Submission Page

**Humanity's Capacity to Apprehend Aesthetic Value
as an Argument for God's Existence**

To Fulfill the Requirements of the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

School of Divinity Liberty University

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Liberty University

**Humanity's Capacity to Apprehend Aesthetic Value
as an Argument for God's Existence**

A Dissertation Submitted to

The Faculty of the Rawlings School of Divinity

In Candidacy for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

School of Divinity

by

Walter Hurst Davis Sr.

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Dedication

To my faithful wife Dodie Mae Davis, my children and grandchildren, for their faithful endurance.

I chose to endure the inconveniences of this process. They did not.

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Preface

Though the passion for this study is evident in the text, the initial idea came from Dr. Dan Mitchell. After graciously agreeing to be the mentor for this project it became clear that settling upon a topic choice was anything but easy. Dr. Mitchell's accomplishments as a very fine artist made his suggestion to consider an aesthetic approach understandable. After serious consideration of what could be done within that area of study, it became more appealing, resulting in the approach demonstrated in the following. When the idea was shared with Dr. Dave Baggett, faculty member of the School of Divinity and co-author of *Good God: The Theistic Foundations of Morality,* and after he was told that the argument was going to be employing abductive inference, he described the concept as "brilliant." With affirmation such as this, that spark sufficiently ignited the fire which has consumed over a year of research and writing.

The study has an aesthetic focus which binds it from beginning to end. Along the way, however, it enters the dialogues present within the disciplines of logical argumentation, philosophy, psychology, science, and theology. What is consistent throughout the journey is a passion for a proposed theistic argument based on man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value, which often rises to the point of a polemic against the views of naturalism, particularly the dogmatism of Richard Dawkins. No apology is being offered for this passion. If, however, the intensity of the polemic disturbs a reader, it is prudent to encourage that reader to try and look past the polemic and concentrate on the accuracy or inaccuracy of the data presented. The reader should also know that the project blatantly reflects the views of evangelical Christianity. One should expect nothing else from a Ph.D. candidate seeking a degree from Liberty University's Rawlings School of Divinity. Throughout the following pages, however, validating the thesis

that man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value is the result of divine causation, with scholarly research reflecting multiple academic disciplines, is the primary focus. That this results in a rational refutation of naturalism should not be a surprise.

It is a major hope that this project might be at least an encouragement for Christians. It would be even more gratifying if the Lord God used it to open the eyes of someone who has been blinded by the errant dogma of Darwinian and neo-Darwinian naturalism.

Walter H. Davis Sr.

Lynchburg, VA. 2016.

my shoulders, during a particularly harrowing week of self-doubt, and hearing him say, "You belong here just like the rest of them." Professors of this caliber are worth more than mere mention. These are powerful examples of what professors should be.

This acknowledgement would not be complete without mention of the wise direction, gregarious support and tireless efforts of Dr. Leo Percer, Chairman of the Ph.D. Department at Rawlings Divinity School. Under his direction, the Ph.D. in Theology and Apologetics degree being sought by this study is not only rigorous in its standards, but practical in its intent to develop students in becoming both respectable, contributing Christian academics as well as effective ministers of the Gospel.

There are too many friends who have either conveyed emotional or prayer support to be listed here without becoming tiresome. Yet, Rachel Pickle and her husband Ron must be given acknowledgment. As fellow members of Thomas Road Baptist Church, having become good friends with my family, Rachel, particularly, as a secondary education AP English teacher, willingly volunteered to review and correct the initial rough drafts of this study before they were sent to the readers for their first review. Not only her expertise but her enthusiastic encouragement is deeply appreciated.

My Family has already been mentioned in the dedication but acknowledgments would be incomplete without at least another mention of their support and encouragement. Families pay a price when parents or spouses go through processes such as this. Their love and support has been immeasurable and needed. A huge thanks is given to all, as well as an acknowledgment of a debt of appreciation which could never be paid. May God richly bless each of you!

WHD

Abstract

This work presents a theistic argument for the existence of God based on man's ability to apprehend, aesthetic value. The argument is called the Aesthetic Theistic Argument. Man's ability to appreciate aesthetic value is unique among biological life forms and is common to every human culture. Explaining the origins of this ability implies a creator/designer who also apprehends aesthetic value. The study both affirms the argument for theism and critiques the philosophical and scientific foundations of Darwinian naturalism. The result of this study affirms the cause for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value is best explained by the existence of God as revealed in Holy Scriptures and the person of the Lord Jesus.

Introduction

Commenting on the regard current re philosophers demonstrate toward aesthetic thought,

Peter Williams,[1] states:

> Philosophers rarely advocate arguments from beauty for the existence of God, and those
> who do advocate them rarely spend more than a few paragraphs in their cause. This is so
> much the case that major critiques of theistic arguments, such as J.L.Mackie's *The
> Miracle of Theism*, feel no need to respond to aesthetic arguments. However, the range,
> subtlety and power of aesthetic arguments is greater than commonly realized, and they
> have been defended by such luminaries as Richard Swinburne, F.R.Tennant and Keith
> Ward.[2]

Addressing the religious philosophers' lack of regard for the value of aesthetic arguments, as

stated above, is a significant motivation for the following pages. Further, Williams notes that

when philosophers do regard aesthetics, their common practice is to prioritize the ontological

characteristics of aesthetics or the nature of beauty.[3] Thus, he implies a minimal consideration of

the epistemological characteristics of aesthetics or how man comes to have knowledge of

aesthetic value. Apparently, the preference of religious philosophers who do focus on the

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[1] Williams is Distinguished Professor of Comparative Religion and American Studies at Miami University, Oxford, OH.

[2] Peter Williams, "Aesthetic Arguments for the Existence of God," *Quodlibet Journal,* Vol 3, No. 3, 2001, 1. (*Quodlibet Online Journal of Christian Theology and Philosophy* is registered with the United States Library of Congress as an international electronic academic publication and has been issued the International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) 1526-6575.) It should be noted that On page 1 of Williams' article cited above, he identifies four categories of aesthetic arguments for God's existence. These arguments fall into one of two categories: ontological or epistemological. For the ontological arguments, emphasis can be either on the nature of the subjective experience or on the reality that there is an awareness of aesthetic value. For the epistemological arguments, emphasis rests on the question of how the existence of God is the unique source of aesthetic value. According to Williams, the ontological approach is used by Augustine in *City of God.* While acknowledging the potential of Williams' taxonomy, this study does not reflect this level of precision in its parsing of aesthetic arguments. This study simply acknowledges that most philosophers have approached the relationship of aesthetics and theology ontologically. In contrast, this study seeks to address the argument epistemologically as it focuses primarily on the experience of apprehending aesthetic value so as to avoid the potentially endless debate on the often intangible nature of aesthetics typical of the ontological approach.

[3] Ibid.

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relationship of aesthetics to theology primarily focus on the beauty inherent in God and nature rather than the capacity man has for apprehending that beauty.[4] Three examples of this prioritization of ontological considerations of aesthetics are the works of Augustine,[5] Anselm,[6] and Hans Urs von Balthasar.[7] These are simply three among many. Few theological luminaries in philosophy were found to demonstrate a preference for the epistemological considerations of aesthetics. Of these few are Richard Swinburne, F. R. Tennant and Keith Ward.[8]

Without diminishing the praiseworthiness of ontological approaches to the study of aesthetics, this study chooses, contra stated ontological trends, to execute an epistemological approach. The following study gives great attention to man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value. Specifically, it gives significant consideration to several explanations for how man is able to apprehend and appreciate aesthetic value. Discussions regarding the consistent presence of man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value are not abundant. Yet, as this study reveals, they merit consideration.[9] The following study demonstrates a significant effort to compensate for this lack of consideration and the worthiness of the effort.

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[4] Williams, *Quodlibet,* Vol. 3 No. 3, 1.

[5] Augustine, *The Complete Works of Saint Augustine,* (Amazon: Kindle Edition, 2011), loc..9865-9880, Kindle.

[6] Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1938), 26–28.

[7] Von Balthasar's Series is titled: *The Glory of the Lord, A Theological Aesthetics* Vol's I-VII. (San Francisco: CA, Ignatius Press, 1989). Several of these volumes were reviewed in the research for this study. They are thoughtful presentations of the awe and wonder humanity should have for their Creator from multiple perspectives. He encourages a theology which reflects the view that all ideas of God, creation, and life should be comprehended with aesthetic value in mind. Yet, in spite of the value of this contribution, its existential thinking and highly liturgical nature makes for little contribution to this project, which is focused on man's ability to apprehend beauty or aesthetic value rather than on God's aesthetic nature.

[8] Williams, *Quodlibet*, Vol. 3 No. 3, 1.

[9] George Santayana, *The Sense of Beauty Being the Outlines of Aesthetic Theory*, (New York, Charles Scribner Sons, 1896), loc. 148 Kindle. In his introduction to this work, Santayana states: "There must therefore be in our nature a very radical and wide-spread tendency to observe beauty, and to value it. No account of the principles

Several preliminary issues, discovered in the research of this project, deserve mention. First, it is difficult if not impossible to argue against the presence of man's ability to apprehend aesthetic value. No philosopher of any merit was found to challenge this notion. Second, among biological organisms, the consensus seems to be that the ability to apprehend aesthetic value is unique to man.[10] There is little evidence for claiming other biological life forms possess the capacity to apprehend aesthetic value.[11] Third, two explanations for the cause of man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic values are offered by naturalism. These two explanations, identified and reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3, fail to meet reasonable standards indicative of adequate explanations. Finally, research ultimately reveals that the best explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value is supernatural causation. The recognition of supernatural causation provides a strong basis for theism. The discussion of these issues and their implications constitute the bulk of the following study. Ultimately, the research confirms theistic causation for man' capacity to apprehend aesthetic value while demonstrating the potential benefits of further consideration of aesthetic relationships to both theological and apologetic disciplines.

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of the mind can be at all adequate that passes over so conspicuous a faculty." This indicates his assumption that humanity's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value is wide-spread, prevalent, and conspicuous in spite of its failure to gain much attention.

