of the search for individual religious meaning as taking place within the capacious confines of the many varieties of Christianity.'[107] According to Lindbeck, the traditions of religious thought and practice into which Westerners are most likely to be socialized conceals from them the social origins of their conviction that religion is a highly private and individual matter.

On the contrary, Hick's approach presupposes a *cosmic* viewpoint. For example, Hick

---

[106] Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, p. 21.

[107] Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, p. 22.

speaks of 'religious ambiguity of the universe.'[108] Hick uses the concept of ambiguity in

a good sense. This is because ambiguity has a connotation of the creative and

transformative power of the universe. This ambiguity can be understood as the parallel to

what Hick regards as *epistemic distance*[109] in the field of Christian theology. The

limitation on the ability of the human being does not limit the creative power of the divine

nature. On the contrary, the limitation of the human being can truly be creative by being a

part of the whole reality. The limitation of the human being is more likely a condition to

manifest the creativity of divine reality.[110]

---

[108] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 73.

[109] In *Evil and the God of Love*, Hick argues that the human being is not allowed to know God directly. Therefore, the human being is open to both a theistic and a naturalistic interpretation of the universe: 'it [the universe] is systematically ambiguous, capable of being interpreted either theistically or naturalistically.' However, this epistemic distance of the human being from God does not limit the creative and transformative power of the Creator, but it shows that the human being is part of divine providence: 'in order for man to be endowed with the freedom in relation to God that is essential if he is to come to his Creator in uncompelled faith and love, he must be initially set at an epistemic 'distance' from that Creator … This means that the sinfulness from which man is being redeemed, and the human suffering which flows from that sinfulness, have in their own paradoxical way a place within the divine providence.' See Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, First Edition, pp. 373 and 323.

[110] 'God's self-revealing actions are accordingly always so mediated through the events of our temporal experience that men only become aware of the divine presence by interpreting and responding to these events in the way which we call religious faith.' 'Events which can be experienced as having a purely natural significance are experienced by the religious mind as having also and at the same time religious significance and as mediating the presence and activity of God.' Hick, *Arguments for the Existence of God*, pp. 104-105, and 111.

Hick draws on many philosophers/theologians (Kant[111], Irenaeus[112], Aquinas[113], etc.)

---

[111] 'I was deeply influenced by Kemp Smith … He was one of the last of the Idealist philosophers and also a major interpreter of Kant … It was through him that I realized the immense importance of Kant … I have retained from Kant what today I identify as 'critical realism' – the view that there is a world, indeed a universe, out there existing independently of us, but that we can only know it in the forms provided by our human perceptual apparatus and conceptual systems.' See Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, pp. 66-69.

[112] 'Man, a created and organized being, is rendered after the image and likeness of the uncreated God … man making progress day by day, and ascending towards the perfect, that is, approximating to the uncreated One.' See Irenaeus, 'Against Heresies', 4. 38. 3, in *The Writings of Irenaeus*, Trans. Alexander Roberts and W. H. Rambaut, London: Hamilton & Co, 1869, p. 44, quoted in Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, p. 219.

According to Gustaf Wingren, modern interpreters of Irenaeus (H. H. Wendt, Adolf von Harnack, and R. R. M. Hitchcock) had pointed out two mutually-contradictory lines of thought in Irenaeus, describing the one as apologetic and the other as moralistic: 'the theology of Irenaeus has two distinctive characteristics: first, the whole of his theology is marked by his contrast between God and the Devil, and the ceaselessly raging conflict between the two powers, a conflict which is fought out in the midst of our humanity; and second, this humanity, independently of the conflict we have mentioned, is continually in process of change, developing and altering its form, but never remaining in the same fixed pattern.' Because of this duality, Irenaeus had been accused of being inconsistent. However, according to Wingren, these two contradictory lines are united in the concept of man growing like a child: 'the unity which unites the two parts consists of the concept of child and the concept of growth.' See Gustaf Wingren, *Man and the Incarnation: A Study in the Biblical Theology of Irenaeus*, London: Oliver and Boyd, 1959, pp. 27 and 104. See also Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, First Edition, p. 221.

[113] 'Things known are in the knower according to the mode of the knower.' See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II/II, Q. I, art. 2. 'God … as considered in Himself, is altogether one and simple, yet our intellect knows Him according to diverse conceptions because it cannot see Him as He is in Himself.' See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, part I, Q. 13, art. 12. See also Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, pp. 241 and 247. Hick, *The Fifth Dimension*, p. 43. Hick, *The New Frontier of Religion and Science*, p. 163. Hick, *Who or What is God?*, p. 10. F. C. Copleston, *Aquinas*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1955, pp. 131-155.

and makes use of many concepts ('two types of faith'[114] from Martin Buber, 'the vale of soul-making'[115] from John Keats, 'religious ambiguity of the universe'[116] from William Temple, 'identity of ethics and soteriology'[117] and 'levels of meanings,'[118] from John Macmurray, etc.) to develop his central position. What is noteworthy among them is John Oman's British Idealism and Roy Wood Sellars' Critical Realism. After the publication of *An Interpretation of Religion*, Hick begins to mention Aquinas to explain his central position.[119] But Hick does not connect his reading of Aquinas with the contemporary academic situation, and therefore it looks weak and underdeveloped.

British Idealism was an influential movement in Britain from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century[120] and John Oman came at the end of the dominance of British Idealism under the influence of Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison, etc.[121]. John Hick

---

[114] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, pp. ix-xix.

[115] Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, First Edition, pp. 289-297.

[116] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, pp. 73-128.

[117] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, pp. 299-315.

[118] Hick, *The New Frontier of Religion and Science*, pp. 140-142.

[119] See Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, pp. 236-249. Hick, *The Fifth Dimension*, pp. 77-90, 144-154. Hick, *The New Frontier of Religion and Science*, pp. 162-171. Hick, *Who or What is God?*, pp. 1-13.

[120] See W. J. Mander, *British Idealism: A History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 1-37. Norman Kemp Smith defines Idealism as a position that 'spiritual values have a determining voice in the ordering of the Universe,' and 'what is most truly distinctive in Idealism is its central contention, that spiritual values can be credited as operating on a more than planetary, that is, on a cosmic scale.' See Kemp Smith, *Prolegomena to an Idealist Theory of Knowledge*, pp. 1 and 4.

[121] See Stephen Bevans, *John Oman and his Doctrine of God*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 35-40. See also Eric McKimmon, 'Oman and Scottish Philosophical Traditions,' in

inherited three aspects of his philosophy of religion from Oman's *The Natural and the Supernatural*: 'the apprehension of the supernatural in and through the natural,'[122] 'the relation between religion and environment,'[123] and 'a comprehensive religious interpretation of religion.'[124]

One of the central arguments that Oman developed in *The Natural and the Supernatural* is the relation between the Natural and the Supernatural. According to Oman, there is no independent realm of the Supernatural, which is separated from the realm of the Natural. On the contrary, Oman says, the Supernatural can be seen only within the Natural as a reconciliation of every different phenomenon in the natural world: 'what determines their faith is not a theory of the Supernatural, but an attitude towards the Natural, as a sphere in which a victory of deeper meaning than the visible and of more abiding purpose than the fleeting can be won … The revelation of the Supernatural was by reconciliation to the Natural: and this was made possible by realizing in the Natural the meaning and purpose of the Supernatural.'[125] Therefore, the Supernatural is perceived when the natural world, within which different individuals are following different values, meanings and purposes, becomes open to its ultimate value, meaning and purpose. The Supernatural is not the

---

John Oman: New Perspectives, p. 108-13.

[122] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. xix.

[123] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. xix.

[124] Hick, *An Autobiography*, p. 84. See also Hick, 'A Voyage Round John Oman,' pp. 163-71.

[125] Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, p. 448, quoted in Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 130.

designation of a world beyond this world; it is, rather, this natural world seen inclusively and as having a new evaluation made of its total significance.[126]

Oman develops the relation between the Natural and the Supernatural into an epistemology of environment. According to Oman, the Supernatural is known only through the entire natural context and hence has no separate locus of its own which can be known independently of the natural environment: 'knowing is not knowledge as an effect of an unknown external cause, but is knowledge as we so interpret that our meaning is the actual meaning of our environment.'[127] Oman says that a human being's environment stands over against the human being and is known only as it crosses into one's mind as meaning, and the interpretation of that meaning is the outcome of one's engagement with the environment.[128] What must be made clear is that Oman is not suggesting that religious awareness is a response to any special object, but rather is constituted by a special type of awareness of all objects taken as a whole. Oman's epistemology of the environment can be designated as inclusive in the sense that the acknowledgement of the Supernatural is one's total engagement with the whole environment. Therefore, a role for religion lies in a belief that 'a human being's environment is other and greater than it seems, that

---

[126] See Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, pp. 69-73. See also Thomas A. Langford, 'The Theological Methodology of John Oman and H. H. Farmer,' in *Religious Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1966, pp. 229-240.

[127] Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, p. 175, quoted in Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 166.

[128] 'Our knowledge cannot be a purely mental creation; and it cannot be a mere effect of an outward cause.' See Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, p. 110.

interpreting the natural, but extending behind or beyond or above it, is the Supernatural, as

a larger environment to which men must relate themselves through the activities.'[129]

   Oman further develops the relation between the Natural and the Supernatural into a

systematic account of world religions. [130] According to Hick, Oman had some

misunderstandings of world religions, but 'Oman's formulation of the idea of epistemic

distance (not his phrase) bridges the gap between the theistic and non-theistic religions in

that the same principle applies to both equally.'[131] Hick says that within each of the great

non-theistic traditions, as within the monotheisms, deliberate effort is required. The

supernatural environment, whether experienced as a personal God or a transpersonal

Reality, is always and everywhere there to be accessed, but is not forced upon our

consciousness.[132]

---

[129] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 182. See also Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, pp. 58-9.

[130] See Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, pp. 346-471.

[131] Hick, *The New Frontier of Religion and Science*, p. 144. Hick quotes Oman's words: 'the peculiarity of the supernatural environment is that we cannot enter it except as we see and choose it as our own.' See Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, p. 309.

[132] With an additional influence from John Macmurray, John Oman's other more theological aspect, the personalist aspect in *Grace and Personality*, changed its form into Hick's inter-relational idea of ethics in the whole system of Hick's philosophy: 'one is personal in virtue of one's participation in an interacting community of persons'. See Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, pp. 144-151. See also John Oman, *Grace and Personality*, London: Collins Fontana: Association Press, 1917.

   According to Hick, 'the philosophical reader can see in *Faith and Knowledge* … a trace of John Macmurray of Edinburgh in his distinguishing of the natural, the ethical, and the divine.' See Hick, *An Autobiography*, p. 115. See also John Macmurray, *The Self as Agent: Volume I of The Form of the Personal*, London: Faber and Faber, 1957. John Macmurray, *Persons in Relation: Volume II of*

Critical Realism was an influential movement in America around the 1920s and 1930s[133] and its first formulation can be seen in Sellars' first book in 1916, *Critical Realism: A Study of the Nature and Conditions of Knowledge* [134], and its mature formulation can be seen in his book in 1932, *The Philosophy of Physical Realism*[135] and a collection of Sellars's papers, *Principles of Emergent Realism: Philosophical Essays*[136]. A large part of Sellars' thinking and writing has been devoted to a theory of perception[137] and John Hick pays special attention to three aspects of Sellars' theory of perception.

First, critical realism differs 'from naïve realism'.[138] However, according to Sellars, critical realism is not simply against naïve realism. Sellars says that naïve realism is based on plain man's belief that physical things are there before one perceives them and they remain there afterwards. Although this uncritical and unreflective view stands in need of revision, Sellars insists that its essentially realistic character must not be violated in revising it. The task of the theory of knowledge is so to refine naïve realism that it will be philosophically justifiable. For critical realism, as for naïve realism, 'it is the external object

the Form of the Personal, London: Faber and Faber, 1961.

[133] See John Passmore, *A Hundred Years of Philosophy*, pp. 281-98.

[134] Roy Wood Sellars, *Critical Realism: A Study of the Nature and Conditions of Knowledge*, Forgotten Books, 2012.

[135] Roy Wood Sellars, *The Philosophy of Physical Realism*, New York: Macmillan, 1932.

[136] Roy Wood Sellars, *Principles of Emergent Realism: Philosophical Essays*, St. Louis: W. H. Green, 1970.

[137] See Norman Paul Melchert, *Realism, Materialism, and the Mind: The Philosophy of Roy Wood Sellars*, Springfield: Illinois, Charles C. Thomas Publisher, 1968.

[138] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 174.

which is known, and *not* the idea of the object.'[139]

Second, critical realism takes 'account of the conceptual and interpretive element within sense perception'.[140] According to Sellars, perceiving is not only a simple and direct affair, but also 'an interpretative operation in which sensa are taken up into a direct characterization of external things.'[141] Sellars develops his criticism of naïve realism to show that perception is not only an 'event in which things directly reveal themselves,'[142] but also is a process in which various factors, both external and internal to the perceiver, mediate between the object and the perceiver. According to Sellars, both external things and innate ideas are elements of the process of perception, and neither is an exclusive constituent.[143] If this is so, whatever one may say about the independence of the physical thing, one can no longer talk about it as common to many perceivers. There may be a correspondence between the percepts of different perceivers, but different perceivers do not see the same thing. Through the process of perception, the minds of different perceivers continue to clarify the objects in terms of different interpretations: 'when a satisfactory perceptual experience is delayed because of uncertainty, the percipient focuses on the object, trying to get clues for a satisfying *interpretation*.'[144]

---

[139] Sellars, *The Philosophy of Physical Realism*, p. v. The italics is in the original.

[140] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 174.

[141] Sellars, *The Philosophy of Physical Realism*, p. 64.

[142] Sellars, *Critical Realism*, p. 12.

[143] See Joseph L. Blau, *Men and Movements in American Philosophy*, New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1952, p. 293-5.

[144] Sellars, *The Philosophy of Physical Realism*, p. 69.

Third, 'sense perception is a complexly mediated awareness of the physical world.'[145] According to Sellars, there are various levels of knowing, some of which are unconscious and implicit, while others are conscious and explicit. The problem of knowledge arises in connection with the conscious and explicit, yet the unconscious and implicit indicate the organic setting or matrix of knowledge-claims, and thereby reveals the presupposed antecedents of cognition. Sellars asserts that this implicit knowing is the foundation out of which explicit knowing grows in a natural fashion, and without which the fact of knowing 'would be as mysterious and non-natural as innate ideas and supernatural revelation.'[146] Throughout these discussions of knowledge, Sellars moves towards the recognition that all knowledge is appropriate as totality rather than absolute as exclusivity. At different levels of knowing, the various types of predicates that one uses are discussed to be appropriate to the disclosure of characteristics of the object.[147]

Even though there are some differences of style, both John Oman's British Idealism and Roy Wood Sellars' Critical Realism have an orientation towards the organic unity of the world, which has been criticized and neglected in analytic traditions in the latter half of twentieth century. In these two pre-analytical traditions, one can find an origin for Hick's cosmic optimism and his orientation towards totality as a second-order theory. During the

---

[145] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 174.

[146] Sellars, *The Philosophy of Physical Realism*, p.87.

[147] See Joseph L. Blau, *Men and Movements in American Philosophy*, New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1952, p. 296-7.

later period of his life, Hick also developed his reading of Aquinas which can be found in

his book, *The New Frontier of Religion and Science*[148], and in his paper 'Who and What

is God?'[149].

In the beginning of the argument, Hick rejects the concept of God found in critics of

Christianity such as Richard Dawkins and Antony Flew (before converting to deism).[150]

According to Hick, Christians in most churches believe in God, who is distinguished from

the natural world as 'an active all-powerful force who is motivated by a limitless love,

tempered by justice, and who has knowledge and wisdom infinitely surpassing our own'[151].

God can and does perform miracles, in the sense of making things happen which would

not otherwise have happened, and preventing things from happening which otherwise

would have happened. Hick says that a problem of this idea of divine intervention is that

it led many to atheism. For example, Antony Flew says that 'we see a child dying of

inoperable cancer of the throat. His earthly father is driven frantic in his efforts to help, but

his Heavenly Father reveals no sign of concern.'[152] What is presupposed in this concept

of divine intervention (for both a certain kind of Christianity and atheism) is that there is a

divine realm on the one hand, and there is another natural realm on the other hand.

---

[148] Hick, *The New Frontier of Religion and Science*, pp. 162-171.

[149] Hick, *Who and What is God?*, pp. 1-13.

[150] Hick, *Who or What is God?*, pp. ix, and 1-4. See also Antony Flew, *There Is a God: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind*, New York: HarperOne, 2008.

[151] Hick, *Who or What is God?*, p. 1.

[152] Antony Flew, 'Theology and Falsification,' in *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*, pp. 98-99.

According to this concept, God intervenes in the natural world from another world of divinity.

Then, Hick argues that a large number of Christian theologians and mystics had a different concept of God, i.e. the concept of divine ineffability: 'within Christianity we find the divine ineffability affirmed by both the great orthodox theologians and the mystics.'[153] Pseudo-Dionysius, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Nicholas of Cusa, Meister Eckhart, Martin Luther, and St. John of the Cross had the concept of divine ineffability. Hick says that 'the divine ineffability does not entail that the ultimate reality, which we are calling God, is an empty blank, but rather that God's inner nature is beyond the range of our human condition.'[154] However, Hick again warns Christians that this concept of divine ineffability should not be understood as an independent realm. If such is the case, 'only those attributes that the theologians regards as desirable are treated'[155] and God becomes the projection of a certain group of people.

Finally, Hick quotes Aquinas ('things known are in the knower according to the mode of the knower'[156]) and says that we are aware of anything, not as it is in itself unobserved, but always and necessarily as it appears to beings with our particular cognitive equipment. And, according to Hick, in the case of religious awareness, the mode of the knower differs

---

[153] Hick, *The New Frontier of Religion and Science*, p. 165.

[154] Hick, *Who or What is God?*, p. 6.

[155] Hick, *The New Frontier of Religion and Science*, p. 169.

[156] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II/II, Q. I, art. 2, quoted in Hick, *Who or What is God?*, p. 10.

from one religious tradition to another. Therefore, the ultimate reality of which the religions speak, and which we refer to as God, is being differently responded to in historical forms of life within the different religions. When these different religions are taken as a whole, each religion becomes 'responsive and not purely projective,'[157] because the elements of contingency and unpredictability become seen from the point of view of a creative purpose. Therefore, divine creativity must not be seen as special interventions from another world, but must be seen as a process of evolution from within this world.[158]

Not only cosmic optimism (originating from John Oman's British Idealism, Roy Wood Sellars' Critical Idealism, and Hick's reading of Aquinas), but Hick also defended an epistemology of religious belief (William James' 'the will to believe,' Thomas Aquinas'

---

[157] Hick, *Who and What is God?*, p. 11.

[158] Hick, *Who and What is God?*, p. 3. At the time of *Evil and the God of Love* (both in the first and the second edition), Hick has a *static* image of the Neo-Platonic tradition including Augustine and Aquinas under the category of 'the principle of plenitude' (the phrase of Arthur O. Lovejoy). But after the publication of *An Interpretation of Religion*, while still keeping the understanding of Augustinian-Calvinist theodicy as having a static and deterministic attitude, Hick changes his understanding of Neo-Platonism as a more *dynamic* and mystical tradition and includes it as a part of his cosmic optimism. See Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, First Edition, pp. 76-87, and 96-113. Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 238. Hick, *The Fifth Dimension*, pp. 144-51.

Also, Hick sometimes mentions persons in the British tradition (e.g. Ralph Cudworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and F. H. Bradley) to support his argument. See Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, pp. 83 and 185. Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, First Edition, pp. 36 and 370. Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 191.

In contrast, Hick shows a critical attitude to a pre-determined understanding of the nature of God in Anselm, Leibniz, and Charles Hartshorne. See, Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, First Edition, pp. 85-88. Hick, *Arguments for the Existence of God*, pp. 68-97.

'the virtue of faith', Richard Swinburne's 'the principle of credulity', and Norman Kemp

Smith's interpretation of Hume's 'natural belief'), and this epistemology can be

understood as complementary to his cosmic optimism. It's basic formulation can be seen

in the statement that 'it is rational to base beliefs on our experience, except when we have

positive reasons not to,'[159] and Hick situates this epistemology in the history of philosophy

in *The New Frontier of Religion and Science*.

   According to Hick, his epistemology of religious belief can be situated within the

British empiricist tradition of David Hume and G. E. Moore as against the one of John

Locke and George Berkeley.[160] According to Hick, the arguments of Locke and Berkeley

had an orientation towards solipsism, the idea that everything and everyone of which I am

aware exists only in my mind. Hume radically changed the terms of the discussion by

claiming that one believes in the reality of the external world simply because it is one's

nature to do so and not as a result of, or justified by, philosophical arguments.[161] To trust

---

[159] Hick, *Dialogues in the Philosophy of Religion*, p. 6. There is another statement of the same position: 'belief in God is not properly based on philosophical arguments but on the religious person's experience of God's presence, or of being in God's presence.' See Hick, *An Autobiography*, p. 314.

[160] Hick, *The New Frontier of Religion and Science*, pp. 127-130.

[161] 'Nature has not left this to [our] choice, and has doubtless esteem'd it an affair of too great importance to be trusted to our uncertain reasonings and speculations. We may well ask, What causes induce us to believe in the existence of body? But 'tis vain to ask, Whether there be body or not? That is a point, which we must take for granted in all our reasonings.' See Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, Book I, Part IV, Section ii, ed. Selby-Bigge, 1896, p. 187, quoted in Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, p. 449, and Hick, *The New Frontier of Religion and Science*, p. 128.

our senses is a matter of what can be called natural belief, or pre-philosophical common sense. Likewise, G. E. Moore insisted that we *know* many things that we cannot *prove*.[162] Moore insisted, as also did his contemporary Ludwig Wittgenstein, the ordinary knowledge that we all share, and express in the ordinary language that we have in common, neither needs nor is able to be backed up by philosophical arguments. Hume and Moore could formulate the implicit principle by which one lives all the time. This is that one accepts what appears to be there as being there, except when one has reason to doubt it.

On the basis of these historical classifications (four periods in both philosophy and Christian theology) and philosophical clarifications (cosmic optimism, influenced by British Idealism and Critical Realism, and an epistemology of religious belief), this study will propose that, as a result of the introduction of reliabilism, Hick's philosophy can have a new meaning as a system composed of Hick's own philosophy of personhood, combined with philosophies of Wittgenstein, Kant, and Hume.

Kemp Smith points out 'a theistic view of Nature' in Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*. See Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, p. 564. See also John Milbank, 'What Lacks is Feeling: Hume versus Kant and Habermas', in *Faithful Reading: New Essays in Theology in Honour of Fergus Kerr, OP*, ed. Simon Oliver, Karen Kilby, and Thomas O'Loughlin, London: Bloomsbury, 2012. Milbank, *Beyond Secular Order*, pp. 88-92.

[162] 'I *know*, with certainty … [that] There exists at present a living human body, which is *my* body. This body was born at a certain time in the past, and has existed continuously ever since, though not without undergoing changes … [T]he earth has existed also for many years before my body was born …' See G. E. Moore, 'A Defense of Common Sense,' in *Contemporary British Philosophy*, Series 2, ed. J. H. Muirhead, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1925, quoted in Hick, *The New Frontier of Religion and Science*, p.129.

In his philosophy of personhood, Hick derives the existence of God from the contradictory relation between the actuality of a person and the possibility of other persons.[163] In his reading of Wittgenstein, Hick understands religion as cultural and linguistic tradition.[164] In his reading of Kant, Hick understands religion as developing toward the ultimate end.[165] In his reading of Hume, Hick understands religion as the environment which secures the existence of the world.[166] These different components of

---

[163] Hick explains his philosophy of personhood in *Faith and Knowledge*, and develops it in *An Interpretation of Religion*. Its basic line of argument will be discussed in An Outline of the Argument.

[164] In *An Interpretation of Religion*, according to Wittgenstein's philosophy of language, Hick understands religions as cultural and linguistic traditions which have remembrances like a family: 'it is … illuminating to see the different traditions, movements and ideologies whose religious character is either generally agreed or responsibly debated, not as exemplifying a common essence, but as forming a complex continuum of remembrances and differences analogous to those found within a family.' See Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 4.

[165] In *An Interpretation of Religion*, according to Kant's philosophy of temporality, Hick understands Kantian categories as developing towards the ultimate reality in the ultimate future: the pure categories or pure concepts of the understanding (for example, substance) are schematized in terms of temporality to produce the more concrete categories which are exhibited in our actual experience of the world (Thus, for example, the pure concept of substance is schematized as the more concrete idea of an object enduring through time).'

Furthermore, Hick argues that Wittgenstein's philosophy of language can be understood as a spatial, embodied aspect of *culture*, and Kant's philosophy of temporality is understood as a linear, progressive aspect of *development*. These two aspects are taken to be complementary: 'the particularizing factor (corresponding, in its function, to time in the schematisation of the Kantian categories) is the range of human cultures, actualizing different though overlapping aspects of our immensely complex human potentiality for awareness of the transcendent.' See Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, pp. 243 and 245.

[166] In *An Interpretation of Religion*, according to Hume's philosophy of common sense, Hick explains Hume's natural belief as the ultimate security of the very basis of reality: 'we are so

---

Hick's philosophical system (Hick's own philosophy of personhood, and philosophies of Wittgenstein, Kant, and Hume) are complementary with each other, and form an organic worldview as a whole.

The 1st and the 2nd chapters of this dissertation will prepare the method of reliabilism, and then the rest of the chapters will gradually disclose the deep structure of Hick's philosophical system by examining each of the different components.

---

constituted that we cannot help believing and living in terms of the objective reality of the perceived world. We may be able to suspend our conviction during brief moments of philosophical enthusiasm; but natural belief … will soon reassert itself.' See Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 213.

Hume's natural belief secures the very basic environment to Wittgenstein's cultural and linguistic traditions and Kant's development towards the ultimate reality. Therefore, Hume's philosophy can be understood as a further complementation to Wittgenstein's and Kant's philosophies.

An Outline of the Argument

The 1st chapter will introduce the method of reliabilism. From a philosophical viewpoint, what are accepted as the standard methods of the theory of religious pluralism can be divided into two different groups: foundationalism and coherentism. The method of John Hick is commonly understood as a typical foundationalism and the one of George Lindbeck is commonly understood as a typical coherentism. However, there is a third method of reliabilism, which proposes a model of knowledge as *a coherent balance of plural foundations.* This study proposes to understand the religious pluralism of Hick from the new method of reliabilism.

The 2nd chapter will clarify philosophical presuppositions hidden in the critics of Hick. On the one hand, there is a group of Reformed Epistemologists such as William Alston and Alvin Plantinga. From a reliabilist viewpoint, the method of Reformed Epistemology is a weak foundationalism. On the other hand, there is a group of 'theologians of religions' such as Gavin D'Costa and S. Mark Heim. The method of these theologians of religions can be understood as coherentism. As an alternative to these positions, this chapter will offer the reliabilist ethics of normality, and further examines the characteristic of reliabilism as having both *stabilizing and creating processes*.

The 3rd chapter will focus on Hick's reading of Wittgenstein's philosophy of language. In *Faith and Knowledge* the relation between language and reality is examined by using the concept of two types of faith: epistemological faith as cognition and ontological faith as trust. On the basis of the *linguistic* standpoint given by epistemological faith as cognition, Hick adds the necessity of a *holistic* standpoint given by ontological faith as trust. In *An Interpretation of Religion*, Hick understands religion as cultural and linguistic tradition, and Hick develops the relation between language and reality into a contrast between the non-realism of D. Z. Phillips and the critical realism of Roy Wood Sellars.

The 4th chapter will focus on Hick's own philosophy of personhood. In *Faith and Knowledge*, Hick discusses William James and John Henry Newman as examples of a position which centres on epistemological faith as cognition. In contrast, Hick discusses a necessity of ontological faith as trust through a contradictory relation between a person and other persons. First, the world has *actuality* only for a particular person. Second, there are other persons, who are living in the world from incomparably different perspectives. It *possibly* means that there are a lot of incomparably different worlds, which are corresponding to incomparably different persons just like oneself. Finally, the natural belief to trust the *actual* world is required in spite of the *possibility* of multiple worlds. On the basis of the natural belief, one can naturally act and react with other persons who are also the centres of the universe, just like oneself. This is the basic line of argument given by Hick's philosophy of personhood. In *An Interpretation of Religion*, Hick's philosophy of

personhood will be developed into cosmic optimism.

The 5th chapter will focus on Hick's reading of Kant's philosophy of temporality. Hick's reading of Kant is influenced by British Idealism especially through Norman Kemp Smith. In *Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'*, Kemp Smith offers to read Kant's philosophy as a relation between a person's actuality, the other person's possibility, and the world's necessity. This inter-personal relation can also be understood as historical progress of a person as well as humanity in general toward the ultimate reality. However, Kant's philosophy of temporality does not provide the reason why the ultimate reality is available here and now. Therefore, Kant's philosophy of temporality is complemented by Oman's philosophy of environment (expounded in *The Natural and The Supernatural)* and Hume's philosophy of common sense. On the basis of these arguments, the system of *An Interpretation of Religion* will further be disclosed to be composed of Hick's own philosophy of personhood, combined with Wittgenstein's philosophy of language, Kant's philosophy of temporality, and Hume's philosophy of common sense. These standpoints as a whole can be understood as an organic worldview, which can also be understood, from a reliabilist viewpoint, as *a coherent balance of plural foundations* with both *stabilizing and creating processes*.

The 6th chapter will discuss Hick's reading of Hume's philosophy of common sense. In his reading of Hume, Hick proposes to understand religion as the very basic environment, which secures the existence of the world shared among ordinary people here

and now. This reading of Hume exemplifies a *stabilizing* aspect of Hick's philosophy.

Then, this chapter will also discuss Hick's philosophy of history contained in his theological works. The theological works exemplify a *creating* aspect of Hick's philosophy.

The conclusion will summarise the whole argument. The introduction of reliabilism discloses Hick's central position as his philosophy of personhood combined with philosophies of Wittgenstein, Kant and Hume. Also, the conclusion organizes the whole argument in a chronological order.

Chapter 1.

A METHODOLOGICAL PREPARATION

Hermeneutics and Reliabilism

John Hick's work on the philosophy of religion has generated considerable critical responses. One of the most explicit and pointed criticisms of the hermeneutical adequacy of Hick's theory is that advanced by Gavin D'Costa. D'Costa argues in a nutshell that Hick's theory is simply inadequate as a general theory about religions precisely because it fails to take them on their own terms and reduces their central views and concepts to understandings and terms unacceptable to the traditions themselves: 'it seems to ignore or deny the really difficult conflicting truth claims by, in effect, reducing them to sameness.'[167] This objection by D'Costa is a fair statement of a common reaction to Hick's primary methodological position.

This common reaction – often regarded as a decisive objection to Hick's theory – in fact hides its own philosophical presuppositions and it, in turn, leads to a crucial misunderstanding about the structure and development of Hick's theory. This chapter aims

---

[167] D'Costa, *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity*, p. 27.

to clarify the philosophical presuppositions of D'Costa and to find an adequate philosophical method for understanding the subtlety of Hick's theory. The first section of this chapter examines the characteristic of the common reaction to Hick's theory. First, D'Costa's interpretation of Hick's hermeneutics will be examined as one of the common reactions to Hick's theory. Then, an alternative hermeneutics of George Lindbeck will be illustrated as another influential approach to religious pluralism. Lastly, the two approaches – the common understanding of Hick and an alternative position of Lindbeck – will be grasped as contrasting approaches and their hidden philosophical presuppositions will be uncovered through an examination of their positions. The second section will turn to the field of philosophy of knowledge to clarify philosophical methodologies hidden behind the approaches of religious pluralism. First, a method of foundationalism will be illustrated and the religious implications will be examined. Then, a method of coherentism will be illustrated and the religious implications will be examined. Lastly, a method of reliabilism will be illustrated as a reconciliation between foundationalism and coherentism. The third section will discuss different versions of reliabilism. First, the reliabilism of Alvin I. Goldman will be examined as a first systematic position. Then, the reliabilism of Alvin Plantinga will be examined as an intervention to the field. Finally, the reliabilism of Ernest Sosa will be examined as the most appropriate position to be used as a method to understand the subtlety of the structure and development of Hick's theory.

1.

Two Conflicting Hermeneutics

I. AN INTERPRETATION OF JOHN HICK'S HERMENEUTICS

One of the strongest voices warning of the dangers of Hick's project is Gavin D'Costa.[168] His criticism of Hick's project is that Hick's central concern to develop a meta-theory of religions and a non-evidentialist pragmatic position on religious belief often leads to neglecting to take their positions on their own terms and reduces their central views and concepts to understanding and terms unacceptable to the traditions themselves. In order to grasp this criticism accurately, this section first presents what Hick is saying about the hermeneutics of religions: can a premise of a 'common core' do justice to the self-understanding of traditions that seemingly see themselves as believing quite different things about the universe and as pursuing quite different ends relative to these beliefs? Then D'Costa's criticism of Hick will be analyzed in some detail.

In *An Interpretation of Religion*, Hick begins the construction of his theory by comparing and contrasting two views of religion and religious diversity – the standard view and an alternative revisionist view – both of which share the idea that religions are

---

[168] See D'Costa, *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity*, pp. 24-29, and 45-52.

soteriological in aim, structure, and function but which diverge in interpreting the meaning of the diversity of religions.[169] The standard view conceives of religions as counterpoised rival systems of belief and practice whereby each system claims to have exclusive access to ultimate truth as well as the sole means of authentic salvation: 'each has come … to regard itself as uniquely superior to the others.'[170] The alternative revisionist view proposed and adopted by Hick, in contrast, sees religions as essentially related 'family' (rather than rival 'strangers') that are concerned with the same vital process of moral and spiritual transformation (from ego- to reality-orientation) taking different forms in diverse cultural and historical settings: 'each of the world religions comes … to see itself as one among many.'[171] Particular religions, under this view, are working towards the same goal of human transformation in a mutually complementary rather than antagonistic way.

It is important to realize that this revisionist conception entails a thesis stronger than a more modest claim about a structural aim and pattern common to religions, for it incorporates the notion that the same transformational process takes 'such widely different forms and is interpreted in such widely different ways.'[172] This is a claim about substantive identity or overlap among diverse religious traditions, amounting to the adoption of a 'common core' or 'unity' theory of religious pluralism, involving the claim

---

[169] About Hick's revisionist conception of religion, see Sumner B. Twiss, 'The Philosophy of Religious Pluralism,' pp. 540-45.

[170] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 2.

[171] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion,* p. 2.

[172] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 5.

of an underlying literal unity of some sort among all religions. The revisionist view, then, embodies a rather substantial thesis about the nature of the world's religions, for it is, after all, a rather short step from claiming 'the same transformational process' among different religions to claiming that these religions in fact refer in some important ways to the 'same ultimate reality.'

It is not surprising to find critics challenging the propriety of this initial hermeneutical move of Hick's theory, for with the revisionist conception Hick is taken considerably far in a particular theoretical direction – towards the transcendental unity of all religions. One immediate and pressing issue for these critics concerns precisely the adequacy of this move, especially considering the fact that its soteriological thesis seems to contradict the self-understanding of traditions about what they believe and practice. The issue is only made more exigent when one considers that, while many historians of religions might be willing to admit structural compatibility in regard to cross-traditional soteriological aims, practices, and concepts, few seem willing to say that the data permits them to draw the conclusion of essential sameness or identity in soteriology cross-traditionally. Most are likely to point to large differences in concept and practice that are in turn linked to equally large differences in meaning and reference. Thus, at the very outset of Hick's theory one needs to record the serious – and some would say, decisive – reservation that it appears to overlook or discount what the religions might say about how to understand properly religious beliefs and practices cross traditionally.

It is precisely this initial hermeneutical move of Hick's theory that prompts D'Costa's objection to the adequacy of Hick's theory. D'Costa suggests that a second-order theory such as Hick's must develop an account that can accommodate traditions' own orthodox understandings of doctrines, beliefs, and concepts without reinterpreting or reducing these into other categories. With regard to the specific case at hand – soteriology – D'Costa argues that, in adopting 'the common soteriological goal'[173], Hick's theory is conceptually compelled to ignore or reinterpret the key soteriological concepts of various traditions in the form of minimizing their differences and claiming that they constitute one essential process (transition from self-centredness to Reality-centredness) taking place in different contexts: 'this tendency toward essentialism in the theology of religions ironically hastens the closure of dialogue.'[174] Indeed, D'Costa even goes so far as to say that 'there are no traditions or positions that are self-evident or neutral'[175]. According to D'Costa, one can never crawl out of one's own cultural, religious framework. One always views the other from one's own given perspective.

At the very least, it appears to be D'Costa's contention that Hick's revisionist approach to religious diversity is unable to accommodate adequately the various soteriological claims internal to traditions as these claims are understood within the traditions themselves. Hick's approach is, in short, hermeneutically deficient in its handling of first-order

---

[173] D'Costa, *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity*, p. 26.

[174] D'Costa, *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity*, p. 43.

[175] D'Costa, *Theology and Religious Pluralism*, p. 46.

religious traditions and their complexity. This fairly represents one of D'Costa's major objections to Hick's revisionist conception.

II. AN ALTERNATIVE HERMENEUTICS OF GEORGE LINDBECK

Before turning to correct D'Costa's misunderstanding about the structure and development of Hick's theory, this chapter will illustrate an alternative hermeneutics proposed by George Lindbeck to make a contrast with the philosophical presuppositions of D'Costa and to find an adequate philosophical method for understanding the subtlety of Hick's theory.

Lindbeck was one of the first scholars to state his 'growing dissatisfaction with the usual ways of thinking about those norms of communal belief and action'[176] and his conviction that the usual theories in these areas are inadequate to account for a strange but undeniable fact of broad agreement on many doctrinal issues by representative intellectuals and ecumenicists of historically contrary traditions.

For example, Lindbeck rejects 'an inner experience of God common to all human beings and all religions.'[177] There has been a theory which emphasizes the experiential aspects of religion, and 'interprets doctrines as noninformative and nondiscursive symbols

---

[176] Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, p. 7. See also Knitter, *Theologies of Religions*, pp. 178-85.

[177] Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, p. 40.

of inner feelings, attitudes, or existential orientations.'[178] This approach often emphasizes the priority of experience over language. In some forms, this approach may consider diverse and even contradictory discursive formulations among different religions as divergent expressions of the same universal experience of the transcendent or divine reality. Lindbeck rejects this option of a universalist hermeneutics which presupposes the same experience of the same reality because he wants a theory of religion and doctrine which can accommodate doctrinal reconciliation without admitting that one or the other parties to reconciliation simply capitulated to the claims of the other.

Lindbeck contends that his concern can best be explained by what he calls a 'cultural-linguistic' approach to religion:

A religion can be viewed as a kind of cultural and/or linguistic framework or medium that shapes the entirety of life and thought.[179]

Lindbeck proposes that it's the words and images that are given by religion that give shape to religious thought and convictions. Words enable someone to have thoughts in the first

---

[178] Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, p. 16. As examples of the experiential-expressive standpoint, Lindbeck mentions Rudolf Otto and Mircea Eliade. See Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, p. 16.

[179] Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, p. 33. According to Lindbeck, the roots of the cultural-linguistic approach go back on the cultural side to Marx, Weber, and Durkheim, and on the linguistic side to Wittgenstein, but it is only rarely and recently that it has become a programmatic approach to the study of religion, as for instance, in the philosopher Peter Winch and the anthropologist Clifford Geertz. As other examples of the cultural-linguistic standpoint, Lindbeck mentions Peter Berger, Ninian Smart, and William Christian. See Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, p. 20.

place. Without religious words, one would not have religious feelings. As Lindbeck puts

it, it is required first to have 'external words'[180] given by religion and culture before having

internal words in minds and hearts. The religious language received from the culture

makes and shapes the very religious experience. Without language, experience is not

possible at all. It is language that gives experience its particular form.

Therefore, an individual identity is not individual at all, but is determined by the

communal and religious worldview that one is born into. One's religious identity is not

only, not primarily, a matter of one's individual choosing and determination; one's choices

are given to one, specified for one, by the religious family one is part of: 'like a culture or

language, it [religion] is a communal phenomenon that shapes the subjectivities of

individuals rather than being primarily a manifestation of those subjectivities.'[181]

Given this understanding of cultural language in general and religious language in

particular, it is evident why Lindbeck is wary of an initial hermeneutical decision to inquire

what all the religions have in common. Lindbeck suggests that there is nothing that can be

truly declared 'common' to all religions. If one's language creates one's world, and if one's

language is mutually different, then one's world will be different with each other, with no

common ground between them: 'unlike other perspectives, this approach [the cultural-

linguistic] proposes no common framework.'[182] For those who take language and culture

---

[180] Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, p. 34.

[181] Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, p. 33.

[182] Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, p. 49.

seriously, it's impossible, or at the least very difficult, to imagine that there is a 'single

generic or universal experiential essence'[183] within all the different religions. There can be

no experiential core because the experiences that religion evokes or moulds are as varied

as the interpretive schemes they embody. Adherents of different religions do not diversely

thematize the same experience, rather they have different experiences. Religious words

and religious experience can be understood and are 'true' only within the given texts or

language system of the particular religion. Every religion, Lindbeck observes, offers a

'totally comprehensive framework, a universal perspective'[184] from which the followers

of the religion understand everything. Everything fits into that framework, but the

framework cannot, by definition, be fit into any other framework. If every religion offers

a perspective that embraces everything and can't be embraced by a more ultimate

perspective, then that means no religion will allow itself to be embraced or explained by

another.

His approach to other religious neighbours is, Lindbeck holds, the best possible

foundation for whatever further dialogue might take place. Because it doesn't presume to

know what makes each religion tick, it can approach all religions as 'simply different and

can proceed to explore their agreements and disagreements without necessarily engaging

in the invidious comparisons that the assumption of a common experiential core makes so

---

183 Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, p. 23.

184 Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, p. 49.

tempting.'[185] Lindbeck concludes that even though his position does not produce the same 'enthusiasm and warm fellow-feelings' for dialogue, 'it does not exclude the development of powerful theological rationales for sober and practically efficacious commitment to interreligious discussion and dialogue.'[186]

III. PHILOSOPHICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS OF THE CONFLICT

What D'Costa and Lindbeck share as their philosophical presupposition is the idea that there are two kinds of possible approaches to the hermeneutics of religions. On the one hand, an approach takes a view that different forms of religious language and belief are understood as indicating the same independent and real ultimate divine. This view aims to develop a second-order theory to find a common core of religion. On the other hand,

---

[185] Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, p. 55.

[186] Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, p. 55. In *An Interpretation of Religion*, John Hick provides a multi-dimensional reading of George Lindbeck's position. According to Hick, Lindbeck treats religion as a vast complex of propositions and says that religion is true to the extent that 'its objectives are interiorized and exercised by groups and individuals in such a way as to conform them in some measure in the various dimensions of their existence to the ultimate reality and goodness that lies at the heart of things.' According to Hick, there is a certain overlap of conclusions between Hick's and Lindbeck's, even though Lindbeck's conceptual system is different from the one of Hick. See Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, p. 51, quoted in Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, pp. 360-61. See also Hick, *Dialogues in the Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 183-84.

Sue Patterson points out a fundamentally contradictory character of Lindbeck's *The Nature of Doctrine,* which has both theistic realist and cultural-linguist orientations. See Sue Patterson, *Realist Christian Theology in a Postmodern Age*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 36-37.

another approach takes a view that religious language and belief is understood to conceive of divine reality as internally related to practices and to construe religious discourse as grammatical rather than referential. This view gives up developing a second-order theory and limits the aim to correct recognition of various first-order theories. Both D'Costa and Lindbeck assume these two approaches are incompatible, and to put these approaches into one coherent view that does justice to each and to the fact of the diversity of religions is impossible. It's a matter of choice and if one view is taken, the other view has to be given up.

Even though their positions and the subject matter of their criticism are slightly different, what underlies their argument as a philosophical presupposition is quite similar. D'Costa criticizes John Hick that his approach to religious diversity is unable to accommodate adequately the various soteriological claims internal to traditions as these claims are understood within the tradition itself. Here D'Costa's central concern is that Hick finds an essence of soteriology from all religions and uses the idea of soteriology as a second-order theory to explain the first-order theory of all religions. But such kind of promotion of an essence leads it's proponents to neglect, or even violate, the fact of diversity.

George Lindbeck criticizes as a past approach that it considers diverse and even contradictory discursive formulations among different religions as divergent expressions of the same universal experience of the transcendent reality. Here Lindbeck's central

concern is that the past approach finds a common core of the experience of transcendent reality among all religions and uses the idea of the experience of transcendent reality as a second-order theory to explain the first-order theory of all religions. But religions are so diverse that there is no existing common ground between them.

What they criticize as past approaches has a philosophical presupposition: to find a common ground among various positions and impose it on all positions in the name of universality. What both D'Costa and Lindbeck refuse is to find the common ground, and instead emphasize the incommensurability of one religious worldview with another. D'Costa argues that there are no traditions or positions that are self-evident or neutral. All religions start from each absolute truth from which they view other religions. Not to admit, or be aware of, this is to set up a version of universal truth and lay it on others. Lindbeck proposes that it's the linguistic framework that gives shape to individual experience. Religious experience can be understood only within the given language system of the particular religion. Every religion offers a totally comprehensive framework from which the followers of the religion understand everything. What D'Costa and Lindbeck share as their reaction to this past approach is that there is no common ground which can be applied to every position and a position can have the meaning only within the comprehensive framework of a particular religion.

2.

Foundationalism, Coherentism, and Reliabilism

I. FOUNDATIONALISM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR RELIGION

As has been discussed in the previous sections, these conflicting approaches to religious diversity hide a philosophical presupposition behind their arguments. This chapter will turn to the field of 'philosophy of knowledge' to clarify the origin of their conflict and to find a philosophical way of reconciliation between the two approaches.

To clarify the nature of different views on knowledge, Ernest Sosa categorized three philosophical positions as 'foundationalism', 'coherentism', and 'reliabilism'.[187] Ernest Sosa explained 'reliabilism' as a possible way of reconciliation between the two radically different positions of 'foundationalism' and 'coherentism'. This method of 'reliabilism' can be seen as a preparatory methodology to formulate a third way to these conflicting approaches to religious diversity.

The central idea of foundationalism is that all knowledge is founded on what is ultimately given. There are 'rational' and 'empirical' foundationalists:

---

[187] See Sosa's *Knowledge in Perspective*.

Foundationalism postulates foundations for knowledge – even if they disagree in their respective foundations, and disagree on how to erect a superstructure.[188]

For the rationalist, only rational intuition can give a secure foundation, and only deduction can build further knowledge of superstructure on that foundation. Here, the model of knowledge is the axiomatic system, with its self-evident axioms and its theorems derived through logical deduction. For example, Descartes sketched in his *Meditations* a strategy for rationally founding all knowledge: 'no act of awareness that can be rendered doubtful seems fit to be called knowledge.'[189] For Descartes, what is obvious is what one knows by intuition, what is clear and distinct, what is indubitable and credible with no fear of error. Thus for Descartes basic knowledge is always an infallible belief in an indubitable truth. All other knowledge must stand on that basis through deductive proof.

For their part, empiricists accept not only foundations by rational intuition but also foundations by sensory experience. Empiricism thus becomes more liberal than rationalism in two respects: first, it accepts a broader foundation, provided not only by rational intuition but also by sensory experience; second, it admits not only deductive reasoning but also inductive reasoning. Hume divided all of human knowledge into two categories: *relations of ideas* and *matters of fact*.[190] Mathematical and logical propositions

---

[188] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective* , p. 1.

[189] Descartes, 'Second Set of Replies,' in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, ed. J. Cottingham, R. Stoothoff, and D. Murdoch, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, vol. II, p. 101, quoted in Sosa, *A Virtue Epistemology*, p. 128.

[190] See Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Section IV, Part I.

are examples of the first, while propositions involving some contingent observation of the world are examples of the second. Hume admits 'two levels of thought: the level of philosophical critical thinking which can offer us no assurances against skepticism; and the level of everyday thinking are completely overridden and suppressed … by an inescapable natural commitment to belief: to believe in the existence of the body and inductively based expectations.'[191]

These two different types of classical foundationalists – rational and empirical – can be seen as presupposing the same philosophical methodology. Because both of them admit a particular foundational knowledge which grounds all the other kinds of knowledge, even though the empiricist like Hume admits a broader range of foundations. The empiricist can be seen to reject radical foundationalism but retain some more moderate form of foundationalism.[192]

Even though his respective foundation is different from the one of Descartes, the philosophical methodology presupposed behind the approach of John Hick can also be grasped as a type of 'foundationalist'. This is because Hick admits an underlying common core which can be found within all the religious traditions. The common core is a foundation, and a set of differential responses by different religious traditions is a set of

---

[191] Strawson, *Skepticism and Naturalism: Some Varieties*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1985, pp. 12-13, quoted in Sosa, *Reflective Knowledge*, pp. 45-46.

[192] For a contemporary version of foundationalism, see, for example, Roderick M. Chisholm, *Theory of Knowledge*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966.

different branches of a superstructure built on the foundation. There are various kinds of relations between these different religious traditions, but all of these relations go back to one ultimate reality. This ultimate reality has a special status, and the foundation is supported by none of the different cultural and religious traditions while supporting them all.

This corresponds to the criticisms given by Gavin D'Costa to John Hick. D'Costa's central concern was that Hick is so convinced that some kind of common ground is necessary that he cannot open his mind to the possibility that religions are so diverse that there is no existing common ground between them. Hick makes up an artificial construction of an ultimate ground and imposes its particular viewpoint on all the others in the name of universality.

II. COHERENTISM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR RELIGION

An alternative to the position of 'foundationalism' is 'coherentism.' The 'coherentist' rejects the notion of foundation in favour of the one that one's body of knowledge is a raft that floats free of any anchor or tie. Donald Davidson's 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge' argues both against foundation and in favour of coherence. An allegedly foundationalist idea, that of 'confrontation between what we believe and reality' is first argued to be 'absurd', thus opening the way for coherentism, subsequently offered as the

alternative:

> What distinguishes a coherence theory is simply the claim that nothing can count as a reason for holding a belief except another belief. Its partisan rejects as unintelligible the request for a ground or source of justification of another ilk.[193]

According to 'coherentism' what justifies belief is not that it can be an infallible belief with an indubitable object, nor that it has been proved deductively on such a basis, but that it can cohere with a comprehensive system of beliefs.[194]

George Lindbeck can be seen as a type of 'coherentist'. This is because Lindbeck rejects the search for a common ground that makes all religions valid. He suggests that there is nothing that can be truly declared common to all religions. Instead, he understands religion as a kind of cultural and linguistic framework. Each cultural and linguistic framework is coherent only within each framework and does not have another foundation outside the framework. A religious experience has a meaning only within a particular cultural and linguistic framework that one is born into. One's religious identity is not a matter of individual choice, but is given to one by the cultural and linguistic family one is part of.

---

[193] Donald Davidson, 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge', in Dieter Henrich, Ed., *Kant oder Hegel?*, Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1983, p. 426, quoted in Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 108.

[194] About other versions of coherentism, see, for example, Quine's *From a Logical Point of View*, Sellars' *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*, and Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1980.

A coherence theory of knowledge can be summarized as a view according to which there are no basic or foundational beliefs and at least the primary basis for justification is the fact that such beliefs fit together and support each other in a variety of complicated ways, thus forming a coherent system of beliefs, or perhaps more than one such system. This pure kind of coherentism is faced with obvious objections. While it is quite plausible that coherence is one element in justification, it is implausible that it is the whole cause of justification.