[10] Throughout this study, when referring to the capacity to apprehend aesthetic value as being unique to man, it should be understood that that this uniqueness refers to man as one of God's created biological life forms. and not God or other supernatural entities. This study assumes that God, as Creator, is able to apprehend aesthetic value and it is arguable that angels and other supernatural entities do as well. Yet, supernatural, non-biological beings are not the focus of this reference. As is stated later, this study contrasts the claims of naturalism and supernaturalism. Naturalists do not recognize the existence of the supernatural. Hence, objecting to man's ability to apprehend aesthetic value as unique because it excludes supernatural entities is irrelevant to the thesis of this study. The discussion of divine entities' ability to apprehend aesthetic value is limited to supernaturalists. Naturalists would not consider the question. Hence, the term "unique," in this context, applies only to the human race as being unique from other biological life forms.

[11] Some may question this statement by citing animals which can distinguish color and their mating rituals. Yet, in spite of these supposed examples, there is no existing evidence suggesting that any animal has the capacity to apprehend the beauty of color or the beauty of the ritual they perform. This capacity remains unique to man.

Three words of clarification are in order. First, it is necessary to reveal that this study reflects an evangelical viewpoint. There is no need to offer disclaimers for this fact, but it is appropriate to mention it for the sake of honesty. In spite of the admitted bias, an accurate, academically just presentation of relevant information is a fundamental priority. Second, it is important to reiterate that the following pages do not primarily focus on the nature of aesthetic value. A succinct review of the nature of aesthetics is necessary, as it is critical to identify clearly the nature of that which man has the capacity to apprehend, but identifying the nature of aesthetics is not the primary focus. Instead, the focus is on man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value and the best explanation of its cause. In so doing, the study affirms that the best explanation for this cause is supernatural. Recognizing how that affirmation leads to theistic implications is then apparent. Third, these theistic implications are identified and reviewed.[12] These two factors, the question of the cause of man's capacity of man to apprehend aesthetic value and the theistic implications resulting in the determination of the best explanation of that cause, formulate this study's primary intent.

Achievement of these objectives begins with a review of relevant introductory material. The review of material which follows includes: clarifying the role of aesthetic arguments, the relevance of the thesis, the argument and reasoning method, the vital relationship between theology and apologetics, the place for this study in apologetics, and the plan for the study. Supplementary information, for those readers interested in additional information, is found in

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[12] Honesty acknowledges a potential criticism in appealing to God's existence as the source of man's ability to apprehend aesthetic value. Some might think this could make this study more ontological than epistemological, contrary to what was stated. While this criticism might arise, the fact is that this study focuses primarily on man's consistent ability to know or apprehend aesthetic value. Focusing on the cause of this ability to apprehend of aesthetic value, and the theistic implications resulting from the identification of that cause, not the nature of aesthetics, makes the study more epistemological than ontological.

three attached appendices. The review of this material results in the proposal and defense of a theistic argument based on man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value.

An objection could be made as to whether another theistic argument is warranted in light of the time-tested theistic arguments presently existing. An adequate response to this concern is in the realization of this argument's uniqueness. Instead of basing the argument used by ontological, cosmological, and teleological arguments, the aesthetic theistic argument identifies more with the moral theistic argument. As with the moral argument, the nature of the aesthetic argument is uniquely values oriented. Man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value, as with man's capacity to acknowledge certain moral boundaries, demonstrates a values based focus. Like the moral argument, the aesthetic theistic argument is based on values which are essentially intangible. They are intangible not because they cannot be experienced but because specifically defining morality or goodness, especially aesthetic value, is controversial. In this regard, the aesthetic theistic argument is even more unique than the moral argument. For instance, there are few if any cultures which would accept the moral notion that it is acceptable to torture babies for one's amusement. This knowledge is properly basic. This dramatic example illustrates the certainty that all cultures share some level of ethical value. In regard to aesthetics, on the other hand, debate continues as to whether aesthetics is a matter of taste driven by culture or whether its recognition is innate to man's nature. There is little challenge to the notion that all human cultures apprehend aesthetic value. Yet, there is not unanimous consent regarding the nature of aesthetic value itself. This discussion will be taken up further in chapter 2. The reason for mentioning it now is that it demonstrates the uniqueness of this argument as two-fold. The argument is unique from the ontological, cosmological and teleological in that it is, like the moral argument, values based. Its uniqueness is also demonstrated in that it is arguably properly

basic knowledge that all human cultures share some ethical standards. Yet, in the case of aesthetics, there is continuing discussion as to whether aesthetic apprehension is culturally determined or inherent to man's nature.

Finally, William Lane Craig,[13] prefers the moral argument in deductive form. David Baggett[14] and Jerry L. Walls,[15] contra Craig, argue that abductive reasoning is a superior method for values based theistic arguments, particularly the moral argument. As recognized above, the aesthetic theistic argument, as presented by this study, like the moral argument, is a values based theistic argument. Baggett and Walls' preference for abduction for the moral argument, therefore, strongly argues for the presentation of the aesthetic theistic argument to also be in abductive form. A fuller explanation of the rationale in justifying this is the focus of Chapter 1. Again, its mention here is to ratify further the argument's uniqueness.

This study identifies the best explanation for the cause of man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value. This unique capacity offers an excellent and effective basis for an argument for theism. The following study verbalizes and defends that assertion. The specific thesis of this study, therefore, is to identify, define and justify an effective theistic argument based on man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value.

Clarifying the Role of Theistic Arguments

Clarifying the role of theistic arguments involves some disclaimers and specificity of expectation. For example, if one expects this project to provide an argument for claiming the

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[13] William Lane Craig is the Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology.

[14] David Baggett is Professor of Philosophy and Apologetics at Rawlings School of Divinity, Liberty University.

[15] Jerry L. Walls is Professor of Philosophy: Scholar in Residence, Houston Baptist University.

validity of Christianity prior to all other worldviews,[16] that expectation will be unsatisfied. Though the supremacy of the Christian worldview is definitely implied, it could surprise some that attributing such certainty to the claims of Christianity is not the goal of any theistic argument nor is it the objective of this study. Gordon R. Lewis explains, "The question of Christianity's truth is not a psychological question calling for the biographical description of believers, but is a philosophical question calling for a meaningful justification of beliefs."[17] Lewis correctly states that theistic arguments provide a meaningful justification for theistic belief and this is not equivalent to demonstrating the certainty of the Christian worldview. Neither is meaningful justification for belief equivalent to the proof of God's existence. Lewis further observes that Christian truth is not a "psychological question" nor is it a demonstration of the proof of Christian truth claims. Instead, theistic arguments present a meaningful justification for belief in those claims. Hence, theistic arguments provide a meaningful justification for the belief that God exists. The goal is not to prove such claims. Craig affirms, "It is the broader task of Christian apologetics to help create and sustain a cultural milieu in which the gospel can be heard as an intellectually viable option for thinking men and women."[18] This project, therefore, only demonstrates that a meaningful basis for justifying one's faith in God's existence is intellectually viable.

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[16]The term "worldview" is exceedingly broad. An excellent presentation of what this study accepts as the meaning of this term is provided in the following: (Ed Hindson and Ergun Caner Gen, Eds. *The Popular Encyclopedia of Apologetics: Surveying the Evidence for the Truth of Christianity,* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2008), 498.

[17] Gordon R Lewis, *Testing Christianity's Truth Claims: Approaches to Christian Apologetics,* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1990). 23.

[18] William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics,* 3d ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 15.

Theistic arguments are intended neither to demonstrate the certainty of Christianity nor prove the existence of God. Their intent is to justify rationally the wisdom in surrendering to belief in God's existence. Reverent awareness of Christian truth claims includes the belief that only God's Spirit can change the heart of anyone (Zechariah 4:6). One cannot reason one's self to faith (Romans 2:14). C. S. Lewis's life illustrates that the rationale of appropriate theistic philosophy can be used by the Spirit to awaken a heart to the reality of God,[19] but no matter what method He may use, only God's Spirit brings a person to faith. Theistic arguments are tools God uses to help man see the need to surrender themselves to faith in Christ. It is the one wielding the tool who brings man to Himself, not the tool alone. Extensively pressing this point may seem unnecessary, but its mention precludes the criticism of those who cite, as a justification for disclaiming apologetics, Colossians 2:8, "See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ." [20] Craig affirms the need to respond to this disclaimer for apologetics in general and theistic arguments in particular, "Some people depreciate the importance of apologetics as a theoretical discipline. 'Nobody comes to Christ through arguments,' they'll tell you. 'People aren't interested in what's true, but in what works for them. They don't want intellectual answers; they want to see Christianity lived out.' I believe that the attitude expressed in these statements is both shortsighted and mistaken."[21] Craig's observation underscores the importance of precluding such objections by making the goal of this study clear.

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[19] C. S. Lewis, (1966-03-23). *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1966), 210. This quote is toward the end of Chapter 13. Chapter 14 describes how Lewis progressed from Idealism to embrace theism. Demonstrating that his journey to faith was deeply influenced by philosophy as well as friendships made at Oxford.

[20] Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture references are to the English Standard Version.

[21] Craig, *Reasonable Faith,* 17.

To that end, the goal of the following pages is to present a rational case for justifying the deserved preference of theism over atheism, and supernaturalism over naturalism. It is then the responsibility of the reader to choose to surrender to, or reject, those implications. Accepting theistic arguments to be both true and valuable in defending the faith should be the position of the supernaturalist. Rejecting these arguments as true and valid reflects agreement with the naturalist. Naturalism more often identifies with atheism. Supernaturalism identifies with theism. Unfortunately, naturalism is the present popular position among many academics today.[22] Making the intent of this project clear precludes short-sighted or mistaken objections and assures its intent remains the defense of theism and exposing the fallacies of naturalism and atheism.