The idea that justification depends solely on the internal coherence of a system of beliefs seems to entail that such justification requires no contact with or input from the world outside that system of beliefs. It means that a relation among beliefs that involves no contact with the world yields a reason for thinking that the beliefs in question correctly describe that world. Then, if the coherentist justification has to do only with the internal relations between the members of a system of beliefs, it seems possible in principle to invent indefinitely many alternative and conflicting such systems in a purely arbitrary way, while still making each of them entirely coherent. But it surely cannot be the case that all such systems are thereby justified in the sense of there being good reason for thinking that their component beliefs are true and there is obviously no possible way to select among them on purely coherentist ground. There seems to be no clear reason in general to think that the coherence of a system of beliefs makes it likely that the component beliefs are true in the realist sense of corresponding with independent reality, thus making it impossible to

understand how coherence can be the basis for justification.[195]

Largely for the reasons just noted, it is difficult to seriously advocate a pure coherence theory of justification, one in which the coherence of a set of beliefs is claimed to be by itself sufficient for justification. There is, first, a claim that an account of justification that depends entirely on coherence will have the absurd consequence that contingent, seemingly empirical beliefs might be justified in the absence of any sort of informational input from the extra-conceptual world that they attempt to describe. This would seem to mean in turn that the truth of those beliefs, if they happened to be true, could only be accidental in relation to that world, and thus that there could be no genuine reason to think that they are true.

The second objection is that even given a relatively demanding conception of coherence, there will still be indefinitely many different possible systems of beliefs in relation to any given subject area, each as internally coherent as others. Thus, the members of each of these systems will seemingly be on a par as regards justification according to a coherentist view.

When George Lindbeck proposed the cultural-linguistic approach to religion, it also has these coherentist kind of problems. It is one thing to see religion as the perspective from which one always views everything else; it is quite another to announce that one is

---

[195] See, for example, Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, pp. 108-30. See also Knitter, *Theologies of Religions*, pp. 224-37.

stuck in that perspective or that the perspective can never change.[196] If one takes seriously

the incommensurability between one religion and another, then it seems that every

religious person is confined only to his/her own religion. That means, first, that whatever

appears within one framework is the truth for the framework, and it can't be questioned by

another framework for the simple fact that it doesn't belong to the framework. This implies

that whatever is declared to be truth for a religion is true only because it is declared as such

in the religion. Any accidental statement can be a truth for a religion and thus no genuine

reason is required to be a truth for a religion. Second, many different religious systems are

equally and internally coherent as others and there can be no relation or communication

between them. It is impossible to truly talk with and understand another person from

another religion or tradition, for one can see only what appears on one's own religious or

cultural framework. What is beyond a framework is beyond their understanding and

consideration.

III. A METHOD OF RELIABILISM

Ernest Sosa proposes the alternative of 'reliabilism' as a reconciliation between the

radically different standpoints of 'foundationalism' and 'coherentism':

---

[196] Paul Knitter, *Introducing Theologies of Religions*, p. 224.

Reliabilism requires for the epistemic justification of belief that it be formed by a process reliable in an environment normal for the formation of such belief.[197]

'Reliabilism' can be seen as a weak kind of 'foundationalism'. Every bit of knowledge still lies as a foundation of knowledge. But the requirements for the building are now less stringent. A belief may now join the base not only through perfectly reliable rational intuition but also through the diverse foundations of introspection, perception, memory, and so on. And one may now erect a superstructure on such a basis not only by deduction but also by induction, both enumerative and hypothetical or explanatory.

Rationalism can be viewed as a special case of 'reliabilism'.[198] What Descartes requires for knowledge and requires of acceptable sources of knowledge is indeed *perfect* reliability. It is assumed that reason puts us directly and *infallibly* in touch with certain truths *from one's particular perspective* and then enables us to reach many other truths, again infallibly, through deductive proof. 'Reliabilism' grants the narrow scope of perfect knowledge, and turns to imperfect but reliable knowledge. This would allow admitting sources of knowledge less than infallible. To reconcile the differing reliability of plural foundations, equilibrial coherence is required for the formation of an integrated perspective.

What is reliable relative to one scope of application may be unreliable relative to another, however, which raises the question of the proper scope relative to which one ought

---

[197] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 89.

[198] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 211.

to evaluate the likes of observation, memory, reason, and so on. This reflection recalls a theme about the relation between truth and inquiry and about the basic seat of inquiry. This is because '*ideally rational inquiry* may rather be defined as what would thus lead us to the truth'.[199] There is no infallible assurance that an appropriate community is realizable on earth. It seems best to take a broad historical perspective and to require only that one has cognitive faculties well suited to further the progress of rational inquiry beyond one's present stage towards that future ideal stage in which one would have the whole truth, or at least a close approximation.

What could have been revealed from the examination of 'reliabilism' is that both 'foundationalism' and 'coherentism' are extreme on the nature of knowledge, and it is reasonable enough to take the reliabilist position as an appropriate view. The method of 'reliabilism' can be understood as the combination of two radically different kinds of inquiry: (1) an inquiry based on the difference of plural foundations, and (2) an inquiry based on the historical process to form a coherent perspective among different foundations. The coherent perspective is not to form a foundational basis, but to negotiate an appropriate balance among different reliabilities of plural foundations. What are required for the appropriate negotiation are the radically different two standpoints of *plural foundations* and *a coherent perspective*. If one of them is neglected, then 'reliabilism' loses its intention.

---

[199] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 211. The italics is in the original.

3.

Reliabilist Theories of Knowledge

I. ALVIN I. GOLDMAN

Before directly turning to an examination of the philosophical position of John Hick, it is necessary to explain why Ernest Sosa's version of 'reliabilism' is more suitable to apply to the problem of religious diversity than other versions. 'Reliabilism' has been a growing field since Alvin I. Goldman applied it in a systematic manner to the field of 'the philosophy of knowledge'[200]. After the systematization of Goldman, Alvin Plantinga intervened in the field with his new interpretation of 'reliabilism'[201]. Therefore, if 'reliabilism' will be applied to the religious problem, just to mention Ernest Sosa without mentioning Goldman and Plantinga cannot avoid a reproach of intentional neglect. Not only Ernest Sosa, but also Alvin I. Goldman and Alvin Plantinga have contributed to the development of 'reliabilism' in the field of philosophy of knowledge. So this chapter will explain why the vision of Ernest Sosa is more suitable to apply to the problem of religious

---

[200] See Alvin I. Goldman, *Epistemology and Cognition*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986. See also D. M. Armstrong, *Belief, Truth and Knowledge*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1973.

[201] See Plantinga, *Warrant: the Current Debate*, and Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function*.

diversity than others.

Alvin I. Goldman is one of the first philosophers who theorized 'reliabilism' in a systematic manner. Due to an influence from its initial inspirational field of 'analytical theory of logic', Goldman understands 'reliabilism' as a multiplication of foundations and keeps its normative role. Goldman inherits an understanding that a unique field of 'reliabilism' is a normative discipline of 'philosophical theorizing about knowledge': 'the evaluation of epistemic procedures, methods, processes, or arrangements must appeal to truth-conduciveness, and objective standards of assessment.'[202] This is the reason why Goldman thinks *empirical science* is relevant to assessing which beliefs count as knowledge and to crafting epistemic norms to guide belief formation so that it yields knowledge. A reliabilist understanding of empirical science works as a normative discipline to guide other fields of research and consequently the personal and social action of human beings.

Goldman divides the philosophy of knowledge into two parts: individual epistemology and social epistemology. Individual epistemology needs help from cognitive sciences: 'cognitive science tries to delineate the architecture of the human mind-brain, and an understanding of this architecture is essential for primary epistemology.'[203] Social epistemology needs help from various social sciences and humanities: '[the social sciences and humanities] jointly provide models, facts, and insights into social systems of science,

---

[202] Goldman, *Epistemology and Cognition*, p. 3.

[203] Goldman, *Epistemology and Cognition*, p. 1.

81

learning, and culture.'[204] By the help of these empirical sciences, the philosophy of

knowledge justifies 'which practices have a comparatively favorable impact on

knowledge as contrasted with error and ignorance.'[205] Individual epistemology asks this

question for nonsocial practices and it provides how individuals should acquire and weigh

evidence; social epistemology asks it for social practices and it provides the norms

governing the social mechanisms that inculcate belief.

The revival of epistemology in contemporary analytical philosophy became possible

only with the innovational method proposed by Goldman. It is Goldman who first

provided a systematic analysis of plural foundations of knowledge (such as perception,

memory, representation, internal codes, deductive reasoning, and probability judgment in

individual epistemology, and testimony, argumentation, communication, and regulation in

social epistemology), and the plurality of knowledge played an important role to change

the paradigm of philosophy from *non-realistic analysis of language* to *realistic analysis of*

knowledge. Before Goldman, criticism towards foundationalism was popular in the field

of philosophy because foundationalism was thought to keep only a narrow foundation.

After Goldman, philosophy could recover its contact with reality and it became possible

by systematic analysis of diverse kinds of knowledge.

However, from the viewpoint of Sosa's version of reliabilism, Goldman's method still

misses an important point of reliabilism. By his understanding of the unique field of

---

[204] Goldman, *Epistemology and Cognition*, p. 1.

[205] Alvin I. Goldman, *Knowledge in a Social World*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999, p. 5.

'reliabilism' as a normative discipline, Goldman made his version of 'reliabilism' close to a type of 'foundationalism'. This is because if a multiplication of foundations plays a normative role, the 'reliabilism' loses its intention of making a balance between 'multiple foundations of knowledge' and 'a coherent perspective among them'. 'Reliabilism' is seen as a third way beyond 'foundationalism' and 'coherentism', because 'reliabilism' holds its tension between *plural foundations* and *a coherent perspective*. If it remains as a 'reliabilism', the tension should never be solved, and the balanced position of ambiguity must be sustained. If 'a multiplication of foundations' is seen as a norm as a whole, it's just to make another kind of indubitable and credible foundation with no fear of error. If cognitive science and social science play a role of normative value, it's just to make another field of the ultimately given. Such a notion of 'norm' steals the characteristic of a balanced position from Goldman's version of 'reliabilism'.

II. ALVIN PLANTINGA

This section will examine an alternative version of 'reliabilism': that of Alvin Plantinga. Plantinga was a latecomer to the debated field of 'reliabilism', and he introduced an important notion of 'proper function' to the field.[206] Plantinga deems 'reliabilism' to be a

---

[206] See James Beilby, *Epistemology as Theology: An Evaluation of Alvin Plantinga's Religious Epistemology*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005, pp. 72-89.

step in the right direction, but he concurs that what provides warrant to a belief is not evidence marshaled in favour of truth-conduciveness. 'Reliabilism' overlooks an element absolutely crucial to a proper conception of warrant: some specification as to the necessity that one's belief producing faculties are 'functioning properly'.[207]

As it has been seen in the previous section, one of the dominant versions of 'reliabilism' was that of Alvin I. Goldman. Goldman's version of 'reliabilism' can be seen as a position which emphasizes the *integrity* of the multiplication of sources of knowledge. Integrity of multiple sources was used as a normative foundation to ground other fields of research. Integrity was used as evidence marshalled in favour of truth-conduciveness. On the contrary, Plantinga's notion of 'proper function' can be seen as an emphasis on the *partiality* of the multiplication of sources of knowledge. Each source of knowledge can be separated, and what has to be inquired is a proper characteristic of each source of knowledge.

The notion of 'proper function' as Plantinga employs the terms is closely correlated with the notion of 'appropriate environment'.[208] An automobile might be in perfect working order, despite the fact that it will not run well at the top of Pike's Peak, or under water, or on the moon: 'faculties must be in good working order, and the environment must be appropriate for your particular repertoire of epistemic powers'.[209] The appropriate

---

[207] Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function*, p. 6.

[208] Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function*, p. 7.

[209] Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function*, p. 7.

environment is closely connected with yet another notion: 'design plan'.[210] The design or purpose of an organism or artifact is relevant to the specification of what constitutes proper function for that organism or artifact: 'a thing's design plan is the way the thing in question is 'supposed' to work, the way in which it works when it is functioning as it ought to, when there is nothing wrong with it, when it is not damaged or broken or nonfunctional.'[211] A cognitive faculty is something the proper function of which is defined or governed by a teleological order.

What has to be mentioned here is that, for Plantinga, to capture a whole picture of the diverse environments of the world is supposed to be impossible. And, in spite of the impossibility, a partial understanding of the world is supposed to be possible. There are quite diverse environments in this world, and to capture the whole picture of these environments is impossible for human beings, but to develop a partial understanding of the world is possible. The role of 'philosophical theorizing about knowledge' is to promote the partial understanding of the world. Through a clarification of the proper function of a human faculty and its corresponding environment, the partial understanding of the world becomes possible.

This is the reason why Plantinga develops an investigation of a properly Christian worldview. One of the most distinctive aspects of Plantinga's philosophy is his claim that 'theistic belief produced by the *sensus divinitatis* can … be *properly basic with respect to*

---

[210] Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function*, p. 13.

[211] Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function*, p. 21.

warrant'.[212] The *sensus divinitatis* is a belief-producing faculty that under the right conditions produces belief that isn't evidentially based on other beliefs. A belief is *basic* for a given person if it is not based on any other beliefs in that person's noetic structure. Theistic belief is not arrived at by inference or argument, but in a much more immediate way. One may hold a warranted belief about the Christian God not on the evidential basis of other propositions, but grounded on or occasioned by an appropriate experience. The purpose of the *sensus divinitatis* is to enable us to have true beliefs about God; when it functions properly, it ordinarily does produce true beliefs about God. These beliefs therefore meet the conditions for warrant; if the beliefs produced are strong enough, then they constitute knowledge.

This clarification of a properly Christian worldview can be seen as an example of promoting a partial understanding of the world. One possible problem of Plantinga's version of 'reliabilism' is that he is not intending to make a whole picture of the world. From the very first, Plantinga gives up the aim of synthesizing different positions into one whole perspective and he concentrates only on clarifying a proper function of a human faculty and its corresponding environment. A Christian worldview is based only on its proper belief-producing faculty and isn't evidentially based on other beliefs. Here is a danger of relativism and the truth of one worldview becoming self-contained. Everything makes sense only within the worldview and nothing makes sense outside of it.

---

[212] Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, pp.178-79. The italics is in the original.

All of these make Plantinga's version of 'reliabilism' close to a type of 'coherentism'. This is because Plantinga neglects a characteristic of 'reliabilism' as a tension between *plural foundations* and *a coherent perspective*. If there is no possibility of constructing 'a whole coherent perspective', 'the plural closed worlds with each proper foundation' becomes separated and can have meaning only within the closed worlds. A possibility of integration among the diverse and closed worlds is lost and the way to a substantive reality is missed. This is the same danger forced by 'coherentism' and the 'diversity model' of the problem of religious diversity.

III. ERNEST SOSA AND THE RELIGIOUS IMPLICATION

In section 2.3., the method of reliabilism was understood as the combination of two radically different kinds of inquiry: (1) an inquiry based on the difference of plural foundations, and (2) an inquiry based on the historical process to form a coherent perspective among different foundations. Sosa's method of reliabilism is an attempt to combine elements from two contrary methods of foundationalism and coherentism. The two methods of foundationalism and coherentism look contradictory, but Sosa tries to keep both of the two methods. His attempt at reconciliation can be grasped as granting the narrow scope of a perfectly solid standpoint but instead turning to an imperfect but reliable standpoint of a wider perspective. The synthesis of the two radically contradictory methods

87

is reasonable because of its considerable subtlety.

This is also why Sosa's version of reliabilism is different from that of Alvin I. Goldman or Alvin Plantinga. For Goldman, reliabilism means a promulgation of a norm. Goldman understands the method of reliabilism as an establishment of a standard of criteria for knowledge. Therefore, the standard is used for guiding other fields of knowledge. For Plantinga, reliabilism means a defence of proper function. Plantinga thinks that establishing such a standard is impossible and instead proposes a notion of 'proper function'. When Plantinga mentions reliabilism, it means plurality of sources of knowledge without integration. Plantinga does not intend to integrate them to establish a standard. He emphasizes that each different kind of source of knowledge has a special status of proper function and each must be defended as a narrow but solid foundation of knowledge. His intention is to isolate a particular type of proper function as a defensible source of knowledge.

The strategy of Goldman and Plantinga is different and almost contradictory, but both of them try to make a perfectly solid standpoint. This is the difference from the reliabilism of Sosa. Sosa's version of reliabilism does not intend to make a perfectly solid standpoint. Instead of accepting the limited scope of a perfectly solid standpoint, Sosa takes an imperfect but reliable standpoint of a wider perspective. Sosa emphasizes a whole balance among different kinds of criteria and history solves the difficult problem of a conflicting truth seeking process.

If one takes the reliabilist view on religion, John Hick's hermeneutics of a revisionist view of religion is better understood as an imperfect but reliable standpoint rather than a perfectly solid standpoint. Gavin D'Costa criticized Hick for making up an artificial construct of an ultimate ground which imposes it's particular viewpoint on all the others in the name of universality. Although D'Costa grasps one side of Hick's project, he misses the other side of Hick's project.

When Hick had a claim about substantive identity or overlap among diverse religious traditions, the emphasis was not only on the underlying transcendental unity, but also on diverse cultural and historical settings of religions. One subtlety of Hick's method is to take these two contradictory standpoints at the same time. When Hick emphasizes the transcendental unity of all religions, he always emphasizes the diverse forms of self-understanding of religion too.

This reconciliation of two contradictory standpoints is what Hick means when he speaks of religions as an essentially related 'family' rather than as rival strangers. The family is working towards the same goal of human transformation, but the goal is not something one can take as fixed. This is because the goal lies beyond the boundaries of one's cultural and historical settings. The goal is to be taken as a necessary hypothesis as it is on this basis that one is able to systematize the differences of cultural and historical settings. One can never finally succeed in completing a synthesis from the diversity of religions, but one should nevertheless be impelled to seek to extend one's boundaries of

those settings as far as possible.

Chapter 2.

CRITICS OF HICK

A Proposal of Reliabilist Ethics

John Hick's work on the philosophy of religion has generated considerable critical response and there are even alternative – some might say divergent or incompatible – critical readings of the nature and significance of Hick's project. Reformed epistemologists such as William P. Alston and Alvin Plantinga, for example, take a foundationalist position and criticise Hick as coherentist,[213] while theologians of religions such as Gavin D'Costa and S. Mark Heim take a coherentist position and criticise Hick as foundationalist.[214] Each of these readings argues – on different grounds – that Hick's theory is based on an inadequate position.[215]

Such divergent readings of one theory raise the critical problem of its precise nature

---

[213] See, for example, Alston's *Perceiving God*, and Plantinga's 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism'.

[214] See, for example, D'Costa, *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity*, pp. 24-29, and 45-52, and Heim, *Salvations*, pp. 13-43.

[215] About incompatible interpretations of Hick's position, see Twiss, 'The Philosophy of Religious Pluralism: A Critical Appraisal of Hick and His Critics,' pp. 533-68.

and import, as well as posing the question of whether the weaknesses identified, in fact, undercut the theory's validity. In order to answer these questions, this chapter aims to clarify the hidden philosophical presuppositions of such divergent critiques and to find an adequate philosophical method for understanding the subtlety of Hick's theory.

The first section of this chapter will examine the characteristic of William P. Alston's and Alvin Plantinga's interpretations of John Hick. Philosophical systems of Alston and Plantinga depend on different theoretical concepts (religious experience and proper function), but they share the same philosophical orientation to emphasize *a person*. Due to the same philosophical orientation, both of them have a somewhat negative understanding of current society which allows diversity of religions. Their understanding of Hick is a result of their position and their understanding of society. Through an examination of their position, Alston's and Plantinga's approaches, both of which claim to criticise foundationalism, will be grasped as hiding the same philosophical presupposition of weak foundationalism.

The second section will turn to the examination of Gavin D'Costa's and S. Mark Heim's interpretation of John Hick. D'Costa and Heim have almost opposite political orientations (D'Costa is more conservative, Heim is more liberal), but both of their philosophical positions depend on the *transformational flexibility* of society. D'Costa finds the transformational flexibility in Christian society, and Heim finds it in actual practices of religious life. As a result of these concerns, they find a static foundation in Hick's theory.

Through an examination of their positions, these two contrasting reactions will be grasped as hiding the same philosophical presuppositions of coherentism.

The last section will propose a method of reliabilism as reconciliation between foundationalism and coherentism. First, the different readings of Hick will be compared and contrasted, and the points of controversy will be clarified. Second, an ethical aspect of reliabilism will be examined as a conceptual preparation for the appropriate reading of Hick. Lastly, reliabilism will be proposed as an appropriate reading of Hick.

1.

Reformed Epistemology

I. WILLIAM P. ALSTON

In *Perceiving God: The Epistemology of Religious Experience*, William P. Alston, on the one hand, admits that his project of religious epistemology was originally inspired by Hick's *Faith and Knowledge*[216], and, on the other hand, understands and criticizes Hick's project as coherentism which emphasizes the indirect and mediated character of perception rather than its direct and unmediated one. [217] This orientation towards direct and unmediated perception characterizes Alston's project, and the direct and unmediated perception in his argument is meant to defend a personal belief in a particular religion rather than a universal basis for any religious belief. In this sense, the philosophical presupposition of Alston can be understood as a weak foundationalism. This section first examines Alston's understanding of Hick's philosophy of religion, and then Alston's own position will be examined.

---

[216] 'The earliest sustained attempts to work through my ideas on our experience of God were strongly influenced by John Hick's treatment in *Faith and Knowledge* (2d ed., 1966)'. See Alston, *Perceiving God*, p. xi.

[217] Alston, *Perceiving God*, pp. 27-28.

In the beginning of *Perceiving God*, Alston summarizes his position that 'the central thesis of this book is that experiential awareness of God, or as I shall be saying, the *perception* of God, makes an important contribution to the grounds of religious belief. More specifically, a person can become justified in holding certain kinds of beliefs about God by virtue of perceiving God as being or doing so-and-so.'[218] Here one can see Alston's indebtedness to Hick and also his difference from Hick. For example, in *Faith and Knowledge*, Hick also gives a central importance to the concept of *perception*:

> All conscious experience of the physical world contains an element of interpretation … The perceiving mind is thus always in some degree a selecting, relating and synthesizing agent.[219]

A basic characteristic of Hick's concept of perception is that experience and interpretation are always mixed in the perception, and Hick does not admit that there is pure experience without interpretation. What is intended in the rejection of pure experience is a sense of contradiction in the interpretative perception and a gradual resolution of the contradiction that develops little by little through personal as well as world history.

Alston does not accept Hick's position as it is. What Alston does not accept is the

---

[218] Alston, *Perceiving God,* p. 1. The italics is in the original. Alston acknowledges an influence of John Hick on his own thinking: 'the earliest sustained attempts to work through my ideas on our experience of God were strongly influenced by John Hick's treatment in *Faith and Knowledge* (2nd ed., 1966).' See Alston, *Perceiving God*, p. xi.

[219] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, Second Edition, p. 108.

primacy of interpretation in Hick's argument. According to Alston, Hick defends a view

that the chief relationship with God consists in 'an interpretation of the world as a whole

as mediating a divine presence and purpose.'[220] Alston distinguishes direct and indirect

perception and categorizes Hick's concept of perception as indirect perception, or even

calls it as 'indirect perceptual recognition' which is closer to linguistic recognition rather

than personal perception: 'this [Hick's] account of the *interpretation* of the world and the

events of one's life as manifesting a divine presence and purpose sounds like what I termed

'indirect perceptual recognition.'[221]

The reason why Alston does not accept Hick's position is that Hick's position remains

uncertain and does not explain genuine certainty of religious belief: 'I do not agree with

Hick that all experience of objects involves interpretation … What makes this a matter of

perceiving the house, rather than just thinking about it or remembering it, is the fact of

presentation, *givenness*, the fact that something is presented to consciousness, is

something of which I am *directly aware*.'[222] As an analogy to understand Hick's position,

Alston mentions taking a vapor trail as a sign of the recent presence of a jet plane, but

without actually seeing the plane. For Alston, Hick's position is a rejection of personal

reality. Instead of personal reality, Hick prioritises ambiguous linguistic recognition which

---

[220] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, Second Edition, pp. 114-15, quoted in Alston, *Perceiving God*, p. 27.

[221] Alston, *Perceiving God*, p. 27. The italics is in the original.

[222] Alston, *Perceiving God*, p. 27. The italics is in the original.

never reaches the reality itself. In this sense, Alston understands Hick as coherentist[223] and criticizes a coherentist aspect of Hick's argument. What should be noted here is that Alston neglects the holistic aspect of Hick's argument. Hick's argument has a dual aspect of linguistic and holistic. When Hick mentions perception, it includes not only linguistic recognition, but also includes evolution and synthesis towards a whole understanding of the world. According to Hick, divine presence and purpose is also shown in the evolving and synthesizing order of the whole world.

Instead of Hick's position of indirect perception, Alston defends the position of direct perception: 'what distinguishes perception from abstract thought is that the object is *directly presented* or *immediately present* to the subject so that 'indirect presentation' would be a contradiction in terms.'[224] When Alston defends the position of direct perception, what is presupposed in the argument is that the direct perception is given to a *person* and the emphasis is on the particularities of a person.

This point becomes clear by examining Alston's argument about religious diversity. According to Alston, an important point about the problem of religious diversity is a personal choice of a particular religion which has meaning only for the specific person,

---

[223] According to Ernest Sosa, coherentism is characterized by the rejection of the notion of foundation in favour of the one that one's body of knowledge is a raft that floats free of any anchor or tie. Instead of keeping the position of foundationalism, which supports the confrontation between what one believes and reality, coherentism suggests that 'nothing can be counted as a reason for holding a belief except another belief.' See Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 108. See also the 1st chapter of this dissertation.

[224] Alston, *Perceiving God*, pp. 20-21. The italics is in the original.

and abstract thought about religious diversity does not deprive someone of having a particular religious belief. Alston says that abstract thought always falls short of giving a participant of a particular religious practice confidence that his practice reliably describes the one religious reality in the face of rival practices: 'there is still a need for faith, for trusting whatever we do have to go on as providing us with a picture of the situation that is close enough to the truth to be a reliable guide to our ultimate destiny. Since it is an essential part of the religious package that we hold beliefs that go beyond what is conclusively established by such objective indicators as are available to us … it should be the reverse of surprising that religious diversity should render us less than fully epistemically justified in the beliefs of a particular religion.'[225] Alston argues that it is rational for practitioners of a particular religion to continue forming beliefs within the particular traditions although they do not have available to them an infallible argument for the conclusion that a particular religion is, among the plurality of mutually incompatible religious traditions, the one that is superior to others: 'the only rational course for me is to sit tight with the practice of which I am a master and which serves me so well in guiding my activity in the world.'[226] For Alston, one (abstract) realm of religious diversity and the other (realistic) realm of personal choice are distinctively different fields and, for example, Hick's position is made on the basis of religious diversity[227] and Alston's position is made

---

[225] Alston, *Perceiving God*, p. 277.

[226] Alston, *Perceiving God*, p. 274.

[227] 'Hick's position … will have to be viewed as a proposal for a reconstruction of religious doxastic

on the basis of personal choice. Therefore, Hick's proposal of religious pluralism is thought to destroy the personal choice of a particular religion. This understanding of Hick must be questioned, but before examining an appropriate understanding of Hick, this chapter will examine Alvin Plantinga's position.

II. ALVIN PLANTINGA

Plantinga further developed Alston's position, and the difference between Alston and Plantinga is that Alston takes Christian belief as basically an *experiential* position, whereas Plantinga takes Christian belief as basically a *cognitive* position. In order to grasp Plantinga's position and his understanding of Hick accurately, this section first presents what Plantinga is saying about the epistemic adequacy of Hick's philosophy of religious pluralism and then Plantinga's own position will be analyzed in some detail.

In his paper, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,'[228] Alvin Plantinga divides the argument into two parts: 'there are initially two different kinds of indictments of exclusivism: broadly moral or ethical indictments, and other broadly intellectual or

---

practices, rather than as a description and evaluation of those practices as they are.' Alston, *Perceiving God*, p. 265.

[228] Alvin Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' in Kevin Meeker & Philip Quinn (eds.), *The Philosophical Challenge of Religious Diversity*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 172-192.

epistemic indictments.'[229] The first part is titled as 'I. Moral Objections to Exclusivism'[230] and the second part is named as 'II. Epistemic Objections to Exclusivism'.[231] John Hick is mentioned in each part. Before directly examining Plantinga's argument on Hick, it is necessary to examine how Plantinga sets up the background of the arguments. After the examination of the background, the moral part and the epistemic part will be discussed in detail.

Plantinga begins his argument from the fact of religious diversity: 'in recent years probably more of us western Christians have become aware of the world's religious diversity; we have probably learned more about people of other religious persuasions, and we have come to see more clearly that they display what looks like real piety, devoutness, and spirituality.'[232] Then Plantinga goes on to define what is exclusivism: 'the exclusivist holds that the tenets or some of the tenets of *one* religion – Christianity, let's say – are in fact true; he adds, naturally enough, that any propositions, including other religious beliefs, that are incompatible with those tenets are false.'[233] To illustrate the tenets of one religion, Plantinga gives an example of his own faith: 'for example, I believe both (1) The world was created by God, an almighty, all-knowing and perfectly good personal being (one that holds beliefs, has aims, plans and intentions, and can act to accomplish these aims) and (2)

---

[229] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' pp. 174-75.

[230] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 175.

[231] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 179.

[232] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 174.

[233] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 174.

Human beings require salvation, and God has provided a unique way of salvation through the incarnation, life, sacrificial death and resurrection of his divine son.'[234] In this way, Plantinga sets out the basic direction of his argument as reconciliation between 'the fact of religious plurality' and 'the exclusivist faith'.

After that, Plantinga introduces a criticism on exclusivism: 'there is a fairly widespread belief that there is something seriously wrong with exclusivism. It is irrational, or egotistical and unjustified or intellectually arrogant, or elitist, or a manifestation of harmful pride, or even oppressive and imperialistic.'[235] Plantinga characterizes these objections not directed to the truth of any propositions someone might accept in the exclusivist way, but 'they are directed to the *propriety* or *rightness* of exclusivism.'[236]

What is important to realize here is that the Plantinga's version of exclusivism does not aim to refute the other kinds of propositional truth. His aim is not to offer a logical foundation to a proposition. That is to say, Plantinga's exclusivism is not based on the *content* of the proposition, but the *exclusivist character* of the proposition itself. This presupposition is shared with the critics of exclusivism. What the critics question are not any contents of exclusivist belief, but the *propriety* of excluding one proposition from other propositions. If one misses the characteristic of this initial presupposition, one misses the central argument of Plantinga.

---

[234] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 173.

[235] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 174.

[236] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 174. The italics is in the original.

On the basis of this setting up of the background, Plantinga moves on to the first part on moral objections. Before examining the moral objection, Plantinga examines the conditions within which his version of exclusivism makes sense: '(1) being rather fully aware of other religions, (2) knowing that there is much that at the least looks like genuine piety and devoutness in them, and (3) believing that you know of no arguments that would necessarily convince all or most honest and intelligent dissenters of your own religious allegiances.'[237]

The first condition is the initial plurality of religion. Plantinga's exclusivism means to choose one position among others. The second is the personal religious conviction. To choose one position among others, there must be a reason. In this case, the reason is not a rational foundation, but personal piety or devoutness. The third is a negative reason of no other defeating reasons. Because of the convictional character of the reason, the reason for a religious conviction cannot be a positive reason by itself. The reason must accompany another reason of no other defeating reasons.

After this clarification of the condition, Plantinga defines a moral objection to exclusivism: 'the exclusivist is intellectually arrogant, or egotistical, or self-servingly arbitrary, or dishonest, or imperialistic, or oppressive.'[238] The moral objection blames exclusivism for being guilty of some or all of these things. Plantinga mentions Hick as a typical example of these objections. Plantinga quotes several sentences from Hick's *An*

---

[237] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 176.

[238] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 175.

Interpretation of Religion: 'nor can we reasonably claim that our own forms of religious experience, together with that of the tradition of which we are a part, is veridical whilst others are not. We can of course claim this; and indeed virtually every religious tradition has done so, regarding alternative forms of religion either as false or as confused and inferior versions of itself.'[239]

What is important to realize here is that John Hick doesn't discuss the content of religious tradition either. Like Plantinga, what is important to Hick is also the *propriety* or *rightness* of one religion. There is a difference of proposition and cultural tradition. Hick thinks that a religion is based on its cultural tradition, while Plantinga thinks that a religion is based on its propositional truth. But both of them make the argument on the basis of propriety or rightness.

That is the reason why both of them start the argument from the initial plurality of religion. The initial plurality cannot be questioned, because the choice of one religion is not based on an infallible rationality. For both Plantinga and Hick, the authority of one religion comes from the personal religious conviction like personal piety or devoutness. In either case, there must be some arbitrariness. Because of this arbitrariness, the authority of one religion – whether proposition or cultural tradition – cannot undermine the other religions.

From these similar concerns, Hick and Plantinga draw out slightly different

---

[239] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 235, quoted in Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 191.

conclusions. The conclusion of Hick is a more holistic direction of pluralism: 'persons

living within other traditions, then, are equally justified in trusting their own distinctive

religious experience and in forming their beliefs on the basis of it … let us avoid the

implausibly arbitrary dogma that religious experience is all delusory with the single

exception of the particular form enjoyed by the one who is speaking.'[240]

On the contrary, Plantinga argues that if the exclusivist believes a proposition, then

'she must also believe that those who believe something incompatible with them are

mistaken and believe what is false.'[241] Plantinga says that what is important is exclusivity

itself and that exclusivity helps to keep the authority of one religion: 'she must therefore

see herself as *privileged* with respect to those others … There is something of great value,

she must think, that *she* has and *they* lack'.[242] The exclusivity is not based on content, so

it cannot refute other propositions. But the other religion's propositions cannot refute the

exclusivity of one's own either: 'as an exclusivist, I realize that I can't convince others that

they should believe as I do, but I nonetheless continue to believe as I do.'[243]

In the end, Plantinga says that the position of John Hick is the same as his own. The

pluralists like Hick also divide two different realms and choose one as true and the other

as false: 'those pluralists, like Hick, hold that such propositions as (1) and (2) and their

---

[240] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 235, quoted in Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of
Religious Exclusivism,' p.191.

[241] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 176.

[242] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 176. The italics is in the original.

[243] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 177.

colleagues from other faiths are literally false, although in some way still valid responses to the Real.'[244] Plantinga says that Hick takes the literal realm as false and the mythical or allegorical realm to be true, so the pluralists' position is also exclusivist and the charge of arrogance is also valid for them.

This understanding of Hick is foundational, because the mythical realm is serving as a foundation on which the literal realm is built.[245] But is this characterization of John Hick as exclusivist really appropriate? Or, does his position include more contradictions within it? Is it impossible to think the relation of the literal realm and the mythical realm as a mixed whole rather than a choice of either/or? These questions will be discussed in the later section. [246] As for now, this section will examine the epistemic objections to exclusivism. Plantinga divides the epistemic objections into three parts: A. Justification, B. Irrationality, and C. Warrant. Plantinga discusses John Hick in Part C, so this section briefly reviews Part A and B, and examines Part C.

In Part A, Plantinga starts the argument by examining the claim that to hold exclusivist views is unjustified. Plantinga gives two possibilities of what this means. The first possibility goes back to Descartes and Locke: 'having violated no intellectual or cognitive

---

[244] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 177.

[245] In *Warranted Christian Belief*, Plantinga argues that the philosophy of John Hick has two contradictory elements and therefore it fails to be valid. See Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, pp. 43-63.

[246] The problem of the literal and mythical understanding of religion will be discussed in the 6th chapter of this dissertation.

duties or obligations in the formation and sustenance of the belief in question.'[247] That is

to say, the exclusivist belief is not derived from self-evident or incorrigible evidence.

Plantinga does not give a clear answer to this classical foundational criticism: 'at present

there is widespread (and as I see it, correct) agreement that there is no duty of the Lockean

kind.'[248]

  The second possibility is that 'exclusivism is intellectually *arbitrary*.'[249] To answer

this objection, Plantinga says that exclusivism is not arbitrary. This is because, Plantinga

explains, the objection is assuming the beliefs in question are on a par in the face of the

plurality of conflicting religious beliefs: 'there is an intellectual duty to treat similar cases

similarly.'[250] But the belief in question is not on a par, and each belief is exclusively

different. If an exclusivist thinks a proposition is true, it means those incompatible with it

are false: 'as an exclusivist, I do think (nonculpably, I hope) that they are not on a par.'[251]

---

[247] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 180.

[248] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 180. In his other books, Plantinga gives a detailed argument to refute classical foundationalism. For example, in *God and Other Mind*, Plantinga argues that the lengthy and august tradition of natural theology and evidentialism regarding belief in God was mistaken. Just as the absence of a compelling argument does not disqualify belief in the existence of other minds as a rational belief, the absence of a compelling argument should not disqualify belief in the existence of God. In 'Reason and Belief in God,' Plantinga develops this assertion to a greater degree of complexity and suggests that belief in God need not be based on arguments or evidence at all. See Alvin Plantinga, *God and Other Minds*, Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell, 1967. Alvin Plantinga, 'Reason and Belief in God' in *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God*, pp. 16-93.

[249] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 180. The italics is in the original.

[250] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 180.

[251] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 181.

What should be mentioned here is that Plantinga denies self-evident or incorrigible evidence, but defends the exclusivity of a proposition. If a proposition is not based on self-evident or incorrigible evidence, there must be something arbitrary in the proposition. But Plantinga tries to avoid the arbitrariness by articulating the exclusivity of a proposition. This is the reason why Plantinga says that a religious proposition is not for everyone, but the proposition is only personally valid: '[proposition] (1) and (2), after all, seem to me to be true; they have for me the phenomenology that accompanies that seeming.'[252] The phenomenology here means that the proposition is only personally meaningful. The proposition is personally limited, but has a solid basis.

Plantinga relates this limited solidity of a proposition to John Calvin: 'if … John Calvin is right in thinking that there is such a thing as the Sensus Divinitatis and the Internal Testimony of the Holy Spirit, then perhaps (1) and (2) are produced in me by those belief-producing processes.'[253] The Sensus Divinitatis or the Internal Testimony of the Holy Spirit does not have self-evident or incorrigible evidence, so the validity is limited to a personal matter. But the validity is internally articulated and has enough validity to believe.[254]

---

[252] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 181.

[253] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 181.

[254] Plantinga explains Calvin's idea of the Sensus Divinitatis in *Warranted Christian Belief*. According to Calvin, there is a sort of instinct, a natural human tendency, a disposition, a nisus to form beliefs about God under a variety of conditions. Calvin calls this tendency a Sensus Divinitatis or sense of divinity. The functioning of the Sensus Divinitatis requires a little maturity, but the deliverances of the Sensus Divinitatis are not inferential. It works in an immediate way.

Finally, Plantinga criticises pluralism. Plantinga identifies pluralism with the view to treat all religions on a par: 'I can go wrong that way as well as any other, treating all religions, or all philosophical thoughts, or all moral views, as on a par.'[255] Plantinga says that pluralism tries to avoid the risk of defending a particular religious position. In this sense, pluralism tries to escape exclusivity, but there is no way to avoid exclusivity: 'there is no safe haven here, no way to avoid risk.'[256]

Plantinga's criticism of pluralism here is close to Alston's criticism of Hick. According to Alston, Hick's position accepts the primacy of interpretation, and therefore his position necessarily remains uncertain and cannot theorize a certainty of direct awareness that is given as a personal reality. For Alston, there is social diversity of religion on the one hand, and personal choice on the other. Likewise, Plantinga also points out a weakness of pluralism which treats all religions as equally valid and therefore fails to defend a particular religious position. This is an understanding of Hick as a coherentist, and both Alston and Plantinga start their arguments from a primacy of personal perspective.

In Part B, Plantinga articulates the idea of rationality as sanity and proper function. This idea of rationality is Aristotelian rationality: 'a person is rational in this sense when no

---

The beliefs of the Sensus Divinitatis are properly basic. See Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, pp. 168-186. See also, John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, London: SCM Press, 1961, I, iii, 3, p. 46, quoted in Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, p. 172.

[255] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 182.

[256] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 182.

malfunction obstructs her use of the faculties by virtue of the possession of which she is rational in the Aristotelian sense.'[257] Rationality as sanity does not require possession of particularly exalted rational faculties: 'it requires only normality (in the nonstatistical sense) or health, or proper function.'[258] Plantinga does not examine this idea of rationality in detail, and instead goes next to Part C. This is because this idea of rationality is closely related with the idea of warrant.

The third objection to exclusivism is that 'the exclusivist doesn't have warrant.'[259] According to Plantinga, the pluralist declares that 'at any rate the exclusivist certainly can't know that his exclusivistic views are true.'[260] Plantinga quotes John Hick to exemplify the objection:

For it is evident that in some ninety-nine percent of cases the religion which an individual professes and to which he or she adheres depends upon the accidents of birth. Someone born to Buddhist parents in Thailand is very likely to be a Buddhist, someone born to Muslim parents in Saudi Arabia to be Muslim, someone born to Christian parents in Mexico to be a Christian, and so on.[261]

This objection says that a religious belief is not justified by its foundational content, but is

---

[257] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' pp. 185-86.

[258] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 186.

[259] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 186.

[260] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 186.

[261] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 2, quoted in Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 187.

justified by a cultural-linguistic framework within which the religious belief is embedded. A religion like Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity is understood to be a closed grammatical framework, and a belief becomes coherent only within the framework. So it seems to be a coherentist objection to a foundational exclusivism.

Against Hick's coherentist objection, Plantinga tries to defend foundational exclusivism. Firstly, Plantinga interprets the coherentist objection as a total negation of any religious beliefs: 'does it follow … that I ought not to accept the religious views that I have been brought up to accept, or the ones that I find myself inclined to accept, or the ones that seem to me to be true?'[262] Plantinga denies the objection. It is because if one accepts the objection, the idea of truth itself becomes impossible. If one has to give up the idea of truth because of its relativity or locality, the idea of truth becomes nonsense.

Then Plantinga argues for his idea of 'proper functionalism'. [263] The proper functionalism approximately means that 'S knows p iff … the belief that p is produced in S by cognitive faculties that are functioning properly (working as they ought to work, suffering from no dysfunction).'[264] The central point of the idea is that the properly functioning faculty is in the middle between true and false. The properly functioning

---

[262] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 187.

[263] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 188. Plantinga explains this idea of proper function in detain in *Warrant and Proper Function*: 'a belief has warrant for you only if your cognitive apparatus is functioning properly, working the way it ought to work, in producing and sustaining it.' See Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function*, p. 4.

[264] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' pp. 188-89.

faculty does not directly conclude the truth or falsity of a proposition, but it implies a certain

kind of rationality which comes from a certain kind of cognitive faculty. There are diverse

kinds of cognitive faculties and just one kind of cognitive faculty does not serve as self-

evident or incorrigible evidence. But it gives a certain kind of aptness to a proposition. It is

not a strong kind of foundationalism, but a weak kind of foundationalism.

Finally, Plantinga shows an alternative interpretation of pluralism. Plantinga says that

pluralism is not a *rebutting* defeater, but an *undercutting* defeater: 'it calls into question, to

some degree or other, the sources of one's belief.'[265] From the alternative interpretation,

pluralism does not mean a total negation of any religious beliefs. Instead, it means to

'reduce the level of confidence or degree of belief in the proposition in question.'[266]

According to Plantinga, many or most exclusivists are aware of this alternative type of

pluralism.

One possible consequence of this situation is a miserable condition from a Christian

perspective. It is because it may deprive believers of some of the comfort and peace the

Lord has promised his followers: 'if he *hadn't* known the facts of pluralism, then he would

have known [propositions] (1) and (2), but now that he *does* know those facts, he doesn't

know (1) and (2).'[267] Pluralism might deprive the exclusivist of the *knowledge* that

---

[265] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 189.

[266] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 189.

[267] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' pp. 189-90. The italics is in the

original.

Christianity is true, even if they *are* true and one *believes* that they are.

However, this is not a necessary route: 'a fresh or heightened awareness of the facts of religious pluralism could bring about a reappraisal of one's religious life, a reawakening, a new or renewed and deepened grasp and apprehension of (1) and (2).'[268] Plantinga says that the fact of plurality does not necessarily weaken one's exclusive religious life, but it could serve as an occasion for a renewed and more powerful working of one's religious belief: 'in that way knowledge of the facts of pluralism could initially serve as a defeater, but in the long run have precisely the opposite effect.'[269]

What should be noted here is that Plantinga does not necessarily deny every kind of pluralism. The pluralism that Plantinga denies is just one type of strong pluralism, and Plantinga accepts his alternative version of weak pluralism. Plantinga's alternative version of weak pluralism is compatible with his version of weak exclusivism. Plantinga presupposes the initial fact of religious plurality, which is the reason why he creates the idea of proper function to weaken the validity of religious exclusivism. Christian belief is not an infallible truth for everyone, and so it has only a weak foundation. But the weakness does not mean that the belief is false, but that the Christian belief is a matter of choice rather than a logical inference. According to Plantinga, this weak kind of exclusivism and pluralism is more appropriate for Christian belief.

---

[268] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 190.

[269] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 190.

III. A PHILOSOPHICAL PRESUPPOSITION OF WEAK FOUNDATIONALISM

Before directly examining Hick's position and an adequate philosophical framework to understand it, it is necessary to understand correctly the philosophical presupposition hidden behind these critiques of Hick. Therefore, this section will examine the philosophical presuppositions of William P. Alston and Alvin Plantinga. Some concepts of Ernest Sosa and George Lindbeck will be used in the examination.[270]

Alston's contribution to the philosophy of religion lies in his theorization of a reliability of a particular religion. What is shown in Alston's argument is a reduction of certainty and an emphasis on the uniqueness of personal choice ('the only rational course for me is to sit tight with the practice of which I am a master and which serves me so well in guiding my activity in the world'[271]). According to Alston, a characteristic of faith is a choice of something uncertain which does not have a demonstrative evidence. It is uncertain but there is a strong motivation for the personal choice of it, so it has its own kind of reasonability. Alston's position is not simply based on pure experience, but he is fully aware of this idea of *an own kind of reasonability*. This position of Alston can be understood as a weak foundationalism.

However, by connecting the reliability of a particular religion with the concept of direct

---

[270] On the adequacy to use their concepts, see the 1st chapter of this dissertation.

[271] Alston, *Perceiving God*, p. 274.

perception, Alston fails to theorize how serious the requirement of coherence is in contemporary society. For example, when Alston divides the two distinctive realms of religious diversity and personal choice and defends the realm of personal choice ('it is an essential part of the religious package that we hold beliefs that go beyond what is conclusively established by such objective indicators as are available to us'[272]), Alston fails to take seriously the requirement of coherence in contemporary society. This point will become clear with an examination of Plantinga's argument.

Alston and Plantinga make a similar argument, but there is a subtle difference, and the subtle difference is shown in their attitude about religious diversity. Alston believes that a distinction between two different realms ('a social situation of religious diversity' and 'personal choice of a particular religion') is possible, but Plantinga's attitude is more nuanced. Plantinga accepts religious diversity as a miserable, but necessary starting point. For example, Plantinga starts the argument from the initial plurality of religion: 'in recent years probably more of us Christians have become aware of the world's religious diversity.'[273] Plantinga keeps this awareness of the world's religious diversity throughout his argument, and this is important because this awareness is taken as a necessary requirement of coherence in the current religious situation.

If a religion becomes true only because it has a cultural-linguistic framework[274], is it

---

[272] Alston, *Perceiving God*, p. 277.

[273] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 174.

[274] The cultural-linguistic view of religion by George Lindbeck can be seen as an application of

possible for a believer to have a solid confidence in the religion? If a religious belief is something like a raft that floats free of any anchor or tie, can one call it a religion? This is the fundamental problem for Plantinga, and his entire argument can be seen as a project which tries to recover personality after the threat of the requirement of coherence in contemporary society. Plantinga sees plurality of religions as a necessarily miserable condition. If a believer hadn't known the facts of plurality, he would have lived in a comfort and peace. But now that he does know the facts of plurality, he cannot live in a comfort and peace.[275] This is Plantinga's reluctant acceptance of the requirement of coherence in contemporary society.

Then, in that miserable situation, what can a religion provide for a believer without contradicting the requirement of coherence? Plantinga provides three conditions as an environment of exclusivism: (1) being fully aware of other religions, (2) knowing that there is much that at the least looks like genuine piety and devoutness in them, (3) believing that you know of no arguments that would necessarily convince all or most honest and intelligent dissenters of your own religious allegiances.[276]

---

coherentism into the field of religion. Lindbeck explains the cultural-linguistic view as the rejection of a common ground that makes religions all valid: 'a religion can be viewed as a kind of cultural and/or linguistic framework or medium that shapes the entirety of life and thought.' Each cultural and linguistic framework is coherent only within each framework and does not have another foundation outside the framework. Therefore, one's religious identity is not a matter of choice, but is given to one by the cultural and linguistic family we are part of. See Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, p. 33. See also the 1st chapter of this dissertation.

[275] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' pp. 188-89.

[276] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 176.

Here one can see what Plantinga thinks to be a foundation of religion and there is his own version of foundationalism[277] in it. None of the three conditions of Plantinga works as a strong foundation which secures all the other knowledge on the basis of it. But they are working together as a limited foundation which gives security to the limited field of knowledge. The first condition can be seen as an awareness of coherence in society (1. being fully aware of other religions). The second condition can be seen as a weak kind of experiential-expressive standpoint, because it is valid only with the third condition (2. genuine piety and devoutness). The third condition can be seen as a weak kind of propositional-realist standpoint. It is because the proposition is not working to found other propositions, but is working only to secure its own proposition (3. one knows of no arguments that would necessarily convince all or most honest and intelligent dissenters of one's own religious allegiances).

What Plantinga explains as Christian truth (the Sensus Divinitatis and the Internal

---

[277] Ernest Sosa defined the central idea of foundationalism that all knowledge is founded on what is ultimately given and there are two kinds of foundationalist: 'rational' and 'empirical'. See. Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 1. See also the 1st chapter of this dissertation.

The propositional-realist standpoint and the experiential-expressive standpoint by George Lindbeck can be seen as religious counterpart of foundationalism. The propositional-realist standpoint emphasizes the cognitive aspects of religion and stresses the ways in which doctrines function as informative propositions or truth claims about objective realities: 'for a propositionalist, if a doctrine is once true, it is always true, and if it is once false, it is always false.' The experiential-expressive standpoint interprets doctrines as noninformative and nondiscursive symbols of inner feelings, attitudes, or existential orientation: 'for experiential-expressive symbolist … religiously significant meanings can vary while doctrines remain the same, and conversely, doctrines can alter without change of meaning.' See Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, pp. 16-17.

Testimony of Holy Spirit)[278] corresponds to these conditions. The Christian truth can be categorized neither as a propositional-realist standpoint nor as an experiential-expressive standpoint, but it works as a mixture of both. It also works as a weak foundation and is compatible with the requirement of religious coherentism.

Plantinga coined the term, 'proper function'[279], to conceptualize this situation. Its central idea is that the properly functioning faculty does not directly conclude the truth or falsity of a proposition, but it implies a certain kind of rationality which comes from a certain kind of cognitive faculty. Instead of a strong idea of truth, it introduces a weak idea of truth. A negative point of the idea is that 'a certain kind of cognitive faculty' is too obscure and any cognitive faculty can be a properly functioning faculty. That is, if a proposition is neither truth or false, any proposition can be a candidate for truth. A positive point is that the idea of proper function can be expected to find a new category of knowledge. Without the idea of proper function, the idea of truth has been based on only 'rationality' and 'experience'. The idea of proper function provides a possibility of finding a new meaning for what has been traditionally neglected. What Plantinga did to Christian truth is that kind of procedure.

From these examinations, what could be known is that Alston began to theorize a weak foundationalism, but it had a limitation in the rejection of coherentism. Plantinga further developed Alston's position, and Plantinga gave a more nuanced version of weak

---

[278] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 181.

[279] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 188.

foundationalism, which presupposes the idea of coherentism. If one carefully follows

Plantinga's argument, it can be seen that coherentism does not necessarily violate

foundationalism. This is a big contribution of Plantinga to the philosophy of religious

pluralism. Furthermore, the examination of his idea of 'proper function' reveals that the

idea of proper function can give a more positive meaning to the plurality of religion. It is

still under development, but the idea of proper function is expected to work as a more

appropriate criterion in the field of religion.

2.

Theologians of Religions

I. GAVIN D'COSTA

Before examining the appropriate reading of John Hick, this section will turn to a different kind of a more coherentist critique of Hick. In his book, *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity*, D'Costa provides his mature reading of Hick.[280] The basic argument of D'Costa is theological, and the philosophical reading of D'Costa might give an impression of distorting the original intention of D'Costa. However, on the basis of this recognition, this section will offer a philosophical reading of D'Costa as a possible argument which can be newly developed from D'Costa's original argument.

Before examining the position of John Hick, Gavin D'Costa characterizes his understanding of pluralism: 'all religions (with qualifications) lead to the same divine reality; there is no privileged self-manifestations of the divine; and finally, religious harmony will follow if tradition-specific (exclusivist) approaches which allegedly claim monopoly over the truth are abandoned in favor of pluralist approaches which recognize

---

[280] D'Costa, *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity,* pp. 19-52.

that all religions display the truth in differing ways.'[281]

What can be seen from this understanding of pluralism is that D'Costa makes a clear distinction between pluralism and exclusivism. If one accepts pluralism, it inevitably entails the denial of exclusivism. This starting point is different from that of Plantinga. Plantinga starts his arguments from the necessary background of religious plurality, and then seeks a way to reconcile exclusivism with the fact of religious plurality. It is necessary to examine D'Costa's reason for separating pluralism and exclusivism.

D'Costa illustrates two consequences of his argument. First, pluralism does not work: 'pluralists simply present themselves as honest brothers to disputing parties, while concealing the fact that they represent yet another party which invites the disputants actually to leave their parties and join the pluralist one.'[282] D'Costa thinks that there is an option not to choose pluralism.

The second consequence of D'Costa's argument is that: 'our Christian pluralists … in fact espouse one of the 'gods' of modernity: unitarian, deistic or agnostic. The Trinitarian God can find no place within such 'Christian' approaches.'[283] What can be seen from this statement is that, in D'Costa's understanding, 'the modern pluralist' belongs to one cultural-linguistic group and 'the Trinitarian Christianity' belongs to another cultural-linguistic group. These two cultural-linguistic groups are in conflict and one is forced to

---

[281] D'Costa, *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity*, p. 19.

[282] D'Costa, *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity*, p. 20.

[283] D'Costa, *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity*, p. 20.

choose between them.

D'Costa relates Hick's project with liberal modernity: 'Hick's 'pluralism' masks the advocation of liberal modernity's 'god,' in this case a form of ethical agnosticism.'[284] Here the un-capitalized 'god' is used in a bad sense. Hick's ethical agnosticism tries to be God, but it fails. The ethics tries to invalidate the content of a religion and instead places ethics at the centre of our lives. We are forced to choose *either* ethics *or* religion. But the project necessarily fails, because it does not have a solid ground of content. Ethics is nothing more than an artificial construct and it cannot be substituted for the real religion.

According to D'Costa, a hidden presupposition of the liberal modernity is 'the attempt to turn history into 'Essences,' a restless drive which will not cease until modernity has 'fixated this world into an object which can be forever possessed, catalogued its riches, embalmed it, and injected into reality some purifying essence which will stop its transformation'.' [285] What is important here is that D'Costa contrasts *essence* and *transformation* and defends the side of transformation. In D'Costa's understanding, modernity is artificial and static and stops the ongoing history of the human being, whereas the Christian tradition is rich and lively and enables the engagement into the transformative wholeness of human reality. This understanding of modernity is arbitrary and questionable, but what is more important is what D'Costa defends against the threat of modernity.

---

[284] D'Costa, *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity*, p. 26.

[285] D'Costa, *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity*, pp. 26-27. The quotation is from Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, London: Paladin, 1983, p.155.

D'Costa's understanding of the tradition of Christianity can be grasped from his understanding of ethics. D'Costa does not deny ethics in general. What D'Costa criticises is the modern version of liberal ethics, and instead D'Costa defends Thomist virtue ethics: 'those religions where ethics is viewed as intrinsically related to the life of the community, in response to a particular revelation, and which, therefore, place a significant emphasis on the precise narrative context of ethics rather than its instrumental outcome, such as Thomistic virtue ethics, are marginalized and occluded within Hick's system.'[286] From this statement, it can be seen that what D'Costa defends is a tradition of *community*. In the tradition of community, a narrative of Christianity has been cultivated after a long period of time and it is not something which can easily be replaced. Virtue ethics has long been inherited over the generations. If the tradition of Christianity is removed according to the abstract ideal of John Hick, that removal leads to a vital destruction of community.

If one carefully reads the text of D'Costa, one can know that D'Costa does not necessarily deny pluralism. D'Costa says that Christianity can embrace pluralism: 'my trinitarian orientation may better attain the real goals of pluralists, 'openness,' 'tolerance,' and 'equality'.'[287] According to D'Costa, the tradition of Christianity is more appropriate for embracing pluralism than modern liberalism. The reason for this can be inferred from D'Costa's basic position. D'Costa claims that the tradition of Christianity is richer and allows more diversity, whereas modern liberalism is more flat and accepts only a narrow

---

[286] D'Costa, *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity*, p. 27.

[287] D'Costa, *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity*, p. 132.

standard. The tradition of Christianity is flexible and has plenty of plasticity which accepts the unknown stranger. This flexibility becomes possible because the tradition of Christianity is based on a deeper understanding of reality, which centres on the abundance of the world.

From this examination of D'Costa, it can be seen that D'Costa provids an alternative understanding of pluralism. For D'Costa, the pluralism of modern liberalists means distributing equal rights to all the religions. Every religion has equal value and each person must be free to choose any religion. D'Costa questions this very basic presupposition. If one thinks that every religion has the same value, that understanding itself will impoverish one's religious life. Religion is not a problem of choice, but an organic worldview. If there is diversity contained in religion, that diversity is a consequence of a long history of cultivation. If one changes religion in a short period of time, it must reduce the richness of religion.

II. S. MARK HEIM

This section will turn to another coherentist critique of Hick. In his book, *Salvations*, S. Mark Heim provides his reading of Hick.[288] Like D'Costa, the basic argument of Heim is also theological, and the philosophical reading of Heim might give an impression of distorting the original intention of Heim again. However, on the basis of this recognition,

---

[288] Heim, *Salvations*, pp. 13-43.

this section will further offer a philosophical reading of Heim as a possible argument which can be newly developed from Heim's original argument.

S. Mark Heim understands that the most important aspect of Hick's theory lies in its totalities: 'Hick asks if there are criteria by which to judge different religious traditions as totalities.'[289] The criteria, which enable the totality of religion, are soteriology and ethics: 'there is then an ethical test for how well each religion is realizing the common religious end they all seek.'[290]

S. Mark Heim says that Hick does not aim to destroy cognitive and experiential particularities of religion. Instead, what Hick intends to do is more likely to include these cognitive and experiential particularities within a common total reality: 'it grounds the cognitive and experiential cores of the great religious traditions in one common object and one common salvific process, whose character Hick describes.'[291] In Hick's understanding, all particularities of religion eventually lose their meaning without the totality of the whole reality and this is the reason why he provides a meta-religious perspective: 'he provides a meta-religious perspective which accounts for the religions' specific beliefs, practices, and objects as culturally variant versions of the reality and process he posits.'[292]

---

[289] Heim, *Salvations*, p. 15.

[290] Heim, *Salvations*, p. 15.

[291] Heim, *Salvations*, p. 16.

[292] Heim, *Salvations*, p. 16.

It means that, in Heim's interpretation, Hick is not a liberalist. But he is more likely a

mystic. For example, Hick has an idea of 'religious ambiguity of the universe.'[293] Hick

uses the concept of ambiguity in a good sense. This is because ambiguity has the

connotation of creative and transformative power of the universe. This ambiguity is the

same as what is theologically regarded as 'epistemic distance'[294]. The limitation on the

ability of the human being does not limit the creative power of the divine nature. On the

contrary, the limitation of the human being can truly be creative by being a part of the

whole reality. The limitation of the human being is more likely a condition to manifest the

creativity of divine reality.

What can be seen from here is that Heim finds *totality* in the project of Hick and Heim

has a *negative* view of the idea of totality. This is an important point because this

interpretation of Hick is different from the one of D'Costa. D'Costa defends totality, a

totality that is given from the tradition of the Christian worldview. That is the reason why

D'Costa criticises Hick. Hick brings fragmentation to the Christian world. If every religion

becomes equal, it destroys the basic background of the Christian worldview.

Heim is against this idea of totality. However, this does not make Heim close to Alston

and Plantinga. This is because what Heim defends is not a perceptual faith or a

propositional faith, but a cultural-linguistic description: 'both religious practice and

---

[293] Heim, *Salvations*, p. 16.

[294] Heim, *Salvations*, p. 17.

125

religious fulfillments are culturally-linguistically 'thick.' [295] The cultural-linguistic

description is not what a person can choose, but is culturally-linguistically given. A person

is always already enclosed within the *thickness*: 'people who follow different traditions

live discernibly different lives.'[296] Faith as we actually find them on the historical plane is

patterned around concrete images, beliefs, practices, and ends. Those kinds of tangible

reality constitute the essence of religious life and faith.

According to Heim, this cultural-linguistic thickness is *dynamic* and always more than

our *static* understanding of religion: 'an adequate theory of religious diversity must include

a positive account of religious change.' [297] The actual practices and instruments of

religious life are always more diverse than what is prescribed as this or that religion: 'even

where people have clear formal agreement about ultimate religious aims and authorities,

wide gulfs can open up when the actual practices and instruments of religious life diverge

significantly.'[298] Heim says that if we look at what is actually going on in the name of

religion, that concrete practice is always more than our understanding of religion.

About the opposition between pluralism and exclusivism, Heim says that both

pluralism and exclusivism are not appropriate for the factual plurality of religious life. For

example, Heim refers to the idea of Abrahamic faith.[299] Heim says that pluralists often

---

[295] Heim, *Salvations*, p. 187.

[296] Heim, *Salvations*, p. 187.

[297] Heim, *Salvations*, p. 189.

[298] Heim, *Salvations*, p. 187.

[299] Heim, *Salvations*, p. 187.

have an understanding of religious diversity that cause conflict and 'this conflict can escalate to denials that people actually are on the same way or share an ultimate end in common.'[300] According to pluralists, religious diversity is the cause of conflict. This idea of pluralism is close to the idea of the Abrahamic faith. According to Heim, this pluralist idea of religious diversity is just an abstraction from concrete religious life and the concrete religious life cannot be limited under the name of Abrahamic faith or an ultimate end: 'though these traditions share in some measure a vision of the end of the religious life, their differences over what constitutes the way towards it arguably amount to distinct alternatives for any individual or community life.'[301] In this way, Heim focuses more on concrete life than identity.

Likewise, exclusivism is also a limitation to concrete religious life. Heim says that exclusivism aims to convert everyone into one single religion, but that aim is none other than a limitation to concrete religious life: 'suppose we were all Muslims or all Christians or all Buddhists. Would that lead to an end to religious conflict and violence? The evidence points in the opposite direction.'[302] According to Heim, exclusivism hides the same philosophical presupposition as pluralism. Both exclusivism and pluralism presuppose the idea that 'they seek the same general religious end,' but the idea of the same general religious end is a projection to the actual fact of religious life.

---

[300] Heim, *Salvations*, p. 187.

[301] Heim, *Salvations*, p. 187.

[302] Heim, *Salvations*, p. 186.

On the basis of this understanding, Heim says that the original religious life has always been changing from the very beginning: 'from a broad perspective, change is at least as prominent as stasis in regard to religion.'[303] Heim says that 'at least two-thirds of the world's people belong to faiths that did not exist two thousand years ago (Christianity, Islam, and 'nonreligious'). At least a third follows paths that did not exist fourteen hundred years ago and at least a sixth paths that hardly existed two hundred years ago.'[304] In Heim's understanding, religion has always been changing throughout history and the projection of a category on the actual currents of history is nothing more than an artificial construction from a bird's-eye view. There has always been 'the constant currents of exchange among the traditions and which may leave no net change, as well as the even greater numbers who migrate from one path to another within a tradition.'[305]

From the reading so far, it has been known that the reality of concrete religious life has primary importance for Heim: 'an appreciation of the diversity of effective religious ends provides the best ground on which to achieve the difficult and delicate task of affirming the validity of differences while still maintaining that the alternatives are importantly different.'[306] What is important to understand about Heim's argument is that when Heim talks about 'diversity', the idea of diversity is not graspable as such.

---

[303] Heim, *Salvations*, p. 189.

[304] Heim, *Salvations*, p. 189.

[305] Heim, *Salvations*, p. 189.

[306] Heim, *Salvations*, p. 222.

III. A PHILOSOPHICAL PRESUPPOSITION OF COHERENTISM

From the summary of the arguments of D'Costa and Heim so far, it can be seen that their philosophical positions share a lot of similarities. This section will use the concepts of 'coherentism' and 'cultural-linguistic standpoint' as methodological tools and examine their philosophical presupposition in detail.[307]

Before the examination, what is important to realize is the fact that their philosophical positions are not the same. They share a lot of similarities, but they also have subtle differences. The subtle difference eventually leads to their fundamentally different views of current society. This point becomes clear when D'Costa and Heim are contrasted from Alston and Plantinga. Alston and Plantinga start their arguments from a rather pessimistic

---

[307] The concept of 'coherentism' and the one of 'cultural-linguistic standpoint' have a slightly different connotation. Both of them have a similar motivation to overcome the so-called 'foundational' position of philosophy and so the 'cultural-linguistic standpoint' has enough reason to regard it as an application of coherentism to the religious field. In spite of this fundamental similarity, their nuance is slightly different. To put it straightforwardly, 'coherentism' has a more theoretical nuance and has an implication of abstraction from reality; the 'cultural-linguistic standpoint' has a more concrete nuance and has an implication of description from within reality. Therefore, when Ernest Sosa understands coherentism as a 'raft that floats free of any anchor or tie,' the explanation has a negative connotation to be overcome because of its abstraction from reality. On the contrary, George Lindbeck understands the cultural-linguistic standpoint as 'a medium that shapes the entirety of life and thought' and Lindbeck defends the cultural-linguistic standpoint as a concrete reality itself. See Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p.169, and Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, p.33.

idea of religiously diverse society. If one can remove the religious plurality from the current society, it's the best thing to do. However, it's impossible. The religious plurality is an obvious fact of current society and what can be done more realistically is only to defend a small secure place within the broadly chaotic situation of current society.

For example, Alston says that 'the only rational course for me is to sit tight with the practice of which I am a master and which serves me so well in guiding my activity in the world'[308]. Alston limits the field of religion within the personal realm, and tries to secure a safe place within which one can be a master. Likewise, Plantinga says that 'a fresh or heightened awareness of the facts of religious pluralism could bring about a reappraisal of one's religious life.'[309] According to Plantinga, the current situation of religious plurality looks miserable, but one can turn the miserable situation into personal strength. Plantinga's argument shows a more serious and nuanced acceptance of religious plurality, but both of their arguments and their idea of personal choice presuppose the pessimistic view of religiously diverse society.

The pessimistic view on the inevitable fact of society is a crucially important starting point for Alston and Plantinga. Therefore, there is a necessary tension between current society and what they want to realize. Their philosophical contribution lies in their awareness of the tension. On the contrary, D'Costa and Heim share a philosophical principle and they both have an optimistic attitude about the realization of their

---

[308] Alston, *Perceiving God*, p. 274.

[309] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p.190.

philosophical principle.

On the basis of this examination, this section will first examine the philosophical principle of D'Costa and Heim and clarify their basic similarity. The starting point for argument can be the 'cultural-linguistic standpoint'[310].

Both D'Costa's and Heim's view of religion have a cultural-linguistic standpoint. Both of them make their argument from the context of *culture*. When they argue in terms of society and especially dynamic society, it presupposes a cultural-linguistic standpoint. When D'Costa explains his view of religion, there is the cultural-linguistic group of Catholic Christianity on the one hand and the cultural-linguistic group of modern liberalism on the other. When Heim explains his view of religion, it was based on the idea of cultural-linguistic thickness. Neither of them take the idea of personal choice as the starting point for their arguments.

What is important to realize is that both of their arguments centre on something indeterminate. To be precise, it does not mean that they are against the rationality of knowledge or reason. It is more likely that they are against the limitation of rationality. For example, the sense of 'more' plays an important part in what D'Costa thinks as reality. When D'Costa defends the tradition of Christianity, what he defends is 'richness,'

---

[310] When George Lindbeck explains the 'cultural-linguistic standpoint', the importance lies in the priority of communal language over personal experience. Religion is not a personal choice, but what is given from a community: 'like a culture or language, it [religion] is a communal phenomenon that shapes the subjectivities of individuals rather than being primarily a manifestation of those subjectivities.' See Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, p.33.

'transformation,' 'the life of the community,' 'narrative,' 'virtue,'[311] and these concepts imply what is more than a personal knowledge. Occasionally, D'Costa looks like imposing a broad framework of Catholic Christianity, but the aim of D'Costa is more like a defence of local plasticity.

Likewise, when Heim defends 'the diversity of effective religious ends,'[312] his idea of diversity is meant to be fundamentally diverse and always more than what can be categorized. If Heim's idea of diversity is understood to be a lot of religious groups from which one can freely choose one position, there is a crucial misunderstanding. In Heim's intention, religious traditions cannot be categorized as such. Religious traditions are in 'constant currents of exchange'[313] and 'the actual practices and instruments of religious life'[314] are supposed to be indeterminate.

What can be seen from these examinations of D'Costa and Heim is that both of their positions are based upon some understanding of fundamental reality. On this basic similarity, their difference must be examined. D'Costa has a positive view of totality, and Heim defends a more fragmentary position.[315] For example, when D'Costa defends

---

[311] D'Costa, *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity,* pp. 26-27.

[312] Heim, *Salvations*, p. 222.

[313] Heim, *Salvations*, p. 189.

[314] Heim, *Salvations*, p. 187.

[315] This difference can be understood as their different views of coherence. For example, when Rorty discusses coherentism, there are slightly different types of coherentism. On the one hand, there are more *holistic* kind of coherentism like Sellars and Quine. They emphasize the wholeness of conceptual scheme that gives framework to propositions. On the other hand, there are more *behaviorist* kind of coherentism like Dewey and Wittgenstein. They emphasize the partiality of

'richness,' 'transformation,' 'the life of the community,' 'narrative,' and 'virtue,' these ideas are supposed to make sense within the order of the Christian worldview. The reason for this is that each partial practice of religious life gets a special meaning only when they are placed within a framework of the bigger worldview. For D'Costa, there is a unique kind of reality that can be acquired only within the bigger worldview. This becomes apparent when one looks at his defence of 'narrative'. When personal religious practices are placed within a whole narrative, each religious practice gets a special meaning that is more than each religious practice. The whole narrative gives a special status to each religious practice. That kind of narrative is not something that can be immediately realized by a personal intention. It can only be realized from an elaboration for generations and generations.

When Heim defends 'diversity,' 'constant current of exchange,' 'actual practice,' and 'dynamic change,' there is also a unique kind of reality. This kind of reality is lost if it's placed within a whole framework of narrative. It is because Heim's understanding of reality is centred on what escapes from categorization. Heim finds more reality in excess, margin, and process, and this kind of reality cannot fit in a closed tradition.

It has been revealed in this section that both D'Costa and Heim defend a kind of reality, and that can be distinguished from the defence of personal choice by Alston and Plantinga.

---

contingent relations between propositions. See Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Princeton University Press, 1979, pp. 170-74; See also Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, pp. 91-92.

3.

Reliabilist Ethics of Normality

I. A COMPARATIVE EXAMINATION OF CRITICISMS OF HICK

Before beginning the examination of the criticisms of John Hick, it should be noted that the aim of this chapter is not a direct analysis or evaluation of the theory of Hick. The aim of this chapter is rather to compare and contrast different readings of Hick, clarify the points of controversy around the readings of Hick, and sort out some guidelines towards an appropriate reading of Hick. On the basis of this basic policy, it must be pointed out that there are two philosophically different understandings of Hick. First, Alston and Plantinga shares a coherentist understanding of Hick's position, the essential point of which is an acceptance of the requirement to recognize cultural-linguistic diversity of religions in contemporary society. As compared to Alston, Plantinga has a more nuanced assessment of religious plurality in contemporary society. But both of them have a similarly coherentist understanding of Hick.

In contrast, when D'Costa and Heim criticize Hick, they understand Hick as a foundationalist who starts from a fixed view of pluralism. Even though D'Costa understands the foundation as modern liberalism and Heim understands it as totality, both

of them have an image of superstructure which is imposed upon other diverse aspects.

Alston and Plantinga share a coherentist understanding of Hick. When Alston criticizes Hick, the criticism presupposes an understanding that Hick's position cannot theorize a directness of religious faith: 'this [Hick's] account of the *interpretation* of the world and the events of one's life as manifesting a divine presence and purpose sounds like what I termed 'indirect perceptual recognition'[316] For Alston, Hick's position is closer to linguistic recognition and it fails to theorize a directness of religious faith which is shown in personal reality.

The same structure can be found in Plantinga's understanding of Hick. When Plantinga quotes Hick, it is related to the cultural-linguistic group: 'for it is evident that in some ninety-nine percent of cases the religion which an individual professes and to which he or she adheres depends upon the accidents of birth. Someone born to Buddhist parents in Thailand is very likely to be a Buddhist, someone born to Muslim parents in Saudi Arabia to be Muslim, someone born to Christian parents in Mexico to be a Christian, and so on.'[317] For Plantinga, Hick's recognition of society comes from the requirement of coherence in contemporary society, and the whole project of Plantinga can be seen as a defence of personal choice from the threat of contemporary society. Even though the attitudes to the plurality of religions are different, both of them have a similarly coherentist

---

[316] Alston, *Perceiving God*, p. 27. The italics is in the original.

[317] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 2, quoted in Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p. 187.

understanding of Hick.

In contrast, D'Costa and Heim shares a foundationalist understanding of Hick. When D'Costa criticizes Hick as liberalist, the liberalism is understood as an imposition of content-less ethics which represses diversity of religions: 'Hick's 'pluralism' masks the advocation of liberal modernity's 'god,' in this case a form of ethical agnosticism.'[318] For D'Costa, Hick's position is understood to be based on liberal ethics, which can be found in every religion and therefore it neglects the concrete grammar of religious community including Catholic Trinitarianism. Modern ethics does not have content, and this is the reason why it can be found in every religion. In this sense, D'Costa's understanding of Hick is closer to what George Lindbeck calls the 'experiential-expressive' standpoint[319].

A similarly foundational character can also be found in Heim's understanding of Hick: 'Hick asks if there are criteria by which to judge different religious traditions as totalities.'[320] However, Heim's understanding of Hick is slightly different from D'Costa's. D'Costa understands Hick as a modern liberalist, but Heim understands Hick as more of a mystic: 'Hick argues for what he calls the 'religious ambiguity of the universe'.'[321] The

---

[318] D'Costa, *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity*, p. 26.

[319] According to George Lindbeck, the experiential-expressive standpoint is characterized as a position which interprets doctrines as noninformative and nondiscursive symbols of inner feelings, attitudes, or existential orientation: 'for experiential-expressive symbolist … religiously significant meanings can vary while doctrines remain the same, and conversely, doctrines can alter without change of meaning'. See Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, p.17.

[320] Heim, *Salvations*, p. 15.

[321] Heim, *Salvations*, p. 15.

religious ambiguity of the universe is meant to include everything as a creative power of

the whole reality: 'he [Hick] is actually an inclusivist through and through …he [Hick]

exempts himself from the charge of being an inclusivist because he relativizes the ultimates

of particular faiths not in favor of one among them, but in terms of something above and

beyond them all.'[322]

The uniqueness of this understanding of Hick becomes apparent if it's contrasted with

George Lindbeck's 'experiential-expressive' standpoint. The idea of the experiential-

expressive standpoint presupposes the distinction of subjective feeling and objective

doctrine and it exclusively chooses the side of subjective feeling as the primarily important

component of religion. This standpoint is theorized fundamentally as a personal standpoint.

On the contrary, in Heim's understanding, the position of John Hick is a cosmic one. It

doesn't choose the subjective side on the basis of the division between the subjective side

and the objective side. The aim of Hick's project is to include every level of religion within

a whole cosmic reality. Both of their positions depend on the idea of unknowable reality,

but their fundamental actor is different. In the case of the experiential-expressive

standpoint, the actor is a person. In the case of Hick, the actor is the cosmos.

An advantage of Heim's understanding is that it can explain Hick's emphasis on 'the

cognitive meaningfulness of religious beliefs.'[323] Heim refers to Hick's argument on

---

[322] Heim, *Salvations*, p. 30. The concept of the religious ambiguity of the universe and Hick's
cosmic optimism will be examined in the 4th chapter of this dissertation.

[323] Heim, *Salvations*, p. 17.

eschatological verification: 'in response to objections that faith predicted no specific state of affairs in distinction from another and so was empty, Hick maintained there were future conditions in which certain religious expectations would be confirmed or refuted.'[324] According to Heim, if one misses Hick's emphasis on the cognitive content of religion, one cannot understand the argument of eschatological verification. Heim's understanding also explains Hick's criticism of non-realist interpretations of religion.[325]

Heim's understanding of Hick is helpful and it illuminates an important aspect of Hick's project. For example, Hick's emphasis on ethics can be understood in this direction. Hick states that

Self-sacrificing concern for the good of others is the basic ethical principle of all the religions.[326]

This kind of ethical concern is ranked high with special importance within the entirety of Hick's project. This kind of ethical concern is not necessarily understood as a universal imperative which imposes a fixed principle on every person, but it can be understood as a vision in which all the different parts of the cosmos are connected with each other. The welcoming of the other is necessary because the hidden possibility of the other can help to

---

[324] Heim, *Salvations*, p. 17.

[325] Heim, *Salvations*, p. 17. Hick's argument about eschatological verification will be examined in the 6th chapter of this dissertation, and Hick's criticism of non-realist interpretations of religion will be examined in the 3rd chapter of this dissertation.

[326] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 325.

revitalize the stabilized order. From Hick's viewpoint, if a religious group is separated from another religious group, the religious group loses its creative nature. The self-sacrificing concern for the good of others is required to radically change a religious group towards the fundamental goodness of the cosmos.

However, Heim and D'Costa similarly interpret the ethics of Hick as an extension of a mythological understanding of religion and this interpretation eventually leads them to interpret Hick as a foundationalist. Heim says that 'any language within a religious tradition which intends to be about the Real itself – as opposed to the effects or marks of the Real in human life – can only be mythological.'[327] In the intention of Heim, this mythological orientation of Hick has a hidden coercive impact on the diverse practices and instruments of religious life. Likewise, D'Costa says that 'if ethical agnostics were to suggest that the conflict between religions would be best dealt with by everyone becoming an ethical agnostic, not only would this fail to deal with plurality, in so much as it fails to take plurality seriously, it would also fail to take religious cultures seriously by dissolving them into instrumental mythical configurations best understood within modernity's mastercode.'[328] Here, the intention of D'Costa is not to defend a plurality of religions, but to defend a tradition of Christianity. But Hick's mythological orientation is understood to threaten the requirement of religious plurality and to eventually destroy the tradition of Christianity.

---

[327] Heim, *Salvations*, p. 20.

[328] D'Costa, *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity*, p. 26.

This kind of mythological and foundational reading of Hick has the effect of invalidating the original intention of Hick's ethics. It misses the fundamental importance of the creative and transformational aspect of mythology and ethics in the whole system of Hick's philosophy. For Hick, the mythological understanding of religion is understood as a creative and transformational aspect which makes a creative reconciliation between cognitive/literal understanding of religion and non-cognitive/analogical understanding of religion. Both the analogical understanding and the literal understanding have a limited content which have their own irreplaceable importance and both of them can exercise their creativity when they are appropriately placed within the creative process of the whole cosmos.[329] Mythology is the principle of the whole creative process and ethics also should be seen as the more concrete principle of the whole creative process.[330] According to Hick, mythology and ethics must be prioritized because they are the only way of thinking in which all the different religious beliefs are connected with each other.

What could be revealed from these examinations is that both weak foundationalists such as Alston and Plantinga and coherentists such as D'Costa and Heim catch a limited aspect of Hick's philosophy, but their criticism of Hick also looks to be directed at their

---

[329] 'According to the pluralistic hypothesis we can make true and false literal and analogical statements about our own image of the Ultimate, truth or falsity here being determined internally by the norms of our tradition. But statements about the Real in itself have mythological, not literal, value.' Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, Second Edition, p. xxxiii.

[330] About a more detailed explanation of mythology and ethics in the whole system of Hick's philosophy, see the 6th chapter of this dissertation.

constructed image of Hick rather than what Hick really intends. What is truly required must be to correctly understand a central intention of Hick's whole argument. Interpretations given by weak foundationalists and coherentists can be used as a useful stepping stone to find a more nuanced philosophical position which is more appropriate for the reading of Hick. Only after this kind of procedure, will the evaluation of Hick, either positive or negative, become possible.

II. AN ETHICS OF RELIABILISM

Before summing up a preliminary guideline for an appropriate reading of John Hick, this section will examine an ethical aspect of reliabilism. Reliabilism is a useful idea for the interpretation of Hick because the idea was originally invented to recover foundationalism after the threat of coherentism. The whole project of Alston, Plantinga, D'Costa and Heim can be understood within this context. The projects of Alston and Plantinga can be understood as a more foundational direction within this context. Those of D'Costa and Heim can be understood as a more coherentist direction. All of their positions are different from classical positions of foundationalism and coherentism, but the context of foundationalism and coherentism is useful to interpret their positions. To add one more methodological option of reliabilism, especially the ethical aspect of reliabilism, promises to be useful in interpreting John Hick.

Reliabilism is primarily an epistemological theory, but it also has some ethical implications. For example, the idea of normality, equilibrium, and virtue can be understood as ethical implications of reliabilism. Therefore, this section will first examine reliabilism as an attempt to recover foundationalism after coherentism. Then, the idea of normality, equilibrium, and virtue will be examined. Lastly, coherence included in the idea of the requirement of social plurality and foundationalism included in the idea of cosmic optimism will be analyzed from a reliabilist point of view.

First, the characteristic of reliabilism as an attempt to recover foundationalism after coherentism will be examined. Reliabilism can be understood as the combination of two radically different kinds of inquiry: (1) an inquiry based on the difference of plural foundations, and (2) an inquiry based on the historical process to form a coherent perspective among different foundations.[331] What is the intention of reliabilism to overcome coherentism?

According to Ernest Sosa, coherentism means 'any view according to which the ultimate sources of justification for any belief lie in relations among that belief and other beliefs of the subject.'[332] The problem of coherentism is that it 'is open to an objection from alternative coherent systems or detachment from reality.'[333] On the one hand, if a coherentist system is supposed to be fragmentary and is determined just by a belief's

---

[331] See the 1st chapter of this dissertation.

[332] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 184.

[333] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 184.

relation with other beliefs, it becomes difficult to have a fixed view of truth. In this case a coherentist system is always floating like a raft and every possible system of beliefs becomes an arbitrary fragment that can always be mixed with other systems of beliefs. On the other hand, if a coherent system is supposed to be holistic and requires no contact with the world outside that system of beliefs, it becomes difficult to justify a system of beliefs against other systems of beliefs. In this case, all systems of beliefs are not based on the world and every system of belief cannot avoid an arbitrary characteristic.[334]

Essentially speaking, this understanding of coherentism is close to what Alston, Plantinga, D'Costa and Heim characterize as the threat of religious pluralism. Its fundamental problem is the loss of a fundamental foundation and the lack of substantial absoluteness. Alston and Plantinga have a more foundationalist orientation and find an answer in the idea of 'personal choice'. D'Costa and Heim have a more coherentist orientation and find an answer in the idea of 'indeterminate reality'.

Then, what is the fundamental foundation for reliabilism? A clue to this problem is the ideas of normality, equilibrium, and virtue. When Ernest Sosa defines reliabilism, he includes an idea of normality: 'reliabilism requires for the epistemic justification of belief that it be formed by a process reliable in an environment normal for the formation of such belief.'[335] Here the word 'normal' is used like a synonym of 'reliable'. This idea of normality must be examined in detail.

---

[334] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 184.

[335] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 89.

What has to be stated is that this idea of normality is what *looks like* normality in a particular situation for a particular person. This normality does not mean to include what everyone else is thinking as normality. It means to create one's unique kind of probabilistic normality within each given situation. According to Sosa, reliabilism is thought of as 'one's way of arriving directly and noninferentially at beliefs respectively about: certain of one's own states at the time; certain features of one's surroundings; and certain aspects of one's past.'[336] Here Sosa says that reliabilism is '*one's way of* arriving … at beliefs *respectively* about.' That is to say, that way of arriving at beliefs cannot be applied for everyone. It is valid only in that particular time, in that particular situation and for that particular person. Likewise, it is arrived at '*directly and noninferentially*'. That is to say, the beliefs are immediately arrived at in a natural and obvious way for that person. That process is not a consequence after a process of reasoning. However, it does not mean that the process is simple. On the contrary, the naturalness has been acquired on a very subtle balance that has been accumulated through history in an unconscious way.

In another passage, Sosa says that 'beliefs are states of a subject, which need not be occurrent or conscious, but may be retained even by someone asleep or unconscious, and may also be acquired unconsciously and undeliberately, as are acquired our initial beliefs, presumably, whether innate or not.'[337] Sosa says that this is what he supposes as 'a normal

---

[336] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 212.

[337] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 135.

human with an ordinary set of beliefs normally acquired through sensory experience.'[338]

This passage implies that Sosa's idea of normality is something that has been acquired in

conscious or unconscious process.

A distinctive characteristic of Sosa's idea of normality is that his idea of normality must

be created by the person as one's unique normality, and therefore one cannot acquire

normality before one's actual engagement with the world. Sosa's idea of normality must

be created at each time at each occasion. That is to say, that normality can only be acquired

after one's embodied engagement with the world's complexity. Here one can see what

Sosa implies when he says to give up 'the narrow scope of perfect knowledge, and turning

to imperfect but reliable knowledge.'[339] This is an aspect of the fundamental foundation

of reliabilism.

Sosa's idea of equilibrium and virtue must be seen on the basis of this idea of normality.

Sosa's idea of equilibrium can be seen as a holistic and comprehensive process to acquire

the normality. For example, Sosa says that 'the method of reflective equilibrium aims to

maximize two factors in one's beliefs: harmonious coherence, and plausibility of

content.'[340] The two factors can be understood as the first order of plausible content

(difference of plural foundations) and the second order of harmonious coherence (a

coherent perspective among different foundations). What is important to realize is that the

---

[338] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 135.

[339] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 212.

[340] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 257.

first order of plausible content must be understood as one's unique engagement with the world's complexity. If the plausible content is understood as what can be fixed and stabilized, one misses the intention of Sosa. If the plausible content becomes fixed and stabilized, the second order of harmonious coherence is also fixed, stabilized, and reduced just to follow what everyone else is thinking under the name of normality. On the contrary, the reflective equilibrium must be an endeavour to cope with the lively reality of the changing world. That is the reason why Sosa says that the reflective equilibrium must be 'wide' rather than 'narrow'.[341]

Sosa says that the idea of reflective equilibrium is threatened to become conservative orthodoxy: 'the use of reflective equilibrium has been attacked as serving only to organize and protect conservative orthodoxy.'[342] An idea of reflective equilibrium has a social aspect and if the way to integrate the different fields of sensations is stabilized and shared among people, there is a threat of conservative orthodoxy. It does not mean that the stabilization is useless. On the contrary, the stabilization of normality is necessary as a conventional standard for a social life. That kind of 'common sense'[343] is the very basis for the possibility of conducting a healthy judgment against the complexity of reality. However, if the normality becomes stabilized, it loses the flexibility to cope with the

---

[341] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, pp. 257-66.

[342] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 261.

[343] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 264.

multifaceted reality of the world. What is required is 'the method of wide equilibrium'[344] and it must be created from one's engagement with reality.

Likewise, the idea of virtue must also be seen on the basis of Sosa's idea of normality. On the one hand, Sosa's idea of virtue is valid only for a unique situation: 'a virtue is virtuous only relative to appropriate surroundings, which are not the product of any reflection.'[345] On the other hand, it is a comprehensive ability of a person to find something common in the complexity of the world: 'broader intellectual virtue makes it possible to accept wide reflective equilibrium.'[346]

What is important to realize is that the reliabilist idea of virtue is deeply related to one's surroundings and it leads to its social aspect towards humanity in general and more: 'we conceive of pursuit of knowledge as an endeavor whose most basic seat is the individual; his tribe; his historical epoch; humanity at large: past, present, and future; or rational beings generally (being capable of knowledge).'[347] The reliabilist idea of virtue implies associating individual sensations with each other and it leads to an integration of them as a basic seat of an individual such as one's environment, one's community, or even one's unconsciousness.

According to Sosa, the reliabilist idea of virtue is deeply related to the social

[344] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 264.

[345] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 266.

[346] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 266.

[347] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 212.

construction of a norm: 'a concept of epistemic justification that measures the pertinent virtues or faculties of the subject relative to the normal for the community will be useful to the community.'[348] This passage implies that the reliabilist idea of virtue has a dialectic relation between person and society. A reliabilist justification functions to unite different abilities of a person and that process of justification is heavily influenced by what has implicitly been inherited through society and maybe humanity in general from generation to generation. What is required is, on the one hand, that the process of justification is made by one's embodied engagement with living reality. On the other hand, the process of justification helps to construct hidden norms of society as 'the implied social component of knowledge'[349]. Both of the two aspects of the process, the creating process and the stabilizing process, are necessary components of reliabilism.

What has been revealed from these examinations is that the method of reliabilism has its own idea of normality as the proper field of study. The characteristic of the idea of normality can be summarised as follows. (1) The idea of normality is valid only for a unique situation and it determines one's immediate reaction with the world. (2) The idea of normality is a comprehensive ability of a person and is based on the balance of the whole aspects of reality. (3) The idea of normality has a social aspect and it has both creating and stabilizing functions.

Is it possible to apply this idea of normality to the interpretation of John Hick? Before

[348] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 276.

[349] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 276.

directly answering this question, this section will examine the possibility of relating the ideas of requirement of social plurality and cosmic optimism to the reliabilist idea of normality. It looks possible to find both coherent and foundational elements in the reliabilist idea of normality.

According to Plantinga, a characteristic of contemporary society is a coherentist requirement that gives equal weight to every religion. Plantinga says that 'in recent years probably more of us western Christians have become aware of the world's religious diversity.'[350] This recognition makes a pluralist position like John Hick, and the process of giving equality inevitably has an effect of abstraction and it contains the threat of depriving a personal choice of a solid foundation. This is the reason why he thinks coherence in contemporary society does not give any solid content.

This process of giving equality is close to the reliabilist process of forming normality. Reliabilism involves a kind of abstractive process of making a norm which is based on qualitatively different kinds of diverse sources of knowledge. In contrast with Plantinga's focus on the specificity of personal choice, the reliabilist idea of making normality is crucially important for one's engagement with the world. From the reliabilist point of view, one cannot form an appropriate understanding of the world without the creation of a unique norm as a balance among difference. Sosa says that 'reliabilism requires for the epistemic justification of belief that it be formed by a process reliable in an environment normal for

---

[350] Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p.174.

149

the formation of such belief,'[351] and this idea of normality must be based on the use of 'wide reflective equilibrium.'[352] According to Sosa, the reliabilist idea of normality is not something that deprives the strength of concrete reality. On the contrary, one cannot engage with the multi-dimensional reality without forming a perspective. This point needs further examination, but, at least, it is possible to say that reliabilism has some elements of what Plantinga thinks as a coherentist requirement of contemporary society.

Likewise, when Heim criticises Hick's cosmic optimism as foundationalism, the criticism was directed towards its totality: 'Hick asks if there are criteria by which to judge different religious traditions as totalities.'[353] According to Sosa, the method of reliabilism necessarily does have a danger of stabilizing the implicit norm. The reliabilist idea of norm is difficult to control, because it involves an implicit part of one's ability. Sosa even says that reliabilism is related with not only 'humanity at large' but also 'rational beings generally.'[354] A possible reaction to the danger is to challenge the generally accepted notion of common sense by questioning the false stabilization of multi-dimensional reality. This is what Sosa means when he introduced the idea of 'wide reflective equilibrium'[355]. This point also needs further examination, but, at least, it is possible to say that reliabilism has some element of what Heim characterizes as Hick's cosmic optimism.

---

[351] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 89.

[352] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 266.

[353] Heim, *Salvations*, p. 15.

[354] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 212.

[355] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 266.

From these examinations it can be said that the reliabilist idea of normality can be a possible choice of methodological tool for an interpretation of John Hick. This section couldn't fully apply the reliabilist idea of normality to the reading of John Hick, but this will be the task of following chapters.[356]

III. A RELIABILIST READING OF HICK

The aim of this section is not to show a reliabilist reading of John Hick, but it is to propose a guideline as a preparation before the textual reading of Hick. Some important points of possible controversy have been revealed in this chapter and these points should be reflected in the following chapters.

On the one hand, weak foundationalists such as Alston and Plantinga prioritize the personal choice of an individual, and coherentists such as D'Costa and Heim prioritize the indeterminate reality. Instead of those positions, the position of Hick can be understood as reliabilist and its central intention lies in the creation of normality on a social and cosmic scale rather than just a personal scale.[357] Various aspects of Hick's position become easy

---

[356] A reliabilist aspect of Hick's cosmic optimism will be examined in the 4th chapter of this dissertation, and a reliabilist aspect of Hick's common sense philosophy will be examined in the 6th chapter.

[357] A good example of Hick's defence of normality and common sense can be found in his reading of Hume. See 6th chapter of this dissertation.

to understand by understanding him as a reliabilist. For example, Hick denies a simple idea of independent individuality and treats a person as always embedded in a cultural-linguistic framework (this is broadly close to Alston and Plantinga's understanding of Hick and the reason why Alston and Plantinga criticizes Hick). In spite of this denial, Hick defends an independent reality which cannot be restricted within a cultural-linguistic framework (this is broadly close to D'Costa and Heim's understanding of Hick and the reason why they criticize Hick). These two aspects of Hick's position was accused of being contradictory, but reliabilism and a reliabilist concept of normality is useful to understand the central intention of Hick's position, which can be distinguished from weak foundationalist's and coherentist's positions.

Chapter 3.

PHILLIPS AND SELLARS

Contradiction between Language and Reality

From the second edition of *Faith and Knowledge*, John Hick defends Wittgensteinian philosophy as an important part of his system of philosophy. [358] The defence of Wittgensteinian philosophy continues in *An Interpretation of Religion*, and the defence can be seen in his argument about 'religion as a family-resemblance concept' [359] and

---

[358] 'The philosophical reader can see in *Faith and Knowledge* the influence … (in the 2nd edition) of Wittgenstein's discussion of 'seeing-as' received through John Wisdom.' See Hick, *An Autobiography*, p. 115. 'The discovery of God as lying behind the world, and of his presence as mediated in and through it, arises from interpreting in a new way what was already before us. It is epistemologically comparable … to what Wittgenstein called 'seeing-as'.' See Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, Second Edition, pp. 141-48. See also Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1953, part II, section xi.

[359] 'Much time and energy has been devoted over the years to the debate between rival definitions of 'religion'. But Wittgenstein's discussion of family-remembrance (or, as they have also been called, cluster) concepts has opened up the possibility that 'religion' is of this rather different kind. He took the example of games … Instead of a set of defining characteristics there is a network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing like the resemblances and differences in build, features, eye colour, gait, temperament and so on among the members of a natural family.' See Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 4. See also Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, section 66.

'experiencing-as'[360]. However, Hick's defence of Wittgensteinian philosophy requires a careful analysis. When Hick defends Wittgensteinian philosophy, Hick always adds another complementary viewpoint. In this sense, Hick's system of philosophy always has a dual character.

On the one hand, Hick defends epistemology and Wittgensteinian philosophy of language which indicate *diversity* of religions. On the other hand, Hick adds an ontological and cosmic viewpoint which indicate the *totality* of religions. What should be realized here is that the latter viewpoint (ontological or cosmic) is not independent and always presupposes the former viewpoint (epistemological or linguistic). For example, in *Faith and Knowledge*, Wittgensteinian philosophy is discussed within a larger framework of 'two types of faith'. According to Hick, these are faith as cognition (epistemological faith) and faith as trust (ontological faith). Wittgensteinian philosophy is related to epistemological faith, and ontological faith is discussed with epistemological faith as a complementary viewpoint with each other.[361]

The dualistic character can also be found in *An Interpretation of Religion*. On the one hand, Hick defends Wittgensteinian philosophy by making such arguments as 'religion as

---

[360] 'In relation to our physical environment the mind/brain is actively interpreting, though at this level its operation is largely controlled by the environment itself. The outcome in consciousness can be called 'experiencing-as' – developed from Wittgenstein's concept of 'seeing-as'. See Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 140. See also Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, part II, section xi.

[361] 'Our primary concern … is with faith as cognition, and we shall treat of faith as trust only so far as may be required by our main purpose.' See Hick, *Faith and Knolwedge*, Second Edition, p. 4.

a family-resemblance concept' and 'experiencing-as'. On the other hand, Hick criticizes

Wittgensteinian philosophers (D. Z. Phillips[362] and Peter Winch[363]) by categorizing them

as non-realist[364] and instead defends the critical realism of Roy Wood Sellars[365]. What

should be noted here is that Hick does not simply set *Wittgensteinian philosophy* and

critical realism in opposition. But, what Hick is actually doing is to use Wittgensteinian

philosophy to recover the basic insight of critical realism from within a very different

context of contemporary philosophy.

On the basis of these considerations, this chapter will first discuss Wittgensteinian

philosophy and the dualistic character of Hick's philosophy in *Faith and Knowledge*. Then

Hick's argument about D. Z. Phillips and Roy Wood Sellars in *An Interpretation of

Religion* will be discussed. Lastly, Hick's defence of critical realism will be examined.

---

[362] 'Phillips has provided a clear and eloquent version of a non-realist interpretation of religious discourse.' See Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 198. About neo-Wittgensteinian philosophy of religion, see also Brian R. Clack, *An Introduction to Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Religion*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999, pp. 78-105.

[363] 'Another contemporary neo-Wittgensteinian philosopher who has expressed similar views, and to whom Phillips often refers, is Peter Winch.' See Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 209.

[364] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, pp. 198-201.

[365] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, pp. 172-75.

1.

Faith and Knowledge

John Hick begins to incorporate Wittgenstein's philosophy into his own system of philosophy from the second edition of *Faith and Knowledge*.[366] An important feature of Hick's system of philosophy is that Hick always embraces views that could be perceived

---

[366] 'The philosophical reader can see in *Faith and Knowledge* the influence … (in the second edition) of Wittgenstein's discussion of 'seeing-as', received through John Wisdom.' See Hick, *An Autobiography*, p. 115.

In *Faith and Knowledge*, Hick states the position of Wisdom that 'language is used not only to convey information and to express emotions but also to alter our apprehensions, to set an object or a situation in a new light which reveals it as, in a sense, a different object or situation; and that the statement that there is a God functions in this way.' In *An Autobiography*, Hick again states the position of Wisdom that 'doing metaphysics is like finding a pattern in a puzzle picture' and says that it was for him 'a clue to the nature of religious experience and religious faith'. See Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, Second Edition, p. 144. Hick, *An Autobiography*, p. 81.

In *Paradox and Discovery*, Wisdom says that metaphysical questions such as 'Does matter exists?', 'Is knowledge of the mind of another possible?', 'Does God exists?', and 'Have men free will?' have no answers, and yet they do evince some inadequacy in our apprehension of things, and that when this inadequacy is removed by thought, which while it is helped by precedent is not bound by it, we gain a new view of what is actual. As David Pole and Ilham Dilman point out, the position of Wisdom is Wittgensteinian but at the same time original. Wisdom's argument has a more heuristic orientation than Wittgenstein. See John Wisdom, *Paradox and Discovery*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965, p. ix. David Pole, *The Later Philosophy of Wittgenstein: A Short Introduction with an Epilogue on John Wisdom*, London: Athlone Press, 1958, p. 103. Ilham Dilman, 'Cambridge Philosophers VII: Wisdom,' in *Philosophy*, Vol. 71, No. 278, 1996, pp. 577-90.

as significantly opposed or even contradictory. For example, this feature can be seen in

Hick's argument about Wittgenstein's 'seeing-as':

> The discovery of God as lying behind the world, and of his presence as mediated in and
> through it, arises from interpreting in a new way what was already before us. It is
> epistemologically comparable … to what Wittgenstein called 'seeing as'.[367]

A contradictory tension can already be found in this quotation as a tension between the

world and God. In this quotation, Hick first says that God is discovered as lying behind the

world. Here what Hick means by it looks as if he distinguishes the realm of the world and

another realm of God. However, Hick then says that the divine presence is mediated in and

through the world. This looks contradictory, because it means that the world and God are

not distinguished and it is a denial of divine independence. Lastly, this contradiction is

solved by indicating that the discovery of God arises from interpreting in a new way what

was already before us. Here it can be seen that what Hick means by the tension between

the world and God is a discovery of a new view of what is actual.

Hick relates this understanding of God with Wittgenstein's concept of 'seeing-as'[368].

---

[367] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, Second Edition, pp.141-142.

[368] Wittgenstein drew philosophical attention to the concept of 'seeing-as', or aspect seeing, and used it in the exploration of philosophical issues and puzzles in *Philosophical Investigations*, notably issues about perception. Wittgenstein was particularly concerned with puzzle pictures: one may see an ambiguous figure as, for example, the picture of a duck facing left or of a rabbit facing right. Wittgenstein distinguished among different types of aspect seeing or 'seeing-as', and he did not think that each type had the same requirements. For some types a familiarity with the applicable

However, Hick does not simply accept the concept of 'seeing-as'. Hick develops the concept of 'seeing-as' into his original concept of 'faith as experiencing-as': 'faith is an uncompelled mode of 'experiencing-as' – experiencing the world as a place in which we have at all times to do with the transcendent God.'[369] The difference between 'seeing-as' and 'experiencing-as' is that when Hick refers to the 'experiencing-as', the emphasis is more on the side of perceiving the transcendent God rather than just looking through the interpretation of a religious community.[370]

---

concepts was required, for other types it was not. In the case of the 'double cross' no familiarity with the concept of cross was necessary to see it as a black cross on a white background and a white cross on a black background. But in the case of the duck-rabbit, Wittgenstein says, 'you only 'see the duck and rabbit aspects' if you are already conversant with the shapes of these two animals'. See Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, part II, section xi.

According to Kellenberger, religious 'seeing-as' is more like seeing the duck-rabbit figure as a duck or as a rabbit: it requires a familiarity with religious concepts. 'Seeing-as' or aspect seeing presupposes a community of discourse in a way that seeing does not. With regard to religious 'seeing-as' experiences, it is important that they not be thought of as independent of culture, upbringing and training and of a religious community in which certain religious concepts are used. One's religious community and upbringing help to determine the way one thinks of or would describe the object of worship, as well as religious practice, the language of prayer, and so on. See J. Kellenberger, "Seeing-as' in Religion: Discovery and Community' in *Religious Studies*, Vol. 38, 2002, pp. 101-08.

[369] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, Second Edition, p. 151.

[370] On Hick's concept of 'experiencing-as,' see Hick, *Philosophy of Religion*, First Edition, pp. 71-73. Hick, *God and the Universe of Faith*, pp. 39-45. Hick, *Problems of Religious Pluralism*, pp. 17-20. Hick, *The Fifth Dimension*, p. 49.

In *God and the Universe of Faith*, Hick relates the concept of 'experiencing-as' with the epistemology of John Oman: 'in a classic statement of John Oman's, 'knowing is not knowledge as an effect of an unknown external cause, but is knowledge as we so interpret that our meaning is the actual meaning of our environment." See Hick, *God and the Universe of Faith*, p. 43.