It is thus established that both critical thinking (reason) and faith are needed to recognize the intellectual viability of belief in Christian truth claims and defend them against the naturalistic propositions prevalent in the present culture. By recognizing that belief in God's existence is both intellectually viable and justified, an honest person should then be more inclined to consider yielding to faith in the Christian truth claims regarding the person and work of Christ. Evangelical teaching underscores the belief that without the work of the Lord Jesus nothing is possible (John 15:5). Hence, there is no intent to claim that arguing for the existence of God proves His existence. Instead, theistic arguments can bring a person to justifying a belief in God's existence, and a surrender to Christian truth claims. Thus, theistic arguments are primarily meant to present intellectually viable alternatives to the claims of naturalism and atheism.

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[22] The validity of the claim that naturalism is prevalent in today's culture is demonstrated later in this study.

Theistic arguments not only defend theistic belief, they confront contrary claims.[23] When encouraging someone toward faith in Christ, the increasing influence of the post-Christian, naturalistic worldview could make it necessary to confront the belief that there is no God as well as defend the belief that there is, before Christian truth claims can be considered. Belief in supernaturalism, or God's existence, is essential in accepting Christian truth claims (Hebrews 11:6). Arguing for supernaturalism and the existence of God by refuting claims which question His existence can encourage a non-believer to see the need to be more open to the gospel. This is the role of both Christian apologetics and this study.[24]

The Relevance of the Thesis

At the heart of biblical Christianity is the belief that there is a God and He wants man to know Him (Philippians 3:8-10). This belief leads to the recognition that God has revealed Himself, His purposes, and His ways through multiple agencies.[25] These agencies include the person of Jesus (John 1:1. 14), the written Word (1 Timothy 3:16) and the very existence of nature with all its intricacies and beauty (Psalm 19:1; Romans 1:19-20; Colossians 1:23). Rationally justifying belief in the existence of God and the validity of his message, while challenging the claims of atheism, is the multi-faceted task of Christian apologetics. The theistic

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[23] Craig identifies two types of apologetics. Offensive apologetics which seems to present "a positive case for Christian truth claims," and defensive apologetics which seek to "nullify objections to those claims" (Craig, *Reasonable Faith*, 23.). Since theistic arguments are central to classical apologetic methodology, (see Appendix 1) it is reasonable to state that theistic arguments are intended to both defend theistic belief and confront claims which are contrary to those beliefs.

[24] A defense of this claim is made in the succinct overview of the different theistic arguments located in Appendix 1.

[25] The reader is encouraged to read C. F. H. Henry, "Chapter 1: The Awesome Disclosure of God," *God Revelation and Authority* Vol II (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1999), 17. This chapter begins his presentation of 15 theses which make up the majority of Volumes I and II. In these theses, Henry demonstrates God's intent is and has always been to reveal Himself to man.

argument being proposed in this study is an augmentation of long-recognized theistic arguments

which share that multi-faceted purpose. Without discounting God's divine revelations, God has

given man a mind by which he is expected to reason (Leviticus 19:17; Romans 1:19-20; Daniel

4:34; Luke 9:47; Acts 17:2; Acts 18:4, 19, 19:8, 24:25).

It is justifiable to assume that mankind's innate desire to identify and affirm a reasonable

and rational basis for his existence and behavior, is an objective of every worldview. The

Christian worldview is not an exception to this. In fact, theistic arguments demonstrate that

theism is the most reasonable and rational basis for a worldview. The relevance of this project is

established by its intent to augment and affirm these long-recognized theistic arguments and their

purpose in defending Christian truth claims and their reasoned confutation of alternate beliefs.

This study demonstrates how the aesthetic argument affirms and appends other theistic

arguments. This is accomplished by identifying God's existence as the best explanation for

man's capacity to aesthetic value. In short, demonstrating God's existence as the best

explanation of this phenomenon demonstrates a meaningful justification for belief in God. Such

a belief in God's existence is a good place to begin the faith journey toward belief in Christian

truth claims. These observations identify and establish the relevance of this study.

<center>The Argument and Reasoning Method</center>

This presentation of the aesthetic theistic argument is stated in the form of abductive

reasoning. This is contrary to the deductive reasoning common to other theistic arguments,

excepting the moral argument as mentioned above.[26] The decision to use abductive reasoning in

presenting the aesthetic theistic argument requires explanation. That explanation is the purpose

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[26] This exception will be further explained in Chapter 1.

of Chapter 1. A brief word of appreciation to David Baggett and Jerry Walls for their volumes *Good God* and *God and Cosmos* is in order. Included is the masterful defense of abductive reasoning offered by Douglas Walton in *Abductive Reasoning*. These affirmations of abductive reasoning, especially in Chapter 2 of *God and Cosmos,* are the principal stimuli for this study's preference for abductive reasoning in stating the aesthetic theistic argument.[27] That argument, the presentation and defense of which is the thesis of this study, is expressed as follows:

(P1) All human beings can apprehend aesthetic value.

(P2) The best explanation for this human capacity to apprehend aesthetic value is supernatural causation.

(C) God's existence is the cause of man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value.

Having identified the argument central to the thesis of this study, and the reasoning method preferred in its presentation, a review of the vital relationship between theology and apologetics appears as follows.

The Vital Relationship between Theology and Apologetics

In spite of the varied opinions which have been labeled "Christian theology," one reassuring fact remains consistent: Christian theology is primarily focused on the goal of identifying what Christians should believe. In spite of the disagreements over church polity and Christian practices, liturgical styles, etc., this primary focus remains consistent. All true Christians understandably want to know and identify with what Christians should believe. In searching for this knowledge, inevitable questions arise regarding the role and relationship

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[27] David Baggett and Jerry Walls, *Good God: The Theistic Foundations for Morality,* (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011). 100. Baggett and Walls state, "We can, however shift gears a bit and couch the argument in abductive terms, an inference to the best explanation, arguing that theism explains commonly accepted features of morality better than atheism does." This study reflects an identification with that statement and subsequently engages the abductive form in presenting the aesthetic theistic argument. Note also: Baggett and Walls, *God and Cosmos: Moral Truth and Human Meaning,* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016) 54ff.

reason has with faith in affirming what those beliefs should be. Both history and Scripture

indicate that reason and faith play shared roles in knowing and experiencing what God has

revealed of Himself, His purposes and His ways through His multiple means of revelation.[28]

Faced with the multiple choices of worldviews, as is the case in the present cultural milieu, it is

vital that the Church be able to accurately proclaim both what should be believed and why it

should be believed. Hence, it is reasonable to claim that sound theology requires divine

revelation, and reasonable faith.[29]

According to E. J. Carnell, whom George Marsden described as one of the great

theological intellectuals of the 20th Century,[30] within the scope of Christian theology is a

discipline which has been practiced since Paul.[31] Yet, it enjoys increased interest, since Charles

Darwin's work, *On the Origin of Species*.[32] This discipline is Christian Apologetics and its intent

is to answer the question, "Why should Christians believe what they believe."[33] Assuming

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[28] Craig, *Reasonable Faith,* 30ff. Craig offers an excellent presentation which justifies this point.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Edward J. Carnell, *Christian Commitment: an Apologetic,* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock 1957) i. This quote is of the noted scholar and historian George Marsden who wrote the foreword for the 2007 edition of this publication. This foreword goes on to note that Carnell was both teacher and later president of Fuller Theological Seminary. Marsden, who has written widely on the history of fundamentalism and evangelicalism in America, cites Carnell as being instrumental in the development of what is known today as evangelicalism.

[31] In 1 Corinthians 1, Paul appeals to the many eye-witnesses of the risen Jesus. This is one of the early defenses of the Christian faith and it parallels the evidential apologetic method described in Appendix 2.

[32] Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection: or The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for life, Sixth London Edition* (Chicago: Bunny Books Inc. 2010), 3. Darwin clearly states the thesis of the work to be that those species which survive are those which are "naturally selected." Since the original edition (1859) Darwin's views have been used to question the idea of a Creator. This conflict continues today but was the focus of significant attention during the 1920's and the famous Scopes Trial. Richard Dawkins, among others, has taken the argument to the point of denying the possibility that there is a supreme being. Those who hold this view are often called "naturalists" as they believe life is the result of random natural events. Rather, "naturalists" believe nature is all that exists, and that there is no supernatural. This ideology has grown in popularity to the point that it has become the accepted view of many scholars today. Hence, Christian apologetics, which is a defense of the biblical claims, has had to increase its presence since 1859.

[33] Carnell, *Christian Commitment,* vii.

Carnell is correct in asserting apologetics as a vital factor in sound theological development, a case can be made for claiming an adequate theologian should also be well versed in apologetics. This is due to the need for him to be able to give justified reasons for his belief. While agreement with that notion is only assumed, the following study confidently stands on the belief that Carnell's view is worthy. In so doing, an essential relationship surfaces between the two disciplines. Apologetics becomes helpful, if not necessary, in making theological views more compelling. Apologetics assists both the unbeliever and believer to comprehend a justifiable reason for belief.

Paul Copan and Paul K. Moser affirm this claim, "Cognitively rational belief in God is not simply a matter of pragmatic, psychological, or prudential considerations. Belief in God is not cognitively justified simply because it 'works' or fills one with a sense of peace or security. Cognitively justified belief in God aims at truth, as an accurate portrayal of reality."[34] Copan and Moser's statement signifies that the goal of both theologians and apologists must be an accurate and justified portrayal of reality. To this end, when one personally encounters God's divine revelation, working in, on, and through man's capacity for reason and faith, God reveals what should be believed. Then, guided by the Holy Spirit, using reason and faith, man understands why that revelation is worthy of belief. The order is debatable, but the point is in realizing both are necessary to the other.

Surprisingly, due to the popularity of naturalism today, it is actually more justifiable to believe theism than atheism. The boldness of this claim becomes more sustainable as this study progresses. At present, however, it is sufficiently forthright to state that valid reasonable arguments for the existence of God are more defensible than those who argue the non-existence

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[34] Paul Copan and Paul K Moser, *The Rationality of Theism* (London: Taylor and Francis 2004). 3.

of God.[35] Thus, the obligation, of those aware of the value of theistic arguments, is to identify, comprehend, proclaim, and explain them, especially in light of the popularity of the less worthy claims of naturalism. This obligation includes identifying the relationship of theology to apologetics, identifying the relevance of Christian apologetics in general, and this study in particular. While some Christian scholars may take issue with the claim that cognitively justified belief is warranted, as depicted by Copan and Moser. Refusing to recognize the responsibility of theologians and apologists to meet that need, especially within the present culture, could cause the desire for increase of the consideration of Christian truth claims to be compromised.

The Place for This Study in Apologetics

Recalling the purpose of theology as the identification of what Christians believe, the purpose of apologetics is to identify *why* Christians hold those beliefs, and why belief in God's existence is both reasonable and necessary to all Christian theists. This understanding now makes it possible to identify the place for this study in apologetics and why the identification of that place has relevance to its purpose. Since the argument being presented has already been identified as a theistic argument and since the presentation of any theistic argument is going to identify with the classical method of apologetics, which primarily exhibits the utilization of theistic arguments, it is accurate to assume this study's place in apologetics is within the classical

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[35] Alistair McGrath and Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion: Atheist Fundamentalism and the Denial of the Divine,* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2007), 96. This work is by a former atheist and Microbiologist's response to Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion.* On page 96, after soundly refuting much of Dawkins' atheistic assertions in *The God Delusion,* McGrath writes, "It is this deep and unsettling anxiety about the future of atheism that explains the 'high degree of dogmatism' and 'aggressive rhetorical style' of this new secular fundamentalism." (McGrath's quotes are taken from "A Modest Proposal for a Truce on Religion" an article by Nicholas D. Kristof, *New York Time,* Dec. 3, 2006.) It would be difficult to read McGrath's statements and the quotes to which he refers without recognizing it as an implication that theism actually does make more rational sense than atheism. If one questions this, McGrath's book is a brief 97 pages and is written to counter Dawkins' views. By countering Dawkins, he demonstrates a justification for preferring theism.

methodology of apologetics. In recognizing this, the question of relevance is answered, in part, by determining whether an additional theistic argument is worthwhile.

Justifying this study's worthiness begins with Craig's observation that belief is something which is properly supported.[36] Specifically, he demonstrates that an identified viable belief which is rationally justified, is "reasonable faith."[37] By identifying the place of this study in apologetics, and remembering that theology focuses on what Christians believe and apologetics focuses on why they believe it,[38] the place of this study within the discipline of apologetics become apparent. Namely, since justifying belief is the role of apologetics, and since this study offers a basis for justifiable belief in God's existence, and this study identifies with theistic arguments, it thus has a place in apologetics. To answer more specifically the question of why this argument is helpful or needed, in light of the time-tested theistic arguments already existing, one need only to recall the "leaky bucket" objection offered by Antony Flew in his debate with Basil Mitchell.[39] The parallel is obvious. Popular religious beliefs today range from Karl Marx's belief that religion is an "opiate"[40] to the irrational fideism which rejects the need for

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[36] Craig, *Reasonable Faith,* 17.

[37] Ibid. Craig states, "It is the broader task of Christian apologetics to help create and sustain a cultural milieu in which the gospel can be heard as an intellectually viable option for thinking men and women." This affirms the notion that faith must be more than tradition. It must be reasonably justified.

[38] Kenneth D. Boa and Robert M. Bowman Jr. *Faith Has Its Reasons: Integrative Approaches to Defending the Christian Faith,* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2005) 4. Boa and Bowman identify three of the most common uses of apologetics: disciplines concerning the defense of the faith, systems used for defense of the faith and practices used for defending the faith. Clearly, the defense of the faith as well as its use in confronting false claims about the faith, comprise the major justification for apologetics. The question of "why?" is appropriate.

[39] A brief summary of this debate can be found in Appendix 2 under the Cumulative Case Apologetic Method.

[40] John Raines, ed. *Marx and Religion,* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), 5. It should be noted on the basis of full disclosure that there are men like John Raines who do not believe Marx was as anti-religious as his statement might sound. In the introduction of a book he states: "When we think about Marx and religion the first thing that comes to mind is his famous statement, "Religion is the opiate of the masses." That is, we tend to think that Marx had a monolithically negative view of religion. But that is not the case." However, the point made above still stands as it is clear Marx's writings do not affirm religion outside its role of encouraging moral behavior.

apologetics.[41] In the face of this, Christian apologetics rightly demonstrate the justifiable belief that there are viable Christian truth claims and among those claims is God's existence. This present post-Christian culture largely rejects, questions or hesitates to accept these claims due to its propensity to accept the claims of naturalism.[42]

Christian apologetics, executed skillfully, offers defense of Christian truth claims with compelling cogency. This does not suggest that apologetics answers every query or doubt to the satisfaction of all. Unfortunately, man's limitations of ignorance and prejudice can sometimes prevent that. Yet, it is to say that while reasoning alone cannot lead a person to faith, well-executed Christian apologetics can give the honest seeker a meaningful justification for surrendering to belief in the truth claims of Christianity and the rejection of naturalism prevalent in today's culture. Christians who are limited in their critical thinking so that they can only state what they believe, but are unable to give rational reasons for why they believe it, have little reason to expect anyone in today's post-Christian culture[43] to consider their message. As it is the purpose of this project to address these concerns, its place is clearly within the discipline of apologetics.

So as to preclude another potential objection by those who are mindful of Augustine's contribution to Christian orthodoxy and his proposal that one needs to believe in order to

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[41] Boa and Bowman *Faith Has Its Reasons,* 337ff. Boa and Bowman identify fideism as those who utterly reject the need for apologetics. In fairness, however, Boa mentions C. Steven Evans work, *Faith Beyond Reason* wherein Evans delineates between Irrational and Responsible Fideism. The first denies any need to think rationally about matters of faith. The second offers a reasoned case for viewing faith as "above, beyond, or in some cases against reason." 338. In both cases, a denial of the necessity of apologetics is present.

[42] Craig, *Reasonable Faith,* 16. Craig makes a foreboding claim about Western culture which justifies the repeated use of the term 'post-Christian" when referring to the current culture: "In general Western culture is deeply post-Christian. It is the product of the Enlightenment, which introduced into European culture the leaven of secularism that has by now permeated the whole of Western society."

[43] Ibid.

understand,[44] Augustine seems to suggest that faith has superiority over reason. This study does not intend to enter any debate which questions Augustine. However, one cannot deny that his view affirms both believing and understanding are required of the believer.[45] Therefore, this study affirms that whether one understands and then believes or whether one believes and then understands does not alter the fact that there must be both faith and reason (understanding) to adequately defend Christian truth claims and offer justifiable alternatives to opposing views. To put it another way, it is essential to have some measure of faith in order to become a Christian and it is not necessary to comprehend all there is to know about the Gospel in order to do this. However, if one cannot explain why he believes the Gospel is true or worthy of belief, or why one has come to believe Jesus is Lord, or why one should rationally believe, the claim that He rose again, or that there even is a God, if he only has a measure of faith and no measure of justification for that faith, his potential for effective Christian ministry is limited. First, Gordon Lewis affirms this, "Apologetic argument may not create belief, but it creates the atmosphere in which faith can come to life."[46] Second, faith devoid of any rational reason is irrational fideism. Such fideism is generally recognized as a weak defense against the critics of Christian truth

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[44] Augustine, *The Complete Works of St. Augustine: The Confessions of Grace and Free Will,* Eds., Philip Schaf, Trans. Marcus Dods, (Public Domain: 2013), loc. 215641, Kindle. Augustine states: "That the Father's Commandment then is "Life everlasting," and that the Son Himself is "Life everlasting," believe ye and receive, believe and understand, for the Prophet saith, "Unless ye believe ye shall not understand." Yet he also states, "For as those things which reason and understand are preferable to those which, without intellect and reason, as in the case of cattle, live and feel; so also those things which have been endowed with life and sensation are deservedly preferred to those things which neither live nor feel" (loc. 7178). Thus the point is made that Augustine affirms that while faith is superior, there is still need for both faith and understanding.

[45] Ibid. loc. 138233. Kindle. Augustine queries: "Why therefore should we not believe the first and the last things which we see not, when we have, as witnesses of both, the things between, which we see, and in the books of the Prophets either hear or read both the first things, and the things between, and the last things, foretold before they came to pass?" In so doing, he argues that faith and reason are not opposites but partners. Understanding can be the result of faith (in what we cannot see). Faith can be enhanced by understanding (of what we can see).

[46] Gordon R. Lewis, *Testing Christianity's Truth Claims: Approaches to Christian Apologetics,* (New York: University Press of America, 1990), 23.

claims as it is properly identified as circular reasoning. Since the irrational fideist has no course

but to state his belief in what the Bible states is merely because the Bible states it, he is claiming

as the basis of his argument the point being argued. This is circular reasoning and is logically

unsound. Most logicians seek to avoid circular reasoning as it does not demonstrate a sufficient

basis for an argument. Evangelicals, such as Carnell, Henry and others, recognized this and

sought to avoid it. Evangelicals believe the Bible is accurate and trustworthy, but their belief is

not usually based on circular reasoning. Instead they express their belief in an inerrant Scripture

with a meaningful, reasoned justification for that belief. Proclaiming to an atheist that he ought

to believe the Bible, because the Bible says so, likely results in a scoffing atheist. On the other

hand, when one is able to present a reasonable, rational argument for why the Bible is to be

trusted, his impact on the atheist has greater potential. Gordon Lewis again posits, "Anyone who

aspires to Christian service must be a defender of the Christian faith, or he fails to meet a

fundamental scriptural condition for the ministry."[47] Believing something to be so because one is

comfortable in believing it, but is unable to express a reasonable foundation for that belief, is not

capable of the sufficient defense to which Lewis is referring. This verifies the need of both faith

and reason in defending Christian truth claims.

Having depicted this study as being within the locus of defending Christian truth claims

and identifying this function as being apologetic in nature, the place for this study's

categorization to be within the scope of apologetics is verified. Having dealt with the matters

related to the focus of this study, it is appropriate to return now to the presentation and defense of

the aesthetic theistic argument.