What should be noted here is that Hick, however, does not underestimate the importance of the interpretative element within faith. Hick, *on the one hand*, sees faith as an 'interpretative element within the religious person's claimed awareness of God.'[371] In this sense, Hick defends Wittgensteinian philosophy of language. Despite the presentation of religious faith as culturally and linguistically oriented interpretation through religious community and upbringing, Hick, *on the other hand*, wishes to defend the factual nature of religious language, which leads to the encounter with the ultimate reality. An interesting feature of Hick's notion of 'faith as experiencing-as' is this contradictory tension between 'the interpretation in and through language' and 'the encounter with reality'. What is implied in this tension is Hick's understanding of God as composed of harmonious difference whose parts are mutually enhancing within the whole. Each of these differences is understood as just as real as any particular part of the whole. Then, Hick explains that this tension within the notion of 'faith' comes from two different usages of the word 'faith':

> 'Faith' is employed both as an epistemological and as a nonepistemological term. The word *fides* and *fiducia* provide conveniently self-explanatory labels for the two uses.[372]

---

[371] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, Second Edition, p. 151.

[372] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, Second Edition, p. 3. Hick's concept of two types of faith comes from Martin Buber: 'Buber … uses the Greek *Pistis* and the Hebrew *Emunah* (trust) to indicate the historical sources of these two uses of 'faith'.' In *Two Types of Faith*, Buber expounds his philosophy of history. According to Buber, the history of Judeo-Christian religion can be understood as a transition from the organic (*Emunah*/*Fiducia*) to the artificial (*Pistis*/*Fides*). But the transition cannot be limited in a specific moment of history and the two types of faith can always be seen in the history. For example, the transition can be found, in a large scale, in a comparison between

One speaks, on the one hand, of epistemological faith (*fides*) that there is a God and that such and such linguistic descriptions about him are true. Here 'faith' is used linguistically, referring to a state, act, or procedure which may be compared with natural instances of knowing or believing. On the other hand, one speaks of ontological faith (*fiducia*) as a trust, maintained sometimes despite contradictory indications, that the supernatural purpose towards us is wholly good and loving. The reality of the ontological Being is simply taken for granted and assumed as a manifest fact to be acted upon like the existence of other persons. An idea of faith, Hick says, necessarily includes these two different aspects and they are intertwined as a single whole: '*fides* and *fiducia* are two elements in a single whole, which is man's awareness of the divine.'[373]

This distinction of the two aspects of faith becomes apparent only when a believer reflects on one's faith from a philosophical point of view: 'it is only when the religious believer comes to reflect upon his religion, in the capacity of philosopher … that he is

Jewish Bible and Christian New Testament, and, in a small scale, in Paul's understanding of church, in the Jews in Diaspora, and in Mediaeval Christendom. On the basis of this recognition of the history, Buber says that both types of faith come from the universal nature of human beings: 'there are two, and in the end only two, types of faith. To be sure there are very many contents of faith, but we only know faith itself in two basic forms.' See Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, Second Edition, p. 3. Martin Buber, *Two Types of Faith*, trans. by N. P. Goldhawk, New York: Macmillan, 1951, p. 7. See also Malcolm L. Diamond, *Martin Buber: Jewish Existentialist*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1960, pp. 173-206.

[373] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, Second Edition, p. 144.

obliged to concern himself with the noetic status of his faith.'[374] When a believer reflects

on himself, it emerges that faith as trust (*fiducia*) presupposes faith as description (*fides*),

as recognition of the object of that trust. In order to worship God and commit ourselves to

his providence one must first have faith that he exists.

After this characterization of the two aspects of faith, Hick distinguishes two uses of

'interpretation': 'the word "interpretation" suggests the possibility of differing

judgments'.[375] In one of its senses, an interpretation is an *explanation*, answering the

question, why? One speaks, for example, of a metaphysician's interpretation of the

universe. Therefore, it is related with the ultimate cause beyond the world. In its other

senses, an interpretation is a *recognition*, answering the question, what? It is, for example,

like the question 'what is that, a dog or a fox?' Therefore, it is related with a thing within

the world. Along the line of the relation between trust (*fiducia*) and description (*fides*), Hick

argues that 'all explanation operates ultimately in terms of recognition.'[376] This is the case

because one renders the unfamiliar intellectually acceptable by relating it to the already

recognizable, indicating a connection or continuity between the old and the new. One

explains a puzzling phenomenon by disclosing its context, revealing it as part of a wider

whole.

Through these aspects of Hick's arguments on the two aspects of faith and

---

[374] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, Second Edition, p. 4.

[375] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, Second Edition, p. 101.

[376] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, Second Edition, p. 102.

interpretation, it becomes apparent that Hick always tries to show the identity of two

contradictory principles. These principles are often illustrated as the epistemological side

and the ontological side, and the epistemological side is depicted as a description of reality

which becomes possible only through linguistic grammar within the community and the

ontological side is depicted as an immediate trust which is exposed as an encounter with

the reality. The epistemological side has more of a this-worldly nature, and the ontological

side has more of an other-worldly nature. The nature of reality always has these two aspects

at once and the tension between the two implies a dynamic order of reality on the whole

as interaction between the two sides.

2.

An Interpretation of Religion

I. NON-REALISM OF D. Z. PHILLIPS

In *Faith and Knowledge*, John Hick explained the dual nature of knowledge as both

experience and interpretation by relating it with perception: 'all conscious experience of

the physical world contains an element of interpretation … The perceiving mind is thus

always in some degree a selecting, relating and synthesizing agent.' [377] In *An*

Interpretation of Religion, Hick still continues this basic position and it can be found in his

defence of realism. After defending the Wittgensteinian concept of 'seeing-as' and its

development into 'experiencing as'[378], Hick refers to Roy Wood Sellars as a typical

defender of critical realism[379] and, in contrast, Hick mentions D. Z. Phillips[380] as a typical

---

[377] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, Second Edition, p. 108.

[378] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, pp. 140-42.

[379] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, pp. 172-75.

[380] See Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, pp. 198-201. In *An Interpretation of Religion*, Hick also
mentions Peter Winch and Steven Katz. Hick argues Winch as a predecessor of Phillips. Winch's
The Idea of a Social Science and its Relation to Philosophy is one of the first attempt to apply
Wittgensteinian philosophy of language to social science: 'the criteria of logic are not a direct gift of
God, but arise out of, and are only intelligible in the context of, ways of living or modes of social
life.' According to Winch, even a physicist is following her own grammar which has been cultivated
within her own community and sociologist, political scientists, and economist also have their own

defender of non-realism.

Even though Hick categorizes Phillips as non-realist ('Phillips has provided a clear and eloquent version of a non-realist interpretation of religion'[381]), Hick does not simply rejects the position of Phillips. Hick's emphasis on language, culture, and forms of life is shared with Phillips:

> All awareness, whether of our more immediate or of our more ultimate environment, is … formed in terms of conceptual systems embodied in the language of particular societies and traditions.[382]

Therefore, this section will first describe the position of Phillips and then examine Hick's criticism of Phillips.

D. Z. Phillips has made many important contributions to philosophy of religion, and

---

kind of grammar. See Peter Winch, *The Idea of a Social Science and its Relation to Philosophy*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958, p. 100. See also Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 209.

Hick mentions Katz when he denies the possibility of non-propositional or non-interpretative experience: 'I am … in disagreement with those who distinguish, both for experience in general and for religious experience in particular, between 'propositional' or 'interpretative' and 'non-propositional' or 'non-interpretive' experience … I am thus in agreement at this point with Steven Katz.' In his paper 'Language, Epistemology, and Mysticism,' Katz suggests that experience is always mediated with interpretation: 'there are No pure (i.e. unmediated) experiences … All experience is processed though, organized by, and makes itself available to us in extremely complex epistemological ways.' See Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 169. Steven Katz, 'Language, Epistemology, and Mysticism,' p. 26.

[381] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 198.

[382] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 173.

central to the contributions is his theory of language games and the grammar of religious belief.[383] At the root of many problems in philosophy of religion, Phillips finds one's inveterate tendency, in Wittgenstein's expression, to 'sublime the logic of our language,'[384] that is to take language out of their normal contexts of application and treat it as an abstraction in a contextual vacuum: 'there is no question of a *general* justification of religious belief, of giving religion a 'sound foundation'. If the philosopher wishes to give an account of religious belief he must begin with the contexts in which these concepts have their life'.[385] For Phillips and Wittgenstein, the meaning of words and concepts is not autonomous but always mediated by their contexts. They make sense only in the context in which they originate and which does justice to their proper nature or character. There is nothing that is free of all contexts and makes sense for all contexts. The first role of philosophical business, therefore, is to specify and locate the proper context of application in which alone it makes sense to speak of a particular concept or problem at all: 'philosophy does not provide a foundation for prayer, it leaves everything as it is, and tries to give an account of it.'[386] For Phillips, the confusion of subliming or de-contextualizing can occur in a number of ways, by ignoring the proper context of a concept, regarding

---

[383] See, for example, Clark, *An Introduction to Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 83-89, 92-103. Anselm K. Min, 'D. Z. Phillips on the Grammar of 'God',' in *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. 63, No. 1/3, 2008, pp. 131-46.

[384] See Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigation*, Aphorism 89 and 94.

[385] Phillips, *The Concept of Prayer*, p. 27. The italics is in the original.

[386] Phillips, *The Concept of Prayer*, p. 3.

proof as an independent, external, and prior condition for the context of believing, or abstracting from all contexts.

For Phillips, God is a radically different kind of reality to which the logic of ordinary empirical things does not apply: 'the criteria of the meaningfulness of religious concepts are to be found within religion itself, and … failure to observe this leads to misunderstanding.[387] According to Phillips, one ignores the proper context whenever one speaks of God as though God were simply one object among others and try to apply the same logic to God that one applies to ordinary empirical things. The proper context of the speech about God is the religious context of worship, and God is experienced in this context as an absolute reality with necessary and eternal existence, as the graceful and loving creator of all things. In the eyes of faith, God's existence is eternal, necessary existence; it is not necessity added on to an otherwise contingent existence simply externally and factually, as though God, without ceasing to be God, could just possibly be contingent although, as a matter of fact, he is not. Phillips divides the context for ordinary things and the one of divine things and says that the divine context requires a special kind of logic which is appropriate for God.

According to Phillips, one also commits the confusion of subliming when one regards proof as a prior, independent, and external condition for the practice and context of believing: 'it is not the task of philosopher to decide whether there is a God or not, but to

---

[387] Phillips, *The Concept of Prayer*, p. 12.

166

ask what it means to affirm or deny the existence of God.'[388] Phillips argues that it is the

confusion committed by epistemological foundationalism that regards the belief in the

existence of God as something to be proven in order to serve as the foundation of religious

life. For Phillips, this is like trying to first prove the existence of the physical world before

one actually use it for one's many practical purposes. For him, one does not presuppose

the existence of physical object before one sits on chairs, sets tables, and climbs stairs, but

rather show the reality of physical objects in such activities, which is the very context in

which alone it makes sense to speak of the reality of the chairs and tables and outside of

which it does not. In the same way, one does not first presuppose God's existence, as

though it were in need of demonstration – in order to talk of his love and judgment. One

shows the meaning or sense of the talk about God's necessary existence precisely in the

talk about God's love and judgment: 'the ultimate appeal is to actual usage itself, that is, to

the activity of praying. Wittgenstein's point implies that the meaning of 'prayer' is in the

activity of praying.'[389] According to Phillips, one's actual engagement in the action is

prior to the context within which the action makes sense. The meaning is made only after

the action. This priority of action leads to a diversification of context rather than an

enclosure within a certain framework.

Therefore, for Phillips, considering the context of application is essential for

determining the sense or meaning of a belief, but the meaning of 'context' needs further

---

[388] Phillips, *The Concept of Prayer*, p. 10.

[389] Phillips, *The Concept of Prayer*, p. 3.

elucidation. Phillips provides this by discussing the grammatical issues involved in the relation between belief and its objects. The relation between belief and its object is not as straightforward as foundational realists tend to make it when they say that 'one cannot believe in God unless one believes there is a God to believe in'. The relation depends on the character of the object, which requires considering the context in which belief has its sense but which foundational realism refuses to take into account. For foundational realism, action is not internal to belief but only an external consequence of belief. To believe in a true God is to worship God, whereas to believe in a theory does not entail such commitment. By divorcing belief and its object, foundational realism makes any kind of believing unintelligible.[390]

For Phillips, the context of application for belief is the context of actions and practices entailed in the belief. According to Phillips, whether one believes in something is

---

[390] In *An Interpretation of Religion*, John Hick categorizes Phillips and Don Cupitt under the category of non-realism. Cupitt first articulates his vision of the non-realist conception of God in *Taking Leave of God*. Christianity, Cupitt argues, must be internally appropriated by the believer as a disinterested practice and enactment of its religious demands. For the realization of this religious demand, the perpetuation of a commitment to a realist God is a hindrance rather than a help: 'if indeed belief in God has to take that very objectified form then the religious consciousness must be obsolete; but I hope to show that things are not as bad as that … The main requirements … are a break with our habitual theological realism, a full internalization of all religious doctrines and themes, and a recognition that it is possible autonomously to adopt religious principles and practices as intrinsically valuable.' From this non-realist viewpoint, Cupitt discusses that 'it seems doubtful whether there is any immense cosmic or supracosmic Creator-Mind.' Hick criticizes this non-realist rejection of cosmic viewpoint because it leads to a negation of 'any notion of the ultimate goodness of the universe.' See Cupitt, *Taking Leave of God*, pp. xii and 8, quoted in Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, pp. 200-201. See also Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 207.

concretely shown in one's practices and actions. The relation between belief and its practical consequences or fruits is internal, not external as foundational realism would have it. It is precisely in and through these fruits that God is operative in one. What a belief amounts to is shown in how it regulates and illuminates one's life: 'the conceptual accounts of the believers must be judged on the grounds of whether they accommodate the various features which 'the life of prayer' exhibits.'[391]

It is this context of practice that forms religious concepts and provides the appropriate condition for the sense and meaning of religious beliefs. Constituted by a set of practices or forms of life, every context also generates, for Phillips, a distinctive language game with its own worldview, grammar, and logic: "practice', 'activity', 'what we do', in Wittgenstein is not something *apart* from language-games, since the latter are themselves forms of activity, practice.'[392] Even language game contains a worldview or picture of the world, an informal system of basic propositions each of which depends on the other in ways that are more practical than logical, whose function is not so much to provide evidence and proof as to provide elucidation by underlying and shedding light on others that surround them. This means that the world picture with its basic propositions is not in itself in need of demonstration but simply taken for granted in what one thinks and does while shedding light on other propositions that surround them. The meaning of belief in God, a basic proposition, for example, is shown in the light it casts on all that surrounds it:

---

[391] Phillips, *The Concept of Prayer*, p. 3,

[392] Phillips, *Belief, Change and Forms of Life*, p. 25.

'no serious account can be given of religious belief which does not take note of the way in which it is interwoven with the surrounding features of human life.'[393] Therefore, for Phillips, the meaning of belief in God is not a simple, readily defined idea, but rather a range of family or interrelated forms of life.

Just as one shows one's belief in the existence of other human beings by actually talking to them and dealing with them in many practical ways, so basic propositions and their totality called the 'world picture' shows their reality in the many particular ways of one's thinking and acting. They provide the very context that makes one's statements and actions meaningful, where one can make meaningful arguments and predicate truth and falsity, correctness and incorrectness of statements and claims. One's worldviews themselves, therefore, are neither right nor wrong. The grammar of a language, the concept of reality in terms of which denials and affirmations may be made, is not itself a belief or a theory about the nature of reality. The criteria for judgment of particular statements are internal to this world picture, which in turn requires no external justification other than those practices that generate it. Whether something agrees with reality is itself a question that arises and makes sense only within a certain world picture. As for the practices themselves, they are simply there as part of one's life: 'we must do away with explanation and description alone must take its place.'[394] The point of description is the solution of

---

[393] Phillips, *Belief, Change and Forms of Life*, p. 79.

[394] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, aphorism 109, quoted in Phillips, *Belief, Change and Forms of Life*, p. 42.

philosophical problems: 'the problems are solved, not by giving new information, but by arranging what one has always known. Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of one's intelligence by means of language.'[395]

On the basis of the above description about the philosophy of Phillips, it could be found that Hick shares the Wittgensteinian viewpoint with Phillips. When Hick defends 'religion as a family-remembrance concept,' Hick defends a Wittgensteinian idea that one cannot resolve which of their practices belong together, or what count as doing the same, without taking account of the cultural context in which those activities occur and the diversity of culture in different contexts should be affirmed as it is and there is no priority due to the difference of cultures:

> It is … illuminating to see the different traditions, movements and ideologies whose religious character is either generally agreed or responsibly debated, not as exemplifying a common essence, but as forming a complex continuum of remembrances and differences analogous to those found within a family.[396]

This is the same when Hick defends the idea of 'experiencing-as': 'it is at this level, at which experience is pervaded, moulded and coloured by human meanings, that I wish to maintain that all experience embodies concept-laden forms of interpretation.'[397]

---

[395] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, aphorism 109, quoted in Phillips, *Belief, Change and Forms of Life*, p. 42.

[396] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 4.

[397] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 142.

However, from Hick's viewpoint, Phillips' position gives an impression that forms of life and practice are relatively fragmented and isolated[398], and it has a pessimistic orientation about the assumption of a whole perspective. What is lacking from Phillips' position is a holistic integrity which must be required to introduce historical change, heterogeneity and mutual interaction within the whole. This is the reason why the position of non-realists such as Phillips is claimed by Hick to 'negate any notion of the ultimate goodness of the universe.'[399] According to Hick, if one follows the non-realist position, it leads to a conclusion that 'the hope that the world is about to be dramatically transformed for the better, although entertained periodically throughout history, has so far always

---

[398] As an example of Phillips' non-realist and linguistic orientation, Hick mentions the problem of death: 'I shall use as a representative sample his analysis of language about death.' See Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 198.

According to Phillips, '[it] would be foolishness … to speak of eternal life as some kind of appendage to human existence, something that happens after human life on earth is over.' For 'eternal life is not more life, but this life seen under certain moral and religious modes of thought.' See Phillips, *Death and Immortality*, London: Macmillan, and New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977, pp. 48-49, quoted in Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 198. The italics is in the original.

According to Hick, Phillips understands religious language 'as referring, not to realities alleged to exist independently of ourselves, but to our own moral and spiritual states.' See Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 199. For Hick, the question of the meaning of death does not belong to this life, but can be solved only after human life on earth is over. Therefore, the problem of death is not a matter of individual morality or spirituality, but it is a matter of independent reality. See also Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, pp. 178-80.

This point about the problem of death will be further examined as Hick's argument of eschatological verification in the 6th chapter of this dissertation.

[399] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 207.

proved delusory.'[400] The point of Hick's reflection on forms of life and practices is that the linguistic grammar that Phillips insists on is itself a product of a long history of human changes and subject to all the complicated interaction with competing forms of life and their worldviews in their contemporary world. Not only are forms of life variant in scope or products of history, these variations in scope and historical genesis are themselves results of complex interactions with other forms of life and practices, interactions which increasingly become internal to the affected forms, promoting, eroding, and in any case significantly changing their identity, which is no longer identical but internally heterogeneous.

When Hick defends Wittgensteinian philosophy or the importance of linguistic interpretation, Hick always adds a holistic viewpoint such as 'higher unseen power'[401] or 'something that is … transcendent'[402]. In Hick's intention, the holistic viewpoint is not an imposition of an external definite perspective, but it is a uniquely created integration which becomes possible by participation from each different context at each specific moment. When Hick refers to 'something … that stands transcendently above or undergirding beneath and giving meaning or value to our existence,'[403] it means a living creation of making a new synthesis in relation to the whole.

---

[400] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 207.

[401] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 5.

[402] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, pp. 172-73.

[403] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 172.

According to Hick, Phillips argues that God is a different kind of reality to an object among other objects, but then refuses to engage in a further, systematic analysis of the being created and uncreated entities precisely to show the ontological basis for the difference in reality. Phillips does not give an analysis of what it means to create, how this creating is not comparable to the making of things at the level of created things of one's experience. What Phillips does is to take them for granted as given grammar within a community, even though there is an emphasis on one's action. There is a large core of truth and plausibility about Phillips' grammatical understanding of community. However, if Phillips limits the belief in God only within a context of faith and worship given by a particular community and does not think of any possibility to have an integrated understanding that synthesize all the different contexts in their particularities, Hick says 'it has to face the charge of an unintended elitism.'[404]

II. CRITICAL REALISM OF ROY WOOD SELLARS

In *An Interpretation of Religion*, Hick makes a contrast between the non-realism of

---

[404] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 207.

Phillips and the 'critical realism'[405] of Sellars[406]:

Critical realism holds that the realm of religious experience and belief is not *in toto* human projection and illusion but constitutes a range of cognitive responses, varying from culture to culture, to the presence of a transcendent reality or realities … I want to contrast with this a range of non-realist and anti-realist theories which deny that religious language should be interpreted realistically and which offer their own alternative ways

---

[405] Critical Realism is a movement which emerged in the first half of the twentieth century. Following Sellars in *The Philosophy of Physical Realism*, Hick distinguishes the version of critical realism developed by Roy Wood Sellars, Arthur Lovejoy, A. K. Rogers and J. B. Pratt and the one developed by George Santayana, Durant Drake, and C. A. Strong. See Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 174.

According to Sellars, both of them agree with the independence of the external thing: 'perception must be regarded as directed at external objects.' However, difference can be seen in their theory of knowledge. Sellars and his followers defend a creatively synthetic and evolutionally organic character of perception, whereas Santayana and his followers limit the basic perception within an instinctive belief in the world. Sellars calls Santayana's theory of knowledge one of identity, in contrast with his own version which is one of disclosure: 'I would … point out that my theory of knowledge is one of disclosure rather than one of identity, which is but another way of saying that I stress similarity as against the identity of logical entities.' For Sellars, perception is the process of 'the manifestation of order', through which one becomes closer to the approximation of it. For Santayana, perception is a primitive rationality that is like 'animal faith' in the world. See Sellars, *The Philosophy of Physical Realism*, pp. 59-60, and 195. The italics is in the original. See also George Santayana, *Scepticism and Animal Faith: Introduction to a System of Philosophy*, New York: Scribner, 1923.

[406] Not only Roy Wood Sellars, but also Arthur Lovejoy developed his own version of critical realism. In *The Revolt Against Dualism*, Lovejoy characterizes the positions of Alfred North Whitehead and Bertrand Russell as the revolt against dualism, and instead defends a dualism contained in plain man's common sense: 'the starting point of the argument for physical realism, I suggest, is the plain man's normal and reasonable belief that the processes of nature do not stop when he stops noticing them.' See Lovejoy, *The Revolt Against Dualism*, pp. 267-68.

of construing it.[407]

What can be seen from this quotation is that Hick makes a contradicting argument like arguments in other parts of *An Interpretation of Religion*. On the one hand, Hick defends a relativistic viewpoint that the realm of religious experience and belief is *constituted* by a range of *cultural* cognition. On the other hand, Hick defends a holistic viewpoint that the realm of religious experience and belief is a response to the presence of a *transcendent reality*.[408]

But what is more important here is that Hick's version of critical realism is different from that of Sellars. What Hick is trying to do is to restore the central importance of the old, almost forgotten position of critical realism by introducing the new position of Wittgensteinian philosophy. This is the reason why Hick is using the expression that

---

[407] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 175.

[408] On Hick's explanation of critical realism, see also Hick, *The Fifth Dimension*, pp. 42-43. Hick, *Dialogues in the Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 104-11. Hick, *The New Frontier of Religion and Science*, pp. 137-38.

In *The Fifth Dimension*, Hick relates his concept of critical realism with the epistemology of Thomas Aquinas: 'it was a brilliant insight of Thomas Aquinas that 'Cognita sunt in congnoscente secundum modum cognoscentis' – 'Things known are in the knower according to the mode of the knower.'' See Hick, *The Fifth Dimension*, p. 43.

In *The New Frontier of Religion and Science*, Hick distinguishes three main positions of epistemology (naïve realism, idealism, and critical realism) and understands critical realism as the middle of the other two. Then Hick relates it with Immanuel Kant: 'he [Kant] affirmed a reality beyond us and existing independently of us, but argued that we are not aware of it as it is in itself, unobserved, but only as the innate structure of the human mind is able to bring the impacts of that reality to consciousness as the phenomenal world.' See Hick, *The New Frontier of Religion and Science*, p. 138.

religious experience and belief varies *from culture to culture*. Sellars might use terms like interpretation or subjectivity, but does not use terms like culture or language game. By developing the terms from Sellars' interpretation/subjectivity to Wittgensteinian culture/language game, Hick's philosophy could incorporate an aspect of *social* dimension which Sellars' basically epistemological philosophy of perception did not provide. It is Hick who discovered the social implication of critical realism to be developed into a nuanced position which is based on Wittgensteinian philosophy but also has a holistic viewpoint which emphasizes mutual interaction and historical change.[409] On the basis of the above consideration, this section will provide a very basic description of Sellars' contribution to philosophy and then the next section will examine Hick's acceptance and development of Sellars' position.

In his 'Realism, Naturalism, and Humanism,' in *Contemporary American Philosophy*, Roy Wood Sellars summarizes the essential orientation of his version of critical realism: 'I was led to think of perception as a selective interpretation of external things and to break away completely from the subjectivistic tradition that ideas are the objects of knowledge.'[410] What Sellars means is that the objects one perceives are not identical with the ideas, or appearances, by means of which one perceives them. The appearances of

---

[409] This social dimension of Hick's philosophy will further be examined in the 4th chapter of this dissertation.

[410] Roy Wood Sellars, 'Realism, Naturalism, and Humanism,' in *Contemporary American Philosophy: Personal Statements*, ed. George P. Adams and Wm. Pepperell Montague, London: G. Allen & Unwin; New York : Macmillan company, 1930, p. 265.

objects, unlike the objects themselves, are subjective effects of the perceptual process and depend upon the perceiving subject for their existence. It had been assumed by many philosophers that this subjective conception of appearances implies that the perceiving subject perceives only its own ideas and never perceives external objects. The principal task of Sellars' philosophy is to show that this assumption is false.

Sellars suggests that one commits a fallacy if one believes that, merely from statements describing how things appear and statements describing the causal conditions of appearing, can one infer that appearances are perceived or that no external physical things are perceived. Sellars explains this fallacy 'a reduction of perception to a mere awareness of sensory impressions.'[411] Philosophers who describe perceiving as a representative process commit the fallacy when, having identified appearances with ideas, they reason that one can perceive only one's own ideas; and when, having concluded that appearances or ideas are pictures of external things, they infer that what people perceive are pictures of things rather than the things themselves. Philosophers commit the fallacy when they assume that these two statements are mutually exclusive: (1) that appearances are ideas or *subjective* effects of physiological and psychological processes and (2) that people perceive *external* things which exist independently of one's perception of them.

For Sellars, directness and mediation must be realized at the same time in the theory

---

[411] Roy Wood Sellars, 'A Statement of Critical Realism,' in *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, Première année, No. 3, p.484. See also Roderick M. Chisholm, 'Sellars' Critical Realism,' in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research,* Vol. 15, No. 1, 1954, p. 35.

of knowledge. On the one hand, 'human knowing is a *direct* knowing of object'[412] – this is against representative epistemology – and, on the other hand, '*this knowing is mediated by logical ideas.*'[413] What critical realism speaks of as the content of knowing is that which can be exhibited in a series of propositions, and this content is the knowledge of the object in the complex act of knowing. Thus critical realism maintains that various people can know identically the same external object: 'in perceiving one regards oneself as in some fashion meaning and characterizing independent public things.'[414] Therefore, according to Sellars, the tree or John that I know is not only my idea of the tree or of John, but the tree or John themselves.

Sellars does not just deny the role of appearances. In describing the role of appearances, Sellars makes use of the distinction between 'content' of perception and the 'object' of perception. Appearances are not the object of perception, but they are the content of perception. Critical realism says that appearances reveal the various kinds of essences of the object of perception: 'the content is relevant to the object, that it contains its structure, position and changes… The content of knowledge offers us the fundamental categories, such as time, space, structure, relations, and behavior, in term of which we think of the

---

[412] Roy Wood Sellars, 'A Re-Examination of Critical Realism,' in *Principles of Emergent Realism*, p. 113. The italics is in the original.

[413] Sellars, 'A Re-Examination of Critical Realism,' in *Principles of Emergent Realism*, p. 113. The italics is in the original.

[414] Sellars, 'A Statement of Critical Realism', p. 474. See also Chisholm, 'Sellars' Critical Realism,' p. 36.

world.'[415]

In characterizing appearances, Sellars stresses their dependence upon conditions of observation. By altering these conditions, a man may alter the appearance he senses; when he does this, 'the appearance of a thing changes while the thing remains the same'.[416] By viewing the thing from different places, for instance, he can vary its visual appearances in a way which could be correlated with a series of photographs taken from the different places. The way in which a thing may thus be made to appear is conditioned in part by certain properties of the thing.

There is a second respect in which appearances may be adequate to the objects of perception. Complex appearances or a series of appearances may, on occasion, resemble such objects in significant ways. Sellars says that an appearance may have a sort of revelatory identity with the object: 'the basic postulate is the claim to know or … the revelatory nature of our predicates. This postulate, if challenged, is confirmed by the success of our critical thinking.'[417] Sellars says that thought cures its own difficulties by showing how new distinctions satisfy old conflicts. Through the process of critical thinking, what has been thought as complex appearances or even perceptual illusion continues to reveal its new aspects: 'I am convinced that the very advance of thought rests on the belief

---

[415] Roy Wilfred Sellars, 'Knowledge and its Categories,' in *Essays in Critical Realism*, London: Macmillan and Co., 1920, p. 200.

[416] Roy Wood Sellars, *The Principles and Problems of Philosophy*, New York: Macmillan, 1926, p. 50.

[417] Sellars, 'Realism, Naturalism, and Humanism,' p. 272.

that sense-perception is revelatory of nature and that the proper use of it enables us to penetrate into the characteristics of the world'.[418]

Here, the content of Sellars' basic postulate about perception can be re-expressed in this way: every perceptual belief is *prima facie* credible because of the fact that it is a perceptual belief. If one takes a certain state of affairs to obtain, then this fact is, of itself, some justification for the belief that that state of affairs does obtain. Only when a particular belief has come into conflict with some one of other beliefs, some of our perceptual beliefs become false. The beliefs one does have, including those about perception and the history of human errors, indicate that human beings have a tendency to make correct guesses and that the human mind is, in this respect, adapted to the comprehension of the world.

On the basis of the above description, one can understand some important features of Sellars' version of critical realism. First, Sellars says that human knowing is a direct knowing of the object.[419] This directness is deeply related with the reason why Sellars' philosophy is important for contemporary philosophy. As the philosophy of Phillips shows, one trend in contemporary philosophy is a rejection of direct relationship with reality. The direct relationship was called foundationalism and hidden linguistic grammar or cultural context were emphasized which is hidden behind the direct relationship. However, some weaknesses of this new position were also discovered, and a recovery of foundationalism

---

[418] Sellars, 'Realism, Naturalism, and Humanism,' p. 273.

[419] 'Knowing is direct in that its primary object is objective disclosure; but it is mediated by data and concepts.' See Sellars, *The Philosophy of Physical Realism*, p. 61.

has become a task of contemporary philosophy. According to Sellars, human knowing reveals only a partial truth of the object, but the partial knowledge is not a representation of the object but is part of reality. This notion of partial but direct knowledge of the object can be seen as an important feature of Sellars' philosophy.

Second, Sellars says that appearances of the object reveal various kinds of essences of the object of perception.[420] This diversity of appearances of object can also be understood as an important feature of Sellars' philosophy. It supposes a lot of different sources of knowledge and each contributes to construct the whole understanding of reality. According to Sellars, the basis of reality can be understood as a total balance of different kinds of elements rather than a tangible, but partial element which is chosen as one of possibilities. When one seeks to recover the basis of reality, one can choose a narrow but certain foundation, but Sellars took an alternative, more holistic direction. The holistic direction might be less certain, but could be more reliable. Sellars says that complex appearances or a series of appearances of object construct a whole understanding of the object. This idea can also be seen as an important feature of Sellars' philosophy.

Third, Sellars says that thought cures its own difficulties by showing how new

---

[420] Sellars calls this point *levels of causality*: 'it will be my argument that science and philosophy are only now becoming sufficiently aware of the principles involved in the facts of levels, of natural kinds, of organization, to all of which the old materialism was blind. I shall even carry the notion of levels into causality and speak of levels of causality.' Sellars also names the same point from the side of the knower as *levels of knowing*: 'knowing must be studied at its various levels as a characteristic claim of the human knower.' See Sellars, *The Philosophy of Physical Realism*, p. 4 and 73. The italics is in the original.

distinctions satisfy old conflicts. [421] This emphasis on the historical process of reconciliation and maturation also shows another important feature of Sellars' philosophy. Not only Wittgensteinian philosophy of Phillips, but also analytical philosophy in general has a possible weakness of a lack of historical awareness. Sellars says that human beings have an evolutional tendency to make correct guesses and they can develop the comprehension of the world through the history of errors. By introducing the insight of Wittgensteinian philosophy which emphasizes cultural difference and language game, Hick tries to inherit the historical awareness of Sellars in a very different setting of contemporary philosophy.[422]

---

[421] Sellars calls this aspect of his position as evolutionary naturalism: 'the evolutionary naturalist holds that, just as matter is unevenly distributed throughout the universe, so are conditions making for complicated organic synthesises such as life and mind … The generic category is change; at the very least, evolution is a kind of cumulative change … Evolutionary naturalism rests upon physical realism and the fact of creative synthesis.' See Sellars, *The Philosophy of Physical Realism*, p. 3.

[422] Various aspects of Hick's philosophy can be understood as a recovery of an old *pre-analytical* worldview from within a new *analytical* worldview. This point will further be examined in the 5th chapter of this dissertation.

3.

Hick's Defence of Critical Realism

When Hick makes a contrast between the non-realism of Phillips and the critical

realism of Sellars, the comparison has an implication of an historical awareness that by

introducing the currently neglected position of critical realism, which had been popular in

the early twentieth century, Wittgensteinian philosophy of religion, which had been

popular in the late twentieth century, can make a further contribution to a progress of

philosophy. For example, one of the central claims of Sellars' philosophy is that there is an

irreducible difference between human subjectivity in all its forms and the objectivity of

reality. In contrast, Wittgensteinian appeal to language games and forms of life as the

context of meaning and evaluation can be understood as one of the attempts in the

anthropocentric direction to measure and evaluate reality by the criteria of human

subjectivity in its many forms, individual and collective, theoretical and practical.

If Hick's argument can be understood as a contribution to philosophy, its central

significance lies in the way of considering the relation between language and reality. Hick

is careful to deal with the necessity of language and not to simply deny the appeal of

subjectivity: 'the kind of religious realism that I shall advocate takes full account of the

subjective contribution to all awareness.'[423]   According to Hick, reality is indeed mediated, theoretically interpreted and practically transformed, by human beings in light of their worldviews and horizons. This fact, however, should not lead one to the anthropocentric illusion that there is nothing outside the horizons or language games. Despite all the inevitable mediation by one's own subjectivity, reality remains both other and more than what it means to the human subject: 'the sensory data of which we are directly aware (or which we 'intuit') are private to the perceiving consciousness, but … it is by means of these private contents of consciousness that we are able to live in relation to a physical world transcending our own mind.'[424]

Without denying that some ideas might be more adequate than others, one's collective ideas are not identical with the objective reality of the things and situations of which one has ideas. According to Hick, human beings have a tendency to assume a simple identity between one's ideas and the objective reality of the world and claim that the world is what one thinks it is. One entertains the illusion that one's ideas are themselves the realities of the world, reducing the world to one's subjectivity. Through various experiences, empirical researches, but most dramatically disasters natural or social, one learns that one's ideas are wrong, often shocked and disillusioned into the recognition of the persisting difference and contradiction between one's thoughts and the world one thinks about. Changes in the real world have a way of replacing and displacing philosophical systems.

---

[423] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 174.

[424] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 174.

Phillips had tried to place God in the religious context where God can be recognized as an absolute reality. He does this by saying that to know God is to worship God, that to worship God is to change one's ways in light of God. The claim is that there is an internal relation between belief and practice: belief by its nature is meant to lead to the transformation of one's existence. Hick adds a careful reservation to this position of Phillips. Hick says that one should not equate the necessary exhortation to subjective transformation with a statement of the objective reality of the object of belief. To say that there is an internal relation between belief and practice is still to maintain a distinction between the two. By the nature of the content, the belief demands to be actualized by each subject who believes. There is also the objective side of the reality, which should not be equated with and reduced to its role in the transformation of subjective existence. It is the intention for Hick, then, to realize that in one's haste to emphasize the imperative of transforming one's subjectivity, one should not forget the transcendent reality over us.

What Hick intends when he accepts the two contradictory standpoints of linguistic and realistic is the tension between subjectivity and objectivity. On the one hand, it is important to emphasize a linguistic standpoint within Hick's argument: 'we have already recognized the unavoidable element of interpretation within all conscious experience'.[425] This is one of the points Hick learned from the critical realism of Roy Wood Sellars: 'critical differed from naïve realism mainly in taking account of the conceptual and interpretative element

---

[425] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 173.

within sense perception.'[426] The linguistic side of Hick's argument, which is inherited

from Wittgenstein, corresponds to the necessity of conceptual interpretation, or subjective

appearance, of Sellars. They, accordingly, acknowledge that the sense perception of which

one is directly aware is subjective to the conceptual interpretation of an individual or a

culture. On the other hand, the kind of religious realism that Hick advocates takes full

account of the realistic standpoint to an awareness of a human being. One is living in a

physical world transcending one's own minds by means of the conceptual, or subjective,

contents. Thus, sense perception is a complexly mediated awareness of the physical world:

'attitudes, expectations, memories, accepted facts, all operate interpretatively to make us

regard ourselves as somehow aware of public, independent things.'[427] In the form of

religious realism that Hick advocates, the realm of religious experience and belief is not *in*

toto human projection but constitutes a range of cognitive responses, varying from culture

to culture, to the presence of a transcendent reality. Therefore, specific human language,

which is working from within individuals and society, is seen to be real that is situated

within the whole: 'what I am calling the realist option understands such language in a

basically realist way as referring to an object of discourse that is 'there' to be referred to.'[428]

This chapter has examined a theoretically typical aspect of Hick's philosophy as the

---

[426] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 174.

[427] Roy Wood Sellars, 'A Statement of Critical Realism', p. 477, quoted in Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 175.

[428] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 173.

contradictory relation between language and reality. More concrete aspects of Hick's

philosophy (the epistemic, the social, and the historical) could not be fully explored in this

chapter. These aspects will be further examined in later chapters.

Chapter 4.

COSMIC OPTIMISM

Contradiction between the Particular and the Universal

When Hick explains cosmic optimism in *An Interpretation of religion*, there is a sense of historical progress which is realized through gradual reconciliation of fundamental contradictions in the world:

> The proclamation of a limitlessly better possibility arising from another reality, transcendent to our present selves … we can express this abstractly by saying that post-axial religion embodies a cosmic optimism.[429]

> What I called earlier the cosmic optimism of each of the great traditions is intensified when we see them all as pointing to the possibility of a limitlessly better existence and as affirming that the universe is such that this limitlessly better possibility is actually available to us and can begin to be realized in each present moment.[430]

This sense of historical progress is what Hick intends when he divides the two

---

[429] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 56.

[430] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 380.

contradictory standpoints between the epistemological/linguistic, which indicates diversity

of religions, and the ontological/cosmic, which indicates totality of religions.

This basic structure of Hick's philosophy is not only shown in a tension between

language and reality (this aspect was discussed in the last chapter), but also takes various

forms from the early stage of *Faith and Knowledge* towards the late stage of *An*

Interpretation of Religion and beyond. For example, the substantive argument of *Faith*

and Knowledge can be found in Part II and Part III.[431] Part II discusses William James,

Immanuel Kant, and John Henry Newman respectively, and this part is recognized as a

preparation which mainly discusses an epistemological side of faith and will be integrated

into a wider perspective in Part III.[432] Under a fundamental influence from John Oman,

Part III discusses the ontological side of faith and integrates the epistemological side of

faith from the viewpoint of totality, which is discussed as a relation between the natural

and the supernatural.[433]

---

[431] 'Any contribution that the book may make to current discussions in the philosophy of religion
is contained, so far as criticism is concerned, in Part II and, so far as construction is concerned, in
Part III.' See Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. v.

[432] 'Part II will review three types or groups of theory concerning the nature of theistic faith … they
are, I think, the most important theories, both in themselves and in relation to the standpoint to be
developed in Part III. In each case I shall offer criticisms of the theory under discussion, and yet
from each of them a significant truth will be carried forward into the next part.' See Hick, *Faith and
Knowledge*, First Edition, p. xix.

[433] 'In Part III, the central section of the book, I shall offer for the reader's consideration an account
of the nature of religious faith and its relation to human cognition … I shall not refer to Oman's
discussion in detail, either by way of exposition or of criticism, those who are acquainted with *The
Natural and the Supernatural* (1931) will find in the present essay an attempt to work out Oman's

In *An Interpretation of Religion*, the basic structure of cosmic optimism is further developed and it is shown in various arguments such as 'the religious ambiguity of the universe,' 'the distinction of the physical, the ethical, and the religious,' etc. More specifically, the religious ambiguity of the universe is discussed in Part Two of *An Interpretation of Religion*:

> The universe is religiously ambiguous in that it is possible to interpret it, intellectually and experientially, both religiously and naturalistically.[434]

In the argument about the religious ambiguity of the universe, Hick intends to use the concepts of the religious and the naturalistic in a basically *epistemological and linguistic* manner, because they are based on a particular interpretation. Both natural science and religion have equally appropriate evidence, and therefore both have a similarly limited reliability.[435]

However, when the distinction of the physical, the ethical, and the religious is discussed in Part Three, Hick discusses them in a different manner. On the one hand, Hick intends to use the concepts of the physical and the ethical in a basically epistemological

---

basic standpoint in relation to the very different world of contemporary philosophy.' See Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. xix.

[434] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 12.

[435] 'We are continuously experiencing aspects of our environment as having kinds of meaning in virtue of which it is appropriate for us to behave within it in this or that way or range of ways.' See Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 12.

and linguistic manner like the case of the natural and the religious ('both the religious and the naturalistic ways of construing the world arise from a fundamental cognitive choice, which I call faith, which is continuous with the interpretive element within our experience of the physical and ethical character of our environment'[436]), and, on the other hand, Hick further intends to use the concept of the religious in a basically *ontological and holistic* manner ('as religious beings we continue to live in the world in terms of its physical and ethical meanings, but do so in new ways required by its religious meaning'[437]). Here, the religious intends to have no content, but works in a relating and synthesizing way.[438] What should be understood here is that Hick uses the concept of the religious in two different manners: the epistemological and the ontological.

On the basis of this recognition, the first section of this chapter will examine the basic structure of Hick's philosophy in *Faith and Knowledge* (Hick's argument about Kant will be discussed in the 5th chapter). The second section will examine *An Interpretation of Religion* (Hick's argument about Kant and soteriology will be discussed in the 5th and 6th

---

[436] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 13.

[437] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 13.

[438] 'It is interpretive element within religious experience that enables us to enter into an uncompelled, though always necessarily limited and mediated, awareness of the Real … Religious traditions, considered as 'filters' or 'resistances', function as totalities which include not only concepts and images of God or of the Absolute, with the modes of experience which they inform, but also systems of doctrine, ritual and myth, art form, moral codes, lifestyles and patterns of social organization. For religions have been basically communal responses to the real, rooted in the life of societies and forming an essential element of human culture.' See Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, pp. 162-63.

chapter). The third section will provide an intermediate summary of the argument up to

this point, which discusses a connection between reliabilism and cosmic optimism.

1.

Faith and Knowledge

I. WILLIAM JAMES

This and next sections will examine Hick's discussion about William James and John

Henry Newman. Their philosophical arguments can be understood as typical liberal and

conservative argument around the late 19th century and the early 20th century. Hick's

criticism against them is that their arguments are structured to defend a particular kind of

knowledge which is distinct from other kinds of knowledge, and consequently they cover

only a limited field of human knowledge and fail to include a totality within their theory,

even though James has a liberal orientation and Newman has a conservative orientation.

For example, James proposes to understand faith as hypothesis: 'faith … is

synonymous with working hypothesis … [The believer's] intimate persuasion is that the

odds in its favour are strong enough to warrant him in acting all along on the assumption

of its truth.' [439]   Again, 'faith means belief [strong enough to determine action] in

something concerning which doubt is still theoretically possible.'[440]   Here James suggests

---

[439]   William James, *The Will to Believe and Other Essays*, New York, 1897, p. 95, quoted in Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 48.

[440]   James, *The Will to Believe and Other Essays*, p. 90, quoted in Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First

that there are a lot of different choices and faith makes one choose one of them. To further

clarify the nature of faith, James suggests that the justification of faith does not come from

outside faith, but justification comes from inside faith: 'there are cases … where faith

creates its own verification.'[441] According to James, faith has its own way of justification

and it is distinguished from the other ways of justification: 'there are truths which cannot

become true till our faith has made so.'[442] Here one can find a weak foundationalist

argument to justify the limited reliability of a particular position. James says that faith

requires its own way of justification. Faith is not an incorrigible truth for everyone, but it

is a specific truth which is chosen by a particular person. The idea of hypothesis is here

used to limit the applicable validity of the nature of faith and instead give a specific

characteristic to it.

Then the argument of James goes in a little different direction and he mentions an

example of personal relationship. In the case of personal relationship, the beginning of

personal relationship does not come from the result of logical inference, but the

relationship immediately presupposes the existence of another person's friendliness: 'the

previous faith on my part in your liking's existence is in such cases what makes your

likings come. But if I stand aloof, and refuse to budge an inch until I have objective

---

Edition, p. 49.

[441] James, *The Will to Believe and Other Essays*, p. 97, quoted in Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 49.

[442] James, *The Will to Believe and Other Essays*, p. 96, quoted in Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 49.

evidence, until you shall have done something apt, as the absolutists say, *ad extorquendum assensum meum*, ten to one your liking never comes.' [443]   James says that the presupposition of the other's liking's existence does not mean the personal relationship is irrational, but it means that the personal relationship has its own way of reasonability, in which cognitivity and experience are intricately mixed.

James relates this aspect of faith with trust: 'a social organism of any sort whatever, large and small, is what it is because each member proceeds to his own duty with a trust that the other members will simultaneously do theirs.'[444]   According to James, trust is what makes community possible, and trust is not just one's imaginative projection but it is a fact of community. To understand the reason of the basis of community, one must figure out this aspect of faith: 'wherever a desired result is achieved by the co-operation of many independent persons, its existence as a fact is a pure consequence of the precursive faith in one another of those immediately concerned.'[445]   James says that the reasonability of faith as trust is different from pure logical inference, but it has its own kind of reasonability. Faith is not just a personal imaginative projection, but is based in community.

Then, John Hick interrupts the argument of William James and adds his own argument.

---

[443]   James, *The Will to Believe and Other Essays*, pp. 23-24, quoted in Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 49.

[444]   James, *The Will to Believe and Other Essays*, p. 24, quoted in Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 50.

[445]   James, *The Will to Believe and Other Essays*, p. 24, quoted in Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 50.

Hick says that James' argument from precursive faith cannot be applied to the proof for

the existence of God, because 'such faith does not create the person of the friend but only

makes that person friendly.'[446] The precursive faith is relevant to beliefs about matters

which depend wholly or partly upon communal processes governed by ourselves, but it

cannot be applied to the conviction that there is a God. Hick says that the precursive faith

'has a like part to play in the relationship between man and God. But this would not be

faith making theism true.'[447] According to Hick, communal faith could only be effective

if theism were already true. For otherwise there would be nothing in the cosmos to respond

to our advances of trust and worship: 'precursive faith, then, is a real and important

phenomenon, but it does not bear directly upon theistic belief.'[448]

Thereafter, Hick distinguishes two kinds of faiths: 'the argument from the nature of

personal relationship is important for the neighboring topic of faith as trust (*fiducia*), but

not for that of faith as cognition (*fides*).'[449] According to Hick, both aspects of faith are

necessary for the full understanding of faith: '*fides* and *fiducia* are two elements in a single

whole.'[450] Faith as trust is necessary to understand the relationship between man and God,

and it is a process governed by community. However, to make this aspect of faith possible,

there must be another kind of faith as cognition. If one follows James' argument, according

---

[446] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 51.

[447] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 51.

[448] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 51.

[449] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 55.

[450] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, pp. 186-87.

to Hick, it implies that the personal faith as cognition is primary and the communal faith as trust is secondary, because what is given from community is just a human construction. However, faith as cognition can go beyond the human construction and it can touch the ultimate cause of the universe.[451]

On the basis of the distinction of the two types of faith, Hick interprets the 'will to believe' argument of William James as essentially the argument to defend faith as cognition, which makes the personal conviction true. James opens his argument of the will to believe from the premise of epistemological agnosticism: 'nothing can be gained … by waiting for proof that God does or does not exist, for such proof may never be forthcoming.'[452] But nevertheless the issue is of tremendous concern to us. The decision between belief and disbelief is a living, momentous, and forced option, and one which nevertheless cannot be decided by rational enquiry. Whichever way one decides, one runs a risk: 'in either case we *act*, taking our life in our hands.'[453] James says that both believer

---

[451] Hick's understanding of James's argument, which emphasizes the personal aspect of faith as cognition, is a typical modern position. In another part of *Faith and Knowledge*, Hick gives a different explanation of faith in the pre-modern period, which emphasizes the communal aspect of faith as trust: 'it is significant that in the Bible faith appears frequently as *fiducia* and hardly at all as *fides*. The reality of the divine Being is assumed throughout as a manifest fact.' At the time of the Bible, faith as trust was the primary aspect of faith. People were living in a closed community on the basis of the trust in transcendent Being, and they could have no doubt in the existence of God: 'the validity of faith in divine existence, like the validity of sense perception in ordinary life, is simply taken for granted and acted upon.' Only after the modern period, personal faith was seen as more primary than communal faith. See Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, pp. 3-4.

[452] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 52.

[453] James, *The Will to Believe and Other Essays*, p. 30, quoted in Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First

and disbeliever are making hypotheses which warrant them in acting all along on the assumption of its truth: '[a faith-vetoer] is actively playing his stake as much as the believer is; he is backing the field against the religious hypothesis, just as the believer is backing the religious hypothesis against the field.'[454] James is asserting the right to believe at one's own risk whatever one feels an inner need to believe. A believer's own stake is important enough to give one the right to choose one's own form of risk.

According to Hick, this is the essence of the 'will to believe' argument, and this aspect of faith warrants faith as cognition. It is still a working hypothesis, but it is about the personal conviction that there is a God. This argument can be understood as a weak foundationalism, and, for example, it can be found in James' argument that both believer and disbeliever are making hypotheses. Here James means that both religious and natural interpretations of the universe have their specific reasons to defend their positions. That is, James gives up the perfect reliability of both positions and understands them as imperfect but reliable positions.

Then, Hick suggests that James' argument from personal relationship, which secures faith as trust, must be understood on the very basis of the 'will to believe' argument, which secures the faith as cognition. All valuable personal relationship is genetically based upon faith as trust, upon treating others in a more trustful way than the evidence currently

---

Edition, p. 52. The italics is in the original.

[454] James, *The Will to Believe and Other Essays*, pp. 26-27, quoted in Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 53.

199

warrants. What one needs to make a good community is faith as trust. But to make the community possible in the first place, one needs the faith as cognition. A communal practice of faith as trust presupposes an experiment of personal faith as cognition: '*knowledge* in the personal sphere consists precisely in faith which has been put into practice and verified in our experience. But clearly, if this is so, we cannot have the verification without experiment … we cannot enjoy the flower if we never plant the seed.'[455] According to Hick, James' argument suggests that one can enjoy the flower of religious community, only if we admit an individual experiment of personal conviction.

As a concluding comment on the argument given by William James, John Hick says that James' argument from personal conviction is applicable to any faiths in the world: 'if it is rational to believe in the Christian God on the ground that this *may* be the only way of gaining the final truth, then it is equally rational to believe in any alternative religious system which *may* also be the sole pathway to Truth.'[456] Hick says that if the personal conviction authorizes us to believe any proposition that is not demonstrably false, but has an inner need from the inside of a believer, then any sort of accidental circumstance may predispose us towards a proposition: 'for a Chinese, Confucianism (or rather, today, Communism) tends to be a live option; for an Arab, Mohammedanism; and for a Briton or an American, Christianity.'[457] Hick's argument here can be understood as a necessary

---

[455] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 55. The italics is in the original.

[456] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, pp. 56-57. The italics is in the original.

[457] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 56.

consequence of weak foundationalism. The weak foundational argument gives specific

meanings to different foundations. Instead of giving up a perfectly reliable position, weak

foundationalism can give expressions to diverse positions which could not be understood

as a specific position before.

Hick understands a consequence of James' position that it requires us to respect any

faith in the world, but keep holding one's own truth. It is firstly because the personal

conviction often follows just a geographical orientation: 'to a purely rational mind,

liberated from the accidents of geography and illuminated by James's argument, it must

appear as important to believe in the Mahdi or Mohammed or any other self-assertive

person who offers a heaven and threatens a hell as to believe in the orthodox God of Europe

and America.'[458] Secondly because the self-insurance often comes from an exclusive

belief in something: 'the only reasonable course would be to wager our faith where the

greatest good is to be hoped for if our faith should turn out to be justified.'[459] Hick goes

on to say that one should believe in that religion or philosophy which one most desire to

be true. For it may be that it *is* true, and that only by pinning one's faith on it can one

realizes its benefits.

What can be understood from the above examination of Hick's understanding of

James is that James does have an understanding of the two types of faith ('faith as cognition'

and 'faith as trust'). However, in Hick's interpretation, James' theory has an emphasis on

---

[458] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 57.

[459] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 57.

the aspect of 'faith as cognition' and it fails to give an appropriate position to 'faith as trust' by interpreting it as secondary and superficial. As a consequence of 'faith as cognition,' James' argument has the implication of respecting any faith in the world, but it is just about a defence of personal preference and it fails to theorize a totality of the world. This is why Hick calls James' position just 'wishful thinking'[460]: 'is he not saying that since the truth is unknown to us we may believe what we like and that while we are about it we had better believe what we like most?'[461] According to Hick, if one accepts James's advice, it just means that each person will follow what each person likes and accordingly there is no unity in the world.[462] James' argument of 'the will to believe' gives a defence of a limited field of *personal choice* and it is important as a part of the whole aspect of faith, but it does not give a defence of *totality*: 'although James … [ascribes] to the human will too large and central a part in the act of faith, it would equally be a mistake to accord to it no place at all. Faith is an activity of the whole man, and as such there is a volitional side to it … religious faith is a 'total interpretation,' or mode of apperceiving the world.'[463]

---

[460] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 57.

[461] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 57.

[462] James' argument of *The Will to Believe* can also be seen in Hick's *An Interpretation of Religion* and Hick gives a similar evaluation of James' position: 'the weakness of his [James'] position, as he himself presents it, is that it would authorize us to believe anything that we may have a strong enough propensity to believe, providing the evidence concerning it is inconclusive.' See Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 227.

[463] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge,* pp. 65-66.

II. JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

A similar structure, which defends only a limited field, can be seen in Hick's interpretation of John Henry Newman. According to Hick, in spite of Newman's own intention to theorize totality ('he [Newman] was deeply conscious of the fact that our more fundamental convictions are reached, not by the intellect alone, but by the whole man functioning as a thinking, feeling, and willing unity'[464]), Newman's project actually remains to defend only a limited field.

The reason why Hick understands Newman's faith as limited is because Newman's faith is intended to be a choice among different options. On the one hand, there is faith which is about totality, and on the other hand, there is logic which is about abstraction. On the basis of this dictum, Newman chooses faith. According to Hick, the limited character of Newman's argument is shown in his distinction between 'real' and 'notional' thinking in his *Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*: 'now there are propositions, in which one or both of the terms are common nouns, as standing for what is abstract, general, and non-

---

[464] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 83. As an example of Newman's intention to understand faith as totality, Hick quotes from Newman's *Apologia pro Vita Sua*: 'for myself … it was not logic, then, that carried me on; as well might one say that the quicksilver in the barometer changes the weather. It is the concrete being that reasons; pass a number of years, and I find my mind in a new place; how? the whole man moves; paper logic is but the record of it.' See Newman, *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, Second Edition, London, 1865, p. 188, quoted in Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 83.

existing, such as 'Man is an animal, some men are learned, an Apostle is a creation of Christianity, a line is a length without breadth' … These I shall call notional propositions, and the apprehension with which we infer or assent to them, notional. And there are other propositions, which are composed of singular nouns, and of which the terms stand for things external to us, unit and individual, as 'Philip was the father of Alexander, the earth goes round the sun, the Apostles first preached to the Jews'; and these I shall call real propositions, and their apprehension real.'[465]

Newman tries to relate the side of the 'real' thinking, which is about the singularity of reality, with what he calls faith. Newman's intention is to deal with convictions concerning matters of fact, which are as such outside the scope of demonstrative proof. Newman introduces a new concept to theorize a human faculty which understands the specific, factual, and realistic nature of faith: 'the illative sense'[466]. Firstly, what Newman means by the illative sense is a capacity to see a large field of evidence as a whole. Newman is concerned to make the point that one's reasoning is often implicit, but that it is none the less rational on that account: 'the conclusion in a real or concrete question is foreseen in the number and direction of accumulated premisses, which all converge to it, and as the result of their combination, approach it more nearly than any assignable difference, yet do not touch it logically (though only not touching it) on account of the nature of its subject-

---

[465] Newman, *A Grammar of Assent*, ed. C. F. Harrold, New York, 1947, p. 8, quoted in Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 87.

[466] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 90.

matter, and the delicate and implicit character of at least part of reasonings on which it depends. It is by the strength, variety, or multiplicity of premisses, which are only probable, not by invincible syllogism – by objections overcome, by adverse theories neutralised, by difficulties gradually clearing up, by exceptions proving the rule, by unlooked-for correlations found for received truth, by suspense and delay in the process issuing in triumphant reactions – by all these ways and many others, it is that the practiced and experienced mind is able to make a sure divination that a conclusion is inevitable, of which his lines of reasoning do not actually put him in possession.'[467]

Then, Newman also argues that one's reasoning concerning matters of fact involves an unavoidably personal element, a recognition of which is vital to the study of such fundamental convictions as those of religion: 'what to one intellect is a proof is not so to another … We judge for ourselves, by our own lights, and on our own principles; and our criterion of truth is not so much the manipulation of propositions, as the intellectual and moral character of the person maintaining them, and the ultimate silent effect of his arguments or conclusions upon our minds.'[468]

According to Hick, Newman's concept of illative sense does theorize an important

---

[467] Newman, *A Grammar of Assent*, p. 244, quoted in Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, pp. 93-94. Also, 'many of our most obstinate and most reasonable certitudes depends on proofs which are informal and personal, which baffle our powers of analysis, and cannot be brought under logical rule, because they cannot be submitted to logical statistics.' See Newman, *A Grammar of Assent*, p. 229, quoted in Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 95.

[468] Newman, *A Grammar of Assent*, pp. 223 and 230, quoted in Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 99.

aspect of faith ('Newman's doctrine of the illative sense is … to be accepted as substantially correct'[469]). Newman rightly theorized that one knows a great many things which one is not able to prove, and that religious judgement comes from a personal ability to respond to indefinable indications in a given field and to marshal a mass of apparently unrelated evidences.

However, Hick says that Newman's argument fails to theorize a totality of faith ('his answer is not … finally satisfactory'[470]). This is because Newman understands divine existence as a kind of an ultimate proposition to be arrived at, and this is shown in Newman's intention 'to prove Christianity in the same informal way in which I can prove for certain that I have been born into this world, and that I shall die out of it.'[471] According to Hick, Newman's argument shows that one's belief in divine existence is concerned with propositions of essentially the same logical type as 'New York is to the north of Washington' or 'Lincoln was born in 1809'. The only important difference which Newman recognizes is that various kinds of implicit evidences and personal response to those, which are not evoked by propositions of purely logical kind, tend to intervene in matters of religion.

According to Hick, Newman is supposing that there is the realm of the natural, on the

---

[469] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 100.

[470] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 101.

[471] Newman, *A Grammar of Assent*, p. 312, quoted in Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, pp. 101-102.

one hand, and there is another realm of the supernatural, on the other: 'he [Newman] assumes that truth in both the natural and the supernatural spheres may be ascertained in essentially the same way – the adding up of probabilities until they amount to virtual certainty.'[472] Hick says that Newman understands the divine existence as something one can finally arrives at after the process of reasoning, but, for Hick, the divine existence is not a proposition like 'New York is to the north of Washington'. Newman understands faith as a choice among other options and, in this sense, Newman's understanding of faith covers only a limited field. However, as John Oman has suggested, the natural and the supernatural cannot be separated and the supernatural can be found only from within the natural: 'the revelation of the Supernatural was by reconciliation to the Natural; and this was made possible by realizing in the Natural the meaning and purpose of the Supernatural.'[473] This understanding of the natural and the supernatural will further be examined in the next section.

What can be seen from the argument above is that, in spite of Newman's own intention to theorize faith as totality, Newman fails to theorize totality. This is because Newman divides the realm of faith as totality, on the one hand, and the realm of logic as abstraction, on the other hand. There is no dialectical interaction between them. By the concept of

---

[472] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 104. Newman says that 'from probabilities we may construct legitimate proof, sufficient for certitude.' See Newman, *A Grammar of Assent*, p. 312, quoted in Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, pp. 104-05.

[473] John Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, p. 448, quoted in Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 130.

illative sense, Newman tries to theorize a personal capacity to see a large field of evidence as a whole, and it can be understood as an important aspect of faith. But, if Newman defends the fixed distinction between faith and logic, Newman's faith remains to defend only a limited field.[474]

III. THE ORIGIN OF COSMIC OPTIMISM

In the previous sections, Hick's understanding of the arguments of William James and John Henry Newman was examined, and both of their arguments were shown to cover only a limited field and they fail to theorize a totality which Hick defends as a necessary aspect of his understanding of faith.

In the beginning of Part III of *Faith and Knowledge*, Hick says that his understanding

---

[474] In the second edition of *Faith and Knowledge*, Hick further adds an example of Thomas Aquinas and his understanding of the virtue of faith as another epistemological understanding of faith. According to Hick, Aquinas teaches that faith is a virtue precisely because it is not compelled. Faith is belief which is not coercively evoked by intrinsic evidence but which is produced by a voluntary adhesion to divine revelation: 'the believer has sufficient motive for believing, for he is moved by the authority of divine teaching confirmed by miracles, and, what is more, by the inward instigation of the divine invitation; and so he does not believe lightly. He has not, however, sufficient reason for scientific knowledge [*ad sciendum*] and hence he does not lose the merit.' Hick says that even if there is sufficient reason, it cannot force one to believe. The belief is only partially evidenced to be rational, and the believer is always required to be engaged with free action. See Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, pt. II, II, Q. 2, Art. 9, quoted in Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, Second Edition, p. 19.

of faith is based on an ordinary religious believer (instead of a special person on whom James' and Newman's understanding depend): 'it is not apart from the course of mundane life, but in and through it, that the ordinary religious believer claims to experience, however imperfectly and fragmentarily, the divine presence and activity.'[475] According to Hick, the ordinary believer meets God not only in moments of worship, but also when through the urgings of conscience he feels the pressure of the divine demand upon his life. Hick says that this is what John Oman means by the relation between the natural and the supernatural: 'the question concerns … the possibility of an awareness of the divine being mediated through awareness of the world, the supernatural through the natural.'[476]

Hick further explains the relation between the natural and the supernatural by introducing the concept of 'significance':

> By significance I mean that fundamental and all-pervasive characteristic of our conscious experience which *de facto* constitutes it for us the experience of a 'world' and not of a mere empty void or churning chaos. We find ourselves in a relatively stable and ordered environment in which we have come to feel, so to say, 'at home'.[477]

Hick says that the world becomes intelligible, only on the basic condition that the world is a familiar place in which one can learn to act and react in a natural and appropriate way. If

---

[475] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 110.

[476] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 110.

[477] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge,* First Edition, p. 112.

one wishes to adopt purposes and adapt means to ends, the world has to reveal to one a familiar, settled cosmos in which one is living and acting: 'it is in virtue of this homely, familiar, intelligible character of experience – its possession of significance – that we are able to inhabit and cope with our environment.'[478]

Then, Hick says that as a further condition for the world to have significance, the world must be experienced by a particular person. This is because just the objective world from nowhere cannot provide the homely character: 'a universe devoid of consciousness would be neither significant nor nonsignificant.'[479] From a perspective of a particular person, a puzzling phenomenon becomes intelligible by disclosing its context, revealing it as part of a wider whole. A person renders the unfamiliar intellectually acceptable by relating it to the already recognizable, indicating a connection or continuity between the old and the new: 'the significance for us of the physical world, nature, is that of an objective environment whose character and 'laws' we must learn, and towards which we have continually to relate ourselves aright if we are to survive.'[480]

After the explanation of 'significance,' Hick begins to introduce another concept of 'interpretation'. According to Hick, interpretation plays a fundamentally important role as a subjective correlate of significance, because the act of interpretation and the existence of the world is always related: 'the perceiving mind is thus always in some degree a selecting,

[478] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 112.

[479] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 115.

[480] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 121.

relating and synthesizing agent, and experiencing our environment involves a continuous

activity of interpretation.[481]

Then, Hick begins to discuss a more basic act of interpretation:

We have now to note, however, the further and more basic act of interpretation which

reveals us the very existence of a material world, a world which we explore and inhabit

as our given environment. In attending to this primary interpretative act we are noting

the judgement which carries us beyond the solipsist predicament into an objective world

of enduring, causally interacting objects, which we share with other people.[482]

Hick says that if one starts from a personal perspective, 'there would be only one person

in existence, and other 'people,' instead of being apprehended as independent centres of

intelligence and purpose, would be but human-like appearances.'[483] The world has

significance only in relation to a particular person, and the particular person in the particular

world is fundamentally different from any other persons in the shared world. This is a

necessary consequence of the singularity of a person. However, in one's normal mode of

experience, one is naturally acting and reacting with other persons as if they are real

persons, who are the centres of the universe, just like oneself. This is a fundamental

contradiction, which is innate to the structure of the world. According to Hick, one's

normal mode of experience and one's presupposition of the independent reality is thus

---

[481] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 122.

[482] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 122.

[483] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 123.

described as the very basic interpretation, or natural belief, by which the existence of the

world itself and other persons within it become possible: 'this is the very basic

interpretation which one is unable to justify by argument but which one has nevertheless

no inclination to doubt.'[484] Then, Hick says that this very basic interpretation is the

properly religious interpretation, that is to say, the essence of religious faith: 'the basic act

of interpretation which reveals to him the religious significance of life is a uniquely 'total

interpretation'.'[485]

On the basis of these arguments about 'significance' and 'interpretation', Hick says

that the existence of God is not something which can be separated from this world, but

God is living in the experience of a believer as a very basic reality which secures the

normality of the world, within which different persons are living: 'the primary religious

perception, or basic act of religious interpretation, is not to be described as either a reasoned

---

[484] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 124. As a support of this argument, Hick mentions
David Hume: 'We may well ask, What causes induce us to believe in the existence of body [i.e.,
matter]? But 'tis vain to ask, Whether there be body or not? That is a point, which we must take for
granted in all our reasonings.' See Hume, *Treatise*, bk. I, pt. IV, sec. 2 (Selby-Bigge's ed., pp. 187-
88), quoted in Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p, 125. Hick's interpretation of Hume will
be examined in detain in the 6th chapter of this dissertation.

[485] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 127. Hick says that, from a logical point of view,
both the existence and the non-existence of the world is possible and a religious person is on the side
to choose the existence of the world: 'although it must be very difficult, if not possible, for the sanely
functioning mind seriously to assent to solipsism and to apperceive in terms of it, yet this does
represent at least a logically possible interpretation of experience, and constitutes a *different*
interpretation.' See Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 124. The italics is in the original.
See also Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, Part Two.

conclusion or an unreasoned hunch that there is a God. It is, putatively, an apprehension of the divine presence within the believer's human experience.'[486] What is important to note is that Hick starts his argument from a particular person, but on the basis of the natural belief, one can naturally live one's own environment, within which other persons are also living.

As a support of his argument, Hick quotes from John Oman's explanation of the religious believer:

What determines their faith is not a theory of the Supernatural, but an attitude towards the Natural, as a sphere in which a victory of deeper meaning than the visible and of more abiding purpose than the fleeting can be won … The revelation of the Supernatural was by reconciliation to the Natural: and this was made possible by realizing in the Natural the meaning and purpose of the Supernatural.[487]

According to Hick, one lives in a real world, though one cannot prove by any logical formula that it is a real world, and this is the reason why it is 'faith'. One discovers and lives in terms of a particular aspect of one's environment through an appropriate act of interpretation, and having come to live in terms of it one neither requires nor can conceive any further validation of its reality.

After this primary explanation of faith as 'significance' and 'interpretation,' Hick

---

[486] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 129.

[487] Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, p. 448, quoted in Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, p. 130.

applies the argument to what he will call 'cosmic optimism': 'moral personality is

gradually being created by free response to environmental challenge and opportunities. It

is a process within which human beings can develop those qualities of unselfishness, love,

and courage which are evoked by difficulties and obstacles and by situations which may

demand the sacrifice of the self and its interests for the sake of others … the universe is

such that to remove its present finite evils would be to preclude an infinite future good.'[488]

According to Hick, the growth of moral personality can be understood as a process

because the paradox of specificity and totality applies not only as a matter of natural world,

but also as a matter of moral obligation.[489]

---

[488] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 141.

[489] In *Faith and Knowledge*, Hick explains this as a relation between the natural, the ethical, and the religious ('as ethical significance interpenetrates natural significance, so religious significance interpenetrates both ethical and natural'), and he develops the same argument in *An Interpretation of Religion*. See Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 127. See also Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, Part Three.

Hick says that the distinction of the natural, the ethical, and the religious comes from John Macmurray: 'the philosophical reader can see in *Faith and Knowledge* … a trace of John Macmurray of Edinburgh in his distinguishing of the natural, the ethical, and the divine.' See Hick, *An Autobiography*, p. 115.

In the second volume of his Gifford Lecture, *The Form of the Personal*, Macmurray explains his concept of person. First, Macmurray says that the world exists only through recognition by a specific person and, in this sense, the existence of the 'I' and the existence of the world is identical, not separated: 'existence – both of the knower and of the world he knows – is given, and given as a togetherness of self and other.'

Then, Macmurray says that, in spite of the total givenness of the world for oneself, there are other persons in the world, who look similarly unique just like oneself. The other persons appear for oneself just like a thing in the world, but, from the side of the other persons, the oneself must appear for them just like a thing in the world: 'I am not alone in the world; there are other agents … This

Hick says that an environment can be seen as a totality, but one always needs to respond to it as a specific person: 'to perceive in some situation that I am under a moral obligation to act in this or that way, is to be aware of my environment as constituting a realm of personal relationships, the present practical significance of which for myself is this moral requirement. Each distinguishable order and kind of significance makes its own immediate or potential 'difference' to the cognizer.'[490] A response becomes personal only when it is incomparably different from any other responses in the world. This is the meaning of 'significance'. A personal response has significance only when it is made by this person to this moral obligation: 'moral significance is the 'difference' made for us by the world as mediating a system of personal relationships.'[491]

---

complete and unlimited dependence of each of us upon the others is the central and crucial fact of personal existence.'

Lastly, Macmurray says that, in spite of the fundamental distance between oneself and other persons, the existence of the world is presupposed among them. This is the basis of religion, according to Macmurray, because the existence of the world, which is incomparably unique for each person and incomparably absolute for everyone, is not a logical consequence, but can only be confirmed as a fact which manifests itself through one's action and other person's reactions. From a personal point of view, the world with other persons appears only as possibility. But, from the divine point of view, the world with incomparably unique persons actually exists as necessity: 'the community of agents, like any individual agent, must be part of the world in which it acts ... This community can act only through the Other, which is both its support and its resistance; and this Other is the world of which the community of agents is only a part … What is verified in action is necessarily a *conception* of God, which presupposes a practical belief in His reality … The relation of man to the world is his relation to God.' See Macmurray, *Persons in Relation*, pp. 209, 211, and 212-17. The italics is in the original.

[490] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 164.

[491] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 169.

However, if one just remains to be personal, it fails to be religious. This is because, according to Hick, to be religious means to have faith in the independent reality, or to create a very basic normality, within which incomparably different persons are living. The understanding of other persons is impossible right from the start, and, in spite of the impossibility, a religious person is required to create a very basic normality on the basis of the assumption that the world exists. This is what Hick means by 'totality', and, because of the impossibility, its realization necessarily includes an element of 'process': 'the totality which it [the religious interpretation] discloses constitutes a situation within which the interpreter is himself inextricably involved as a constituent, a situation which makes continual practical demands upon him.'[492]

As a support of his argument, Hick quotes from John Oman again: 'knowing is not knowledge as an effect of an unknown external cause, but is knowledge as we so interpret that our meaning is the actual meaning of our environment.'[493] Hick says as a comment that cognition of the world and other persons can never be formally infallible by definition. However, the impossibility to know the world and other persons is not a defect but a virtue: 'the fallibility which religious judgments share with all other interpretations does not constitute an epistemic defect, but rather a virtue.'[494] From the argument above, this is

---

[492] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 186.

[493] Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, p. 175, quoted in Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 166.

[494] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 166.

because the incomparable personality and the existence of the world are the two sides of

the same reality. The world has significance only for a particular person, but, at the same

time, the significance will be lost without the existence of the divine environment, within

which incomparably particular persons are living: 'it is in virtue of this tendency that we

are able both to know God and yet to be genuinely free in relation to him.'[495] This

contradictory relationship is what Hick means by the necessity of the two types of faith:

'*fides* and *fiducia* are two elements in a single whole, which is man's awareness of the

divine.'[496]

---

[495] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, pp. 183-84.

[496] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, pp. 186-87.

2.

An Interpretation of Religion

In the previous section, a fundamentally contradictory characteristic of Hick's argument in *Faith and Knowledge* was examined. This section will examine a continuity of the same characteristic in *An Interpretation of Religion*.

In Part II of the book, Hick introduces a concept of 'the religious ambiguity of the universe': 'by the religious ambiguity of the universe I do not mean that it has no definite character but that it is capable from our present human vantage point of being thought and experienced in both religious and naturalistic ways.'[497] According to Hick, what is important in the argument is not any general inference to defend a religious or naturalistic worldview, but what Hick calls 'the *prima facie* significance of the evidence'[498].

For example, a theistic person can suggest that theistic evidence can be found in a particular supposed divine revelation, or the orderliness and beauty of the world, or the moral nature of the human species, or some other factors. Likewise, an atheistic person can suggest that atheistic evidence can be found in the problem of suffering, or the reductionist force of a sociological or a psychological analysis of faith, or the evils caused

---

[497] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 73.

[498] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 123.

by religion in human history, and so on. Hick says, however, that all the evidences are incomparably unique and therefore it can have significance only as arbitrary and subjective evidence: 'I selected these particular aspects precisely because they constitute *prima facie* evidence for, or against, theism … any such relative quantifications could only be arbitrary and subjective.'[499] These arguments from evidences can be understood as being made from what Hick called 'faith as cognition'. The evidentialist defence of religion can make sense only from a particular viewpoint.[500]

Then, in Part Three of the book, Hick moves to the argument of 'the natural, the ethical, and the religious'. According to Hick, 'the religious ambiguity of the universe' is taken as a problem because all the evidences make sense only when there is only the *actual* world rather than *possible* multiple worlds: 'whilst the objective ambiguity of our environment consists in the fact that it is *capable* of being interpreted in a variety of ways, its consciously experienced and actively lived-in character consists in its *actually* being interpreted as

---

[499] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 123.

[500] Hick's interpretation of Richard Swinburne's 'the principle of credulity' can be understood as an example of 'the faith as cognition'. According to Swinburne, 'what one seems to perceive is probably so. How things seem to be is good grounds for a belief about how things are.' For example, having the experience of it seeming epistemically to one that there is a table there is good evidence for supposing that there is a table there. Likewise, in the absence of special considerations, all religious experiences ought to be taken by their subjects as genuine, and hence as substantial grounds for belief in the existence of their apparent object. After the accumulation of such evidences, Swinburne says that, one can increase the probability of the existence of God. Hick makes a comment that 'it is rational to regard our apparently perceptual experiences as veridical except when we have reason to doubt their veridicality.' See Swinburne, *The Existence of God*, p. 254, quoted in Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 214. See also Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 215.

meaningful.'[501]

Hick explains that this actuality can be understood as the significance of the world: 'we do not find ourselves in a homogeneous continuum within which no distinctions can be made, or within a mere chaos or stream of kaleidoscopic change which would offer no purchase for purposefully appropriate action, but rather in a structured environment within which we can react differently to different items and within diverse situations.' [502] According to Hick, the significance is the very basic condition for the world to have any meanings: 'to find the world, or some aspect of it, meaningful is thus to find it intelligible – not in the intellectual sense of understanding it but in the practical sense that one is able to behave appropriately (or in a way that one takes to be appropriate) in relation to it.'[503] And, this significance provides actuality only for a particular person in this particular world at this particular time, because the person and the world is inseparably intricate in this very basic case: 'we are not bodiless observers viewing a scene with which we have no contact, but integral parts of the world that we are cognizing, and we exist in continuous interaction with those parts of it that are adjacent to us.'[504] The significance of the world is what Hick calls 'the natural'.

Then, on the basis of the significance of the world, Hick introduces the argument from

---

[501] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 129. The italics is added.

[502] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 130.

[503] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 131.

[504] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 131.

the existence of other persons, who look just human-like appearances for a particular person, but it is *possible* for them to be other centres of the universe: 'to be confronted by another human person is to be aware of another consciousness existing independently of and over against myself; another centre of judgment appealing to canons of rationality to which we both subscribe; another system of valuation; another set of purpose; another will.'[505] From the existence of other persons, it can *possibly* mean that there are a lot of incomparably different worlds, which are corresponding to incomparably different persons just like oneself: 'in the presence of another person two evaluators meet, so that in judging I am at the same time judged. Not only am I conscious of the other but I am conscious that the other is conscious of me. Further, he or she will have aims and interests which may support or oppose my own.'[506] This *possible* existence of other persons, instead of the *actual* existence of myself, is what Hick calls 'the ethical'.

Furthermore, on the basis of the possible existence of other persons, a person can make a choice that the *actual* world exists in spite of the *possible* existence of multiple worlds. According to Hick, this is the essence of being religious: 'I am going to argue, then, that it is rational to believe in the reality of God. More precisely, by taking account of differences between different people, and also between the cognitive situations of the same person at different times, the thesis elaborates itself as follows: it has been rational for some people in the past, it is rational for some people now, and it will presumably in the future be

[505] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 145.

[506] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 145.

rational for yet other people to believe in the reality of God.'[507]   A point of argument here

is that not only *spatial* difference between persons, but also *temporal* difference has the

same structure. The world has 'significance' only at this particular time, and past and future

looks like just human construction. In spite of the possibility, the world actually exists not

only now but also in the past and future.

Hick says that, according to Norman Kemp Smith, this is what Hume called 'natural

belief':

Western philosophy from Descartes to Hume has shown by default that we cannot

prove the existence of an external world … We thus come to rest in something like the

'natural belief' that Hume – according to Norman Kemp Smith's interpretation, in

contrast to the older reading of Hume as a systematic sceptic – adumbrated … That is

to say, we are so constituted that we cannot help believing and living in terms of the

objective reality of the perceived world. We may be able to suspend our conviction

during brief moments of philosophical enthusiasm; but natural belief in 'the existence

of body' will soon reassert itself.[508]

According to Hick, on the basis of this natural belief, which secures the very basis of reality,

one's belief in the existence of God, which secures both the absolute oneness of the world

and the incompatible uniqueness of different persons, can be understood. What Hick adds

---

[507] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 211.

[508] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 213. The quotation is from Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, London: Oxford University Press, 1968, p. 187. See also Norman Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, London: Macmillan, 1941.

to Hume's argument is a personal dimension. From the structure of a person, the other persons necessarily appear only as human-like appearances. There is no direct confirmation of whether the other persons are really persons or not. Theoretically, one cannot distinguish a person from a machine. In spite of the theoretical ambiguity, ordinary people believe that the other persons are actually persons just like oneself. Then, if ordinary people are naturally presupposing the incompatible uniqueness of other persons, there must be the common recognition of God behind them.[509]

According to Hick, this natural belief is based on trust, instead of cognition: 'we shall not however be asking directly whether A's 'experience of existing in the presence of God' *is* genuine ..., but rather whether it is rational for A to trust his or her experience as veridical and to behave on the basis of it.'[510] The natural belief is based on trust, because the existence of other persons can only possibly be supposed for a particular person. In spite of the theoretical possibility, ordinary people naturally trust in the existence of other persons. But this necessity of faith as trust does not lead to disregard faith as cognition. This is because one's faith as trust, which is based on one's trust in the existence of other persons, originally comes from one's faith as cognition, which is based on one's personal significance of the world.

Hick says that not only faith as cognition, but also faith as trust has its own rationality. This is because it is argued as a necessary consequence of an initial premise of the personal

---

[509] Hick's reading of Hume will further be discussed in the 6th chapter of this dissertation.

[510] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 212.

significance of the world, and it is open to decide whether it is rational or irrational: 'a proposition believed can be true or false: it is the believing of it that is rational or irrational.'[511] This natural belief, which is based on both the personal significance of the world and the existence of other persons, is what Hick calls 'the religious'.

---

[511] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 212.

3.

An Intermediate Summary of the Argument

The last chapter had examined Hick's argument about critical realism as a contradictory relation between language and reality. This chapter has further examined Hick's argument about cosmic optimism as a contradictory relation between the particular and the universal. On the basis of these examinations, this section will examine a relation between reliabilism, which the 1st and the 2nd chapters examined, and critical realism / cosmic optimism, which the 3rd and the 4th chapters examined. Even though reliabilism tends to emphasize a more static aspect of *balance* among different factors and cosmic optimism / critical realism tends to emphasize a more dynamic aspect of *progress* through history, each can be understood as different aspects of the same philosophy of John Hick. In spite of its emphasis on 'balance among different factors', reliabilism necessarily includes 'progress through history'. Likewise, in spite of its emphasis on 'progress through history', cosmic optimism necessarily includes 'balance among different factors'.

For example, what had been examined in the 1st chapter was Ernest Sosa's distinction between foundationalism, coherentism, and reliabilism, and an ethical implication of reliabilism was further examined as normality in the 2nd chapter.

In the 1ˢᵗ chapter, foundationalism was defined as a position that all knowledge is founded on what is ultimately given: 'foundationalism postulates foundations for knowledge – even if they disagree in their respective foundations, and disagree on how to erect a superstructure.'[512] The characteristic of foundationalism is that it has an ultimate foundation with which all the other kinds of knowledge are related. According to foundationalism, a foundation puts one directly and infallibly in touch with certain truth from one's particular perspective and then enables us to reach many other truths, again infallibly, through deductive proof.

In contrast, the characteristic of coherentism is lack of foundation: 'what distinguishes a coherent theory is simply the claim that nothing can count as a reason for holding a belief except another belief.'[513] According to coherentism, there are no basic or foundational beliefs and at least the primary basis for justification is the fact that such beliefs fit together and support each other in a variety of complicated ways, thus forming a coherent system of beliefs, or perhaps more than one such system. Then, two problems of coherentism were suggested. First is an arbitrariness, which means that whatever appears within one framework is the truth for the framework, and it can't be questioned by another framework for the simple fact that it doesn't belong to the framework. Whatever is declared to be truth for a framework is true only because it is declared as such in the framework. Second is a

---

[512] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 1. See also the 1ˢᵗ chapter of this dissertation.

[513] Donald Davidson, 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge', in Dieter Henrich, Ed., *Kant oder Hegel?*, Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1983, p. 426, quoted in Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 108.

226

closed nature, which means that many different frameworks are equally and internally coherent as others and there can be no relation or communication between them. It is impossible to truly understand another framework from one's own framework.

Reliabilism was proposed to reconcile foundationalism and coherentism, and is characterized as not only static balance but also dynamic history: 'reliabilism requires for the epistemic justification of belief that it be formed by a process reliable in an environment normal for the formation of such belief.'[514] Firstly, reliabilism makes a balance among plural foundations. What foundationalism proposed as a perfect foundation is now understood by reliabilism as an imperfect but reliable foundation with a unique characteristic. As a result, according to reliabilism, there are a wide variety of different foundations, each of which has an incommensurate characteristic. What is required is more like making a coherent balance among incompatible foundations, instead of choosing one of them. Therefore, the criterion of judgement becomes whether it is reliable or not, instead of whether it is true or not.

Secondly, this side of reliabilism, which aims to make a balance, emphasizes a static aspect, but it also has a dynamic aspect, which aims to make historical progress. Reliabilism takes an historical approach to form a coherent perspective among different foundations. This is because what is reliable relative to a particular situation may be unreliable to another. There is no perfectly reliable foundation, and therefore reliabilism is

---

[514] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 89.

required to take a broad historical approach to inquire from what have been accumulated in the past, through one's present stage, towards a future ideal in which one would have the whole truth, or at least a close approximation.

The static balance and dynamic history can also be found in the ethical implication of reliabilism as normality. In the 2nd chapter, reliabilism was explained as 'one's way of arriving directly and noninferentially at beliefs respectively about: certain of one's own states at the time; certain features of one's surroundings; and certain aspects of one's past.'[515] A distinctive characteristic of the reliabilist idea of normality is that the idea of normality must be created by the person as one's unique normality, and therefore one cannot acquire normality before one's actual engagement with the world. One must create one's own normality in that particular time, in that particular situation. One's actual engagement is immediately arrived at in a natural and obvious way, but it does not mean that the process is simple. On the contrary, the naturalness has been acquired through a very subtle balance that has been accumulated through history.

The necessity of balance and history can also be found in the reliabilist idea of equilibrium: 'the method of reflective equilibrium aims to maximize two factors in one's beliefs: harmonious coherence, and plausibility of content.'[516] According to reliabilism, the first order of plausible content can be understood as one's unique engagement with the world's complexity. If the plausible content becomes fixed and stabilized, the second order

---

[515] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 212.

[516] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 257.

of harmonious coherence is also fixed, stabilized, and reduced just to follow what everyone else is thinking under the name of normality. On the contrary, the reflective equilibrium must be an endeavor to cope with the lively reality of the changing world. On the one hand, stabilizing balance is necessary for the possibility of conducting a healthy judgement against the complexity of reality, but, on the other hand, the stabilizing balance must include a moment of historical progress which is created by one's unique engagement at each time on each occasion.

The necessity of balance and history can also be found in the reliabilist idea of virtue. On the one hand, virtue is valid only for a unique situation: 'a virtue is virtuous only relative to appropriate surroundings, which are not the product of any reflection.'[517] On the other hand, it is a comprehensive ability of a person to find something common in the complexity of the world: 'broader intellectual virtue makes it possible to accept wide reflective equilibrium.'[518] This reliabilist idea of virtue is related to the social construction of a norm: 'a concept of epistemic justification that measures the pertinent virtues or faculties of the subject relative to the normal for the community will be useful to the community.'[519] A reliabilist justification functions to unite different abilities of a person and that process of justification is heavily influenced by what has implicitly been inherited through society and humanity in general from generation to generation. The process of

---

[517] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 266.

[518] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 266.

[519] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 276.

justification helps to construct hidden norms of society as 'the implied social component of knowledge'[520], but, at the same time, the process of justification is made by one's actual engagement with reality. Both of the two aspects of the process, the creating process and the stabilizing process, are necessary components of reliabilism.

Likewise, the creating process through history and the stabilizing process through balance can also be found in Hick's argument about critical realism. For example, in the 3rd chapter, the first characteristic of Roy Wood Sellars' critical realism was discussed that human knowing is a direct knowing of the object: 'knowing is direct in that its primary object is objective disclosure; but it is mediated by data and concepts.'[521] According to Sellars, human knowing is partial but direct. Human knowing reveals only a partial truth of the object, but the partial knowledge is not a representation of the object but is part of reality.

Then, Sellars says that appearances of the object reveal various kinds of essences of the object of perception: 'knowing must be studied at its various levels as a characteristic claim of the human knower.'[522] According to Sellars, diversity of appearances supposes a lot of different sources of knowledge and each contributes to construct the whole understanding of reality. In this sense, the basis of reality can be understood as a total *balance* of different kinds. When one seeks to recover the basis of reality, one can choose

---

[520] Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 276.

[521] Sellars, *The Philosophy of Physical Realism*, p. 61.

[522] Sellars, *The Philosophy of Physical Realism*, p. 73.

a narrow but certain foundation, but Sellars took an alternative, more holistic direction.

Lastly, Sellars says that thought cures its own difficulties by showing how new distinctions satisfy old conflicts: 'the generic category is change; at the very least, evolution is a kind of cumulative change … Evolutionary naturalism rests upon physical realism and the fact of creative synthesis.'[523] This is an emphasis on the *historical* process of reconciliation and maturation. According to Sellars, human beings have an evolutional tendency to make correct guesses and they can develop the comprehension of the world through the history of errors.

The stabilizing process through balance and the creating process through history can also be found in Hick's argument about cosmic optimism. Firstly, Hick says that the world has a homely character which has significance only for a particular person: 'to find the world, or some aspect of it, meaningful is thus to find it intelligible – not in the intellectual sense of understanding it but in the practical sense that one is able to behave appropriately (or in a way that one takes to be appropriate) in relation to it.'[524] According to Hick, this homely character provides actuality only for a particular person in this particular world at this particular time, because the person and the world is inseparably intricate in this very basic case.

Then, secondly, there are other persons who are living in the world from incomparably different perspectives: 'to be confronted by another human person is to be aware of another

---

[523] Sellars, *The Philosophy of Physical Realism*, p. 3.

[524] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 131.

consciousness existing independently of and over against myself; another centre of judgment appealing to canons of rationality to which we both subscribe; another system of valuation; another set of purpose; another will.'[525] From the existence of other persons, it can possibly mean that there are a lot of incomparably different worlds, which are corresponding to incomparably different persons just like oneself.

Furthermore, the natural belief to trust the actual world is required in spite of the possibility of multiple worlds: 'western philosophy from Descartes to Hume has shown by default that we cannot prove the existence of an external world … We thus come to rest in something like the 'natural belief' that Hume … adumbrated … That is to say, we are so constituted that we cannot help believing and living in terms of the objective reality of the perceived world.[526] According to Hick, on the basis of the natural belief, one can naturally act and react with other persons who are also the centres of the universe, just like oneself. This natural belief which secures the very basis of reality can be understood as a total *balance* of one's world kept by common sense, within which incomparably different persons are living.

Lastly, Hick says that the dialectical relation between the actual and the possible necessarily includes an historical process towards the infinite future: 'what I called earlier the cosmic optimism of each of the great traditions is intensified when we see them all as pointing to the possibility of a limitlessly better existence and as affirming that the universe

---

[525] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 145.

[526] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 213.

is such that this limitlessly better possibility is actually available to us and can begin to be realized in each present moment.'[527] This cosmic optimism can also be understood as progress through history.

What can be revealed from these examinations is that, even though each shows a lot of different emphases, both reliabilism and cosmic optimism start the argument from a specificity of a particular perspective, and, as a result of the necessity of synthesizing the incomparably different perspectives, two different kind of logic, a static logic as stabilization through balance and a dynamic logic as creation through history, are required.

---

[527] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 380.

Chapter 5.

HICK'S INHERITANCE FROM KANT

The System of *An Interpretation of Religion*

John Hick's reading of Kant must be interpreted within the whole system of *An Interpretation of Religion*. First, there is a contradiction in Hick's reading of Kant. For example, Hick says that 'the mind actively interprets sensory information in terms of concepts, so that the environment as we consciously perceive and inhabit it is our familiar three-dimensional world of objects interacting in space. This is a highly generalized version of Kant's complex theory of the forms and categories of perception.'[528]

Here, one can find a contradiction. According to Hick, Kant, on the one hand, suggests that the world exists because I interpret the world through forms and categories. In this case, the subject ('I') is prior to the world, and an external object in the world is a mere appearance which is nothing but a representation by oneself. This is a *subjective* side of Kant's argument. However, Kant, on the other hand, suggests that my existence in time and space is determined by its relation with external objects. In this case, the world is prior

---

[528] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 240.

to the subject ('I'), and an external object is an actual thing which exists outside oneself and not a mere representation of a thing. In other words, a personal world recognized through one's forms and categories is, in spite of its artificial and constructed character, the actual world which is shared by everyone. This is an *objective* side of Kant's argument.

Hick's use of Kant's other concepts such as categories and concepts[529] and regulative idea[530] can be understood as an answer to this fundamental contradiction. These concepts indicate that the subjective side and the objective side are in a dialectical relationship which develops towards the ultimate reality.

A confirmation of this interpretation can be found in Hick's comment on Norman Kemp Smith. In *An Autobiography*, Hick says that

I was deeply influenced by Kemp Smith … He was one of the last of the Idealist philosophers and also a major interpreter of Kant … It was through him that I realized the immense importance of Kant … I have retained from Kant what today I identify as 'critical realism' – the view that there is a world, indeed a universe, out there existing independently of us, but that we can only know it in the forms provided by our human

---

[529] 'The pure categories or pure concepts of the understanding (for example, substance) are schematized in terms of temporality to produce the more concrete categories which are exhibited in our actual experience of the world (Thus, for example, the pure concept of substance is schematized as the more concrete idea of an object enduring through time).' See Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 243.

[530] 'The idea of God … functions as a regulative idea whereby we 'regard all order in the world as if it had originated in the purpose of supreme reason." See Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 243, and the quotation is from Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B714, trans. Norman Kemp Smith, London: Macmillan, and New York: St. Martin's Press, 1958, pp. 559-60.

perceptual apparatus and conceptual systems.[531]

Here, Hick clearly states that the independent world can be known only from within human perceptual apparatus and conceptual systems. The world is not independent just by itself, but the independence of the world must be mediated by human perceptual apparatus and conceptual systems.

Therefore, the ultimate reality can only be known from within the historical development of human understanding. However, the historical development is not enough for the full understanding of the ultimate reality. Even though historical development is relevant to matters which is about the process governed by human being, it cannot be applied to the confirmation of the ultimate reality itself. Then, Hick's concept of environment [532] can be understood as an answer to the necessity of the ultimate confirmation. This concept of environment comes from John Oman:

John Oman was probably the most original British theologian of the first half of the twentieth century, and his teaching concerning the relation between religion and environment, and the apprehension of the supernatural in and through the natural,

---

[531] Hick, *An Autobiography*, pp. 66-69.

[532] 'The impact of our environment upon our sensory equipment … comes to consciousness in forms prescribed by … schematized categories.' 'The cognitive structure of our consciousness, with its capacity to respond to the meaning or character of our environment … [includes] its religious meaning or character.' 'As in the case of our awareness of the physical world, the environing divine reality is brought to consciousness in terms of certain basic concepts or categories.' See Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 243-45.

provides (as it seems to me) an important key to the problem of religious knowledge.[533]

The concept of environment indicates that the ultimate reality which is reached at the end of history is the same as the environment here and now.

On the basis of these arguments, it can be seen that the noumenon can only be known from within the historical development of the phenomenon, and the noumenon which is reached at the end of history is the same as the phenomenon here and now: 'all that we are entitled to say about the noumenal source of … information is that it is the reality whose influence produces, in collaboration with the human mind, the phenomenal world of our experience.'[534] Here Hick says that the noumenon produces the phenomenon, and not vice versa. Human beings can know the noumenon only from within the phenomenon, but the phenomenon is actually produced by the noumenon.

Furthermore, Hick's reading of Kant must be understood within the whole system of *An Interpretation of Religion*. For example, Hick says that 'the divine Reality is not directly known *an sich*. But when human beings relate themselves to it in the mode of an I-Thou encounter they experience it as personal.'[535] Here the concept of personal must be understood in its relation to Hick's other argument about 'the natural, the ethical, and the religious'. Accordingly, it is related with Hick's cosmic optimism.[536]

---

[533] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. xix.

[534] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 243.

[535] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 245.

[536] The relation between Hick's argument about 'the natural, the ethical, and the religious' and

Also, Hick says that 'the particularizing factor (corresponding, in its function, to time in the schematisation of the Kantian categories) is the range of human cultures, actualizing different though overlapping aspects of our immensely complex human potentiality for awareness of the transcendent.'[537] Here the concept of culture comes from Hick's understanding of Wittgenstein. Accordingly, it is related with Hick's critical realism.[538]

On the basis of these, the first section of this chapter will discuss incompatible readings of Kant, exemplified in William Forgie and John Milbank, and the philosophical presuppositions of the conflict.[539] The second section will discuss an alternative reading of Kant. First, Norman Kemp Smith's *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'* will be examined. Then, John Oman's *The Natural and the Supernatural* will be examined. Lastly, John Hick's reading of Kant will be discussed in relation to them. The third section will discuss Hick's religious pluralism. First, incompatible readings of Hick's religious pluralism, which is corresponding to incompatible readings of Kant, will be discussed.[540] Then, Hick's critical realism and cosmic optimism will be discussed. Lastly, an alternative reading of Hick's religious pluralism, which is corresponding to an alternative reading of Kant, will be discussed.

Hick's cosmic optimism was discussed in the 4th chapter of this dissertation.

[537] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion,* p. 245.

[538] The relation between Hick's reading of Wittgenstein and Hick's critical realism was discussed in the 3rd chapter of this dissertation.

[539] See the 1st chapter of this dissertation.

[540] See the 2nd chapter of this dissertation.

1.

Incompatible Readings of Kant

I. WILLIAM FORGIE

A typical reading of Kant, which emphasizes the *objective* side of Kant's argument, can be found in William Forgie's reading. For example, William Forgie suggests that the forms and categories for Kant are the permanent nature of the thing which is inherent in the objective world: 'for Kant the *a priori* concepts, the categories, are twelve in number and are shared by all mankind. And they are inescapable.'[541] According to Forgie, even if a person must follow forms and categories, the forms and categories are shared by all human beings. Therefore, the forms and categories are not subjective in nature, but they are objective which is inherent in the objective world. An objective person is living in the objective world, and there is no contradiction between them.

Forgie says that this objective character of one's sense experience is the source of the veridicality of the world: 'ordinary sense experiences are frequently thought to possess a presumption of veridicality ... such a presumption is not upset by the supposed fact that

---

[541] William Forgie, 'Hyper-Kantianism in Recent Discussion of Mystical Experience,' in Religious Studies, vol. 21, no. 2, 1985, p. 208. See also Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, pp. 243-44.

those experiences are shaped by the Kantian categories – our epistemic or evidential

distinctions are made within the class of experiences so shaped.'[542] According to Forgie,

if forms and categories vary from one to another, it violates the veridicality of the world.

Therefore, even though there can be minor changes within the presupposition of the forms

and categories, the presupposition of forms and categories themselves must be understood

as permanent and inherent in the objective world.

II. MILBANK

Another typical reading of Kant, which emphasizes the subjective side of Kant's

argument, can be found in John Milbank's reading. For example, Milbank suggests that if

one conceives of God only through schematizations by concepts, one cannot conceive

God in itself: 'pure reason demands that we regard the world 'as if' in a relationship of

dependence of a highest cause, as a clock depends upon an artisan. This allows us, however,

no room to speculate about that cause as it is in itself, and if we are forced to conceive this

cause by reference to the schematizations involved in concepts of our experience, then this

should involve us in nothing more than a 'symbolic anthropomorphism' which, as Kant

says, 'only concerns language and not the object'.'[543] According to Milbank, the forms

---

[542] Forgie, 'Hyper-Kantianism in Recent Discussion of Mystical Experience,' pp. 215-16.

[543] Milbank, *The Word Made Strange*, p. 8, and the quotation is from Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics That Will Be Able to Present Itself as a Science*, trans. P. G. Lucas,

and categories for Kant are subjective in nature. When a person recognizes the world according to forms and categories, the person can recognize the world as if it is the real world. But the person never experiences the world directly, and the experience always remains subjective. Therefore, according to Milbank, if one follows Kant, the world is divided into the subjective world, which appears only though language as phenomenon, and the objective world, which loses any content as the world in itself.

III. PHILOSOPHICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS OF THE CONFLICT

What Forgie and Milbank share as their philosophical presupposition is the idea that there are two kinds of incompatible interpretations of Kant's forms and categories. If one chooses *objective* interpretation, it necessary excludes the choice of *subjective* interpretation, and vice versa.

On the one hand, an objective interpretation takes a view that Kant's forms and categories are understood as indicating the same independent reality. This view presupposes the fixed identity of the world, and therefore any changes brought by forms and categories do not violate the common reality of the world.

On the other hand, a subjective interpretation takes a view that Kant's forms and categories are understood to conceive of the world as internally related to language and to

---

Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1962, pp. 121-28.

construct the world only through language. This view gives up direct experience of the world, and one is restricted within the various kinds of human language.

Both Forgie and Milbank assume these two interpretations are incompatible, and to put these interpretations into one coherent view that does justice to each is impossible. It's a matter of choice and if one view is taken, the other view has to be given up. Even though their positions are different, what underlies their arguments as a philosophical presupposition is quite similar.

However, what has to be questioned is this philosophical presupposition. Kemp Smith's interpretation of Kant can be understood as a reconciliation between subjective and objective interpretations.

2.

An Alternative Reading of Kant

I. NORMAN KEMP SMITH

In the beginning of the introduction of *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'*, Kemp Smith says that a fundamental importance for the philosophy of Kant lies in the problem of synthetic *a priori*: 'how are synthetic *a priori* judgements possible?'[544] Kemp Smith starts his argument by examining the concept of *a priori*.

According to Kemp Smith, the *a priori*, the distinguishing characteristic of which are universality and necessity, is not given in sense but is imposed by mind: 'the *a priori* … is not part of the matter of experience but constitutes its form.'[545] In this sense, the *a priori* can be understood to have a subjective characteristic. For example, when a human being acts, the action must take the form of time which comes from the past through now to the future. The formality of past/now/future can be understood as universal and necessary, but the form of time can have a meaning, or what Hick calls 'significance,' only from a particular moment, 'now,' which is an incomparably special moment of time which can

---

[544] Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'*, p. xxv.

[545] Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'*, p. xxxiii.

be experienced only by a particular subject. If there is no 'now' as a special moment, just a formality of past/now/future cannot be understood as actual duration: 'human experience is a temporal process and yet is always a consciousness of meaning. As temporal, its states are ordered successively, that is, externally to one another; but the consciousness which they constitute is at each and every moment the awareness of some single unitary meaning by reference to which the contents of the successive experiences are organized.'[546] Kemp Smith says that the form of time is constituted by mind, and it has a subjective characteristic.

According to Kemp Smith, however, this same principle of universality and necessity also has an external characteristic: 'the universality and necessity which Kant claims to have established for his *a priori* principles are … always extrinsic.'[547] For example, if the form of past/now/future is understood to be able to be separated as an independent past, an independent now, and an independent future, the form of time becomes possible to be shared by other persons. It is experienced not only by oneself, but also by other persons. Then, the form of time becomes just possibility instead of actual duration. What is actual is only this particular now, and the actuality of the past and future becomes just postulation even though they are shared by other persons: 'the principles which lie at the basis of our knowledge … have no intrinsic necessity, and cannot possess the absolute authority … They can be established only as brute conditions, verifiable in fact though not demonstrable in pure theory, of our actual experience. They are conditions of *sense-*

---

[546] Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'*, p. xxxiv.

[547] Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'*, p. xxxv.

244

experience, and that means of our knowledge of appearances, never legitimately applicable in the deciphering of ultimate reality … human experience, even in its fundamental features (e.g. the temporal and the spatial), might conceivably be altogether different from what it actually is, and that its presuppositions are always, therefore, of the same contingent character.'[548] Kemp Smith says that only when the actuality of the *a priori* principle is separated from this particular oneself, does it become possibility which is shared by other persons. In this sense, the *a priori* can be understood to have an objective characteristic, which is independent of a personal perspective.