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[47] Lewis, *Testing Christianity's Truth Claims* 33.

The Plan for the Study

The following identification, explanation and justification of the aesthetic argument requires four chapters. The first identifies the preference of abductive reasoning over deductive and inductive reasoning in stating the argument. The chapter reflects a positive consideration of deductive and inductive reasoning while justifying the preference for abductive reasoning in presenting the aesthetic theistic argument. The utilization of abductive reasoning, especially in regard to theistic arguments, is a relatively recent practice. Its objective is to infer the best explanation for a phenomenon or question. The first chapter demonstrates abduction to be well-suited for presenting an argument based on man's capacity for aesthetic apprehension.

The second chapter presents and defends the first premise of the argument. The discussion of this first premise primarily focuses on the language "apprehending aesthetic value." The discussion succinctly defines aesthetic value and then justifies the claim that all human cultures demonstrate the ability to apprehend it. It demonstrates a strong argument for the assertion "all human cultures demonstrate an ability to apprehend aesthetic value."

The third chapter is the epicenter of the study. It reveals three known, potential explanations for man's ability to apprehend aesthetic value. Two of these explanations reflect the postulations of naturalists. The third identifies the supernatural view. After reviewing these explanations and evaluating their strengths and weaknesses, the chapter concludes that supernatural causation, specifically God's existence, is the best explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value as it is the most justifiable. Upon achieving this conclusion, the thesis of the study is validated.

The fourth chapter discusses several implications of the proven argument. There is potential for this study to be of significant value when used by critically thinking Christians.

Some of these are reviewed in this chapter. The fifth and final section summarizes and concludes the study. It reviews how the aesthetic theistic argument, the specific thesis of this study, is validated in the previous chapters.

For those desiring additional, relevant data regarding the issues being discussed, there are three appendices. Appendix 1 lists and succinctly describes four of the more popular theistic arguments. Appendix 2 offers similar description of five of the most familiar apologetic methods. Reviewing these methods helps to explain why the aesthetic theistic argument identifies best with classical apologetic methodology. Appendix 3 offers additional thoughts on how the thesis of this study potentially impacts naturalism. Primarily, it recognizes the impact naturalism has had on education, and the hostile environment Christian students face in secular schools. The intent of this discussion is to affirm the need to prioritize critical thinking among Christian students, particularly as it regards theistic arguments, so as to better equip them for their encounter with this antagonistic environment.

Chapter 1

A Defense of Abductive Reasoning
in Light of Other Reasoning Methods

Unlike arguments between two neighborhood baseball teams disagreeing over which team is going to bat first, formal arguments of logic are supposed to be more sophisticated, intellectual and less dependent on physical or emotional resources. Formal arguments present a logical justification for belief in a stated truth or conclusion. Informal arguments, such as the sandlot example, can be resolved by one team acquiescing to the other so that the arguing can stop and the playing can begin. Acquiescence, merely for the sake of convenience, is not consistent with good formal argumentation. Instead, logical arguments generally focus on justifying belief in a conclusion, no matter how convenient or inconvenient the conclusion. Dependence on superior volume, force of personality or physical strength are unacceptable bases for justifying belief. Similarly, mumpsimus has no place in formal arguments like that which may sometimes be present in informal, dogmatic differences of opinion. Participation in logical argumentation must rise above such prejudice to seek the honest justification of a conclusion. Instead of oppressing the opposing interlocutor to concession, resorting to volume instead of content, or obstinacy instead of honesty, formal argumentation uses coherence, cogency, consistency and the conclusiveness of argument to validate a conclusion.[48]

James D. Carney and Richard K. Scheer instruct that formal arguments require one or more premises (P1, P2, etc.) followed by a conclusion (C).[49] The truth of the conclusion is

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[48] The justification for this criterion is established in chapter 3.

[49] James D. Carney and Robert K Scheer, *Fundamentals of Logic,* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1980), 3. Carney is a faculty member of Arizona State University. Sheer is a faculty member of Kansas State University.

dependent upon the truth of the premises. In spite of negative connotations popular use of the word *argument* engenders, arguments of logic, especially theistic arguments, are not comparable to what takes place between two individuals hurling base language at one another. The actual opponent in formal, logical argumentation is ignorance, not the interlocutor with which one is verbally engaged. Despite the common negative feelings resulting when opinions are challenged, formal arguments do not focus on the negation of individuals but in justifying truth claims by demonstrating the truth of a conclusion is sound. If the argument is presented in a way that is logically defensible, only ignorance loses. To exemplify these assertions, a formal argument which fails to meet the standards of good logical argumentation follows:

(P1) All politicians are liars

(P2) Frank is a politician

(C) Frank is a liar

While the form of this argument appears appropriate, in that it has two clearly stated premises and a conclusion, careful reflection reveals that the argument itself is not consistent with truth and is, therefore, not sound. It is incorrect to assume, despite one's opinion of politicians, that all of them are liars. The existence of even one honest politician makes the first premise untrue. Additionally, one cannot assume that inherent to all politicians is the requirement that he/she lie. Hence the truth of first premise is not provable. If premises cannot be established as true, the conclusion is unsound and the argument fails. For this reason, formal arguments can and should require extensive research to establish premises upon which the verity of the conclusion is based. In the example above, were research to reveal the discovery of even one honest politician, the premise is proven untrue which makes the conclusion untrue. Since such research is not presented to verify the premises, the premises cannot be demonstrated as true. Though the form

or presentation of the argument may be correct, it still fails. When the premises are consistent

with truth, as in the next example, the result is different:

(P1) All working lightbulbs are able to produce light when properly connected to electricity.[50]

(P2) This object is a working light bulb connected to electricity.

(C) This object is able to produce light.

In this argument, the truth of each premise can be substantiated. Hence, it is rational or

justifiable, according to this argument, to believe that the object in question (P2) is a working

light bulb when, upon connecting it to electricity, as it was designed, it produces light (C). Since

this is verifiable, the object referenced, meets the qualifications of the premises proving the

argument sound.

According to Carney and Scheer, logic is the study of the definition and methodologies

used in presenting formal arguments as these examples demonstrate.[51] The purpose of logic is to

"determine whether arguments are correct or incorrect."[52] In the light bulb example, logic

assures that all truth claims of the premises are valid, establishing the truth of the conclusion.

While acknowledging, for review purposes, the extremely simplistic examples above, logical

argumentation can be very complex when formulated by skilled logicians or philosophers.

Adding to this complexity, there are several forms and methods by which arguments can be

stated. Investigating some of these various forms is relevant to the presentation of the aesthetic

argument, particularly in regard to the form of reasoning used in verbalizing that argument which

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[50] For the sake of clarity, it is assumed that a working light bulb requires proper connection to an electric source as it was designed, for the purpose of producing light.

[51] Carney and Scheer, *Fundamentals of Logic,* 3,

[52] Ibid. Also, it is understood that in order for the argument to be "correct" it must demonstrate the conclusion is true.

is the focus of this study. Such a review of these methods is found in Appendix 2. Reviewing this data is further complicated in realizing not all philosophers or logicians agree on the number or types of logical expression. For instance, Carney and Scheer primarily discuss two basic kinds of arguments: deductive and inductive. Abductive reasoning, or reasoning according to the best explanation, is a third form of argumentation which they do not specifically discuss. Douglas Walton[53] is the primary source for the following review of abductive argumentation. Reviewing these three kinds of argumentation comprise the content of this chapter. After reviewing each of these argumentation forms, the preference for abductive reasoning over the other two, is defended.

Deductive Reasoning

As demonstrated above by the light bulb example, deductive reasoning establishes that any alternative to the conclusion is impossible. A deductive argument is sound if, and only if, the trueness of the premises makes it impossible for the conclusion to be false.[54] If the premises are true, the conclusion is true, assuming the conclusion is a natural, accurate reflection of the premises. Walton, confirms this in his definition of deductive reasoning: "if the premises are true, then necessarily the conclusion is true, where the adverb "necessarily" applies to the inferential link between the premises and the conclusion."[55] Patrick Hurley, whose work is described as "one of the most widely used logic textbooks,"[56] similarly describes the deductive argument as "an argument in which the premises are claimed to support the conclusion in such a

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[53] Douglas Walton is the Distinguished Research Fellow at the University of Windsor.

[54] Carney and Scheer, *Fundamentals of Logic*, 12.

[55] Douglas Walton, *Abductive Reasoning,* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press. 2014) 2.

[56] Walton, *Abductive Reasoning,* 2

way that it is impossible for the premises to be true and the conclusion false."[57] Another example

of deductive argumentation based on these descriptions appears as follows:

(P1) George Washington was the first to be inaugurated as president

(P2) All presidents must be inaugurated

(C) George Washington was the first president.

Because the conclusion cannot be true unless all the premises are true, this form of reasoning is a

verifiable, absolute claim. Anthony Weston[58] agrees, "If its premises are true, the conclusion is

true too."[59] Hence, the claim of absolutism is reasonable: premises must always be true for the

conclusion to be true.[60] Since the premises are true in the example just given, the conclusion is

true as it correctly reflects the trueness of the premises, and this deductive argument is sound.

Hesitancy in Using Deductive Reasoning

Since deductive reasoning demonstrates a solid, popular method for presenting verifiable

arguments, a legitimate query surfaces as to why the aesthetic argument is stated abductively.

The deductive form of reasoning is the most common form used in logical argumentation due, in

part, to its significant use in history. This usage, for instance, can be traced back to Anselm and

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[57] Patrick J. Hurley, *A Concise Introduction to Logic.* 7th ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth 2000), 33.

[58] Anthony Weston is Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at Elon University.

[59] Anthony Weston, *A Rulebook for Arguments, Fourth Edition,* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, Inc. 2009), 37.