Then, Kemp Smith introduces the concept of the action of synthetic judgement: 'awareness is identical with the act of judging, and that judgment is always complex, involving both factual and interpretative elements. Synthetic, relational factors are present in *all* knowledge, even in knowledge that may seem, on superficial study, to be purely analytic or to consist merely of sense-impressions.'[549] According to Kemp Smith, the subjective side and the objective side of knowledge cannot be separated, because they are part of the same process. Only with abstraction, can one separate the particular subject and the universal object, but actually they are part of the same action of synthetic judgement which reveals the unknown aspect of reality: 'when, by forced abstraction, particulars and

---

[548] Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'*, p. xxxv. The italics is in the original.

[549] Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'*, p.xxxviii. The italics is in the original.

universals are held mentally apart, they are still being apprehended through judgements, and therefore through mental processes that involve both. They stand in relations of mutual implication within a *de facto* system.'[550] For example, within the process of one's action, the form of past/now/future is not separated between the subjective now and the objective past/future, but the now and the past/future is mutually inter-related. The acting in the present includes the necessity of past and future as actual duration.

According to Kemp Smith, the *a priori* principle has a paradoxical character.[551] A fact becomes actual only when experienced by a particular subject, but, at the same time, the fact must be shared by other persons as possibility. If one misses the paradoxical character of the *a priori* principle, one misunderstand it: 'the *a priori* is of this character must be clearly understood. Otherwise the reader will be pursued by a feeling of the unreality, of the merely historical or antiquarian significance, of the entire discussion.'[552]

Kemp Smith summarizes these arguments as an argument about consciousness. Kemp Smith first says that 'consciousness is in all cases awareness of meaning.'[553] According to Kemp Smith, the meaning is not about any contents of the awareness. The meaning

[550] Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'*, p. xxxviii. The italics is in the original.

[551] 'There is no difficulty in accounting for analytic judgments. They can all be justified by the principle of contradiction. Being analytic, they can be established *a priori* … For Kant *a priori* concepts are merely logical functions, i.e. empty; and secondly, are always synthetic.' See Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'*, p. 30.

[552] Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'*, p. xxxvi.

[553] Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'*, p. xli. The italics is in the original.

indicates a fact that the world has a meaning only from a particular viewpoint.[554] Then, Kemp Smith moves to 'the diaphanous view of consciousness ... which treats consciousness merely as a medium.'[555] According to Kemp Smith, the diaphanous view treats the content as being independent from a particular viewpoint. The separation between the universal content and the particular viewpoint results in a 'mirror-like mode of representation'[556] which allows the subjective realm, on the one hand, and the objective realm, on the other. However, according to Kemp Smith, the subjective realm and the objective realm cannot be separated[557] and both are part of the same process: 'not passive contemplation but active judgement, not mere conception but synthetic interpretation, is the fundamental form, and the only form, in which our consciousness exists.'[558] Kemp Smith says that consciousness must be regarded as an activity and it consists of certain relational factors whose presence can be detected in each and every act of awareness.

According to Kemp Smith, this paradoxical characteristic of synthetic *a priori* is not

---

[554] 'Meaning ... always involves the interpretation of what is given in the light of wider considerations that lend it significance.' See Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'*, p. xlii.

[555] Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'*, p. xli.

[556] Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'*, p. xli.

[557] Kemp Smith says that Kant is a founder of a *coherence* theory of truth, instead of a *correspondence* theory: 'our consciousness ... is always conditioned and accompanied by interpretative processes, and in their absence there can be no awareness of any kind.' See Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'*, p. xli. See also Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'*, p. 36.

[558] Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'*, p. xlii.

only found in time, but also in objects in space, and self: 'consciousness of time, consciousness of objects in space, consciousness of self, are the three modes of experience which Kant seeks to analyse. They are found to be inseparable from one another and in their union to constitute a form of conscious experience that is equivalent to an act of judgement – i.e. to be a form of awareness that involves relational categories and universal concepts.'[559] For example, the consciousness of objects in space has meaning only at this actual moment from a particular viewpoint. But, at the same time, the object is made possible by considering it as being shared with other persons. The possibility of an object is transformed into necessity by one's creative activity. Likewise, the self has meaning only from this specific viewpoint which enables the actual world. But, at the same time, the self is made possible by considering it as being shared with other persons. The possibility of self is transformed into necessity by one's creative activity.[560] Kemp Smith says that this structure can also be found in morality: 'morality, no less than knowledge, presupposes *a priori* principles.'[561]

Then, Kemp Smith says that this process of synthetic *a priori* is not a personal process,

---

[559] Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'*, p. xxxiv.

[560] 'I am conscious to myself of myself – this is a thought which contains a twofold I, the I as subject and the I as object. How it should be possible that I, the I that thinks, should be an object … to myself, and so should be able to distinguish myself from myself, it is altogether beyond our powers to explain. It is, however, an undoubted fact.' See Immanuel Kant, 'Concerning the Advances made by Metaphysics since Leibniz and Wolff' in *Werke*, VIII, ed. Hartenstein, pp. 530-1, quoted in Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'*, p. li.

[561] Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'*, p. xxxvi.

but an ontological[562] process: 'our mental states … are themselves part of the natural order which consciousness reveals. They compose the empirical self which is an objective existence, integrally connected with the material environment in terms of which alone it can be understood. The subjective is not opposite in nature to the objective, but a sub-species within it.'[563] According to Kemp Smith, the principle to guide the ontological process is called regulative, because the experienced order is discovered from within the process of solving contradictions instead of presupposing it as determined end: 'owing to the creating activities of the mind, regulative principles are active in all consciousness; and under their guidance the experienced order … is transformed into a comprehended order.'[564]

Finally, Kemp Smith explains the structure of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*: 'the problem of the *Critique*, the analysis of our awareness of meaning, is a single problem, and each … involves all the others.'[565] According to Kemp Smith, different parts of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (Transcendental Aesthetic, Transcendental Analytic, and Transcendental Dialectic) discuss the single problem from different angles: 'the statement in the *Aesthetic* that space and time are given to the mind by the sensuous faculty of

---

[562] 'To eliminate the ontological implications of his theory of consciousness is … to render many of his conclusions entirely untenable, and in particular to destroy the force of his fundamental distinction between appearance and reality.' See Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'*, p. xlv.

[563] Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'*, p. xlvi.

[564] Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'*, pp. xxxviii-xxxix.

[565] Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'*, p. liii.

receptivity is modified in the *Analytic* through recognition of the part which the syntheses

and concepts of understanding must play in the construction of these forms; and in the

Dialectic their apprehension is further found to involve an Idea of Reason.'[566] According

to Kemp Smith, the Idea of Reason is different from forms and categories in being not

constitutive but regulative. The idea of reason is regulative because it reveals the infinite

historical process of realizing the ultimate end from within the human conditions,

especially the spatial and temporal conditions under which the aim is realized.[567]

What can be seen from the argument above is that what mediates subjectivity and

objectivity is history. First, the world is experienced as *subjective* for a particular person.

However, the same world is shared with other persons. Then, the world which has been

known among other persons appears as *objective* from the viewpoint of the specific person.

This is contradiction. Then, the personal *subjectivity* of the world can be recovered from

---

[566] Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'*, p. liv.

[567] Kemp Smith distinguishes the Hegelian version of Idealism (Hermann Lotze and T. H. Green) and the Kantian version of Idealism (Edward Caird and John Watson), and says that his reading of Kant is close to Caird and Watson: 'we have … to consider what is perhaps the most serious of all the misunderstandings to which Kant has laid himself open, and which is in large part responsible for the widespread belief that his Critical principles, when consistently developed, must finally eventuate in some such metaphysics as that of Fichte and Hegel … This interpretation of Kant appears in a very crude form in James's references to Kant … It appears in a more subtle form in Lotze and Green. Caird and Watson, on the other hand, have carefully guarded themselves against this view of Kant's teaching.' See Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason*,' p. l. See also Edward Caird, *The Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant*, Glasgow: James Maclehose, 1889, and John Watson, *The Philosophy of Kant Explained*, Glasgow: James Maclehose, 1908.

within one's action and other persons' reactions. The *objectivity* of what has been known among other persons is replaced by the *subjectivity* of another person's reaction, which is not known by the specific person yet. In this case, the subjectivity and the objectivity is in the relationship of historical development. The personal *subjectivity* is replaced by the *objectivity* of other persons, and then the *objectivity* of other persons is replaced by the *subjectivity* of other persons' reaction. Because of the replacement, the relation between subjectivity and objectivity is understood as historical development.

However, historical development is not enough for the full understanding of the ultimate reality. Even though historical development is relevant to matters which are about the process governed by human being, it cannot be applied to the confirmation of the ultimate reality itself.

II. JOHN OMAN

One of the central arguments that Oman developed in *The Natural and the Supernatural* is that the supernatural can be known only from within the natural. The relation between the natural and the supernatural can be found in his concept of environment and his reading of Kant's concepts of the noumenon and the phenomenon.

First, Oman's concept of environment indicates that the ultimate reality is not different from one's personal environment here and now: 'knowing is not knowledge as an effect

of an unknown external cause, but is knowledge as we so interpret that our meaning is the actual meaning of our environment.'[568]   According to Oman, the ultimate reality is known only through human knowing and hence has no separate locus of its own which can be known independently of one's personal environment.

Then, Oman says that the personal environment is neither purely subjective nor purely objective: 'our knowledge cannot be a purely mental creation; and it cannot be a mere effect of an outward cause.'[569]   Here Oman intends to say that personal environment must not be understood as a result of a fixed relation between a subject and its object. On the contrary, personal environment is characterized by what is more than one's expectation: 'a human being's environment is other and greater than it seems, that interpreting the natural, but extending behind or beyond or above it, is the Supernatural, as a larger environment to which men must relate themselves through the activities.'[570]   According to Oman, there is one's engagement with the personal environment. However, the response from the side of environment must not be understood as a direct result of one's engagement. The environment always stands over against a person, and therefore its response is always more than one's expectation.[571]

---

[568] Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, p. 175.

[569] Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, p. 110.

[570] Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, pp. 58-9.

[571] Oman says that the supernatural is characterized by what is more than the natural: 'the Supernatural means the world which manifests more than natural values.' See Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, p. 71.

Oman says that this relation between a person and the world can also be understood as a relation between a person and other persons: 'such a leaning by intercourse [with the world] has a parallel only in our experience of persons … all friendship is a reaching out to the person who is himself both the revelation and the prophecy of fuller manifestation.'[572] Here Oman mentions other persons, because other persons always manifests itself as what is more than a person's expectation.

Furthermore, Oman says that the concept of *personal* environment which is more than one's expectation leads to the concept of the *ultimate* environment as totality of the world: 'as they live more in accord with their environment they know it better, and as they know it better they can live in a larger accord … the more he is himself an independent person, the more his knowledge is objective. Religion differs only by reason of a higher environment.'[573] According to Oman, what characterizes religion is totality, which can be found as the ultimate unity of the world: 'what distinguishes religion from all else is the unique quality … of the way of thinking things together.'[574]

Oman says that the ultimate environment can be understood as including all of the world in all of its aspects, within which all the different persons are living: 'religion must be a large experience in which we grow in knowledge as we grow in humility and courage, in which we deal with life and not abstractions, and with God as the environment in which

---

[572] Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, p. 340.

[573] Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, p. 470.

[574] Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, p. 58.

we live and move and have our being … This we realize, as environment is only to be realized, by rightly living in it.'[575]

On the basis of the arguments above, Oman explains the relation between the natural and the supernatural: 'the revelation of the Supernatural was by reconciliation to the Natural: and this was made possible by realizing in the Natural the meaning and purpose of the Supernatural.'[576] According to Oman, the Supernatural is perceived when the natural world, within which different individuals are following different values, meanings and purposes, becomes open to its ultimate value, meaning and purpose. The Supernatural is not the designation of a world beyond this world; it is, rather, this natural world seen inclusively and as having a new evaluation made of its total significance.

What is important to note here is that religion is not thought to be a matter of history: 'the origin of religion … cannot be an historical question … At the lowest stage we know, man is already … with his religion as a going concern in all its aspects of higher feeling, higher values and higher environment … a belief in the Supernatural, which, even in its grossest material environment, evokes a reverence and a trust not to be explained by any exaltation of the Natural.'[577] Here Oman intends to say that religion as an ultimate environment is the ultimate basis to think of history, and not vice versa. According to Oman, religion is related with the eternal, whereas history is related with the evanescent: 'if

---

[575] Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, p. 471.

[576] Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, p. 448.

[577] Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, pp. 55-6.

reconciliation to the evanescent is revelation of the eternal, and revelation of the eternal a higher reconciliation to the evanescent, that is only as we know all environment, which is by living in accord with it.'[578] Here Oman intends to say that if there is only history, it remains to be arbitrary and evanescent. What lacks in history as the evanescent is a higher reconciliation given by the eternal. Then, according to Oman, the eternal is not only understood as the ultimate environment which is reached at the end of history, but also the personal environment here and now which is known by one's living in accord with it.

This point becomes clearer with the examination of Oman's reading of Kant's concepts of noumenon and phenomenon. First, Oman says that contradiction between causal necessity of the phenomenal world and personal freedom of the noumenal world can be solved by thinking their relation as the process to be developed through one's knowing of the world: 'the necessity of the phenomenal world does not contradict the freedom of the noumenal world, because the necessity is only created by our way of knowing.'[579] This process can be understood as historical progress to discover the order of the world: 'when mind becomes conscious and interprets its environment by reason and proceeds to manage it by considered and deliberate purpose, environment is found to be neither adamant nor putty, but an ordered and reliable universe.'[580]

---

[578] Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, p. 470.

[579] Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, p. 242.

[580] Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, p. 330. According to Oman, this historical progress is originated in a dialectical relationship between the individual and individuality. By the individual is meant the *phenomenal* character of being one person, which is common to all persons. By

255

However, according to Oman, Kant's argument from historical progress must not be understood as just a mere continuation of physical causation: 'progress has no meaning, if evolution is mere adaptation to the struggle to keep physically alive in an environment of value only for that end.'[581] What is lacking in physical causation is the sacred or absolute values. Oman says that personal freedom must be understood as the realization of the sacred values: 'freedom, working with sacred or absolute values, is the only vantage ground from which we can consciously be aware that our environment is a universe.'[582]

Then, Oman says that the argument by historical progress must be complemented by the argument by the ultimate environment: 'what we consciously or unconsciously mean by progress is advancement into a life measured as higher by ideals, which is freer and fuller adjustment to an environment which is also higher because of the larger scope for following ideals.'[583] According to Oman, if there is only history, one can never go out of human understanding. One can endlessly develop one's understanding, but the development cannot reach the ultimate reality itself. Therefore, one needs two different kinds of logic. On the one hand, one needs a logic of history. The logic of history can solve

---

individuality is meant the *noumenal* character of being one person, which makes each person incomparably unique. Oman says that, according to Kant, the individual's recognition of the world can be understood as the process that the endless variety of individuality manifests itself from within forms, concepts, categories, and the ideas of reason. See Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, pp. 144-67.

[581] Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, p. 332.

[582] Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, p. 330.

[583] Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, p. 332.

the contradiction between subject and object. However, the logic of history cannot explain the relation between the ultimate environment, which is reached at the end of history, and the personal environment here and now. Therefore, on the other hand, one also needs a logic of environment.

What can be seen from the arguments above is that Oman's argument which is based on the concept of *environment* is different from Kant's argument which is based on the concept of *history*, even though both of their arguments can be understood as the relation between a person and other persons. In the case of Kant, the relation between a person and other persons is a relation of *replacement.* A person's understanding of other persons is endlessly replaced by another understanding. But the replacement cannot reach the ultimate reality itself.

Whereas, in the case of Oman, the relation between a person and other persons is a relation of *integration*. On the one hand, there is a *personal* environment. The personal environment is thought to be more than one's expectation. On the other hand, there are other persons. The other persons are also more than one's expectation. Then, the person and the other persons are integrated within the *ultimate* environment. The ultimate environment is thought to include all of the world in all of its aspects, within which all the different persons are living. A person and other persons are always already integrated within a larger environment. The environment itself does not explain the history, but the environment is necessary for the full understanding of the history.

Kant's logic of history and Oman's logic of environment are in a complementary relationship. One needs both logic for the full understanding of the ultimate reality. On the one hand, there must be a logic of history, which aims at the ultimate reality of the world. But, in this case, the ultimate reality remains to be beyond one's personal world. Therefore, on the other hand, there must be a logic of environment, which secures that the ultimate reality is actually available for the person here and now.

III. JOHN HICK

Hick's reading of Kant can be understood on the basis of Kemp Smith and Oman. For example, in *An Autobiography*, Hick says that 'I was deeply influenced by Kemp Smith … He was one of the last of the Idealist philosophers and also a major interpreter of Kant … It was through him that I realized the immense importance of Kant … I have retained from Kant what today I identify as 'critical realism' – the view that there is a world, indeed a universe, out there existing independently of us, but that we can only know it in the forms provided by our human perceptual apparatus and conceptual systems.'[584] Here Hick says that the independent, or ultimate, reality can be known only from within human understanding.

In *An Interpretation of Religion*, Hick says that the relation between human

---

[584] Hick, *An Autobiography*, pp. 66-69.

understanding and the ultimate reality develops according to *temporality*: 'in Kant's

system of thought these [categories of the understanding] are *a priori* and hence universal

and invariable modes of human perception. The pure categories or pure concepts of the

understanding (for example, substance) are schematized in terms of temporality to produce

the more concrete categories which are exhibited in our actual experience of the world

(Thus, for example, the pure concept of substance is schematized as the more concrete

idea of an object enduring through time).'[585] According to Hick, one's understanding of

substance is replaced by another, more concrete understanding of substance, and it

endlessly continues.

Hick's understanding of Kant's concept of regulative idea can also be understood as a

consequence of this historical progress: 'the idea of God … functions as a regulative idea

whereby we 'regard all order in the world as if it had originated in the purpose of supreme

reason.''[586] According to the logic of history, one's understanding is endlessly replaced

---

[585] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 243.

[586] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 243, and the quotation is from Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B714, trans. Norman Kemp Smith, London: Macmillan, and New York: St. Martin's Press, 1958, pp. 559-60.

Before this quotation, Hick mentions Kant's argument about morality: 'the categorical character of moral obligation presupposes the reality of God as making possible the *summum bonum* in which perfect goodness and perfect happiness will coincide … But for Kant God is postulated, not experienced.' Here Hick is criticizing Kant, because Kant's argument is only about God who is *postulated* at the end of history and not about God who is *experienced* here and now. See Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, pp. 242-43.

This argument originally comes from *Faith and Knowledge*. In *Faith and Knowledge*, Hick criticizes Kant as well as James and Newman, because their arguments cover only a limited field of

by another, and the endless progress requires the ultimate end to be reached at the end of history.

On the basis of the argument above, one can understand the influence from Oman: 'John Oman was probably the most original British theologian of the first half of the twentieth century, and his teaching concerning the relation between religion and environment, and the apprehension of the supernatural in and through the natural, provides

---

knowledge: 'for the purpose of our inquiry, the main comment to be made upon this Kantian theory is that it leaves no room for any acquaintance with or experience of the divine … We may make a justifiable intellectual move to the belief that there is a God; but we cannot be conscious of God himself … This cannot, I think, be regarded as an analysis of the faith of the ordinary religious believer.' See Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, pp. 75-6.

According to Hick, Kantian ethics is made of two different aspects: moral goodness and happiness. On the one hand, there is moral goodness, which is universal: 'act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.' See Immanuel Kant, *The Moral Law, or, Kant's Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, trans. H. J. Paton, London: Hutchinson University Library, 1948, p. 88, quoted in Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 71.

On the other hand, there is happiness, which is personal: 'to be happy is necessarily the desire of every rational but finite being.' See Immanuel Kant, *Kant's Critique of Practical Reason and Other Works on the Theory of Ethics*, trans. Thomas Kingsmill Abbott, London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1889, p. 112, quoted in Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 72.

According to Hick, what Kant calls the highest good, the *summum bonum*, is the moral goodness with the presupposition of happiness. Then, happiness is actualized only as *action* which engages with moral goodness from within this particular moment. The actualization is understood as an endless *process* to realize happiness from within moral goodness towards *the ultimate end*. This process of actualization requires the assumption of divine existence as the ultimate end: 'the compulsion to postulate divine existence is thus a compulsion to 'assume something without which that cannot be which we must inevitably set before us as the aim of our action,' namely the *summum bonum*.' See Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 74, and the quotation is from Kant, *Kant's Critique of Practical Reason and Other Works on the Theory of Ethics*, p. 89.

(as it seems to me) an important key to the problem of religious knowledge.'[587]

In *An Interpretation of Religion*, Hick also uses the concept of environment. What is important to note here is that Hick distinguishes non-religious environment and religious environment. Hick starts the argument from non-religious environment: 'the impact of our environment upon our sensory equipment … comes to consciousness in forms prescribed by … schematized categories.'[588] According to Hick, this non-religious environment can be understood as one's physical world.

Then, Hick moves to religious environment: 'in the religious case there are two fundamental circumstances: first, the postulated presence of the Real to the human life of which it is the ground; and second, the cognitive structure of our consciousness, with its capacity to respond to the meaning or character of our environment, including its religious meaning or character.'[589] According to Hick, the religious environment can be understood from the two different circumstances. First, Hick says that there is the postulated presence of the Real. In this case, the presence of the Real is not directly experienced, but postulated in the infinite future. Then, Hick says that one's consciousness which responds to the meaning of one's environment also includes its religious meaning. In this case, one's personal environment, which has a meaning *here and now,* can also be understood to directly embody religious meaning of the ultimate environment, which is postulated *in the*

---

[587] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. xix.

[588] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 243.

[589] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 244.

infinite future.

What should be noted here is that the 'religious' has a special meaning for Hick which connects the experience here and now and the postulation of the Real in the infinite future: 'the 'presence' of the Real consists in the availability, from a transcendent source, of … what we call religious experience.'[590] According to Hick, 'the religious', which is distinguished from 'the natural', is characterized by the direct experience of the ultimate environment. In religious experience, the presence of the Real is not postulated, but experienced directly.

This connection between 'the postulation of the Real in the infinite future' and 'the direct experience of the Real here and now' can also be found in Hick's reading of Kant's concepts of noumenon and phenomenon. First, Hick says that noumenon cannot be directly known for a human being, because noumenon is beyond one's recognition: 'he [Kant] is not … using the term 'noumenon' in the positive sense of that which is knowable … but in the negative sense of 'a thing in so far as it is not an object of our sensible intuition'.'[591] According to Hick, the noumenon can only be postulated as the necessary requirement of the structure of human cognition: 'the noumenal world exists independently of our perception of it and the phenomenal world is that same world as it appears to our human consciousness.'[592] In this case, the noumenon is understood to be a

---

[590] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 244.

[591] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 241.

[592] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 241.

postulation in the infinite future.

Then, Hick says that the postulation of the Real is not enough for the full understanding of religion. What is required is not only the postulation of the Real in the infinite future, but religious experience here and now: 'in partial agreement but also partial disagreement with him, I want to say that the Real *an sich* is postulated by us as a pre-supposition … of religious experience and the religious life.'[593] According to Hick, both 'the postulation of the Real' and 'the direct experience of the Real' is necessary for the full understanding of religion. On the basis of both, the religious can be distinguished from the natural by the direct experience of the ultimate reality.

According to Hick, the direct presence of the ultimate reality remains to be mysterious facts: 'in the religious case there are … the ultimately mysterious facts of which we have to take account.'[594] However, the ultimate reality is actually available here and now: 'it is entirely reasonable for the religious person, experiencing life in relation to the transcendent …, to believe in the reality of that which is thus apparently experienced.'[595]

What can be seen from the argument above is that Kant's philosophy of history, which requires the postulation of God at the end of history, must be complemented by religious experience, which secures the experience of God here and now. On the basis of this argument about Kant, the meaning of 'the religious' becomes clearer by placing Hick's

---

[593] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 243.

[594] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 244.

[595] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 235.

argument about religious pluralism in the whole system of *An Interpretation of Religion*.

3.

Hick's Religious Pluralism

I. INCOMPATIBLE READINGS OF HICK'S RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

Corresponding to the incompatible readings of Kant, there are also incompatible readings of Hick's religious pluralism. On the one hand, there is an *essentialist* reading of Hick. According to this reading, Hick's project is understood to be based on the universal essence of religion which can be found in every religious traditions. For example, such a universal essence of religion can be ethics: 'self-sacrificing concern for the good of others … which we have seen to constitute the basic ethical principle of the great traditions.'[596] According to this reading, every religious tradition is based equally on the universal ethic of self-sacrificing concern for the good of others. Because of its emphasis on the normative characteristic of ethics, this interpretation is often criticised as a reduction of concrete narratives of different religious traditions into an abstract ideal of universal ethics.

Alternatively, such a universal essence of religion can be mythology: 'we can make true and false literal and analogical statements about our own image of the Ultimate, truth or falsity here being determined internally by the norms of our tradition. But statements

---

[596] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 325.

about the Real in itself have mythological, not literal, value.'[597] According to the essentialist reading of Hick, the same structure can also be found in the case of mythology. According to this reading, every religious tradition is based equally on mythology. Because of its normative characteristic, mythology is understood as oppression of literal and analogical statements in different religious traditions. As in the case of ethics, this reading also understands mythology as an abstraction from concrete religious traditions.

In a similar direction, there is also a *totalitarian* reading of Hick. According to this reading, Hick's project is characterized by its totalizing tendency which aims to include every different aspect of the world within the total unity of the ultimate reality. For example, its totalizing tendency can be found in Hick's concept of the religious ambiguity of the universe: 'the universe is religiously ambiguous in that it is possible to interpret it, intellectually and experientially, both religiously and naturalistically.'[598] According to this reading, religious ambiguity of the universe is intended to include every different aspect of the world, such as the religious and the natural, as well as the intellectual and the experiential within the total unity of the ultimate reality. This totalizing tendency can also be criticized as an abstraction from concrete religious lives.

However, on the other hand, there is a *cultural-linguistic* reading of Hick. This reading emphasizes precisely the opposite aspect of Hick's project. For example, this reading emphasizes the cultural-linguistic groups of religious traditions: 'it is evident that in some

---

[597] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, Second Edition, p. xxxiii.

[598] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 12.

ninety-nine percent of cases the religion which an individual professes and to which he or she adheres depends upon the accidents of birth. Someone born to Buddhist parents in Thailand is very likely to be a Buddhist, someone born to Muslim parents in Saudi Arabia to be Muslim, someone born to Christian parents in Mexico to be a Christian, and so on.'[599] According to this reading, there are a lot of different cultural-linguistic groups, and a person is determined by the cultural and linguistic worldview that one is born into. One's religion is given to one by the religious family one is part of. If one's culture creates one's world, and if one's language is mutually different, one's worlds will be different to another's.

According to this reading, religious pluralism is based on the plurality of religious traditions which actually exist in the world: 'persons living within other traditions, then, are equally justified in trusting their own distinctive religious experience and in forming their beliefs on the basis of it … let us avoid the implausibly arbitrary dogma that religious experience is all delusory with the single exception of the particular form enjoyed by the one who is speaking.'[600] There are a lot of different cultural-linguistic traditions in the world. If a person is determined by the cultural and linguistic traditions that one is born into, the other persons in other traditions are similarly justified by being determined by the cultural and linguistic traditions that one is born into. The initial plurality of religion cannot be questioned, because the choice of one religion is not based on an infallible rationality. Because of the arbitrariness, the authority of one religion cannot undermine the other

---

[599] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 2.

[600] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 235.

religions.

What can be seen from the argument above is that there are two mutually incompatible readings of Hick. On the one hand, there is an essentialist or totalitarian reading of Hick, which emphasizes the identity of religions. On the other hand, there is a cultural-linguistic reading of Hick, which emphasizes the difference of religion.

II. CRITICAL REALISM AND COSMIC OPTIMISM

According to the argument so far, the whole system of Hick's *An Interpretation of Religion* can better be understood as reconciliation between the two mutually incompatible standpoints, rather than a choice of either of them. Then, on the basis of that, two different kinds of logic are required for the full understanding of the reconciliation. The two different kinds of logic can be understood as the logic of history and the logic of environment.

First, there is the logic of *history*: 'the particularizing factor (corresponding, in its function, to time in the schematisation of the Kantian categories) is the range of human cultures, actualizing different though overlapping aspects of our immensely complex human potentiality for awareness of the transcendent.' [601] According to Hick, Wittgenstein's philosophy of language can be understood as particularization of Kant's philosophy of temporality. Hick says that Wittgenstein's philosophy of language can be

---

[601] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion,* p. 245.

268

understood as a spatial, embodied aspect of *culture*, and Kant's philosophy of temporality is understood as a linear, progressive aspect of *development*. These two aspects of culture and development are taken to be complementary.

On the one hand, according to Wittgenstein's philosophy of language, there are a lot of different kinds of cultural and linguistic traditions: 'it is … illuminating to see the different traditions, movements and ideologies whose religious character is either generally agreed or responsibly debated, not as exemplifying a common essence, but as forming a complex continuum of remembrances and differences analogous to those found within a family.' [602] Here Hick denies the common essence of religion, and instead proposes to understand religions as different kinds of cultural and linguistic traditions.

Then, on the other hand, these cultural and linguistic traditions are understood to be developing according to Kantian categories which are developing towards the ultimate reality in the infinite future: 'the pure categories or pure concepts of the understanding (for example, substance) are schematized in terms of temporality to produce the more concrete categories which are exhibited in our actual experience of the world (Thus, for example, the pure concept of substance is schematized as the more concrete idea of an object enduring through time).' [603]

This logic of history can also be found in Hick's critical realism. According to Hick, religious experience embedded in culture is not closed, but related with the ultimate reality:

---

[602] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 4.

[603] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 243.

'critical realism holds that the realm of religious experience and belief is not *in toto* human projection and illusion but constitutes a range of cognitive responses, varying from culture and culture, to the presence of a transcendent reality.'[604] What is important to realize here is that the different cultures as responses to the ultimate reality can be understood as interacting and developing according to history towards the infinite future: 'the world is about to be dramatically transformed for the better, although entertained periodically throughout history.'[605]

According to the logic of history, the ultimate reality lies in the infinite future and, therefore, always remains to be 'there' which is outside one's cultural-linguistic tradition: 'what I am calling the realist option understands such language in a basically realist way as referring to an object of discourse that is 'there' to be referred to.'[606]

However, the logic of history cannot provide the reason why the ultimate reality in the

---

[604] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 175.

[605] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 207. The emphasis on history can also be found in Roy Wood Sellars' evolutionary naturalism: 'The evolutionary naturalist holds that, just as matter is unevenly distributed throughout the universe, so are conditions making for complicated organic synthesises such as life and mind … The generic category is change; at the very least, evolution is a kind of cumulative change … Evolutionary naturalism rests upon physical realism and the fact of creative synthesis.' See Sellars, *The Philosophy of Physical Realism*, p. 3.

[606] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 173. The emphasis on the independence of object, which always remains to be outside one's interpretation, can also be found in Sellars' critical realism: 'all sorts of facts about the thing perceived … influence our perceptual experience … Attitudes, expectations, memories, accepted facts, all operate interpretatively to make us regard ourselves as somehow aware of public, independent things.' See Sellars, 'A Statement of Critical Realism', p. 477, quoted in Hick in *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 175.

infinite future is also available here and now. Therefore, the logic of history must be complemented by the logic of *environment*. Hick's argument about personhood can be understood as a procedure to lead the logic of environment.

First, Hick says that the world must be experienced from a particular person: 'we are not bodiless observers viewing a scene with which we have no contact, but integral parts of the world that we are cognizing, and we exist in continuous interaction with those parts of it that are adjacent to us.'[607] According to Hick, the particular viewpoint is the very basic condition for the world to have any meanings. The particular viewpoint provide actuality only for a particular person in this particular world at this particular time, because the person and the world is inseparably intricate in this very basic case.

The necessity of particular viewpoint is applicable not only in the case of a person but also a personal religious experience embedded in a tradition: 'our own forms of religious experience, together with that of the tradition of which we are a part, is veridical whilst others are not. We can of course claim this; and indeed virtually every religious tradition has done so, regarding alternative forms of religion either as false or as confused and inferior versions of itself. '[608]

Then, on the basis of the necessity of particular viewpoint, Hick introduces the argument from the existence of other persons, who look like just human-like appearances

---

[607] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 131.

[608] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 235, quoted in Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism,' p.191.

for a particular person, but it is possible for them to be other centres of the universe: 'in the presence of another person two evaluators meet, so that in judging I am at the same time judged. Not only am I conscious of the other but I am conscious that the other is conscious of me. Further, he or she will have aims and interests which may support or oppose my own.'[609] From the existence of other people, it can possibly mean that there are a lot of incomparably different worlds, which are corresponding to incomparably different persons just like one self.

The existence of other persons is applicable not only in the case of other persons but also other persons' religious experiences embedded in other traditions: 'persons living within other traditions … are equally justified in trusting their own distinctive religious experience and in forming their beliefs on the basis of it.'[610]

Furthermore, on the basis of the existence of other persons, Hick introduces an argument from Hume's natural belief: 'we are so constituted that we cannot help believing and living in terms of the objective reality of the perceived world. We may be able to suspend our conviction during brief moments of philosophical enthusiasm; but natural belief … will soon reassert itself.'[611] According to Hick, ordinary people in the common sense world naturally make a choice that the actual world exists in spite of the possible existence of other persons and their worlds. This natural belief, which secures the very

---

[609] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 145.

[610] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 235.

[611] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 213.

basis of reality, can be understood as a total balance of one's environment kept by common sense, within which incomparably different persons are living.

This very basic environment can be understood as a weak kind of unity, which secures an imperfect but reliable balance, instead of a strong kind of unity, which imposes a perfectly solid foundation. For example, the distinction between weakness and strength can be found in Hick's distinction between faith as trust and faith as cognition: 'we shall not … be asking directly whether A's 'experience of existing in the presence of God' *is* genuine …, but rather whether it is rational for A to trust his or her experience as veridical and to behave on the basis of it.'[612] Here what Hick calls faith as trust can be understood as a *weak* kind of reliability, in contrast with faith as cognition as a *strong* kind of reliability. One's particular cognition of the actual world has a strong kind of reliability, whereas one's natural belief in the homely, balanced environment, within which other persons are living, has only a weak kind of reliability. This is because the existence of other persons can only possibly be supposed for a particular person.

This logic of environment is a weak kind of logic, but it secures that the environment is not only possible in the infinite future, but actually available here and now. Then, at last, on the basis of the two kinds of logic about history and environment, one can understand Hick's cosmic optimism: 'what I called earlier the cosmic optimism of each of the great traditions is intensified when we see them all as pointing to the possibility of a limitlessly

---

[612] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 212.

better existence and as affirming that the universe is such that this limitlessly better possibility is actually available to us and can begin to be realized in each present moment.'[613]

On the one hand, there is a logic of history, which secures that different religious traditions can be understood as interacting and developing towards the ultimate reality. The different religious traditions here and now are pointing to the possibility of a limitlessly better existence in the infinite future. However, the logic of history cannot provide the reason why the ultimate reality in the infinite future is also available here and now. Therefore, on the other hand, there is a logic of environment, which secures that the ultimate reality is not only possible in the infinite future, but actually available as the environment here and now. The different religious traditions are actually realizing the ultimate reality in the infinite future from within the common environment in each present moment.

III. AN ALTERNATIVE READING OF HICK'S RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

On the basis of the arguments above, John Hick's religious pluralism can be understood as an imperfect but reliable standpoint rather than imposing a perfectly solid standpoint. First, there are different foundations of plural religious traditions, and then, on

---

[613] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 380.

the basis of these traditions, one can think of historical process as a means to recover the common environment among different foundations.

When Hick had a claim about substantive identity or overlap among diverse religious traditions, the emphasis was not only on the underlying ultimate unity but also diverse cultural and historical settings of religions. Hick takes these two contradictory standpoints at the same time. When Hick emphasizes the ultimate unity of all religions, he always emphasizes the diverse forms of self-understanding of religion too.

On the basis of the presupposition of the existence of different religious traditions, Hick provides the two kinds of logic which secure the ultimate unity of different religious traditions. One is the logic of history: 'the particularizing factor (corresponding, in its function, to time in the schematisation of the Kantian categories) is the range of human cultures, actualizing different though overlapping aspects of our immensely complex human potentiality for awareness of the transcendent.'[614] This logic of history can be understood as a combination of Wittgenstein's philosophy of language and Kant's philosophy of temporality. According to Wittgenstein's philosophy of language, a religion can be viewed as a kind of cultural and linguistic framework. Then, according to Kantian philosophy of temporality, these religious traditions can be understood as in a relationship between actuality and possibility. The actuality of one religious tradition is seen as possibility from other religious traditions, and this contradiction is continued to be solved

---

[614] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion,* p. 245.

in a course of history.

Then, the other is the logic of environment: 'we are so constituted that we cannot help believing and living in terms of the objective reality of the perceived world. We may be able to suspend our conviction during brief moments of philosophical enthusiasm; but natural belief … will soon reassert itself.'[615] According to the logic of environment, the actuality of one religious tradition and the possibility of other religious traditions are solved within a common environment in which ordinary people naturally believe. This logic of environment is based on Hume's philosophy of common sense.[616]

On the basis of the two kinds of logic, one can understand Hick's cosmic optimism: 'what I called earlier the cosmic optimism of each of the great traditions is intensified when we see them all as pointing to the possibility of a limitlessly better existence and as affirming that the universe is such that this limitlessly better possibility is actually available to us and can begin to be realized in each present moment.'[617]

---

[615] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 213.

[616] Hume's philosophy of common sense will be examined in the 6th chapter of this dissertation.

[617] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 380.

Chapter 6.

COMMON SENSE AND HISTORY

Two Complementary Aspects of Hick's Philosophy

In the 1st chapter of this dissertation, the characteristic of reliabilism was defined: (1) an inquiry based on the difference of plural foundations, and (2) an inquiry based on the historical process to form *a coherent perspective among different foundations*. In the 2nd chapter, the definition was further developed as the ethics of normality: (1) the idea of normality is valid only for a unique situation and it determines one's immediate reaction with the world, (2) the idea of normality is a comprehensive ability of a person and is based on the balance of whole aspects of reality, and (3) the idea of normality has a social aspect and it has both *creating and stabilizing* functions.

These characteristics of reliabilism can also be found in John Hick's philosophy. For example, Hick's reading of Hume's natural belief can be understood as the belief in the very basis of reality, within which one can naturally act and react with other persons. This can be understood as a total balance of the world kept by common sense. This natural belief is not a consequence after a process of reasoning. However, it does not mean that

the process is simple. On the contrary, the naturalness can be understood to have been acquired on a very subtle balance that has long been kept through history.

Likewise, Hick's cosmic optimism can be understood as dynamism created by a specific person's unique engagement with other persons. If the total balance among persons is fixed and stabilized, the lively reality of the changing world is lost. Even though the stabilization of normality is necessary as a conventional standard for a social life, the conventional standard must be wide enough to accept a specific person's unique engagement.

Therefore, John Hick's philosophy has these two aspects: common sense and history. On the one hand, Hick's reading of Hume's natural belief can be understood as a philosophy of common sense: 'we are so constituted that we cannot help believing and living in terms of the objective reality of the perceived world. We may be able to suspend our conviction during brief moments of philosophical enthusiasm; but natural belief … will soon reassert itself.'[618] On the basis of natural belief, one can naturally act and react with other persons as if they are real persons who are also the centre of the universe, just like oneself. This natural belief, which secures the very basis of reality, can be understood as a total balance of one's world kept by common sense, within which incomparably different persons are living.

---

[618] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 213.

What is presupposed in Hick's philosophy of common sense can be understood as the logic of integration.[619] According to Hick, the world is experienced as *actuality* only for a particular person. Then, the same world is shared with other persons, and it is theoretically possible to doubt the existence of the world and other persons, because they appear for the specific person as just *possibility*. However, for ordinary people, the common sense world presupposes the *necessary* existence of the world. Therefore, the other persons, who appear for the specific person not to be known yet, are actually living in the same world, which has been known for ordinary people. In this case, the actuality of a specific person and the possibility of other persons are *integrated* within a necessary existence of the whole world, which ordinary people naturally presuppose. Because of this integrity, common sense realism is understood as *total balance* among different persons.

On the other hand, Hick's cosmic optimism can be understood as philosophy of history: 'what I called earlier the cosmic optimism of each of the great traditions is intensified when we see them all as pointing to the possibility of a limitlessly better existence and as affirming that the universe is such that this limitlessly better possibility is actually available to us and can begin to be realized in each present moment.'[620] What Hick intends by cosmic optimism is a dialectical relationship between the actual and the possible, and the dialectical relationship necessarily includes an historical process towards the infinite future.

---

[619] See also the 5th chapter of this dissertation.

[620] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 380.

What is presupposed in Hick's philosophy of history can be understood as the logic of replacement.[621] According to Hick, the world is experienced as *actuality* for a particular person. However, the same world is shared with other persons. The world which has been known among other persons appears just as *possibility* from the viewpoint of the specific person. However, the personal actuality can be recovered from within one's action and other persons' reaction to it. The possibility of what has been known among other persons can be replaced by the actuality of one's action and other persons' reaction to it. Then, through the process between one's action and other persons' reaction to it, the existence of the world can be recovered as *necessity*. In this case, the actuality and the possibility is in the relationship of *replacement*. Personal actuality *is replaced* by the possibility of other persons, and then the possibility of other persons *is replaced* by the actuality of one's action and other persons' reaction to it. From within the process of replacement, the necessary existence of the world is continued to be extended in a wider basis. Therefore, cosmic optimism is understood as an historical process from what has been known in the past, through one's present stage, towards the future ideal in which one would have the whole truth, or at least a close approximation. Because of this continued movement of replacement, cosmic optimism can be understood as the process of *historical maturation*.

Both natural belief and cosmic optimism can be understood as the process to recover personal actuality. If the person, the other persons, and ordinary people are understood in

---

[621] See also the 5th chapter of this dissertation.

a relationship of integrity, it takes the form of balance. If the person and the other persons are understood in a relationship of replacement, it takes the form of history. These two kinds of logic, common sense and history, are necessary results of the contradiction between the actual and the possible, or the particular and the universal.

Then, from the viewpoint of reliabilism, natural belief, based on the philosophy of common sense, and cosmic optimism, based on the philosophy of history, can be understood as mutually complementary aspects of one's total recognition of the world. Natural belief, which secures the very basis of reality, can be understood as a *stabilizing* aspect of one's total recognition of the world. Cosmic optimism, which includes an historical process towards the infinite future, can be understood as a *creating* aspect of one's total recognition of the world.

On the basis of the consideration above, the first section will examine Hick's philosophy of common sense in his reading of Hume. After the examination of Hick's reading, Norman Kemp Smith's and John Milbank's readings of Hume will be examined. The second section will examine Hick's philosophy of history in his theodicy, eschatology, and soteriology. The third section will examine the relation between common sense and history.

1.

Philosophy of Common Sense: Hume

I. JOHN HICK

John Hick's philosophy of common sense can be found in his reading of Hume.[622]

For example, in *The New Frontier of Religion and Science*, Hick situates his philosophy

in the tradition of British Empiricism: 'we believe that there is a surrounding world which

impinges from moment to moment on our senses, so that through the continuous operation

of enormously complex neural circuitry we have a generally reliable awareness of that

---

[622] See Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, pp. 124-5. Hick, *Arguments for the Existence of God*, p. 110. Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 213. Hick, *Dialogues in the Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 6-7. Hick, *The New Frontier of Religion and Science*, pp. 128-9. Hick, *An Autobiography*, p. 314.

In *An Interpretation of Religion*, Hick relates Kemp Smith's interpretation of Hume's 'natural belief' with Richard Swinburne's 'the principle of credulity': 'what one seems to perceive is probably so. How things seem to be is good grounds for a belief about how things are.' See Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 214.

In *Dialogues in the Philosophy of Religion*, Hick further relates his argument with Alvin Plantinga's 'properly basic beliefs': 'this holds that there are 'properly basic beliefs,' which are foundational and thus not in need of external justification, and that belief in God is of this kind … Thus 'I see a tree before me' is properly basic if I am having the experience of seeing what appears to me to be a tree before me. And 'I am in God's presence' is properly basic if I am experiencing what seems to me to be God's presence.' See *Dialogues in the Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 6-7.

world as it appears to animals with our perceptual equipment, and are thus able to act

appropriately within it. We all believe that it exists, and yet we cannot prove any logical

argument to back up this belief, because any argument will appeal to the evidence of the

senses, thus begging the question by assuming what it is trying to prove. This anomalous

epistemological situation was progressively clarified in the developing British empiricist

tradition.'[623] According to Hick, the arguments of Locke and Berkeley had an orientation

towards solipsism, the idea that everything and everyone of which I am aware exists only

in my mind. Then, Hume radically changed the terms of the discussion by claiming that

we believe in the reality of the external world simply because it is our nature to do so and

not as a result of, or justified by, philosophical arguments.[624]

According to Hick, one's mind simply acknowledges what is forced upon it, namely

that most of its perceptions come with a distinctive and irresistible force and forms 'a single

ordered system which we call 'reality' or 'the world''[625]. One perceives a world in which

---

[623] Hick, *The New Frontier of Religion and Science*, p. 127. In *An Autobiography*, Hick says that 'I [am] more in the tradition of the English empiricists, Locke, Berkeley and Hume and, in the twentieth century, Russell and others.' See Hick, *An Autobiography*, p. 314.

[624] 'Nature has not left this to [our] choice, and has doubtless esteem'd it an affair of too great importance to be trusted to our uncertain reasonings and speculations. We may well ask, What causes induce us to believe in the existence of body? But 'tis vain to ask, Whether there be body or not? That is a point, which we must take for granted in all our reasonings.' See Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, Book I, Part IV, Section ii, ed. Selby-Bigge, 1896, p. 187, quoted in Hick, *The New Frontier of Religion and Science*, p. 128, and also in Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, p. 449.

[625] Hick, *The New Frontier of Religion and Science*, p. 128.

one lives and no amount of philosophical reasoning can either establish or refute this: 'to trust one's senses is a matter of what can be called natural belief, or pre-philosophical common sense.'[626] Hick says that this natural belief is a pragmatic necessity. If one does not act on it, one would soon perish.[627]

On the basis of Hume's natural belief, Hick tries to extend it into the existence of God. For example, in *Dialogues in the Philosophy of Religion*, Hick says that 'the basic principle that it is rational to base beliefs on our experience, except when we have positive reasons not to, applies impartially to all forms of putatively cognitive experience, including religious experience.'[628] Likewise, a similar argument can be found in *An Interpretation of Religion*: 'it is no more possible to prove the existence of God than the existence of a material world but … theistic belief arises, like perceptual belief, from a natural response of the human mind to its experience. All that we can say of a form of natural belief, whether

---

[626] Hick, *The New Frontier of Religion and Science*, p. 129.

[627] To support his argument, Hick also mentions G. E. Moore's 'A Defense of Common Sense': 'I *know*, with certainty … [that] There exists at present a living human body, which is *my* body. This body was born at a certain time in the past, and has existed continuously ever since, though not without undergoing changes … [T]he earth has existed also for many years before my body was born …' See G. E. Moore, 'A Defense of Common Sense,' in *Contemporary British Philosophy*, Series 2, ed. J. H. Muirhead, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1925, quoted in Hick, *The New Frontier of Religion and Science*, p.129.

According to Hick, G. E. Moore supports Hume at this point and insists that the ordinary knowledge that everyone share, and express in the ordinary language that everyone have in common, neither needs nor is able to be backed up by philosophical arguments. See Hick, *The New Frontier of Religion and Science*, p. 129.

[628] Hick, *Dialogues in the Philosophy of Religion*, p. 6.

perceptual, moral or religious, is that it occurs and seems to be firmly embedded in our human nature.'[629]

However, what is important to realize here is that Hick is aware of the difference between Hume's defence of natural belief and his application of it into the field of religion: 'within the basic epistemological similarity between perceptual and religious experience-and-belief there are important dissimilarities.'[630] When Hick argues about religious belief, which is distinguished from the natural belief, Hick presupposes his own argument about the natural, the ethical, and the religious. The difference among the natural, the ethical and the religious is argued in *An Interpretation of Religion*[631], but the same argument is already made in *Faith and Knowledge*.

In *Faith and Knowledge*, Hick starts the argument from the natural significance of the world: 'the level of natural significance … is the significance which our environment has for us as animal organisms seeking pleasure and survival and shunning pain and death.'[632] According to Hick, in building houses, cooking food, avoiding dangerous precipices, whirlpools, and volcanoes, and generally conducting oneself prudently in relation to the material world, one is all the time acting on the basis of the innate tendency to believe in the natural significance of the world. This argument about the natural is already the same

---

[629] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 214.

[630] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 214.

[631] See the 4th chapter of this dissertation.

[632] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 122.

as Hume's natural belief ('we have a generally reliable awareness of that world as it appears to animals with our perceptual equipment, and are thus able to act appropriately within it'[633]).

Then, Hick moves to the philosophical necessity of interpretation: 'it is a familiar philosophical tenet, and one which may perhaps today be taken as granted, that all conscious experience of the physical world contains an element of interpretation.'[634] According to Hick, from the philosophical viewpoint, the natural world is not natural at all, but is a result of the continuous activity of interpretation. Therefore, one's action is always selecting, relating and synthesizing, and experiencing the environment through interpretation. Through the interpretative activity, one can recognize a three-dimensional room, or a particular configuration of colored patches within that field as a book lying on a table.

However, according to Hick, the interpretation cannot prove the existence of other persons, because 'there is no event within our phenomenal experience the occurrence or nonoccurrence of which is relevant to the truth or falsity of the solipsist hypothesis.'[635] Hick says that what philosophy can prove is that there would be only one person in existence, and other persons would be just human-like appearances. It is a necessary

---

[633] Hick, *The New Frontier of Religion and Science*, p. 127.

[634] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge,* First Edition, p. 122.

[635] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 123.

consequence of philosophical thinking that only one's own world exists and that everything and everyone of which one is aware exists only in one's own world.

Then, according to Hick, on the basis of the natural belief in the existence of the world,[636] one can also believe in the existence of other persons, who are incomparably unique like oneself: 'given the initial rejection of solipsism (or rather given the interpretative bias of human nature, which has prevented all but the most enthusiastic of philosophers from falling into solipsism) we can, I think, find corroborations of an analogical kind to support our belief in the unobserved continuance of physical objects and the reality of other minds.'[637] According to Hick, what is important to note here is that both the common sense presupposition of the natural world and the philosophical assumption of solipsism are necessary for the support of the existence of other persons. This is because, in the common sense world, the existence of other persons are just presupposed and taken for granted, instead of being apprehended as independent centres with incomparable uniqueness. Only after philosophical solipsism can one realize that the other persons are also incomparably unique just like oneself. The philosophical solipsism

---

[636] 'As Hume noted, nature has not left this to our choice, 'and has doubtless esteem'd it an affair of too great importance to be trusted to our uncertain reasonings and speculations. We may well ask, What causes induce us to believe in the existence of body [i.e., matter]? but 'tis vain to ask, Whether there be body or not? That is a point, which we must take for granted in all our reasonings." See Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, I, iv, 2, pp. 187-8, quoted in Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, pp. 124-5.

[637] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 123.

is in this respect right, but is unable to provide the reason why ordinary people naturally believe in the existence of other persons.

Therefore, one needs both common sense realism and philosophical solipsism. Then, on the basis of the natural belief in the existence of the world, one can recognize the personal interactions with one another: 'it is characteristic of mankind to live not only in terms of the natural significance of his world but also in the dimension of personality and responsibility.'[638] Within personal interaction, one finds the necessity of responsibility to treat other persons as one would wish to be treated oneself. This is what Hick calls the ethical significance of persons.

At last, Hick says that on the basis of the natural and ethical significances, one can think of the religious significance: 'as ethical significance interpenetrates natural significance, so religious significance interpenetrates both ethical and natural. The divine is the highest and ultimate order of significance.'[639] According to Hick, the religious significance can be understood as a necessity of the ultimate environment within which incomparably unique persons are living. In spite of the incompatible uniqueness, all of them naturally recognize the common world. Then, because of the uniqueness and the commonality, each person can be seen as recognizing the same divine presence and purpose. When one treats other persons as oneself, one can realize that not only oneself but also the other persons are incomparably unique, and then the assumption of the

---

[638] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 125.