[60] There are many sub-categories of deductive arguments which could be discussed here as well as a great deal more about analytical philosophy and critical thinking, but to do so would deter from the pursuit of this project's goal. For further study, a thorough reading of the Carney/Shcheer, Patrick J. Hurley and Douglas Walton's works listed in the bibliography is recommended.

his presentation of the ontological argument.[61] The legendary example of Anselm's ontological argument illustrates this point:

(P1) A being whose non-existence is inconceivable is greater than a being whose non-existence is conceivable

(P2) God is the greatest conceivable being

(C) God's Non-existence must be inconceivable.[62]

According to Craig, this form of argumentation has been used by Scotus, Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz.[63] In his review of this argument, Craig observes, "There is no contradiction involved in this notion. Therefore, God must exist."[64] This argument helps to demonstrate that deductive reasoning, especially in classical theistic arguments, is not only well known, but is an effective method for presenting the logic of certain theistic arguments.

Recognizing that deductive reasoning is commonly used in theistic argumentation and is the preferred reasoning method of several philosophical and theological luminaries, could call into question any hesitancy in using deductive reasoning for the presentation of the aesthetic theistic argument. The first step in precluding this question is the acknowledgment that this hesitancy is not due to any perception of an inherent weakness in deductive reasoning. Conceding deduction to be the strongest form of logical presentation, there are justifiable reasons for believing certain arguments can be more *persuasive* when expressed in a different form of reasoning other than deduction. In making this statement, it is obvious that an apposition is being made between strength of argument and the persuasive force of an argument. Strength of

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[61] Craig, *Reasonable Faith,* 95.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid.

argument has to do with the soundness of the logic. If the premises are sufficiently true, the conclusion is true. That is excellent strength of logic. However, there are some arguments, though logically sound, which are not persuasive due to differences of worldview. This will be demonstrated more clearly as this chapter progresses but it is important to note this contrast here. Yet, as a disclaimer, this difference between strength of logic and strength of persuasion is not relevant to all theistic arguments. For instance, the ontological, cosmological and teleological arguments are extremely persuasive, even most persuasive, in their current deductive form. However, observations made by David Baggett and Jerry L. Walls in the second chapter of their recent work, *God and Cosmos*[65] suggest a more persuasive moral theistic argument would result if the abductive form of reasoning is used instead of stating the moral argument deductively. This is based on critiques of Craig's deductive form of the moral argument which appears as follows:

(P1) If God does not exist, objective moral values and duties do not exist.

(P2) Objective moral values and duties do exist.

(C) Therefore, God exists.[66]

While acknowledging the soundness of deductive reasoning and the strengths it presents in the ontological, cosmological and teleological theistic arguments, Baggett and Walls offer a list of five problems found in Craig's deductive form of the moral argument stated in *Reasonable Faith.* A review of these five concerns, justify their hesitancy in the use of deduction for the presentation of the moral argument. Since the aesthetic argument is a values based argument similar to the moral argument, a hesitancy in using deductive reasoning for the presentation of the moral argument suggests an appropriate hesitancy for its use in presenting the aesthetic

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[65] David Baggett and Jerry L Walls¸ *God and the Cosmos: Moral Truth and Human Meaning,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 54ff.

[66] Craig, *Reasonable Faith,* 172.

argument. To validate this hesitancy, a study of the five concerns raised by Baggett and Walls is

necessary. That list of five problems they identify as present in Craig's use of deduction in

presenting the moral theistic argument follows:

1. It makes us say very uncomfortable and unintuitive and unnecessary things— "Rape isn't wrong … if God doesn't exist," for example. The abductive approach avoids any need to do so.
2. TDA, [67] more than abduction, allows the atheist to reject the moral realism instead of the naturalism— like Marks did. Abduction keeps the moral facts in question front and center as the starting data in need of explanation.
3. TDA doesn't allow enough room to acknowledge what would be the simply amazing features of a world like this if it could exist without God— whereas abduction does not deny the power of a world like this without God, per impossible, to explain some of morality.
4. Deduction bases the moral argument on a premise involving a particularly intractable counterpossible. Are there nontrivially true counterpossibles? Sure. But pontificating confidently about a world in which the ground of being doesn't exist? That is problematic indeed— particularly synthetic claims like the famous Dostoyevskian counterfactual.
5. TDA can sever the bridge with our naturalist interlocutors it claims to build by focusing, and needlessly so, more on our differences than our similarities.

In order to justify the hesitancy of using deductive reasoning in expressing the aesthetic

argument deductively, a tentative example of how the aesthetic theistic argument being presented

in this study might appear, were it stated in the form of deductive reasoning, follows. Using

Craig's moral argument as the paradigm for the tentative deductive aesthetic argument, and that

it would be incongruous to compare the abductive form of the aesthetic argument to the

deductive form of the moral argument, a tentative example of the aesthetic argument follows:

(P1) If God did not exist, there would be no capacity for man to apprehend aesthetic value.

(P2) Man does possess the capacity for apprehending aesthetic value

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[67] TDA is an acrostic for The Deductive Argument and refers to Craig's deductive form of the moral argument stated above.

(C) Therefore, God exists.

This is a viable presentation of the aesthetic argument. Yet, since problems with the persuasiveness of the deductive moral argument, presented by Craig, are identified by Baggett and Walls, similar concerns for the aesthetic argument are justified were it to be presented deductively, using Craig's paradigm. Therefore, identifying the hesitation for using deduction to express Craig's moral argument, justifies hesitancy for the use of Craig's paradigm in expressing the aesthetic argument. To ratify this assertion, each of the problems Baggett and Walls identified in Craig's deductive example is listed and reviewed.

Problem 1: Uncomfortable Implications

The first problem states, "It [the deductive argument] makes us say very uncomfortable and unintuitive and unnecessary things— 'Rape isn't wrong … if God doesn't exist,' for example." This serious assertion is based on the first premise of Craig's deductive moral argument. The premise begins with an atheistic assumption, "if God did not exist." Reason would suggest that if God does not exist, nothing would exist. Even allowing that existence of human life could emerge without God's causation, Baggett and Walls note that His lack of existence would also require no moral values at all as He is the source of goodness and morality.[68] Yet, these observations are true only from a theist's perspective. While Craig's deductive moral argument is perfectly arguable and logically sound, it is not persuasive to an atheist comfortable in his belief that there is no God. His explanation for the source of morality could be cultural influences or the recognition that without some measure of morality society falls into chaos. This would be consistent with naturalism's belief that survival of the species is

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[68] Baggett and Walls, *God and Cosmos,* 64.

the primary description of evolution. Hence, the naturalistic atheist might claim, society has survived by recognizing certain moral boundaries. Baggett and Walls observe several potential sources for naturalists to claim as the origins of morality which would not require the existence of God, "human nature, social harmony, interpersonal interactions, the deliverances of various hypothetical imperatives whose goals are practically universal, a wide variety and assortment of physical, psychological, metaphysical, aesthetic, practical, and epistemic features . . ."[69] The point they make is that the deductive form of the moral argument though logically sound, is not persuasive for atheists who accept the atheistic counterfactual that God does not exist. In using Craig's paradigm for the tentative form of the aesthetic argument, the same concern would exist in the deductive form of the aesthetic argument. Beginning with this atheistic premise, atheists are not inclined to be persuaded as they both assume God's non-existence and assume another basis for morality exists. The same could be true were the aesthetic argument to be expressed deductively. It does not recognize that atheists are comfortable in the idea that God's non-existence requires alternative causes to be identified for both morality and aesthetic value. Thus, the two arguments expressed deductively are not, according to Baggett and Walls, as persuasive as desired.

Problem 2: Potential Rejection of Moral Theism

The second problem Baggett and Walls observe is stated as follows, "The Deductive argument . . . allows the atheist to reject the moral realism instead of the naturalism." Since Craig's deductive moral argument requires concession to the fallacies of naturalism, Baggett and Walls posit that instead of renouncing naturalism, atheists would use the moral argument, as stated in the deductive format, to reject moral realism. This is stated in the following quote which

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[69] Baggett and Walls, *God and Cosmos,* 71.

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refers to naturalists who recognize "moral indicators around them."[70] In this regard Baggett and

Walls testify, "we don't want them to do as this former Kantian Marks did, that Craig quoted, in

abandoning not his atheism, but his moral realism, after thinking about the implications and

deficiencies of his naturalism."[71] The stated concern references the "dogmatic secularists"[72] who,

if given a world without God would be willing to abandon the concept of moral realism rather

than abandon atheism and naturalism.[73] Instead, they suggest, the non-theist is receptive to the

concept of moral values, but is unwilling to concede to the notion that God is the only source of

those values.[74] Since the atheist draws this distinction, Baggett and Walls believe the naturalist

would abandon moral realism before abandoning naturalism. That result would exacerbate the

conflict between naturalism and supernaturalism, weakening hope for persuading naturalists

toward theism. For this reason, Baggett and Walls believe the first premise of the deductive form

of Craig's moral theistic argument is counterproductive. This raises concern regarding the use of

deduction in presenting the aesthetic theistic argument. The use of Craig's paradigm in stating

the tentative deductive form of the aesthetic argument reflects this same atheistic formula in its

first premise. It is reasonable to assume a similar response by atheists. Such concerns cause a

certain hesitancy in using deduction in presenting the aesthetic theistic argument.

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[70] Baggett and Walls, *God and Cosmos,* 76.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Ibid., 74.

[73] Ibid., 75.

[74] Ibid., 75-76.

Problem 3: Insufficient Room for Consideration of Non-Theism

The third problem identified by Baggett and Walls asserts, "The deductive argument doesn't allow enough room to acknowledge what would be the simply amazing features of a world like this if it could exist without God." This concern is based on the truth that a "clear apprehension of moral truth is a feature of this world."[75] The rationale for this concern reflects the authors' belief that allowing some sense of morality's origin, apart from God, might be possible.[76] Baggett and Walls reveal that Craig came to agree with this possibility.[77] In so doing they suggest the reader "take a look at this world and see what you can do by way of explaining morality and its distinctive features, and don't be surprised if you find that you can make some progress."[78] The authors make a salient argument for the possibility of demonstrating openness to the idea of a moral non-theistic basis. Such consideration persuades an atheist to consider an argument for theism "without having to argue that secular ethics is impotent."[79] The apparent implication is that by allowing the possibility of secular ethics a, better opportunity to engage the atheist in a discussion toward the best explanation for the source of man's apprehension of moral value (including a theistic one) is possible. Theists know that the best explanation of morality's causation is God's existence. Yet, Baggett and Walls suggest a failure to acknowledge the potentially amazing features of a world without God does not compromise theism but offers a better arena for persuading theism to be the better explanation. Again, because of its inherent rigidity, a deductive argument based on man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value would

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[75] Baggett and Walls, *God and Cosmos,* 75.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid., 76.

[79] Ibid., 74.

obviously not offer similar opportunity. The non-theistic element of the first premise of the deductive form of the moral does not encourage a persuasive interaction.[80] As the first premise of the deductive form of the aesthetic theistic argument is also non-theistic, it too would be similarly problematic in not encouraging persuasive interaction. This causes hesitancy in the use of deductive reasoning in presenting the aesthetic argument.

Problem 4: Based on a Counterpossible

Baggett and Walls' fourth problem with the deductive form of the moral argument, which contributes to the hesitation of its use in stating the aesthetic theistic argument, is as follows: "Deduction bases the moral argument on a premise involving a particularly intractable counterpossible. Are there nontrivially true counterpossibles? Sure. But pontificating confidently about a world in which the ground of being doesn't exist? That is problematic indeed." This concern suggests a certain obstinacy is present in Craig's deductive example of the moral theistic argument. Baggett and Walls attribute a certain pontification quality to the use of its counterpossibles. They suggest the first premise assumes that no possibilities exist for moral values apart from God's existence. Atheistic naturalists would not agree as they are comfortable in accepting God's non-existence while also claiming moral values do exist. Baggett and Walls suggest Craig's deductive moral argument exacerbates this disagreement with an unnecessary level of pontification. According to Baggett and Walls, this might not provide the best intellectual atmosphere for an exchange of different viewpoints. Additionally, the world in which the argument is referring doesn't exist. There is no world in which God does not exist. Hence, the level of pontification about this counterpossible is described by the authors as problematic.

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[80] Baggett and Walls, *God and Cosmos,* 74.

Again, since the paradigm used in formulating the tentative deductive form of the aesthetic argument, reflects the same obstinate pontification of counterfactuals, it is reasonable to assume the same problem would exist were the same deductive form of reasoning used in the presentation of the aesthetic argument. This adds to the hesitancy of using deductive reasoning in presenting the aesthetic argument

Problem 5: Severs Rather than Builds Bridges with Interlocutors

The last of the problems Baggett and Walls identified in Craig's deductive moral argument appears as follows, "The deductive argument can sever the bridge with our naturalist interlocutors it claims to build by focusing, and needlessly so, more on our differences than our similarities." This final concern is based on the supposition that apologetics and thus, theistic arguments, are intended to engage atheists in meaningful exchange of ideas. This cannot be done, as this concern implies, when bridges allowing this engagement are severed rather than built. At the root of this concern is the question of whether or not apologetics are meant to present arguments for the purpose of persuading others to consider a more justifiable worldview. Assuming this to be priority of Christian apologetics, it is likely that this influence toward a more justifiable worldview is less productive when bridges of communication are severed rather than built. The concern the authors demonstrate reflects the suspicion that Craig's deductive form of the moral argument is more inclined to sever.

Again, finally, since Craig's paradigm is used to formulate the tentative deductive form of the aesthetic theistic argument, the same concern is present.

Deciding Against the Use of Deduction

A sense of urgency encourages the reiteration that inherent weakness in deductive reasoning is not being suggested. What is revealed in the previous discussion is that it may not always be the best way to express theistic arguments. Craig's preference for the moral argument expressed deductively is justifiable in that it is a very strong and logically sound argument. However, Baggett and Walls raise compelling concerns about its persuasiveness when used in a debate environment with atheistic philosophers. Determining how to choose between deductive and abductive reasoning requires a review of the very purpose of apologetics which is laboriously spelled out in the introduction of this study. Fundamentally two purposes for Christian apologetics exist, according to Craig: 1) to defend the truth claims of Christianity and 2) to oppose counterclaims to Christianity. It seems Baggett and Walls are suggesting something else should also be considered. Perhaps they see the role of apologetics, especially as it pertains to the moral theistic argument, to play more of a mentoring or discovery role. It seems these authors desire to engage those of different views with meaningful, respectful debate so as to determine together, the best explanation for the existence of moral values present in every culture. This suggests their objective is persuasion not just confrontation. Clearly, their understanding, that the purpose of apologetics to include persuasion, is better suited to abductive reasoning then deductive reasoning. While deductive reasoning may represent a greater strength of logic, abduction reflects a greater potential for persuasion. Their claims are summarized by the following review.

In regard to Problem 1, Craig's deductive model is built upon an atheistic non-factual assuming God's non-existence. Such a world, assuming it could exist as nothing would exist if God did not exist, requires there to be no theistic basis for morality and as such the lack of

morality would not exclude such behaviors as rape and torturing children for the fun of it. Defending the possibility of such a counterfactual would not cause the atheist to be persuaded as they not only envision the possibility of existence apart from God, they also accept the possibility of moral grounding without God. Abductive reasoning would remove this atheistic counterfactual and would thus remove the need to argue for a morality apart from God. Instead, it would argue for the best explanation for morality's existence. This "best explanation" approach allows, for the sake of conversation, the possibility of non-theistic origins of morality. Thus it meets the atheist where he is. Then, as it is presently understood, abductive reasoning would engage the theist in reviewing all possible explanations for the purpose of determining the best. Theists believe, and are capable of justifying the belief, in the notion that God is the best explanation of the cause of morality. Since the same formula is present in the tentative deductive aesthetic argument, it is reasonable to assume that the same problem would exist. It is also assumed that abduction would similarly address that concern.

In problem 2, the concern was the possibility that the deductive argument would force the atheist to reject moral realism as he would be unlikely, if challenged directly, to reject naturalism. Abduction, according to Baggett and Walls, would prevent the need for moral realism's rejection by "keeping moral facts in question front and center as starting data in need of explanation."[81] Abductive reasoning, focusing on the best explanation, resolves this concern. This observation is not lost on the presentation of the aesthetic argument nor is the fact that abduction resolves this concern for the potential rejection of moral realism.

In problem 3, the concern was that the deductive form of the moral argument doesn't allow enough room to consider the possibility of morality existing in a world without the

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[81] Baggett and Walls, *God and Cosmos,* 77.

existence of God. Instead of formulating the argument in terms of the impossibility of a world

without God, which would not persuade the atheist who believes such a world exists. The

abductive approach would be to acknowledge the possibility but to search for the best

explanation of those possibilities available. Such an approach engages rather than confronts the

atheist. That this would also be the case in the deductive form of the aesthetic argument,

hesitation of its use in presenting the aesthetic theistic argument results.

Problem 4 is based on the observation that the deductive argument projects "intractable

counterpossibles." Abduction would preclude the obstinacy of such counterpossibles.

Additionally, it would reject the notion that counterpossibles were trivial. Instead, the abductive

argument engages the atheist in the pursuit of all recognized possibilities for the purpose of

determining the best of those explanations. This allows for greater potential for engaging the

atheist, improving the potential of persuasion. This adds to the hesitancy of using deduction in

presenting a values based theistic argument which could involve a discussion about personal

taste in defining aesthetic value.

Problem 5 summarizes the previous four in the sense that it raises the question of

purpose. Is the intent of the interaction with naturalists to build or sever any possible bridge of

engagement with the atheist? Abduction, though weaker logically, offers less hesitancy of its use

as it seems to offer more potential for persuasion through engagement. These five observations

result in a greater comfort in the use of abductive reasoning rather than deductive reasoning in

stating the aesthetic theistic argument.

<center>Inductive Reasoning</center>

Before a final decision to use abductive reasoning, a consideration of inductive reasoning

is necessary. While deductive reasoning requires alternative explanations to be impossible,

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inductive reasoning requires alternate explanations to be improbable. Carnes and Scheer state, "The study of deductive logic is the study of rules and methods to *determine the validity* of deductive arguments. . . . . The study of inductive logic is the study of rules and methods for *assigning probabilities* to the conclusions of inductive arguments when the premises are assumed to be true."[82] The difference between these two methods of inference, or reasoning, is clear. When moving from deductive to inductive logic you are moving from the goal of validity to the goal of probability. This is demonstrated by the following example:

(P1) My daughter has scored 90 or above on every test this semester.

(C) She is likely to score 90 or above on the final

Note the several obvious differences between inductive and deductive logic in these simplistic examples. First, the inductive example has only one premise and a claim. Although it might have many premises, only one is common to inductive arguments. Clearly, there is less rigidity in inductive reasoning. It is intended to demonstrate the flexibility of a probability rather than the rigidity of a certainty. Such words as "likely" or "probably" are often present in an inductive argument. According to Carnes and Scheer, it is "the attempt to answer this question: How does one determine how likely a conclusion is on the basis of the evidence cited in the premises?"[83]

Walton affirms Carnes and Scheer's assertions with his description of inductive reasoning, "The inferential link between the premises and the conclusion here is not one of necessity but of probability."[84] Walton also observes that there is controversy over the exact meaning of probability. However, to pursue that controversy in depth in this venue would

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[82] Carnes and Scheer, *Fundamentals of Logic,* 346.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Walton, *Abductive Reasoning,* 2.

unacceptably deter the study from its intent. Instead, it suffices to note that "probability" is the key word in inductive inference. The question this raises, however, is whether or not inductive reasoning has a significant role in theistic arguments.