[639] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 127.

incomparable uniqueness of other persons requires the necessity of the common existence of God: 'entering into conscious relation with God consists in … to see the world as being ruled by a divine love which sets infinite value upon each individual and include all men in its scope … 'What determines their faith is not a theory of the Supernatural, but an attitude towards the Natural, as a sphere in which a victory of deeper meaning than the visible and of more abiding purpose than the fleeting can be won … and this was made possible by realizing in the Natural the meaning and purpose of the Supernatural.'[640]

Therefore, when Hick says that 'all that we can say of a form of natural belief, whether perceptual, moral or religious, is that it occurs and seems to be firmly embedded in our human nature,'[641] Hick is fully aware of the distinction between the natural, the ethical and the religious.

From the argument above, it can be seen that what Hick added, on the basis of Hume's natural belief, is a personal dimension. From the introduction of the philosophical necessity of solipsism, Hick arrives at the mutual recognition of unique personality in the common sense world. Then, from the mutual recognition of unique personality, Hick concludes the possibility of the existence of God, who is shared by everyone. Hick says that it is theoretically possible to doubt the existence of God, but, as an alternative choice, one can choose to enter into the personal relationship with God which will finally lead to the

---

[640] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, pp. 129-130, and the quotation is from Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, p. 448.

[641] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 214.

ultimate perfection at the end of history. The existence of God is a necessary consequence

of the initial premise of the natural significance of the world, and therefore it is open to

decide whether it is rational or irrational. What Hick intends by the existence of God can

be understood as the belief in the very basis of reality, within which one can naturally act

and react with other persons. From the viewpoint of reliabilism, it is a total balance among

unique persons kept by the very basic kind of common sense.

II. NORMAN KEMP SMITH

Even though they do not focus on the uniqueness of persons, Kemp Smith's and John

Milbank's reading of Hume can also be understood as the recovery of the very basic kind

of reality. In the case of Kemp Smith, his intention lies in the recovery of reality in

philosophical and scientific causal inference. According to Kemp Smith, causal inference

is not independent by itself, but is actually grounded by lively imagination in the vulgar

world. By recognizing its connection with the vulgar world, causal inference can recover

its lively reality.

Hick's reading of Hume comes from Norman Kemp Smith's reading of Hume in *The*

Philosophy of David Hume.[642] According to Kemp Smith, in section 2 of Part IV in the

---

[642] 'We thus come to rest in something like the 'natural belief' that Hume – according to Norman
Kemp Smith's interpretation … – adumbrated.' See Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 213.

first volume of *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Hume raises a twofold question that (1) why

we suppose objects to have an existence *distinct* from the mind and from perception; and

(2) why we attribute a *continued* existence to them, even when they are not present to the

senses.[643]

As an answer to this question, Hume divides the two systems: the vulgar system and

the philosophical system. Hume starts the argument from the vulgar system.[644] The vulgar

system takes the existence of objects for granted. The vulgar system is based on natural

belief in the common sense world. However, according to Kemp Smith, Hume does not

totally agree with the vulgar system. Hume dissents from the vulgar system and agrees

with the philosophical system in one fundamental respect that the objects of immediate

---

[643] ''Tis certain, that almost all mankind and even philosophers themselves, for the greatest part of their lives, take their perceptions to be their only objects, and suppose, that the very being, which is intimately present to the mind, is the real body or material existence. 'Tis also certain, that this very perception or object is suppos'd to have a continu'd uninterrupted being, and neither to be annihilated by our absence, nor to be brought into existence by our presence. When we are absent from it, we say it still exists, but that we do not feel, we do not see it. When we are present, we say we feel, or see it.' Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, I, iv, 2, ed. Selby-Bigge, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896, pp. 206-7, quoted in Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, p. 450.

[644] 'Nature breaks the force of all skeptical arguments … and keeps them from having any considerable influence on the understanding … Nature has not left this to his choice, and has doubtless esteem'd it an affair of too great importance to be trusted to our uncertain reasonings and speculations. We may well ask, *What causes induce us to believe in the existence of body*? But 'tis in vain to ask, *Whether there be body or no*t? That is a point, which we must take for granted in all our reasonings.' Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, I, iv, 1-2, pp. 186-7, quoted in Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, pp. 448-9. The italics is in the original.

consciousness are in all cases internal and perishing existences.[645] In spite of the necessity

of internality, we do believe – the 'we' being the philosophical no less than the vulgar –

that objects exist and persist independently of our experience of them.

This is a fundamental contradiction. The vulgar system has misunderstood the

necessity of subjectivity. The philosophical system is in this respect right, but is unable to

provide the reason why both of them naturally believe in the existence of objects. Then,

according to Kemp Smith, Hume tries to defend the philosophical system from within the

vulgar system. The method to connect the vulgar system and the philosophical system is

the concept of imagination.

Kemp Smith says that one of Hume's central doctrines is that mental processes, which

have hitherto been credited to understanding, are due to a quite different type of faculty,

the imagination. So-called causal inference is not inference at all, but natural belief

operating in and through the imagination. For example, the objects towards which the

mind is directed in causal inference are 'what any common man means by a hat, or shoe,

or stone, or any other impression, convey'd to him by his senses.'[646] Imagination has gone

---

[645] 'When we press one eye with a finger, we immediately perceive all the objects to become double, and one half of them to be remov'd from their common and natural position. But as we do not attribute a continu'd existence to both these perceptions, and as they are both of the same nature, we clearly perceive, that all our perceptions are dependent on our organs, and the disposition of our nerves and animal spirits … and by an infinite number of other experiments of the same kind … we learn that our sensible perceptions are not possest of any distinct or independent existence.' Hume, *A Treatise of Human Naure*, I, iv, 2, pp. 210-11, quoted in Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, pp. 451-2.

[646] Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, I, iv, 2, p. 202, quoted in Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of*

to the determination of these objects; so that the *imagination* continues in what it has already been doing in *natural belief* when it operates also in *causal inference*. First, there is the natural belief in the existence of object, and imagination is already working in the common sense world. Then, imagination continues to work in causal inference, and develops the natural belief through the gradual discovery of the unknown objects with 'error and deception'[647].

Therefore, the causal inference developing with imagination is 'the monstrous offspring of two principles, which are contrary to each other, which are both at once embrac'd by the mind, and which are unable mutually to destroy each other.'[648] On the one hand, there is a philosophical principle, and it teaches that objects can be fallible and corrigible in the *particular* modes in which they occur.[649] The part that lies open to correction is the part for which natural belief is not responsible, viz. the part which is determined by the internal and perishing experiences. On the other hand, there is a vulgar principle, and it teaches that, in its *general* import as natural belief, objects can impose themselves upon the mind in a way which does not allow of being questioned.[650] The part

---

David Hume, p. 453.

[647] Hume, *A Treaties of Human Nature*, I, iv, 2, p. 189, quoted in Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, p. 454.

[648] Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, I, iv, 2, p. 215, quoted in Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, p. 483.

[649] 'Even when we are most intimately conscious, we might be mistaken.' See Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, I, iv, 2, p. 190, quoted in Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, p. 467.

[650] 'We can humour our reason for a moment, when it becomes troublesome and solicitous; and yet upon its least negligence of inattention can easily return to our vulgar and natural notions.' See Hume,

of the vulgar principle which one has no option save to accept is the part that falls to natural belief. On the basis of both the philosophical system and the vulgar system, the contradiction between the particular and the general can be solved as the process to reveal the unknown aspect of objects.

In the end, Kemp Smith concludes that natural belief through imagination takes two contradictory forms, as belief in continuing and therefore independent existence, and as belief in causal inference. These two forms are not reconcilable, and one cannot adjust the two principles to one another, and also may not prefer either to the exclusion of the other. Both are natural to the mind, and both are necessary for its proper functioning; and it is through the balancing of each against the other, with an interdict against the universalizing of either of them, that Nature preserves in health and equilibrium the complex economy of one's human constitution: 'not being able to reconcile these two enemies … we endeavor to set ourselves at ease as much as possible, by successively granting to each whatever it demands, and by feigning a double existence, where each may find something, that has all the conditions it desires.'[651]

From the argument above, it can be seen that the central intention of Kemp Smith lies in the recovery of reality in philosophical and scientific causal inference. According to

---

The Treatise of Human Nature, p. I, iv, 2, p. 216, quoted in Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, p. 491.

[651] Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, I, iv, 2, p. 215, quoted in Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, p. 490.

Kemp Smith, causal inference is subjective and, because of its subjectivity, it can develop with error and deception. It is a positive aspect of causal inference. However, the positive aspect of causal inference can also become its negative aspect as abstraction from reality. Therefore, causal inference must be grounded by lively imagination in the vulgar world. By recognizing its connection with the vulgar world, causal inference can recover its lively reality. From the viewpoint of reliabilism, it can also be understood as a recovery of a stabilizing balance in philosophical and scientific developments by recognizing its continuity with vulgar kind of common sense.

III. JOHN MILBANK

Hick and Kemp Smith are not the only philosophers who read Hume's philosophy as the recovery of the very basic kind of reality. Even though his religious and philosophical position is different from them, John Milbank's reading of Hume can be understood as a critical successor of Hick's and Kemp Smith reading of Hume.

As in the case of Kemp Smith, Milbank's intention also lies in the recovery of reality in rational thinking. For example, in *Beyond Secular Order*[652] and 'What Lacks is Feeling'[653], Milbank says that Hume's intention lies in the recovery of ontological reality

---

[652] Milbank, *Beyond Secular Order*, pp. 88-99.

[653] Milbank, 'What Lacks is Feeling: Hume versus Kant and Habermas' in *Faithful Reading: New Essays in Theology in Honour of Fergus Kerr*, ed. Simon Oliver, Karen Kilby, and Thomas

in rational thinking about causation, substance, etc.[654] According to Milbank, rational

thinking is nothing but the continuation of fiction making, and it cannot reach the reality

itself. What is required for the recovery of reality is the recognition of its connection with

everyday habit. By recognizing its connection with everyday habit, rational thinking can

recover its lively reality.

Milbank starts the argument from a negative aspect of Hume's philosophy: 'with

respect to the empirical investigation of human understanding … all that is given is

fictional association, and the only law which governs this givenness is 'the law of

association'. But this means … that our awareness of what governs our nature leaves us

powerless to rectify this nature according to law, since the law denotes only the rule of a

seemingly mad anarchy … our being aware of this can never cause us to give up fictioning,

since this is the very substance of our human lives.'[655] Milbank says that, according to

Hume, human understanding cannot grasp the causation of nature, and what human

understanding can do is just continue to make fiction. This is because nature is made of

incompatibly diverse contingencies and what human understanding can do is just project

infinitely possible associations between them. Human understanding can only construct

---

O'Loughlin, London: Bloomsbury, 2012, pp. 1-28.

[654] 'Hume never denies the full ontological … reality of causation, substance, personal identity or
the soul: he doubts them all, but in the end finds a new way to affirm them.' See Milbank, 'What
Lacks is Feeling,' p. 14.

[655] Milbank, *Beyond Secular Reason*, p. 90. Milbank refers to David Hume, *A Treatise of Human
Nature*, ed. E. C. Mossner, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985, I. IV. ii., p. 259.

possible ideas to connect arbitrary impressions, but it never reaches the actuality of nature itself.

Then, Milbank moves to a positive aspect of Hume's philosophy. Milbank says that the positive aspect comes from Hume's concept of habit: 'Hume is clear that even constant conjuncture is something ineffably felt and established according to habitual imagination and not something rationally known. This mode of empirical connection is for him in the end extra-rational.'[656] Milbank says that what secures the very basic reality of nature is everyday habit. In the common sense world of everyday habit, ordinary people are naturally feeling the actual existence of the world.[657]

As an example of everyday habit, Milbank discusses time. According to Milbank, what rational thinking can offer as the result of its skepticism is only the eternal now which consists of infinite probability. However, ordinary people in the common sense world are naturally presupposing the necessity of time which flows from the past through now to the future: 'habitual imagination … performs a mysterious work in excess of rational probability by assuming that an absolutely novel instance will fall into the same 'historical' sequence of cause and effect as instances have been taken to so fall in the past.'[658] Here

---

[656] Milbank, 'What Lacks is Feeling,' pp. 13-14.

[657] 'Our ontological categories (like 'power' and 'cause') and ethical values (like 'honesty' and 'courage') are but the 'facts' of the way our passionate responses to reality work according to the force and vividness of habitual non-identically repeated impressions.' See Milbank, *Beyond Secular Reason*, p. 90.

[658] Milbank, 'What Lacks is Feeling,' p. 14.

Milbank says that, for ordinary people, the absolute novelty, which comes from the future, is naturally taken to fall into the past. They presupposes the necessity of the flow of time. This is fundamentally different from the assumption of rational thinking, which can only project infinite probabilities within which even the flow of time loses its sense.

Milbank says that what is important for keeping the common sense world is one's self-experience, and the self-experience comes from one's feeling, habit, and imagination: 'even though he [Hume] takes it that we are but part of a chain of natural causation, he says that the best clue to the nature of the latter lies within our own self-experience. But within ourselves, the experience of our own consecutive causal action is a matter of feeling, habit and imagination.'[659]

Then, Milbank says that what is distinctive in Hume's argument is the relation between *rational thinking* and *everyday habit.* Hume does not reject rational thinking, but tries to recover it from within everyday habit: 'reflection cannot seriously break with habit and that even the most basic assumed stabilities (substance, the self, and causation) depend upon habit … But … in being slaves to habit, human beings must acknowledge the workings of a natural power constituted through time that *exceeds* our capacity to observe it.'[660] Milbank says that rational thinking with regard to substance, the self, and causation,

---

[659] Milbank, 'What Lacks is Feeling,' p. 14.

[660] Milbank, 'What Lacks is Feeling,' p. 16. Milbank also says that 'this … reverses his skepticism not only with regard to causation but also with regard to constitutive relation. Reason can only make sense of individual items that are shifting and unstable but utterly isolated, and in no way intrinsically connected with anything else. The same must be true, rationally speaking, of our 'impressions'; yet

cannot give the actuality of independent reality. However, according to Milbank, feeling, habit, and imagination should not be understood as the denial of rational thinking. On the contrary, feeling, habit, and imagination recover rational thinking from within the objective reality of the common sense world: 'Hume, then, is saying that all thought is feeling and that reason is tempered feeling; that we must trust at least some of our most constant feelings and that there may be something 'like' feeling already in pre-human nature.'[661]

At last, Milbank's emphasis on Hume's concept of sympathy can also be understood as a result of common sense realism: 'in the case of Hume, 'sympathy' at times seems to be a self-grounding end in itself and the sympathetic links between people to be something that reason itself cannot really grasp.'[662]   Milbank says that ordinary people in the common

---

we 'feel' certain unshakeable links between them in various ways. The feeling of association that sustains the link between cause and effect in our experience of thought then leads to a legitimate projection of intrinsic association also into the world of things … Hence while the denial of internal relation lies at the heart of Hume's thought insofar as it is a merely rational empiricism, a certain 'internal' … relation returns within his thought insofar as it is an extra-skeptical empiricism of feeling that even points us back towards a metaphysical realism in the broad sense of affirming a structure to objective reality that is independent of our perceptions of that reality.' Here Milbank says that rational thinking with regard to causation, constitutive relation, and impressions, can be understood from within the common sense world of independent reality, which is sustained by feeling, habit, and imagination. See Milbank, 'What Lacks is Feeling,' p. 15.

[661] Milbank, 'What Lacks is Feeling,' p. 16. In *Beyond Secular Reason*, Milbank says that 'in the case of Hume he does not think of imagistic impressions and ideas as a screen within our minds … but as the one and only reality … with which we have to deal.' See Milbank, *Beyond Secular Reason*, p. 98. Here Milbank says that rational thinking through imagistic impressions and ideas can be understood as the one and only reality of the common sense world.

[662] Milbank, 'What Lacks is Feeling', p. 12.

sense world naturally presuppose the existence of other persons. The presupposition must have become certain after the long accumulation of reciprocal bonds of everyday sympathy, but which is also irreducible to any rational thinking. Therefore, according to Milbank, Hume's concept of sympathy can also be understood as part of his common sense realism.

From the argument above, it can be seen that the central intention of Milbank lies in the recovery of reality in rational thinking, and this argument is similar to Norman Kemp Smith's. Also, Milbank further extends the recovery of reality into Hume's argument about sympathy. Norman Kemp Smith did not examine the social implications of Hume's natural belief, but Milbank suggests that sympathetic links between people can be understood as an extension of their everyday habit. In this respect, Milbank's argument goes beyond Kemp Smith and is closer to John Hick. For both Hick and Milbank, Hume's common sense realism is understood as a recovery of a shared worldview, which connects different kinds of persons. From the viewpoint of reliabilism, it can also be understood as a stabilizing balance among different persons kept by the very basic worldview given by common sense.

2.

Philosophy of History: Theodicy, Eschatology, and Soteriology

I. THEODICY

John Hick's theological arguments, which are made within a limitation of Christian worldview, can also be understood as his philosophy of history. For example, in *Evil and the God of Love,* Hick defends his theodicy on the basis of his reading of *Against Heresies* by Irenaeus.[663] According to Hick, a distinctive characteristic of Irenaeus' argument comes from his recognition of the fundamental paradox in human nature, which is different from the one of Gnosticism which clearly divides the world into two realms of the good and the evil. Against this division of the world into two realms, Irenaeus suggests that the universality of the good manifests itself only from within the process to overcome the particularity of the evil.[664]

---

[663] Hick also mentions Irenaeus in other books. See Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 46. Hick, *God and the Universe of Faiths*, pp. 53, 67, 70, 157, 174, 191, and 197. Hick, *Death and Eternal Life*, pp. 47-8. Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, pp. 118-9. Hick, *Problems of Religious Pluralism*, pp. 62 and 138. Hick, *The Metaphor of God Incarnate*, p. 109. Hick, *The Fifth Dimension*, pp. 131-49. Hick, *Dialogues in the Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 7-9. See also Cheetham, *John Hick*, pp. 40-66.

[664] Hick relates the Irenaean Type of Theodicy with the concept of 'the vale of Soul-making' by John Keats: 'The common cognomen of this world among the misguided and superstitious is 'a

Hick begins the argument by Irenaeus' distinction between the image (εἰκών) and the

likeness (ὁμοίωσις) of God: 'the man is rendered spiritual and perfect because of the

outpouring of the Spirit, and this is he who was made in the image and likeness of God.

But if the Spirit be wanting to the soul, he who is such is indeed of an animal nature, and

being left carnal, shall be an imperfect being, possessing indeed the image [of God] in his

formation, but not receiving the likeness through the Spirit.'[665] Hick says that, in Biblical

terms, the image means one's bodily nature, whereas the likeness means one's final

perfection by the Holy Spirit. Then, according to Hick, if they are understood in

contemporary terms, the image means one's nature as personal. Because the finite personal

---

vale of tears' from which we are to be redeemed by a certain arbitrary interposition of God and taken
to Heaven – What a little circumscribed straightened notion! Call the world if you please 'The vale
of Soul-making' … Do you not see … how necessary a World of Pains and troubles is to school an
Intelligence and make it a Soul?' See Keats, *The Letters of John Keats*, Fourth Edition, ed. M. B.
Forman, London: Oxford University Press, 1952, pp. 334-5, quoted in Hick, *Evil and the God of
Love*, p. 295.

Also, it is worth noting that Pringle-Pattison mentions the same passage of John Keats to explain
Kant's philosophy as an education of the human race for a never-ending progress towards the ideal:
'the use of the world, as Keats finely said, is to be 'the vale of soul-making' … So to Kant the world
becomes ultimately intelligible as a spiritual process.' Furthermore, Pringle-Pattison says that his
reading of Keats comes from Bernard Bosanquet: 'I believe that a consideration of Professor
Bosanquet's position is likely to prove especially helpful, because in both his Gifford volumes he
adopts Keats's description of the world as 'the vale of soul-making'.' See Pringle-Pattison, *The Idea
of God in the Light of Recent Philosophy*, pp. 29 and 256. See also Bernard Bosanquet, *The
Principle of Individuality and Value: the Gifford Lectures for 1911 delivered in Edinburgh
University*, London: Macmillan, 1912. Bernard Bosanquet, *The Value and Destiny of the Individual:
the Gifford Lectures for 1912 delivered in Edinburgh University*, London: Macmillan, 1913.

[665] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, V. vi. 1, quoted in Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, p. 217.

creature is in a personal relationship with his Maker, the creature is in a process of growing

towards the perfect being whom God is seeking to produce. Therefore, the likeness means

the final culmination, towards which the process of growth and development in God's

continuing providence is moving. Hick says that the image, within which the human being

is made finite, and the likeness, towards which the human being is moving, are two aspects

of the same process. Because the human being is made finite, one is growing towards the

final culmination. This is God's self-revealing activity in history, who manifests himself

from within the spiritual growth of humanity.[666]

Hick says that Irenaeus expresses this spiritual growth of humanity as two kinds of the

knowledge of what is good. On the one hand, there is the final realization of the ultimate

goodness. But, on the other hand, the ultimate goodness manifests itself only as temporal

goodness which is mixed with temporal evil. This paradoxical nature of the good is what

Irenaeus calls two kinds of the knowledge of what is good: 'just as the tongue receives

experience of sweet and bitter by means of tasting, and the eye discriminates between

black and white by means of vision, and the ear recognises the distinction of sounds by

hearing; So also does the mind, receiving through the experience of both the knowledge

---

[666] 'Man, a created and organized being, is rendered after the image and likeness of the uncreated
God – the Father planning everything well and given His commands, the Son carrying these into
execution and performing the work of creating, and the Spirit nourishing and increasing [what is
made], but man making progress day by day, and ascending towards the perfect, that is,
approximating to the uncreated One' See Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, IV. xxxviii. 3, quoted in Hick,
Evil and the God of Love, p. 219.

of what is good, becomes more tenacious of its preservation, by acting in obedience to God ... But if any one do shun the knowledge of both kinds of things, and the twofold perception of knowledge, he unawares divests himself of the character of a human being.'[667] Hick says that, for Irenaeus, good and evil are always mixed, and this mixture is the condition for manifesting the ultimate divine goodness from within the spiritual growth of humanity. Because a human being is created as an imperfect creature, a human being can undergo spiritual development towards the perfection intended for one by one's Maker.

Hick develops this reading of Irenaeus in *Death and Eternal Life* and *The Metaphor of God Incarnate*. In *Death and Eternal Life*, Hick proposes to read the theodicy of Irenaeus as a two-stage conception of the divine creation of the human being: 'Irenaeus distinguished between what he called the image of God and the likeness of God, and suggested a two-stage conception of the divine creation of man.'[668] According to Hick, the first creation of the human being can be understood as a creation of a specific person in the image of God, and this can be extended into one's society and one's culture. Then, the second creation of the human being is fundamentally different from the first, and it can be understood as the ongoing creation of the shared world from within different persons. From the standpoint of the second creation, the first creation is finite. But from within finite

---

[667] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, IV. xxxix. 1, quoted in Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, p. 220.

[668] Hick, *Death and Eternal Life*, p. 47.

actions and responses, human beings can realize that the existing world is actually the place to manifest ongoing creation towards the divine likeness.

Hick says that this theodicy has an eschatological implication: 'such a religious interpretation of human existence is teleologically and indeed eschatologically oriented.'[669] According to Hick, the final meaning of a human's life lies in the future state to which, in God's purpose, he is moving. From the divine viewpoint, a human being's finite nature is not in contradiction with their ultimate destiny. From a human viewpoint, it is theoretically possible to think that the existence of different persons indicates the denial of the ultimate destiny, because different persons are following different paths. However, as a matter of fact, human beings have an innate tendency to understand the existence of other persons as living within the same world and, accordingly, referring to the same ultimate destiny. Therefore, according to Hick, the difference among persons in the world can be understood as part of the same process of the manifestation of ultimate divinity from within the finality of human being.

In *The Metaphor of God Incarnate*, Hick further proposes to read the theodicy of Irenaeus as an interpretation of the trinity: 'on this view the Spirit of God has always been active within the human spirit, inspiring men and women to open themselves freely to the divine presence and to respond in their lives to the divine purpose. This continuous creative activity means that 'God has always been incarnate in his human creatures, forming their

---

[669] Hick, *Death and Eternal Life*, p. 48.

spirit from within and revealing himself in and through them' … We must accordingly …

speak of this continuum as a single creative and saving activity of God the Spirit towards,

and within, the spirit of man, and of his presence in the person of Jesus as a particular

moment within that continuous creativity.' [670] Hick says that, according to Irenaean

theodicy, the incarnation of Jesus Christ can be understood to indicate the paradoxical

nature of divinity. The finality of God's appearance in a life involving suffering and violent

death is not a contingent event, but a necessary revelation of God to show that the ultimate

goodness manifests itself only from within the suffering of humanity. The Son of God,

although he was perfect, passed through the state of suffering which is shared with the rest

of mankind. What is shown in the process of incarnation is that human beings can receive

the divine goodness only from within finite suffering. Direct reception of the divine

goodness is not allowed for human beings. Only from within the finite point of view,

human beings are allowed to make a progress towards the ultimate fulfilment of the divine

purpose.

From the examination above, it can be seen that Hick's philosophy of history can be

found not only in his theodicy but also in his eschatology and his understanding of trinity.

Unlike his philosophy of common sense, the characteristic of Hick's philosophy of history

lies in the availability of the ultimate reality *in the infinite future*. Irenaeus emphasizes the

finality of human beings, because finality is necessary for the human being's spiritual

---

[670] Hick, *The Metaphor of God Incarnate*, p. 109.

development toward the final culmination of divine perfection in the infinite future. Here

the intention of Irenaeus always remains in the infinite future. On the contrary, in the case

of Hick's philosophy of common sense, disclosed in his reading of Hume, the ultimate

reality is already available *here and now* and shared by ordinary, vulgar people. The whole

structure of Hick's philosophy shows that these two aspects of common sense and history

are mutually complementary, and both are necessary for the full understanding of reality.

II. ESCHATOLOGY

John Hick's eschatological verification can be understood as his answer to the question

of Antony Flew: 'what would have to occur or to have occurred to constitute … a disproof

of the love of, or of the existence of, God?'[671] Hick says that, under the influence from

logical positivism and Karl Popper, Flew required to express religion in a form of

proposition which denies something. This is because, if an assertion is to amount to

anything, it must carry its denial with it. A genuine assertion, as a putative statement of fact,

must lay itself open to correction and refutation. In order to say something which may

---

[671] Antony Flew, 'Theology and Falsification' in *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*, pp. 98-99,
quoted in Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 149.
Hick develops his eschatological verification in his other books. See Hick, *Death and Eternal Life*,
pp. 207-10. Hick, *Problems of Religious Pluralism*, pp. 80, 99, and 111-25. Hick, *An Interpretation
of Religion*, pp. 178-80. Hick, *The Rainbow of Faiths*, pp. 72-6.

possibly true, we must say something which may possibly false. If a proposition *p* is to

constitute a true or false assertion, the state of the universe which satisfies *p* must differ

from any state of the universe that satisfies *not-p*.

As an answer to this requirement, Hick first says that any factual evidence cannot be a

disproof of the existence of God: 'theism is not an experimental issue. There is no test of

observation, no crucial instance such that if *A* occurs theism is shown to be true, while if *B*

occurs theism is shown to be false.'[672] This is because theism is about how the world

appears as incomparably unique for a person. Any fact can appear for the person as being

unique and, therefore, any fact cannot be a disproof of the existence of God for the person.

Even if there is the worst kind of evil and pain in the world, it is not about the question why

the world has a meaning only for a particular person. Therefore, any factual evidence

cannot be a disproof of one's personal faith in the existence of God. Theism is compatible

with whatever may occur.

Then, however, Hick says that it is possible to express theism in the form of a factual

assertion, because theism is not only about personal faith in the existence of God, but also

about the process of personal faith developing through history. Then, Hick proposes to

express theism in the form of personal faith in spiritual survival after bodily death. Hick

says that, according to the survival claim, one can distinguish two rival accounts of the

universe. One is naturalism: 'naturalism postulates what we may call a 'bungaloid'

---

[672] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 145.

universe, on one level, within which man figures as an intelligent animal thrown up in the course of natural evolution and destined to extinction when his physical environment becomes uninhabitable.'[673] The other is theism: 'religion … asserts that this is a 'many-storied' universe, and that man is not only an animal but partakes also of a spiritual nature in virtue of which some or all human personalities survive bodily death.'[674] According to Hick, naturalism is based on bodily existence and, accordingly, it accepts only one level of bodily universe, whereas theism is based not only on bodily existence but also admits spiritual existence and it accepts many-stories of bodily and spiritual universe.

What distinguishes the factual claims of naturalism and theism is the survival claim. Naturalism denies the survival claim and theism defends the survival claim. However, according to Hick, what is important in this argument is that the survival claim is not open to refutation: 'the logical peculiarity of the claim is that it is open to confirmation but not to refutation.'[675] This is because if one survives bodily death, the one shall presumably know that one has survived it. But if one does not survive death, one shall not know that one has not survived it. Therefore, the possibility of the refutation is closed for a human being. This is a necessary structure of the human condition. However, the survival claim is at least a factual assertion and it can be distinguished from naturalism. The difference may not involve a difference in the objective content of each or even any of its currently

---

[673] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 150.

[674] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 150.

[675] Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, First Edition, p. 150.

passing moments, but the theist does and the naturalist does not expect that when history

is completed it will be seen to have led to a particular end-state.

In *Death and Eternal Life*, Hick relates the survival claim to the Irenaean theology of

'the vale of soul-making' and develops it as a process of not only a person but also

humanity in general: 'this theology prompts an understanding of the meaning of life as a

divinely intended opportunity, given to us both individually and as a race, to grow towards

the realization of the potentialities of our own nature and so to become fully human. Life

is thus aptly imaged in terms of the ancient picture of an arduous journey towards the life

of the Celestial City. This pilgrimage crosses the frontier of death; for its end is not attained

in this life, and therefore if it is to be attained at all there must be a further life.'[676]

According to Hick, if a soul-making process is taking place in this life, that process is

seldom completed by the time of bodily death. In some people the creative process makes

considerable progress during their earthly existence, in most only a little, and in some none

at all or less than none. Thus, if the person-making process is ever to be carried through, it

seems that it must necessarily continue beyond one's bodily death toward the next life.[677]

What can be seen in the argument above is that, like Hick's theodicy, the emphasis of

Hick's eschatology also lies in the infinite future. The confirmation of a human being's

survival claim is possible only in one's future life, and a particular person is expected to

---

[676] Hick, *Death and Eternal Life*, p. 210. See also Cheetham, *John Hick*, pp. 67-98.

[677] On the basis of this point, Hick examines different conceptions of resurrection and
reincarnation in various religious traditions. See Hick, *Death and Eternal Life*, pp. 265-398.

gradually disclose the ultimate reality in one's further life toward its ultimate end. Because of the finite nature of human being, the world is understood to be in the gradual process of disclosing the ultimate reality.

III. SOTERIOLOGY

Not only theodicy and eschatology, but John Hick's soteriology can also be understood as an historical process. When Hick defines soteriology as 'the transformation of human existence from self-centredness to Reality-centredness'[678], this transformation can be understood as an historical process. Ultimate reality manifests itself only from within a person's self-centred action and other persons' reaction to it.

Likewise, when Hick connects ethics with soteriology, the connection can also be understood from Hick's understanding of the historical process for the ultimate reality to manifest itself from within a person's action and other persons' reaction to it: 'from a religious point of view we must … assume the rooting of moral norms in the structure of our human nature and the rooting of that nature in our relationship to Real.'[679] The world has actuality only for a specific person, and the other persons appear only as possibility for the specific person. Then, the ultimate reality manifests itself only from within one's action

---

[678] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 300. See also Gillis, *A Question of Final Belief*, pp. 100-28.

[679] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, p. 312.

and other persons' reaction to it. This is what Hick calls the structure of human nature. Moral norms between a person and other persons are rooted in this fundamental structure, and the interaction between a person and other persons can be understood as the historical process for the ultimate reality to manifest itself.

In *The Metaphor of God Incarnate*, John Hick applies his soteriology to Christology.[680] Hick starts from a literal interpretation of incarnation: 'Jesus was God the Son living a human life, being both 'truly God' and 'truly man', *vere Deus, vere homo*. He was literally (not metaphorically) God and literally (not metaphorically) human.'[681] This is a theological doctrine reached at Nicaea and Chalcedon. Jesus was one being (*hypostatis*) and person (*prosopon*) in two natures (*en duo phusesin*). The essence of the doctrine lies in that the man Jesus of Nazareth was in a literal sense God.

However, this theological doctrine does not itself explain the reason why one person can have two different natures. There must be a further explanation for the general statement that Jesus had both a divine and a human nature. Then, Hick says that the dichotomy of body/mind can be a simplest possible model for such an explanation: 'if we assume a body/mind dichotomy, and say that a person's, X's, body is a human body but that X's mind is the mind of God, we should have one possible literal meaning for the statement that X is God incarnate.'[682] According to this model, given the concepts of

---

[680] See also Gillis, *A Question of Final Belief*, pp. 71-99.

[681] Hick, *The Metaphor of God Incarnate*, p. 101.

[682] Hick, *The Metaphor of God Incarnate*, p. 102.

divine mind, human body, and a mind being embodied, it is clearly a literal sense of divine

incarnation.[683]

To this answer of the dichotomy, Hick says that, even though it is the simplest possible

model as the interpretation of the incarnation, it does not provide an answer to the question

why a human being has not only a body but also a mind, and why human beings make

personal relationships with one another by using the mind and body. Thus, the simplest

possible model is based on 'a presupposition of our personal relationships with one another

that we all have human minds as well as human bodies.'[684]

Then, Hick proposes to interpret the doctrine of incarnation as metaphor to express the

paradox of grace.[685] The difference between literal and metaphorical ways of speaking

lies in whether it indicates a straightforward fact or a paradox: 'the essential difference,

then, between the literal and metaphorical ways of speaking of divine incarnation is that

---

[683] According to Hick, a similar kind of dichotomy can be found in fact in the conception of incarnation used by St Athanasius in his *De Incarnatione*, even though Athanasius used another concept of the Word of God instead of the mind of God. Hick says that in the *De Incarnatione* (which predates his controversy with the Arians) the only meaning that Athanasius gives to 'incarnation' is that of the Word of God taking a human body: 'He took to Himself a body, a human body even as our own,' 'He assumed a body capable of death,' 'the Word submitted to appear in a body,' 'He takes to himself an instrument … a human body,' 'He manifested Himself by means of a body.' See St Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, London: Mowbray, and Crestwood, N. Y.: St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, 1989, paragraph. 8, 9, 16, 43 and 54, quoted in Hick, *The Metaphor of God Incarnate*, p. 103.

[684] Hick, *The Metaphor of God Incarnate*, p. 103.

[685] As defenders of the paradox of grace, Hick mentions Donald Baillie and Geoffrey Lampe. See Donald Baillie, *God was in Christ*, London: Faber & Faber, 1948. Geoffrey Lampe, *God as Spirit*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.

whereas the first can (at least in intention) be spelled out as a physical or psychological or metaphysical hypothesis (or a mixture of these), the second cannot be so translated without destroying its metaphorical character.'[686] The metaphor of God incarnate indicates a paradox, which is based on a literal interpretation of the story of Jesus: 'the truth or the appropriateness of the metaphor depends upon its being literally true that Jesus lived in obedient response to the divine presence, and that he lived a life of unselfish love.'[687]

The first paradox of grace is that Jesus is incomparably unique and surpassing all other men, but, at the same time, the incomparable uniqueness is not wrought by himself but by God: 'in the New Testament we see the man in whom God was incarnate surpassing all other men in refusing to claim anything for himself independently and ascribing all the goodness to God.'[688] This is a paradox, because Jesus is incomparably unique and, therefore, fully personal, but also the incomparable uniqueness comes from God, who is shared by everyone as the common creator of the world. In this sense, Jesus is fully human and fully divine at the same time.

But what is more surprising is the second paradox that Jesus tries to share the incompatible uniqueness with other persons: 'we see him also desiring to take up other

---

[686] Hick, *The Metaphor of God Incarnate*, p. 106.

[687] Hick, *The Metaphor of God Incarnate*, p. 105. Furthermore, Hick says that myth is a much extended metaphor: 'metaphor operates to change our way of seeing something and thus our stance in relationship to it; and myths, as multi-dimensional metaphors, do this in a larger and more comprehensive way.' See Hick, *The Metaphor of God Incarnate*, p. 105.

[688] Hick, *The Metaphor of God Incarnate*, p. 107.

men into his own close union with God, that they might be as he was.'[689] This is a paradox, because Jesus tries to share what cannot be shared. The supremacy of Jesus is uniquely given by God, and therefore it is not something to be shared by other persons. But, in spite of the impossibility, Jesus tries to share the incomparable uniqueness given by God.

Finally, Hick says that as a response to the action of Jesus, the other persons can experience the paradox of grace only in fragmentary ways: 'if these men, entering in some small measure through him into that union, experience the paradox of grace for themselves in fragmentary ways.'[690] Hick says that, in the case of Jesus, the paradox is absolute and the life of Jesus, which indicates the perfection of humanity, is the very life of God. Likewise, in the case of human beings, even though the paradox is only fragmentary, they can respond to the divine grace and enter into union with God. Like Jesus, one can make personal relationships with others, and, through personal relationships, one can realize possible union with God. Because of its fragmentary character, possible union with God is only gradually actualized from within an historical development towards its final realization. But the final perfection is actually indicated in the life of Jesus. According to Hick, this is the meaning of the metaphor of God incarnate, and the paradox of grace forms the basis of distinctively Christian experience and faith.[691]

---

[689] Hick, *The Metaphor of God Incarnate*, p. 107.

[690] Hick, *The Metaphor of God Incarnate*, p. 107.

[691] In *Christianity at the Centre*, Hick says that his position as Christian is a middle way between conservative and radical: 'this is a middle way between a conservative cleaving to the traditional structure of belief, and a radical rejection of all traditional content including the transcendent … It is

What can be seen from the argument above is that these theological arguments, which are made within the limitation of a Christian worldview, can also be understood as Hick's philosophy of history which is a part of Hick's philosophical system. According to this theodicy, the human being is in a process of growing towards ultimate perfection. According to his eschatology, this same process can be understood as including a factual assertion about one's spiritual survival after bodily death. Even though one cannot know the confirmation of one's spiritual survival within one's life in this world, one can believe that one's spiritual survival will finally lead to one's spiritual perfection at the end of history. According to soteriology, this same process can be understood as the transformation of one's existence from self-centredness to Reality-centredness. As the life of Jesus indicates, this transformation can only be realized from within one's personal relationships with one another. The philosophy of history can be understood as a dialectical relationship between a person and other persons' reaction to it. Hick's theodicy, eschatology, and soteriology show that personal relationships with one another are realized as an historical process towards the ultimate end.

---

radical in rejecting much of the orthodox system of belief. But it is conservative in affirming the transcendent – the reality of God, the divinity of Christ, and life after death. It is thus open to criticism from both sides – from the conservatives for denying the infallible inspiration of the scriptures, or the fall of man, or the virgin birth, of the bodily resurrection, or contra-natural miracles, or the sanctity of the church; and from the radicals for nevertheless stubbornly affirming the personal transcendent God whose love is directly manifest in the love of Christ and whose good purpose for mankind is ultimately to be fulfilled beyond bodily death.' See Hick, *Christianity at the Centre*, p. 16.

However, according to Hick, the dynamic philosophy of history towards the ultimate perfection must be complemented by the static philosophy of common sense, which secures the existence of the world itself within which personal relationship takes place. On the very basis of the existence of the world, one can develop one's personal relationship with other persons.

3.

The Reception of Idealism in Britain,
and the Relation between Philosophy and Practice

This study has mainly focused on reconciling diverse voices of Hick's critics that it could not develop properly its own interpretative position. The main problem here is the status of the Kantian infinite future: in what sense is this a progress, if the ultimate goal always recedes into further infinity. In what sense is this a cosmic optimism, if the *telos* of reconciliation can never be actualized. These questions were posed against Kant by another great representative of German Idealism, namely G. W. F. Hegel, who called the Kantian idea of the infinite progress a 'bad infinity': 'bad' precisely in the sense that it does not foster any progression, but, by delegating the desired end into the indefinite future, it merely enhances its unfeasibility.

From the pragmatic point of view, therefore, the Kantian ideal can lead to the two very different positions: 1) 'pessimism' which refuses to see the infinitely deferred reconciliation as a solution at all; and 2) 'optimism' which relies on the Kantian projection as the guarantee that there is a progress and the inter-religious dialogue slowly but surely heads for the better future.

What are the specific normative outcomes of the Kantian idea of the infinite progress? One can be liberal and believe in the progressive convergence of religious traditions – or one can be conservative and believe in sticking to the particular differences defining one's own tradition. The latter standpoint is represented historically by Johann Herder. Herder believes in the irreducible diversity of religious traditions here and now and, simultaneously, in their infinite reconciliation which can realize itself only in the divine mind (Herder's famous metaphor is: where we, confronted with different persons and cultures, hear only cacophony – God hears sublime harmony.) Yet, in terms of the daily immanent practice, this position means that we can stay safely on our local particular level and don's bother about understanding other traditions because God has done this for us already.

Historically speaking, this kind of argument in German Idealism was introduced into Britain by British Idealists. In *The Secret of Hegel: Being the Hegelian System in Origin, Principle, form and Matter* (1865), James Hutchison Stirling defended Hegel against Kant. According to Stirling, Hegel's secret is to be found in the overcoming of Kant's idea of *a priori* categories and in Hegel's idea of the concrete universal. Where Kant fails is in believing that the *a priori* categories are mere subjective representations of things and cannot reach the objective things in themselves. This point is related to Hegel's critique of Kant's 'bad infinity', because 'bad infinity' is 'bad' precisely in the sense that it does not foster any progression, but, by delegating the desired end into the indefinite

future, it merely enhances its unfeasibility. According to Stirling, the central idea of Hegel is of an objective universal that determines its own subjective particulars.[692]

As a consequence of the acceptance of Hegelian philosophy, some British Idealists (F. H. Bradley, J. M. E. McTaggart, and Michael Oakeshott, etc.) went towards a more conservative direction and some British Idealists (T. H. Green, Edward Caird, and R. G. Collingwood, etc.) went towards a more liberal direction.[693] The distinction of the conservative direction and the liberal direction concerns philosophy's relation with practical life and the improvement of the condition of society.

As Collingwood noted in his Autobiography, T. H. Green acted as an initial powerful stimulus on the whole British Idealist School in the domain of moral, social, and political philosophy. Green's major effect was to send out into public life 'a stream of ex-pupils who carried with them the conviction that philosophy … was an important thing, and their vocation was to put it into practice … Through this effect on the minds of its pupils, the philosophy of Green's school might be found, from 1880 to about 1910, penetrating and fertilizing every part of the national life.'[694] Likewise, Melvin Richter says that 'Green converted Philosophical Idealism, which in Germany had so often served as a

---

[692] See David Boucher and Andrew Vincent, *British Idealism: A Guide for the Perplexed*, London: Continnum, 2012, p. 13.

[693] David Boucher and Andrew Vincent, *British Idealism*, p. 129.

[694] R. G. Collingwood, *Autobiography*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951, pp. 15-17.

rationale of conservatism, into something close to a practical programme for the left wing

of the Liberal Party.'[695]

Green's direction of British Idealism was called New Liberalism, in distinction from

Old Liberalism of John Locke and John Stuart Mill, and is characterized by a gradual

evolution of society rather than a total revolutionary change.[696] The New Liberalism

played an important role in spreading the idea of welfare state in Britain, and it

committed to a 'social individualism': the good of the individual was seen as tied to the

good of the whole community. The atomism of the formal classical view came to be

regarded as morally and sociologically naïve. Poverty, unemployment and illness were

not just the concern of the single individual, but were social issues and dealing with them

transcended individual capacities.

The basic statement of New Liberalism can be found in T. H. Green's essay 'Liberal

Legislation and Freedom of Contract'. Green argued that freedom cannot be understood

as simply the absence of restraint or compulsion, vis-à-vis contractual relations. Green

contended that 'we do not mean merely freedom to do as we like. We do not mean

freedom that can be enjoyed by one man … at the cost of a loss of freedom to others.'

Freedom, he continued, is 'a positive power of doing or enjoying, and that, too,

---

[695] Melvin Richter, *The Politics of Conscience: T. H. Green and His Age*, Bristol: Thoemmes
Press, 1996, p. 13.

[696] David O. Brink, *Perfectionism and the Common Good: Themes in the Philosophy of T. H.
Green*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003, pp. 77-87.

something that we do or enjoy in common with others.'[697] Freedom is not just individual

whim or desire, it is something more positive. The core idea of Green's essay was that

law and restraint were not necessarily incompatible with liberty. Thus, Green contended

that it was justifiable, on the grounds of freedom, to interfere in the sale and consumption

of alcohol, housing, employment, public health provisions, and education. Such action,

although coercive, nonetheless removed unjustifiable obstacles and so provided

conditions for the genuine exercise of freedom. Law could thus contribute to the lives of

the underfed, ill-housed, overworked, and undereducated.

In Hegel's terminology, the individual was seen to be part of an 'ethical substance'

that consists of 'law and powers', where 'these substantial determinations are duties

which are binding on the will of the individual.'[698] Moral obligations are seen to occur

from within the associated norms of a civil community of which they are an element.

However, this basic position of British idealism was also challenged by a

development of Scottish Idealism called Personal Idealism. Andrew Seth's *Hegelianism*

and Personality (1887) launched a sustained attack on the Hegelian system and its

assumptions. The defect in Hegelian Absolutism, Seth contends, is that it treats the

individual simply as a universal or a spectator of things and merged into the universal,

occupying a universal standpoint, indifferent to the issue as to whether it is my

personality, or another, that comprehends the world. Seth was particularly perturbed by

---

[697] T. H. Green, *Works*, Vol. III. 1885, pp. 370-371.

[698] G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, Section 146 and Section 148.

the tendency within Hegelian Absolutism to identify the human and divine self-

consciousness. Seth complained: 'the radical error both of Hegelianism and of the allied

English doctrine I take to be the identification of the human and the divine self-

consciousness, or, to put it more broadly, the unification of consciousness in a single

Self.'[699] Personal Idealism, as such, thus begins dissatisfied with the place of individual

personality in the Hegelian program.

One should however exercise caution. It would be unwise to exaggerate the

differences between the Personalists and the Absolutists. Indeed, Personalists insisted on

the continuity, rather than a complete break with Absolutism. Seth differentiated himself

in the emphasis he gave to personhood and the uniqueness of the finite individual. The

individual could not be regarded as a mere appearance of reality. The individual person is

an experienced certainty, foundational to all action and thought, and cannot be explained

away. The Absolute therefore cannot negate the finite individual. In discussing Kant, Seth

argues that the person exists only through the world, and the world only through the

person. Person and the world are the same reality looked at from different points of view.

The basic unity, or identity, of reality can only be grasped from the point of view of the

subject, or a person.[700]

---

[699] Andrew Seth, *Scottish Philosophy*, Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1890, p. 221.

[700] Andrew Seth, 'Philosophy as Criticism of the Categories,' Essays in *Philosophical Criticism*,
A. Seth and R. B. Haldane (eds.), London: Longmans Green, 1883, p. 38.

As Wayne M. Martin discusses, Kant insists that certain fundamental ideals are bad infinite in structure: in principle unattainable and uncompleteable, giving rise to an endlessly iterated series of infinite endeavors. On the contrary, Hegel denounces such ideals, claiming that this form of infinitude is bad – psychologically debilitating and transcendentally incoherent. Martin says that 'most important philosophical disputes end in just this sort of standoff. The debate between freedom and determinism, the debate for and against idealism, the debate between the moral egoist and the proponent of the moral law … We face a choice in these matters, a choice that in the last analysis concerns the sort of ideals that we should set for ourselves, the standards of behavior we should aim at, and the norms by which we should measure our success.'[701] For Hegel, those goals may be infinite but they must be completeable – infinite totalities within reach of finite human beings and their institutions. The question is whether one should follow this sensible counsel, or stand instead with Kant, who had the conviction that what is distinctive about human existence and human dignity is in part the fact that one finds oneself situated with regard to demands that one can never finally fulfill, but which continue to exert their infinite authority over us.

Hick's Kantianism and his emphasis on inter-personal relationship is to be read from within these contexts and his practice of inter-religious dialogue can be understood as an inheritance of New Liberalism by British Idealists. The British Idealists believed in a

---

[701] Wayne M. Martin, 'In Defense of Bad Infinity: A Fichtean Response to Hegel's *Differenzschrift*' in *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain*, Vol. 55, 2007, pp. 168-187.

gradual extension of the moral community. For example, T. H. Green contends that rational consciousness of the unfulfilled potential of a common reason impresses upon us a consciousness of wider circles of people who have claims upon us and upon whom we may justifiably make claims. A moral person has a capacity for conceiving of a good that is common and of acting in such a way as to attain it. In so far as membership of any community is in principle membership of all communities, each person has a right to be treated as a free person by all other persons, and not to be subjected to force unless it is to prevent force. Recognizing anyone as human acknowledges they are capable of participating in the common good. Green argues: 'It is not the sense of duty to a neighbor, but the practical answer to the question, Who is my neighbor? that has varied.'[702] The road to cosmopolitan morality begins at home, in the family, neighbourhood, nation and beyond to international morality.

Hick has been actively involved in inter-religious dialogue 'with Hindus in India and in the West, with Sikhs in the Punjab, with Buddhists in Sri Lanka, Japan, and the United States, with Jews and Muslims in Britain and the USA, and also with Jews in Israel' and Hick 'was a founding member of both the Buddhist-Christian Theological Encounter group and the International Scholars' Jewish-Christian-Muslim dialogue group.'[703] This practice of inter-religious dialogue can be understood as embodiment of his philosophical position to improve of the condition of society. Especially, Hick recommends

---

[702] T. H. Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899, section 207.

[703] John Hick, *The Rainbow of Faiths*, p. 120.

intervention in various problems of society such as human rights violation: 'the dialogue should engage the pressing problems of the world today, including war, violence, poverty, environmental devastation, gender injustice, and human rights violations.'[704]

As David Boucher argues, 'the British Idealists played a crucial role in the transition from natural rights to human rights.'[705] According to Boucher, natural rights never strayed far away from religious foundationalism. While the British Idealists dispensed with the foundational element in natural rights, they did not dispense with the religious. Human rights develop over time, but within the context of a divine unfolding rationality.

T. H. Green's *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation* have been described as 'perhaps the finest book in the philosophy of rights written to date.'[706] For Green, rights are those powers of an individual that are recognized by others as being necessary for the attainment or achievement of a good in which they all share. Rights are, for Green, made by recognition. This is not a sufficient condition, because rights must also be powers, and contribute to the common good. The possession of such powers, or capabilities, guaranteed by society, and those that society exercises over the individual, are justifiable only on the grounds that they are a necessary prerequisite to fulfilling

---

[704] John Hick, 'Pluralism Conference,' in *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, Vol. 24, 2004, pp. 253-255.

[705] David Boucher. *The Limits of Ethics in International Relations: Natural Law, Natural Rights, and Human Rights in Transition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2009, p. v.

[706] Martin Rex, 'Green on Natural rights in Hobbes, Spinoza and Locke,' in *The Philosophy of T. H. Green*, Andrew Vincent, ed. Aldershot: Gower Publishing, 1986, pp. 104-126.

'man's vocation as a moral being'[707] This social conception of rights entails, for Green, correlative obligations.

The determination to reconcile opponents was to lead Green to attempt the adaptation to liberal purposes of concepts originally developed by conservatives. Green insisted that the idea of common good and the positive theory of freedom could be reconciled with liberalism without any danger to its essential beliefs. The supreme value of the individual and his freedom, the obligation to remove all obstacles to merit and fair competition such as class privilege or religious discrimination, the necessity to make moral principle the criterion of political decision – these were articles of the liberal creed which Green claimed to have preserved.[708]

When Hick says that 'the second half of twentieth century saw both a worldwide development of inter-religious dialogue, coinciding with considerable east-to-west migration, and also a strong contrary growth of aggressive fundamentalism in powerful elements within each tradition. But dialogue has led to a much greater mutual knowledge and appreciation between the world faiths, so that it is now possible for leaders of the religious institutions to meet in mutual amity and respect … We offer for discussion, as the fruit of our deliberations, a step beyond this unstable situation'[709], the defense of inter-religious dialogue is based on his conviction that religion, if it is to have any reality, must

---

[707] T. H. Green, *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation*, section 21.

[708] Melvin Richter, *The Politics of Conscience*, p. 194.

[709] John Hick, 'Pluralism Conference,' pp. 254-255.

begin its real task of working with genuine humanizing effect upon the great mass of

men living brutal and deprived lives. From the reasons above, my study suggests that

Hick's religious pluralism is based on 'optimism' to enhance dialogue and relies on the

Kantian projection as the guarantee that there is progress and inter-religious dialogue

slowly but surely heads for the better future.

Conclusion

As a result of the introduction of reliabilism, this dissertation has disclosed the philosophical system of John Hick to be composed of Hick's own philosophy of personhood, combined with the philosophies of Wittgenstein, Kant, and Hume.

According to reliabilism, this dissertation proposed a new model of knowledge. It was explained as *a coherent balance of plural foundations*, which contains both *stabilizing and creating* processes.

Then, Hick's philosophy of personhood was disclosed as a basic logic of his philosophical system as *inter-personal relationship*. In his philosophy of personhood, Hick derived the existence of God from the contradictory relation between the actuality of a person and the possibility of other persons. First, the world has *actuality* only for a particular person. Second, there are other persons, who are living in the world from incomparably different perspectives. It *possibly* means that there are a lot of incomparably different worlds, which are corresponding to incomparably different persons just like oneself. Finally, the natural belief to trust the *actual* world is required in spite of the *possibility* of multiple worlds. On the basis of the natural belief, one can

naturally act and react with other persons who are also the centres of the universe, just like oneself.

Furthermore, Hick's religious pluralism was disclosed as a development of this inter-personal relationship into *inter-traditional relationship*. In his reading of Wittgenstein, Hick understood religions as *cultural and linguistic traditions*. Then, in his reading of Kant, Hick added temporality to these religions as *developing toward the ultimate reality*. However, Kant's argument does not provide the reason why the ultimate reality is available here and now. Therefore, in his reading of Hume, Hick further understood religion as *the very basic environment* which secures the existence of the world shared among ordinary people here and now.

From a reliabilist viewpoint, these different components of Hick's philosophical system (Hick's own philosophy of personhood, and philosophies of Wittgenstein, Kant, and Hume) can be understood as making a coherent balance of plural foundations, which contains both stabilizing and creating processes.

Hick's philosophy of personhood starts the argument from the specificity of a particular person. Then, there are other persons. As a result of the necessity of synthesizing the incomparably different perspectives, the shared existence of the world is required as *a coherent balance of plural foundations*. If one focuses on the coherent balance, it leads to the emphasis of stabilizing processes. If one focuses on the plural foundations, it leads to the emphasis of creating processes.

330

On the basis of Hick's reading of Wittgenstein (religion as cultural and linguistic traditions), Hick's reading of Kant (religion as developing toward the ultimate reality) represents the *creating process* of the whole world. Then, Hick's reading of Hume (religion as the very basic environment) represents the *stabilizing process* of the whole world.

Each chapter of this dissertation has gradually disclosed this deep structure of Hick's philosophical system. The 1st chapter explained reliabilism as a coherent balance of plural foundations. The 2nd chapter explained reliabilism as stabilizing and creating processes. The 3rd chapter examined Hick's reading of Wittgenstein. The 4th chapter examined Hick's own philosophy of personhood. The 5th chapter examined Hick's reading of Kant. The 6th chapter examined Hick's reading of Hume.

Then, on the basis of the central argument in these discussions, the whole argument in this dissertation can also be understood in a *chronological order* according to the development of Hick's project. The project of Hick can be understood as a recovery of a pre-analytical worldview (Norman Kemp Smith, John Oman, and Roy Wood Sellars) from within analytical contexts (the 'theology and falsification' debate, Neo-Wittgensteinian Philosophy, and Reformed Epistemology). The method of reliabilism, by which this dissertation has tried to situate Hick's whole philosophy, belongs to the latest context which is shared with Reformed Epistemology. Outside this context, Hick independently offered his theological reading of Irenaeus.

The argument given by Kemp Smith can be understood as chronologically the earliest and logically the most fundamental argument. Kemp Smith's readings of Kant and Hume determined the basic directions of Hick's philosophy as history and common sense. In the 5th chapter of this dissertation, Kemp Smith's reading of Kant was examined. According to Kemp Smith, Kant says that a fact becomes actual only when experienced by a particular person, but, at the same time, the fact must also be shared by other persons as possibility. Then, according to Kant, the actuality of a person and the possibility of the other persons can be understood as part of the same action of synthetic judgement which reveals the unknown aspect of reality. The action of synthetic judgement is not only a personal process, but also an ontological process. It continues to solve contradictions in reality, and reality reveals itself from within the infinite *historical process* towards the ultimate end.

In the 6th chapter of this dissertation, Kemp Smith's reading of Hume was examined. According to Kemp Smith, Hume divides the two systems: the vulgar system and the philosophical system. The vulgar system takes the existence of objects for granted. The vulgar system is based on *natural belief* in the common sense world, whereas the philosophical system takes the objects of immediate consciousness as internal and perishing. Then, according to Hume, the vulgar system and the philosophical system can be understood as part of the same process of causal inference developing with imagination. First, there is the natural belief in the existence of object, and imagination is already working in the common sense world. Then, imagination continues to work in causal

inference, and develops the natural belief through the gradual discovery of the unknown

objects with error and deception.

These arguments by Kant and Hume can be understood as the examination of the same

process to develop personal as well as humanity's knowledge in general to reveal the

ultimate reality. In the case of Kant, the argument is directed towards the ultimate end in

the infinite future and therefore emphasizes history. In contrast, Hume emphasizes the

origin of causal inference in the common sense world here and now. The causal inference

develops with the help of imagination, but the development is ultimately based on the

common sense world. Hick uses these two types of arguments as mutually complementary

aspects of his philosophy of religion.

Oman's argument, which provides the logic of environment, can be understood as a

further development on the basis of Kemp Smith. In the 5th chapter of this dissertation, the

argument of Oman was examined. According to Oman, Kant's philosophy of history is

complemented by a philosophy of *environment*. The logic of history can solve the

contradiction between a person and other persons, but it cannot explain the relation

between the ultimate environment, which is reached at the end of history, and personal

environment here and now. Oman says that a logic of environment secures that the ultimate

reality is actually available for a person here and now. The logic of environment explains

that a person and other persons are integrated within a larger environment, and the ultimate

environment includes all of the world in all of its aspects, within which all the particular

persons are living. The environment itself does not explain history, but the environment is necessary for the full understanding of history.

Under the influence from Kemp Smith and Oman, John Hick, in *Faith and Knowledge*, critically examines the epistemological standpoints of William James and John Henry Newman, and develops his own argument about the necessity of *the two types of faith*: the epistemological and the ontological. James can be understood as a typical liberal position, and Newman as a typical conservative position. In the 4th chapter of this dissertation, Hick's readings of James and Newman and his own argument on the basis of them were examined. According to Hick, James does have an understanding of the two types of faith (epistemological faith as cognition and ontological faith as trust). However, James' theory has an emphasis on the aspect of faith as cognition and it fails to give an appropriate position to faith as trust by interpreting it as secondary and superficial. James's argument of *the will to believe* gives a defence of a limited field of personal choice and it is important as a part of the whole aspect of faith, but it does not give a defence of totality.

In the case of Newman, Hick argues that, in spite of Newman's own intention to theorize faith as totality, Newman fails to theorize totality. This is because Newman divides the realm of faith as totality, on the one hand, and the realm of logic as abstraction, on the other hand. There is no dialectical interaction between them. By the concept of *illative sense*, Newman tries to theorize a personal capacity to see a large field of evidence as a whole, and it can be understood as an important aspect of faith. But, if Newman defends

the fixed distinction between faith and logic, Newman's faith remains to defend only a limited field.

Against James and Newman, Hick explains his argument from the *personal significance* of the world. Seen only from a particular point of view, the world makes sense. However, there are other persons in the world. From a personal viewpoint, there would be only one person in existence, and other persons are just human-like appearances. However, in one's normal mode of experience, one is naturally acting and reacting with other persons who are also the centres of the universe, just like oneself. This is a fundamental contradiction. If everyone naturally believes in the existence of other persons, this is because there is the absolute God behind the incomparable uniqueness of all persons. The world has a significance only for a particular person, but, at the same time, this significance will be lost without the existence of the divine environment, within which incomparably particular persons are living. This is what Hick means by the necessity of the two types of faith: the epistemological and the ontological.

On the basis of the argument above, Hick's eschatological verification in *Faith and Knowledge* can be understood as an answer to the 'theology and falsification' debate begun by Antony Flew. The eschatological verification was examined in the 6th chapter of this dissertation. According to Hick, it is possible to express theism in the form of factual assertion. Theism can be expressed in the form of personal faith in the *spiritual survival after bodily death*. According to the survival claim, one can distinguish two rival accounts

of the universe: naturalism and theism. What distinguishes the factual claims of naturalism and theism is the survival claim. Naturalism denies the survival claim and theism defends the survival claim. What is important in this argument is that the survival claim is not open to refutation. If one survives bodily death, then one shall presumably know that one has survived it. But if one does not survive death, one shall not know that one has not survived it. Therefore, the possibility of refutation is closed for a human being. However, the survival claim is at least a factual assertion and it can be distinguished from naturalism.

From the second edition of *Faith and Knowledge*, Hick includes Wittgenstein's philosophy in his argument about the two types of faith. In the 3rd chapter of this dissertation, Hick's reading of Wittgenstein was examined. According to Hick, on the one hand, faith necessarily involves *interpretation* which is culturally and linguistically determined through one's community and upbringing. In this aspect, Hick defends Wittgenstein's philosophy of language. However, on the other hand, faith also involves with the factual nature of religious language, which leads to the encounter with the ultimate reality. Hick says both faith as interpretation and faith as the encounter with the ultimate reality are necessary for the full understanding of the existence of God, within which different cultures and languages are understood to be mutually enhancing within the whole.

In *An Interpretation of Religion*, Hick develops his reading of Wittgenstein into his critical reading of D. Z. Phillips' Wittgensteinian philosophy, and, in contrast, Hick defends Roy Wood Sellars' critical realism instead of Phillips's non-realism. In the 3rd chapter of

this dissertation, Hick's reading of Phillips and Sellars were examined. For Phillips and Wittgenstein, the meaning of words and concepts is not autonomous but always mediated by their context. When Hick defends faith as interpretation, Hick shares this with Wittgenstein's philosophy of language. However, according to Hick, what is lacking from Phillips' position is a *holistic integrity*, and it must be required to introduce historical change, heterogeneity, and mutual interaction within the whole.

Hick tries to read Wittgenstein's philosophy of language within the critical realism of Roy Wood Sellars. On the one hand, Sellars says that human knowing is a direct knowing of an object. In this sense, Sellars defends realism. However, on the other hand, Sellars says that the objects can be known for a subject only as appearance, and the appearance is known differently for different subjects. Therefore, diverse appearances reveal various kinds of essences for different subjects. Then, Sellars says that the contradiction between the direct knowing of the object and the diverse appearances is solved as an *historical process* to find a better solution through trial and error. Thought cures its own difficulties by showing how new distinctions satisfy old conflicts. This is what Sellars calls critical realism.

Then, in various places such as *Dialogues in the Philosophy of Religion* and *An Autobiography*, etc., Hick tries to develop his responses to 'Reformed Epistemologists' such as William P. Alston and Alvin Plantinga, and 'theologians of religions' such as George Lindbeck, Gavin D'Costa, and S. Mark Heim. However, Hick's responses look

underdeveloped. Therefore, on behalf of Hick, this dissertation proposed to introduce a classification of foundationalism, coherentism, and reliabilism, which is proposed by Ernest Sosa. From the viewpoint of reliabilism, Alston and Plantinga can be understood as weak foundationalists. Lindbeck, D'Costa and Heim as well as Wittgenstein and Phillips can be understood as coherentists.

In the 1st chapter of this dissertation, the classification of foundationalism, coherentism, and reliabilism was examined. The central idea of foundationalism is that all knowledge is founded on what is ultimately given. For example, for rationalist, only rational intuition can give *a secure foundation*, and only deduction can build further knowledge of superstructure on that foundation. Here, the model of knowledge is the axiomatic system, with its self-evident axioms and its theorems derived through logical deduction. Therefore, a foundationalist admits a particular foundational knowledge which grounds all the other kinds of knowledge.

A coherentist rejects the notion of foundation in favour of the one that one's body of knowledge is a raft that floats free of any anchor or tie. What distinguishes a coherence theory is the claim that nothing can count as a reason for holding a belief except another belief. What justifies belief is not that it can be an infallible belief with an indubitable objects, nor that it has been proved deductively on such a basis, but that it can cohere with *a comprehensive system of beliefs*. A coherence theory can be summarised as a view according to which there are no basic or foundational beliefs and at least the primary basis

for justification is the fact such beliefs fit together and support each other in a variety of complicated ways, thus forming a coherent system of beliefs, or perhaps more than one such system.

Ernest Sosa proposes the alternative of reliabilism as a reconciliation between the radically different standpoints of foundationalism and coherentism. The method of reliabilism can be understood as the combination of two radically different kinds of inquiry: (1) an inquiry based on the difference of plural foundations, and (2) an inquiry based on the historical process to form a coherent perspective among different foundations. Reliabilism grants the narrow scope of perfect knowledge, and turns to *imperfect but reliable knowledge*. Then, in the 2nd chapter of this dissertation, reliabilism was further examined as the ethics of normality: (1) the idea of normality is valid only for a unique situation and it determines one's immediate reaction with the world, (2) the idea of normality is a comprehensive ability of a person and is based on the balance of the whole aspects of reality, and (3) the idea of normality has a social aspect and it has both *creating and stabilizing* functions.

From a reliabilist viewpoint, the arguments given by Reformed Epistemologists can be understood as weak foundationalism. In the 2nd chapter of this dissertation, Reformed Epistemologists such as William P. Alston and Alvin Plantinga were examined. Alston's contribution to philosophy of religion lies in his theorization of a reliability of a particular religion. What is shown in Alston's argument is a reduction of certainty and an emphasis

339

on the uniqueness of *personal choice*. According to Alston, a characteristic of faith is a choice of something uncertain which does not have demonstrative evidence. It's uncertain but there is a strong motivation for the personal choice of it, so it has its own kind of reasonability.

Alston and Plantinga make a similar argument about the reliability of a particular religion. Like Alston, Plantinga also argues that Christianity does not directly conclude the truth or falsity of a proposition, but implies a certain kind of rationality which comes from a certain kind of cognitive faculty. But there is a subtle difference between them, and it is shown in Plantinga's attitude about religious plurality. Plantinga keeps the awareness of the world's religious plurality throughout his argument, and this awareness is taken as a *necessary requirement of coherence* in the current religious situation. In this sense, Plantinga further developed Alston's position, and Plantinga gives a more nuanced version of weak foundationalism, which presupposes the idea of coherentism.

This dissertation proposed to read the arguments of George Lindbeck, Gavin D'Costa, and S. Mark Heim as a basically similar line of coherentist arguments, which is shared also by Wittgenstein and Phillips. In the 1st chapter of this dissertation, the argument of George Lindbeck was examined. According to Lindbeck, a religion can be viewed as a kind of *cultural and/or linguistic framework* or medium that shapes the entirety of life and thought. An individual identity is not individual at all, but is determined by the communal and

religious worldview that one is born into. Therefore, there is nothing that can be truly declared common to all religions.

In the 2ⁿᵈ chapter of this dissertation, the arguments of Gavin D'Costa and S. Mark Heim were examined. Both D'Costa and Heim presuppose the cultural-linguistic standpoint and, on the basis of it, D'Costa chose a more conservative direction, whereas Heim choose a more liberal direction. D'Costa explains his view of religion in contrast with modernity. According to D'Costa, there is, on the one hand, the cultural-linguistic group of Catholic Christianity, and, on the other hand, the cultural-linguistic group of modern liberalism. In the name of Catholic Christianity, D'Costa defends the richness of the life of *community* and the virtue of *narrative*. What is implied in them is a defence of the European tradition which allows much plasticity in accepting what is unknown. When D'Costa defends the European tradition, it means the order of a Christian worldview within which each partial practice of religious life gets a special meaning. There is a unique kind of reality that can be acquired only within the bigger framework.

In contrast, Heim rejects such a bigger framework, and instead focuses on what escapes a certain categorization. As the cultural-linguistic thickness of religion, Heim defends diversity of actual practice and constant current of exchange. Heim finds more reality in *excess, margin, and process*, and these kinds of reality cannot fit in a closed tradition. These kinds of reality can be discovered throughout history, but can be particularly revealed within modern society. Modern society is a unique society that

focuses on the technological advancement towards excess, margin, and process. For Heim, technological advancement is not something added to the original nature of human being. On the contrary, the technological advancement actualizes what is hidden within the original nature of human being.

This dissertation proposed to read Hick's argument in *An Interpretation of Religion* from the viewpoint of reliabilism. In the 1st chapter of this dissertation, a reliabilist aspect of Hick's argument was examined. From the reliabilist viewpoint, Hick's argument is better understood as an imperfect but reliable standpoint rather than a perfectly solid standpoint. When Hick has a claim about substantive identity or overlap among diverse religious traditions, the emphasis was not only on the underlying literal unity but also on diverse cultural and historical settings of religions. A subtlety of Hick's method lies in his method to take these *contradictory* standpoints at the same time.

Then, on the basis of the argument above, this dissertation further examined Hick's cosmic optimism and philosophy of religious pluralism in *An Interpretation of Religion*. In the 4th chapter of this dissertation, Hick's cosmic optimism was examined. Hick explains cosmic optimism on the basis of his philosophy of personhood, which he developed in *Faith and Knowledge*. According to Hick, the world has significance only for *a particular person*. Then, from the viewpoint of a particular person, *the other persons* look just human-like appearances. There is no direct confirmation of whether the other persons are really persons or not. Theoretically, one cannot distinguish a person from a

mere appearance. In spite of this theoretical ambiguity, *ordinary people* naturally believe that the other persons are actually persons just like oneself. Then, if ordinary people are naturally presupposing the incompatible uniqueness of other persons, there is a common recognition of the world. This natural belief in the existence of the world is based on trust, instead of cognition.

On the basis of the argument above, Hick's cosmic optimism can be understood. According to Hick, a person can confirm the existence of the world only from within dialectical relationship between the actuality of a person and the possibility of other persons. Then, this personal interaction is expected to be realized only in the infinite future. However, according to cosmic optimism, one can see the personal interaction not only as pointing to the possibility of a limitlessly better existence, but also as affirming that the universe is such that this limitlessly better existence is actually available to a person and can begin to be realized in each present moment.

In the 5th chapter of this dissertation, Hick's philosophy of religious pluralism in *An Interpretation of Religion* was examined. Hick's philosophy of religious pluralism can be understood as a combination of three different standpoints (Wittgenstein's philosophy of language, Kant's philosophy of temporality, and Hume's philosophy of common sense) on the basis of his own philosophy of personhood. First, according to Wittgenstein's philosophy of language, there are a lot of different kinds of cultural and linguistic traditions. Hick denies the common essence of religion, and instead proposes to understand religions

as different kinds of cultural and linguistic traditions. Second, according to Kant's philosophy of temporality, these cultural and linguistic traditions are understood to be developing towards the ultimate reality in the infinite future. However, Kant's philosophy of temporality cannot provide the reason why the ultimate reality in the infinite future is also available here and now. Third, therefore, according to Hume's philosophy of common sense and Hick's philosophy of personhood, *a person* in a religious tradition and *other persons* in other religious traditions are understood to be integrated within a common environment in which *ordinary people* naturally believe. The different religious traditions are actually realizing the ultimate reality in the infinite future from within the common environment in each present moment. From the viewpoint of reliabilism, the combination of these standpoints as a whole can be understood as a coherent balance of plural foundations which has both creating and stabilizing functions.

In addition to these philosophical arguments, John Hick also developed his reading of Irenaeus in his more theological arguments in *Evil and the God of Love*, *Death and Eternal Life*, and *The Metaphor of God Incarnate*. In the 6th chapter of this dissertation, Hick's reading of Irenaeus was examined. In *Evil and the God of Love*, Hick begins the argument by Irenaeus' distinction between the image and the likeness of God. The image means one's nature as personal. Because the finite personal creature is in a personal relationship with his Maker, the creature is in a process of growing towards the perfect being whom God is seeking to produce. The likeness means the final culmination, towards which the

process of growth and development in God's continuing providence is moving. The image, within which the human being is made finite, and the likeness, towards which the human being is moving, are two aspects of the same process. This is God's self-revealing activity in history, who manifests himself from within the spiritual growth of humanity.

Hick develops this reading of Irenaeus in *Death and Eternal Life* and *The Metaphor of God Incarnate*. In *Death and Eternal Life*, Hick says that theodicy has an eschatological implication. The final meaning of man's life lies in the future state to which, in God's purpose, he is moving. From the divine viewpoint, the human being's finite nature is not in contradiction with one's ultimate destiny. From a human viewpoint, it is theoretically possible to think that the existence of different persons indicates the denial of the ultimate destiny, because different persons are following different paths. However, as a matter of fact, a human being has an innate tendency to understand the existence of other persons as living within the same world and, accordingly, referring to the same ultimate destiny. Therefore, the difference among persons in the world can be understood as part of the same process of the manifestation of the ultimate divinity from within the finality of the human being.

In *The Metaphor of God Incarnate*, Hick says that, according to Irenaean theodicy, the incarnation of Jesus Christ can be understood to indicate the paradoxical nature of divinity. The finality of God's appearance in a life involving suffering and violent death is not a contingent event, but a necessary revelation of God to show that the ultimate goodness

345

manifests itself only from within the suffering of humanity. The Son of God, although he was perfect, passed through the state of suffering which is shared with the rest of mankind. What is shown in the process of incarnation is that the human being can receive the divine goodness only from within finite suffering. Only from within the finality is the human being allowed to make a progress towards the ultimate fulfilment of the divine purpose.

What is shared in all of these theological arguments is a historical awareness towards the ultimate end. These theological arguments, which are made within a limitation of Christian worldview, can also be understood as Hick's philosophy of history which is a part of Hick's philosophical system.

In the field of religious pluralism, this dissertation has disclosed Hick's philosophical system to be composed of Hick's own philosophy of personhood, combined with the philosophies of Wittgenstein, Kant, and Hume. By introducing the method of reliabilism, this dissertation has classified philosophical presuppositions hidden in various criticisms against Hick, and tried to rehabilitate Hick's religious pluralism by disclosing the deep structure of his philosophical system. Throughout the argument, this dissertation has also situated Hick's project in the history of philosophy of religion and understood his project as a recovery of a pre-analytical worldview from within analytical contexts.

Bibliography

John Hick

'The Will to Believe: William James' Theory of Faith,' in *The London Quarterly and Holborn Review*, Vol. 127, 1952, pp. 290-5.

'The Nature of Religious Faith,' in *The Proceedings of the XIth International Congress of Philosophy*, Vol. 11, 1953, pp. 57-62.

Faith and Knowledge: A Modern Introduction to the Problem of Religious Knowledge, First Edition, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1957.

'The Christology of D. M. Baillie,' in *Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 1958, 1-12.

'Belief and Life: The Fundamental Nature of the Christian Ethics,' in *Encounter*, Vol. 20, No. 4, pp. 494-516.

'Theology and Verification,' in *Theology Today*, Vol. 27, No. 2, 1960, pp. 12-31.

'God as Necessary Being,' in *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 57, No. 22-23, 1960, pp. 725-34.

Philosophy of Religion, First Edition, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1963.

Evil and the God of Love, First Edition, London: Macmillan, 1966.

'Christology at the Crossroads,' in *Prospects for Theology*, ed. F. Healy, James Nesbit, London: James Nisbet & Co. 1966, pp. 137-66.

Faith and Knowledge, Second Edition, London: Macmillan, 1967.

Christianity at the Centre, London: Macmillan, 1968.

'God, Evil and Mystery,' in *Religious Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 1968, pp. 539-46.

'The Problem of Evil in the First and Last Things – Reply to I. Trethowan,' in *Journal of Theological Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 1968, pp. 591-602.

'Religious Faith as Experiencing As,' in *Talk of God*, ed. N. Vesey, London: Macmillan, 1969, pp. 20-35.

Arguments for the Existence of God, London: Macmillan, 1970.

'Freedom and the Irenaean Theodicy Again,' in *Journal of Theological Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 2, 1970, pp. 419-22.

'Towards a Christian Theology of Death,' in *Dying, Death, and Disposal*, ed. G. Cope, London: SPCK, 1970, pp. 8-25.

'A New Form of Theistic Argument,' in *Proceedings of the XIVth International Congress of Philosophy*, Vienna, Vol. 5, pp. 336-41.

Biology and the Soul, Eddington Memorial Lecture: Cambridge University Press, 1972.

God and the Universe of Faiths, London: Macmillan, 1973.

Philosophy of Religion, Second Edition, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1973.

'Resurrection Worlds and Bodies,' in *Mind*, Vol. 82, No. 327, 1973, pp. 409-12.

'Coherence and the God of Love Again,' in *Journal of Theological Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 2, 1973, 522-8.

'Whatever Path Men Choose is Mine,' in *The Modern Churchman*, Vol. 18, No. 1&2, pp, 8-17.

Death and Eternal Life, London: Collins, 1976.

The Centre of Christianity, London: SCM Press, 1977.

'Eschatological Verification Reconsidered,' in *Religious Studies,* Vol. 8, No. 2, 1977, pp. 189-92.

'Christian Theology and Inter-religious Dialogue,' in *World Faiths*, 103, 1977, pp. 2-19.

'Present and Future Life' (The Ingersoll Lecture), in *Harvard Theological Review*, Vol.

71, No. 1-2, 1978, pp. 1-15.

Evil and the God of Love, Second Edition, London: Collins, 1979.

God has Many Names: Britain's New Religious Pluralism, London: Macmillan, 1980.

'An Irenaean Theodicy,' in *Encountering Evil: Live Options in Theodicy*, ed. Stephen T. Davis, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1981.

'On Grading Religions,' in *Religious Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 4, 1981, pp. 451-67.

The Second Christianity, London: SCM Press, 1983.

Philosophy of Religion, Third Edition, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1983.

'On Conflicting Religious Truth-Claims,' in *Religious Studies*, 1983, pp. 458-92.

'The Philosophy of World Religions,' in *Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol. 37, 1984, pp. 229-36.

Problems of Religious Pluralism, London: Macmillan, 1985.

An Interpretation of Religion: Human Responses to the Transcendent, Basingstoke, Macmillan Press, 1989.

'The Logic of God Incarnate,' in *Religious Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 4, 1989, pp. 409-423.

'Rational Theistic Beliefs Without Proofs,' in P. Badham (ed.), *A John Hick Reader*, 1990.

'Religious Faith as Experiencing-As,' in P. Badham (ed.), *A John Hick Reader*, 1990.

'Religion as Fact-Asserting,' in P. Badham (ed.), *A John Hick Reader*, 1990.

'Religion as 'Skillful Means': A Hint from Buddhism,' in *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. 30, No. 3, 1991.

Disputed Questions in Theology and the Philosophy of Religion, London: Macmillan, 1993.

The Metaphor of God Incarnate, London: SCM Press, 1993.

The Rainbow of Faiths, London: SCM Press, 1995.

'Religious Pluralism and the Divine: A Response to Paul Eddy,' in *Religious Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 4, 1995, pp. 417-20.

'The Possibility of Religious Pluralism: A Reply to Gavin D'Costa,' in *Religious Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 2, 1997, pp. 161-6.

'The Latest Vatican Statement on Christianity and Other Religions,' in *New Blackfriars*, Vol. 79, No. 934, 1998, pp. 536-43.

The Fifth Dimension, Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1999.

'Ineffability,' in *Religious Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 1, 2000, pp. 35-46.

Dialogues in the Philosophy of Religion, New York: Palgrave, 2001.

An Autobiography, Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2002.

'Pluralism Conference,' in *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, Vol. 24, 2004, pp. 253-5.

'The Next Step beyond Dialogue,' in *The Myth of Religious Superiority*, ed. Paul Knitter, New York: Orbis, 2005.

'Introduction to Second Edition,' in *An Interpretation of Religion*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

The New Frontier of Religion and Science, New York: Palgrave, 2006.

'Exclusivism versus Pluralism in Religion: A Response to Kevin Meeker,' in *Religious Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 2, 2006, pp. 207-12.

'D. Z. Phillips on God and Evil,' in *Religious Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 4, 2007, pp. 433-41.

Who or What is God?, London: SCM Press, 2008.

Between Faith and Doubt, New York: Palgrave, 2010.

'A Voyage Round John Oman,' in *John Oman: New Perspectives*, ed. Adam Hood, Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2012.

John Hick (ed.)

Classical and Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Religion, First Edition, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964.

Faith and the Philosophers, London: Macmillan, 1964.

The Existence of God, London: Macmillan, 1964.

Classical and Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Religion, Second Edition, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970.

Truth and Dialogue in World Religions: Conflicting Truth Claims, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974.

The Myth of God Incarnate, London: SCM Press, 1977.

Classical and Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Religion, Third Edition, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1990.

John Hick and Arthur C. Mcgill (eds.)

The Many-Faced Argument, New York and London: Macmillan, 1976.

John Hick and B. Hebblethwaite (eds.)

Christianity and other Religions, Glasgow: Fount, 1980.

John Hick and M. Goulder

Why Believe in God?, London: SCK Press, 1983.

John Hick and Paul F. Knitter (eds.)

The Myth of Christian Uniqueness: Toward a Pluralistic Theology of Religions, Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1987.

John Hick and Lamont C. Hempel (eds.)

Gandhi's Significance for Today, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989.

Other Works Consulted

Alston, William P.

Perceiving God: The Epistemology of Religious Experience, Ithaca and London; Cornell University Press, 1991.

'John Hick, Faith and Knowledge,' in A. Sharma (ed.) *God, Truth and Reality*, 1992.

Anselm, St

Proslogion, trans. M. J. Charlesworth, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965.

Armstrong, D. M.

Belief, Truth and Knowledge, London: Cambridge University Press, 1973.

Aquinas, Thomas

Summa Theologica, Blackfriars Latin/English ed., London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1976.

Summa contra Gentiles, trans. Anton Pegis, New York: Doubleday, 1955.

Athanasius, St

On the Incarnation, London: Mowbray, and Crestwood, N. Y.: St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, 1989.

Aristotle

Nicomachean Ethics, trans. Terence Irwin, Second Edition, Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett Pub., 1999.

Augustine, St

The City of God, trans. Marcus Dods, George Wilson, and J. J. Smith, New York: Random House Inc., 1950.

Confessions, trans. Albert C. Outler in *Augustine: Confessions and Enchiridion*, London: SCM Press, 1955.

Ayer, A. J.

Language, Truth and Logic, London: Gollancz, 1936.

Baillie, Donald

God was in Christ, London: Faber & Faber, 1948.

Barth, Karl

Church Dogmatics, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1936-.

Barthes, Roland

Mythologies, London: Paladin, 1983.

Basinger, David

Religious Diversity: A Philosophical Assessment, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002.

Beilby, James

Epistemology as Theology: An Evaluation of Alvin Plantinga's Religious Epistemology, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005.

Berdyaev, Nicholas

The Meaning of the Creative Act, trans. Donald Lowrie, London: Victor Gollancz, 1955.

Berkeley, George

The Principles of Human Knowledge, ed. T. E. Jessop, London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1945.

Bevans, Stephen

John Oman and his Doctrine of God, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Bradley, F. H.

Appearance and Reality, Second Edition, London: Sonnenschein, and New York: Macmillan, 1906.

Essays on Truth and Reality, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914.

Blau, Joseph L.

Men and Movements in American Philosophy, New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1952.

Brink, David O.

Perfectionism and the Common Good: Themes in the Philosophy of T. H. Green,

Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003.

Bosanquet, Bernard

The Principle of Individuality and Value: the Gifford Lectures for 1911 delivered in Edinburgh University, London: Macmillan, 1912.

The Value and Destiny of the Individual: the Gifford Lectures for 1912 delivered in Edinburgh University, London: Macmillan, 1913.

Boucher, David

The Limits of Ethics in International Relations: Natural Law, Natural Rights, and Human Rights in Transition, Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2009.

Boucher, David & Vincent, Andrew

British Idealism: A Guide for the Perplexed, London: Continuum, 2012.

Braithwaite, R. B.

An Empiricist View of the Nature of Religious Belief, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1955.

Bruce, Alexander Balmain

The Moral Order of the World, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1899.

Buber, Martin

Two Types of Faith, trans. by N. P. Goldhawk, New York: Macmillan, 1951.

Burrell, David

Aquinas: God and Action, Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1979.

Faith and Freedom: an Interfaith Perspective, Malden, Mass.; Oxford: Blackwell, 2004.

Byrne, Peter

'John Hick's Philosophy of World Religions,' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 35, 1982.

God and Realism, Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate, 2003.

Cairns, D. S.

The Faith That Revels, London: SCM Press, 1937.

Caird, Edward

> *The Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant*, Glasgow: James Maclehose, 1889.

Calvin, John

> *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, London: SCM Press, 1961.

Cavanaugh, William

> 'A Fire Strong Enough to Consume the House: The Wars of Religion and the Rise of the Nation State,' in *Radical Orthodoxy Reader*, ed. John Milbank and Simon Oliver, London: Routledge, 2009, pp. 314-37.

Cheetham, David

> *John Hick: a Critical Introduction and Reflection*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003.

> *Ways of Meeting and the Theology of Religions*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2013.

Chisholm, Roderick M.

> 'Sellars' Critical Realism,' in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research,* Vol. 15, No. 1, 1954, pp. 33-47.

> *Theory of Knowledge*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966.

Christian, William A.

> *Oppositions of Religious Doctrines: a Study in the Logic of Dialogue Among Religions*, London: Macmillan, 1972.

Clack, Brian R.

> *An Introduction to Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Religion*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999.

Coakley, Sarah

> *Christ Without Absolutes: A Study of the Christology of Ernst Troeltsch*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988.

Cobb, John B.

> *Transforming Christianity and the World: a Way Beyond Absolutism and Relativism,*

ed. Paul F. Knitter, Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1999.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor

Biographia Literaria, or, Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions, London: Dent, 1906.

Collingwood, R. G.

Autobiography, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951.

Copleston, F. C.

Aquinas, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1955.

Corliss, Richard

'Redemption and the Divine Realities: A Study of Hick and an Alternative,' in *Religious Studies*, Vol. 22, 1986, pp. 235-48.

Craig, Robert

Social Concern in the Thought of William Temple, London: Victor Gollancz, 1963.

Cudworth, Ralph

The True Intellectual system of the Universe, trans. J. Harrison, London: Thomas Tegg, 1845.

Cunningham, Conor

'Language: Wittgenstein after theology,' in *Radical Orthodoxy: a New Theology*, ed. John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock, and Graham Ward, London: Routledge, 1999.

Darwin's Pious Idea: Why the Ultra-Darwinists and Creationists Both Get it Wrong, Grand Rapids, Mich.; Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans, 2010.

Cupitt, Don

Taking Leave of God, London: SCM Press, and New York: Crossroad, 1980.

Davidson, Donald

'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge', in Dieter Henrich, ed., *Kant oder Hegel?*, Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1983, reprinted in Davidson, *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 137-53.

Davis, S. (ed.)

Encountering Evil, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1981.

Death and Afterlife, London: Macmillan, 1989.

D'Costa, Gavin

John Hick's Theology of Religions: A Critical Evaluation, Lanham: University Press
of America, 1987.

Theology and Religious Pluralism: the Challenge of Other Religions, Oxford:
Blackwell, 1986.

The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000.

Theology in the Public Square: Church, Academy, and Nation, Malden, Mass.:
Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

D'Costa, Gavin (ed)

Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered, New York, Orbis Books, 1990.

De Certeau, Michel

The Practice of Everyday Life, trans. S. Rendall, Berkeley and LA: University of
California Press, 1984.

Descartes, René

'Second Set of Replies,' in The Philosophical Writings of Descartes, ed. J. Cottingham,
R. Stoothoff, and D. Murdoch, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

DeHart, Paul J.

The Trial of the Witnesses: The Rise and Decline of Postliberal Theology, Oxford,
Blackwell, 2006.

De Lubac, Henri

'The Mystery of the Supernatural,' in Theology in History, San Francisco: Ignatius
Press, 1996, pp. 281-316.

The Mystery of the Supernatural, trans. Rosemary Sheed, New York: Crossroad, 1998.

Diamond, Malcolm L.

Martin Buber: Jewish Existentialist, New York: Oxford University Press, 1960.

Dilman, Ilham

'Cambridge Philosophers VII: Wisdom,' in *Philosophy*, Vol. 71, No. 278, 1996, pp. 577-90.

Drummond, Henry

The Ascent of Man, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1894.

Eddy, Paul R.

'Religious Pluralism and the Divine: Another look at John Hick's Neo-Kantian Proposal', in *Religious Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 4, 1994, p. 493.

Farmer, H. H.

The World and God: a Study of Prayer, Providence and Miracle in Christian Experience, London: Nisbet, 1936.

Revelation and Religion: Studies in the Theological Interpretation of Religious Types, London: Nisbet, 1954.

Ferré, Nels F. S.

Evil and the Christian Faith, New York: Harper & Row, 1947.

Flew, Antony

'Theology and Falsification,' in *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*, ed. A. G. N. Flew and A. C. MacIntyre, London, SCM Press, 1955.

There Is a God: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind, New York: HarperOne, 2008.

Flint, Robert

Theism, Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1877.

Ford, David

Barth and God's Story: Biblical Narrative and the Theological Method of Karl Barth in the Church Dogmatics, Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1981.

Forgie, William

'Hyper-Kantianism in Recent Discussion of Mystical Experience,' in *Religious Studies*, vol. 21, no. 2, 1985.

Forsyth, Peter Taylor

The Justification of God, London: Duckworth, 1916.

Fraser, Alexander Campbell

Philosophy of Theism, Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1895-96.

Fredericks, James L.

Faith among Faiths: Christian Theology and Non-Christian Religions, New York: Paulist Press, 1999.

Frei, Hans

The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1974.

Gillis, Chester

A Question of Final Belief: John Hick's Pluralistic Theory of Salvation, London: Macmillan, 1989.

Goldman, Alvin I.

Epistemology and Cognition, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986.

Knowledge in a Social World, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999.

Greco, John

'Introduction: Motivations for Sosa's Epistemology,' in *Ernest Sosa and his Critics*, ed. John Greco, Malden, Mass.; Oxford: Blackwell, 2004.

Green, T. H.

Prolegomena to Ethics, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899.

Works, London: Longmans, 1885.

Griffiths, Paul J.

Problems of Religious Diversity, Oxford: Blackwell, 2001.

Griffiths, Paul J., and Delmas Lewis,

'On Grading Religions, Seeking Truth, and Being Nice to People – A Reply to

Professor Hick,' in *Religious Studies* 19, 1983, pp. 75-80.

Hare, R. M.

'Theology and Falsification,' in *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*, London: SCM Press, 1955.

Harnack, Adolph von

History of Dogma, London: Williams & Norgate, 1894-1899.

Hartshorne, Chrles,

The Logic of Perfection, and Other Essays in Neoclassical Metaphysics, LaSalle, Ill.: Open Court, 1962.

Hauerwas, Stanley

Character and the Christian Life, San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1985.

Heim, S. Mark

Salvations: Truth and Difference in Religion, Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1995.

The Depth of the Riches: A Trinitarian Theology of Religious Ends, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.

Hewitt, H. (ed.)

Problems in the Philosophy of Religion, London: Macmillan, 1991.

Hitchcock, F. R. Montgomery

Irenaeus of Lugdunum: a Study of His Teaching, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914.

Hodgson, Leonard

For Faith and Freedom, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1956-7.

Towards a Christian Philosophy, London: Nisbet & Co., 1942.

Hume, David

A Treatise of Human Nature, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, London: Oxford University Press, 1968.

Huxley, Julian

'The New Divinity,' in The Twentieth Century, Vol. CLXX, No. 1011, 1961, pp. 9-18, reprinted under the title of 'Evolutionary Humanism' in Hick (ed.), *Classical and Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Religion*, First Edition, pp. 357-63.

Irenaeus, St

Against Heresies, in *The Writings of Irenaeus*, trans. Alexander Roberts and W. H. Rambaut, London: Hamilton & Co, 1869.

Proof of the Apostolic Preaching, in *Ancient Christian Writers*, Vol. 16, trans. Joseph P. Smith, London: Longmans, 1952.

Iverach, James

Evolution and Christianity, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1894.

James, William

The Will to Believe and Other Essays, New York and London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1897.

Jaspers, Karl

The Origin and Goal of History, trans. Michael Bullock, New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1953.

Kant, Immanuel

Kant's Critique of Practical Reason and Other Works on the Theory of Ethics, trans. Thomas Kingsmill Abbott, London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1889.

The Moral Law, or; Kant's Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals, trans. H. J. Paton, London: Hutchinson University Library, 1948.

Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics That Will Be Able to Present Itself as a Science, trans. P. G. Lucas, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1962.

Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, trans. Norman Kemp Smith, London: Macmillan, 1964.

Katz, Steven

'Language, Epistemology, and Mysticism,' in *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis*,

ed. Steven T. Katz, New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Keats, John

Letters of John Keats, ed. Sidney Colvin, London: Macmillan, 1925.

Kellenberger, J.

"Seeing-as' in Religion: Discovery and Community' in *Religious Studies*, Vol. 38, 2002, pp. 101-08.

Kemp Smith, Norman

Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason', London: Macmillan and Co., 1923.

Prolegomena to an Idealist Theory of Knowledge, London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1924.

The Philosophy of David Hume: A Critical Study of its Origins and Central Doctrines, London: Macmillan, 1966.

Knitter, Paul F.

Theologies of Religions, Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 2002.

Laird, John

Knowledge, Belief and Opinion, London: D. Appleton & Co, 1930.

Lampe, Geoffrey,

God as Spirit, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Langford, Thomas A.

'The Theological Methodology of John Oman and H. H. Farmer,' in *Religious Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1966, pp. 229-40.

Lash, Nicholas

Theology on the Way to Emmaus, London: SCM Press, 1986.

Leibniz, G. W.

Theodicy, trans. E. M. Huggard, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952.

Lindbeck, George

The Nature of Doctrine: the Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age, Philadelphia:

Westminster, 1984.

Lovejoy, Arthur O.

The Revolt Against Dualism: An Inquiry Concerning the Existence of Ideas, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1930.

The Great Chain of Being: a Study of the History of an Idea (the William James lectures delivered at Harvard University), Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1936.

Loughlin, Gerard

 'Noumenon and Phenomena,' in *Religious Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 4, 1987, pp. 493-508.

Macgregor, Geddes

Introduction to Religious Philosophy, London: Macmillan & Co., 1960.

Macmurray, John

The Self as Agent: Volume I of The Form of the Personal, London: Faber and Faber, 1957.

Persons in Relation: Volume II of the Form of the Personal, London: Faber and Faber, 1961.

Mander, W. J.

British Idealism: A History, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Martin, Wayne M.

'In Defense of Bad Infinity: A Fichtean Response to Hegel's *Differenzschrift*' in Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain, Vol. 55, 2007.

Martineau, James

A Study of Religion, Oxford: Clarendon Press, Second Edition, 1889.

McKimmon, Eric

'Oman and Scottish Philosophical Traditions,' in *John Oman: New Perspectives*, ed. Adam Hood, Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2012.

Melchert, Norman Paul

Realism, Materialism, and the Mind: The Philosophy of Roy Wood Sellars, Springfield: Illinois, Charles C. Thomas Publisher, 1968.

Milbank, John

Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason, Oxford: Blackwell, 1990.

The Word Made Strange: Theology, Language, Culture, Oxford: Blackwell, 1997.

The Suspended Middle: Henri de Lubac and the Debate concerning the Supernatural, London, SCM Press, 2005.

'The End of Dialogue,' in *The Future of Love: Essays in Political Theology*, Eugene, Oregon: CACADE Books, 2009.

'What Lacks is Feeling: Hume versus Kant and Habermas', in *Faithful Reading: New Essays in Theology in Honour of Fergus Kerr, OP*, ed. Simon Oliver, Karen Kilby, and Thomas O'Loughlin, London: Bloomsbury, 2012.

Beyond Secular Order: The Representation of Being and the Representation of the People, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013.

Min, Anselm K.

'D. Z. Phillips on the Grammar of 'God',' in *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. 63, No. 1/3, 2008, p. 131-46.

Montefiore, Hugh

Awkward Questions on Christian Love, London Collins, 1964.

Moore, G. E.

'A Defense of Common Sense,' in *Contemporary British Philosophy*, Series 2, ed. J. H. Muirhead, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1925.

Nagasawa, Yujin

'John Hick's Pan(en)theistic Monism,' in *Religious Pluralism and the Modern World: An Ongoing Engagement with John Hick*, ed. Sharada Sugirtharajah, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Netland, George A.

'Professor Hick on Religious Pluralism,' in *Religious Studies* 22, 1986, p. 249-61.

Newman, John Henry

Apologia pro Vita Sua, Second Edition, London, 1865.

A Grammar of Assent, ed. C. F. Harrold, New York, 1947.

Niebuhr, Reinhold

The Nature and Destiny of Man, London: Nisbet & Co, 1941-43.

Oliver, Simon

Philosophy, God and Motion, London: Routledge, 2005.

Oman, John

Grace and Personality, London: Collins Fontana: Association Press, 1917.

The Natural and the Supernatural, London: Cambridge University Press, 1931.

Passmore, John

A Hundred Years of Philosophy, London: Duckworth, 1957.

Patterson, Sue

Realist Christian Theology in a Postmodern Age, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Phillips, D. Z.

The Concept of Prayer, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965.

Death and Immortality, London: Macmillan, and New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977.

Belief, Change and Forms of Life, Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press, 1986.

Pickstock, Catherine

After Writing: on the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy, Oxford: Blackwell, 1998.

'Music: Soul, City, and Cosmos after Augustine,' in *Radical Orthodoxy: a New Theology*, ed. John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock, and Graham Ward, London: Routledge, 1999.

Piper, Otto

Recent Developments in German Protestantism, London: S.C.M. Press, 1934.

Plantinga, Alvin

God and Other Minds, Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell, 1967.

Warrant: the Current Debate, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Warrant and Proper Function, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Warranted Christian Belief, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism', in *The Philosophical Challenge of Religious Diversity*, ed. Kevin Meeker & Philip Quinn, New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Plantinga, Alvin, and Nicholas Wolterstorff (eds),

Faith and Rationality, Notre Dame and London: Notre Dame University Press, 1983.

Plotinus

Enneads, trans. Stephen MacKenna, Fourth Edition, London: Faber & Faber, 1969.

Pole, David

The Later Philosophy of Wittgenstein: A Short Introduction with an Epilogue on John Wisdom, London: Athlone Press, 1958.

Popper, Karl

The Logic of Scientific Discovery, London: Hutchinson, 1959.

Price, H. H.

Thinking and Experience, London: Hutchinson, 1953.

'Survival and the Idea of 'Another World',' in *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, Vol. L, Part 182, 1953, pp. 1-25, reprinted under the title of 'Personal Survival and the Idea of Another World' in Hick (ed.), *Classical and Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Religion*, First Edition, pp. 364-86.

Belief, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1969.

Philosophical Interactions with Parapsychology, ed. Frank Dilley, London: Macmillan.

Pringle-Pattison, A. S.

The Idea of God in the Light of Recent Philosophy, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1917.

Quick, Oliver Chase

Doctrines of the Creed, London: Nisbet & Co., 1938.

Quine, Willard Van Orman

From a Logical Point of View: Logico-Philosophical Essays, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1953.

Raven, Charles E.

Natural Religion and Christian Theology, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953.

Richter, Melvin

The Politics of Conscience: T. H. Green and His Age, Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1996.

Rex, Martin

'Green on Natural rights in Hobbes, Spinoza and Locke,' in *The Philosophy of T. H. Green*, Andrew Vincent, ed. Aldershot: Gower Publishing, 1986.

Rorty, Richard

Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature, Oxford: Blackwell, 1980.

Russell, Bertrand

Our Knowledge of the External World as a Field for Scientific Method in Philosophy, London: Open Court, 1914.

Santayana, George

Reason and Religion, New York: Charles Scriner's Sons, 1905.

Scepticism and Animal Faith: Introduction to a System of Philosophy, New York: Scribner, 1923.

Schleiermacher, Friedrich

The Christian Faith, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1928.

Sellars, Roy Wood

Critical Realism: A Study of the Nature and Conditions of Knowledge, Forgotton Books, 2012 (Originally published in 1916 by Rand McNally & Company).

'Knowledge and its Categories,' in *Essays in Critical Realism*, London: Macmillan and Co., 1920.

'Realism, Naturalism, and Humanism,' in *Contemporary American Philosophy: Personal Statements*, ed. George P. Adams and Wm. Pepperell Montague, London: G. Allen & Unwin; New York: Macmillan company, 1930.

The Philosophy of Physical Realism, New York: Macmillan, 1932.

Principles of Emergent Realism: Philosophical Essays, St. Louis: W. H. Green, 1970.

Sellars, Wilfrid

Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind, Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 1997.

Seth, Andrew

Scottish Philosophy, Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1890.

'Philosophy as Criticism of the Categories,' *Essays in Philosophical Criticism*, A. Seth and R. B. Haldane (eds.), London: Longmans Green, 1883.

Sinkinson, Christopher

The Universe of Faiths: A Critical Study of John Hick's Religious Pluralism, Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2001.

Sosa, Ernest

Knowledge in Perspective: Selected Essays in Epistemology, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

A Virtue Epistemology: Apt Belief and Reflective Knowledge, Volume I, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Reflective Knowledge: Apt Belief and Reflective Knowledge, Volume II, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Strawson, P. F.

Skepticism and Naturalism: Some Varieties, New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.

Swinburne, Richard

The Existence of God, Oxford: Clarendon Press, and New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.

Temple, William

Nature, Man and God, London: Macmillan, 1934.

Tennant, F. R.

Philosophical Theology, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930.

Tillich, Paul

'Theology of Culture,' in *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, May, 1946, pp. 3-13, reprinted under the title of 'Two Types of Philosophy of Religion' in Hick (ed.), *Classical and Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Religion*, First Edition, pp. 387-398.

Twiss, Sumner B.

'The Philosophy of Religious Pluralism: A Critical Appraisal of Hick and His Critics,' in *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 70, No. 4, The University of Chicago Press, 1990, pp. 533-68.

Voegelin, Etic

Order and History, Baton Rouge and London: Lousiana University Press, 1954-74.

Ward, Graham

Cities of God, London: Routledge, 2000.

True Religion, Oxford: Blackwell, 2003.

Ward, James

Essays in Philosophy: with a Memoir by Olwen Ward Campbell, W. R. Sorley and G. F. Stout (eds.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927.

Ward, Keith

'Truth and the Diversity of Religions,' in *Religious Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 1, 1990, pp. 1-18.

Warren, W. Preston

Roy Wood Sellars, Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1975.

Watson, John

The Philosophy of Kant Explained, Glasgow: James Maclehose, 1908.

Whale, J. S.

The Christian Answer to the Problem of Evil, London: SCM Press, 1936.

Whitehead, A. N.

Process and Reality, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1929.

Wingren, Gustaf

Man and the Incarnation: A Study in the Biblical Theology of Irenaeus, London: Oliver and Boyd, 1959.

Winch, Peter

The Idea of a Social Science and its Relation to Philosophy, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958.

'Understanding a Primitive Society' in *Ethics and Action*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972.

Wisdom, John

'Gods,' in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 1944-45, reprinted in Hick (ed.), *Classical and Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Religion*, First Edition, pp. 413-28.

Philosophy and Psycho-Analysis, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1953, pp. 149-68.

Paradox and Discovery, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig

Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, trans. C. K. Ogden, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1922.

Philosophical Investigations, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, Oxford: Blackwell, 1958.