The Inductive Nature of the Evidential Apologetic Method

Gary Habermas[85] effectively demonstrates the value of inductive reasoning in the evidential methodology of his writing. Dr. Habermas is a proponent of evidential methodology in apologetics.[86] His method presents such a preponderance of evidence, supporting the justified belief in the resurrection and the existence of miracles, etc., that the probability for their existence becomes too high to ignore. One example of this is found in *Did the Resurrection Happen,* which contains an accurate accounting of his debate with well-known atheistic philosopher Antony Flew. In his response to Flew's counterclaims, Habermas consistently appealed to his vast reservoir of evidence which contradicted Flew's assertions. He presented abundant data to argue effectively the high probability for the resurrection occurrence, as recorded in Scripture.[87] The results he achieves using this method are impressive. The sheer amount of evidence, for the resurrection and miracles he has collected, is staggering and leaves little doubt of their historicity. Yet, despite his impressive evidence, there are both strengths and weaknesses present in the use of inductive reasoning when considering its use in presenting a formal argument. These were taken into account in making the decision to use abductive reasoning over inductive reasoning to present the aesthetic theistic argument.

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[85] Gary Habermas is the Distinguished Professor of Apologetics and Philosophy at Rawlings Divinity School of Liberty University.

[86] See the discussion on apologetic methods presented in Appendix 2

[87] Gary Habermas, *Did the Resurrection Happen? A Conversation with Gary Habermas and Antony Flew,* David Baggett Ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2009).

Hesitations in the Use of Induction

Charles S. Peirce[88] states, "Induction consists in starting from a theory, deducing from it predictions of phenomena, and observing those phenomena in order to see *how nearly* they agree with the theory."[89] Walton remarks that Peirce was so critical of inductive reasoning used by John Stuart Mill's utilitarianism that he declared, "It would be a waste of time to discuss such a theory."[90] Peirce's major complaint was that instead of making an argument, inductive reasoning was "making a prediction which then matches that prediction to an observation."[91] His point seems to be that there is a difference between making a statement of fact and making an evidenced based prediction about the facts. To Peirce, an argument should reflect the first, not the second. Peirce's reservations about this form of argument gives cause to be hesitant in using it for presenting the aesthetic theistic argument.

Though both theology and science has significant use for inductive reasoning, it does not present as the preferred approach within the discipline of apologetics, with the exception of what has already been observed of the evidential apologetic methodology of Habermas. Even then, there is a difference between the gathering of prolific information which validates a view and formally verbalizing the process as a formal argument which reflect that view. Deductive reasoning remains the favorite form for expressing formal arguments. When faced with a

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[88] *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* s.v. "Charles Sanders Peirce," http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ peirce/ (Accessed April 15, 2016,). Among many other things, this excellent article describes Peirce as the founder of American pragmatism.

[89] , Charles S. Peirce, "Elements of Logic," *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce,* vol. 2, eds. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), 105.

[90] Walton, *Abductive Reasoning,* 8.

[91] Ibid.

mountain of data supporting supernaturalism, induction remains a powerful tool. Yet, the end

result of inductive reasoning can at best be a high probability. No matter how strong the evidence

or the vast amount of it, and no matter how high the level of probability it attains, inductive

reasoning can only present a probability or a high level of likelihood.[92]

This limitation, by itself, however, is not sufficient cause for hesitation of its use in

presenting the aesthetic theistic argument. As induction is perceived to be logically stronger than

the plausibility of abduction. Yet, one must still recognize that of the ontological, cosmological,

teleological and moral theistic arguments, none of them are presented in the form of inductive

reasoning. Wondering why this is so presents cause for hesitation. While its limitation to present

only a probability may not be sufficient cause for hesitation, combined with the fact that no other

theistic argument is expressed in theistic arguments, there is sufficient cause for hesitation in

using it to present the aesthetic theistic argument.

Since apologetics is intended to defend the truth, it is clear that something stated as true is

much more appealing than stating something as *probably* true.[93] That is not to say that

probability has a weak role in apologetics. Craig Keener, demonstrates the great strength of using

evidence in establishing a high probability for the miraculous. He also provides a plethora of data

chronicling scores of medically affirmed healings which are unexplained by natural causes.[94]

The volume of evidence he presents, supporting the miraculous, raises a very high probability

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[92] Walton, *Abductive Reasoning,* 3.

[93] Carl Henry presents a powerful and specific argument for some weaknesses of Science and its prolific use of induction. (Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1999), 174.)

[94] Craig Keener, *Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts,* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011) loc. 5031ff, Kindle. Keener's extensive chronicling begins in Part 3 Chapters 11 and 12 of the first volume of his work. In this work he discusses miracle accounts from antiquity to present. The reader is left to his own judgment regarding the acceptance of this data as miraculous but no one can deny the sheer volume of it is very impressive as it presents, if accurate, a high probability for the miraculous.

that miracles both occurred and occur. Yet, no matter how high the probability, inductive reasoning does not move beyond the probability status. This does not imply that this form of inference is insufficient or irrelevant. Stating that there is a high probability that miracles yet occur today is clearly staggering and potentially life-changing. Instead, the point is that inductive reasoning does not rise above probabilistic conclusion. Though it may be very impressive, especially as it applies to the magnitude of data Habermas and Keener provide. Still, it does not reflect the notion that it is impossible for the conclusion not to be true as deductive reasoning does. A point might be made for suggesting induction is better suited for affirming a particular premise or a particular point of view rather than the presentation of formal argumentation. Assuming this to be possible, such an explanation would justify its value as an apologetic method without diminishing its worth because of its lack of use in stating classical theistic argumentation. Taken together, these observations cause hesitancy for the use of induction in the presentation of the aesthetic theistic argument.

To again affirm the value of evidential reasoning, one should note that apologetics is not the only discipline wherein the use of inductive reasoning is successfully used, Sports statisticians are constantly using the inductive method. It is common for football coaches or analysts to posit, "Since they used this play 56% of the time it is likely that they will use it frequently when we play them next time." This is inductive reasoning. Physicians treating a patient may often go through an inductive thought process such as, "We tried the statin drugs with no effect so it is likely that we need to administer another type." These examples ascribe high value for the use of inductive inference. Yet again, there are reasons for hesitancy in using this form of reasoning when verbalizing the aesthetic argument. Another example for justifying

this hesitancy is found in the following examples of the aesthetic argument stated in the form of inductive reasoning.

Example 1

   (P1) God is described as the cause for the existence of all things.

   (C) God is the likely cause of man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value

Example 2

   (P1) God is responsible for the beauty of nature

   (C) It is probable that God created man with the ability to apprehend nature's beauty

Though these statements argue well logically, when used with values based arguments such as these, induction reveals a weakness in persuasion. In each case, affirming the truth of either premise or either conclusion would require voluminous evidence and even then, at best, it would result in a probability rather than an assertion or even the best explanation. This weakness in persuasion in the formal verbal formula of inductive reasoning adds to the justification of hesitancy in using this form to present the aesthetic theistic argument.

Abductive Reasoning

   Having identified deductive and inductive reasoning and considered both their advantages and disadvantages in presenting value based theistic arguments, the discussion now turns to that method chosen to formulate the aesthetic argument within this study. Deductive reasoning makes the alternative to the claim impossible. Inductive reasoning makes the alternative to the claim improbable. Abductive reasoning makes an alternative to the conclusion implausible. Baggett and Walls have already demonstrated that though abduction may be the weakest in its strength of logic, it is preferred because of its strength of persuasion. Abductive reasoning offers a solution that is the best answer to a particular question. Though similar to

induction, it differs in that induction presents information which establishes the likelihood of the conclusion being considered. In abduction, all possible explanations are considered for the purposes of determining the best explanation available. In this regard inductive reasoning, as with deductive reasoning, is potentially stronger in logic, but it is not as persuasive as abduction in affirming the conclusion. In abduction, the goal is to consider all possible conclusions so as to determine the best explanation of the phenomenon or event. To demonstrate the best explanation approach is more persuasive, a clear understanding of abduction is necessary. Demonstrating the soundness of this claim begins with some history and definition.

Walton cites Norwood Russel Hanson who points to "convincing examples of abductive reasoning in physics and other sciences."[95] Walton states that only recently has Hanson been recognized as an icon of the philosophy of science and argumentation.[96] John R. Josephson[97] observes that abduction has been "largely overlooked and under-analyzed by almost 2400 years of formal logic and philosophy."[98] Walton refers to the importance of abductive inference in the use of scientific discovery, legal reasoning, everyday argumentation and goal-directed reasoning.[99] Walton additionally asserts that the commonality of abductive reasoning is what makes it of such interest to those concerned with the pursuit of achieving artificial intelligence.[100] Carnes and Scheer, on the other hand, do not even mention abductive reasoning

[95] Walton, *Abductive Reasoning,* 17.

[96] Ibid.

[97] Josephson writes from regarding the uses of abductive reasoning in the practice of law.

[98] John R. Josephson, "Abductive Inference: On the Proof Dynamics of Inference to the Best Explanation." *Cardozo Law Review* vol. 22 no 5, (New York: Yeshiva University, 2001), 1622.

[99] Walton, *Abductive Reasoning,* 17.

[100]Ibid., 6.

in their textbook.[101] This demonstrates the likelihood that Josephson is correct in asserting

abductive reasoning has been overlooked and under-analyzed. Impressive as its history is, its

present lack of popularity requires that it be carefully defined.

Defining Abductive Reasoning

Walton, offers the following description, "Abduction is the process of forming an

explanatory hypothesis."[102] He further describes abduction as "prior to induction and deduction

in the process of scientific argumentation."[103] He adds, "Every single item of scientific theory

which stands established today has been due to abduction"[104] Finally, Walton proposes his own

formal definition of abduction:

> First, it is a technique used to narrow down the number of alternatives by picking out one
> or a few hypotheses from a much larger number of them that are available. Second, it is a
> process of guessing, or picking the right guess, and thus it is clear that it is a fallible
> process that can lead to wrong hypotheses as well as to right ones. Third, it comes into
> play when a new phenomenon is observed, in other words, a phenomenon that has not yet
> been explained, or explained well enough, in science.[105]

Understanding abduction and validating its use for presenting the aesthetic theistic argument

requires some discussion of the three observations made here by Walton. First, abduction

recognizes multiple alternatives and seeks to pick one of those alternatives. For instance, in the

case of this project, there are two alternatives offered by naturalism and one by supernaturalism

as possible explanations for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value. Instead of making a

declaration, as deductive argumentation does, or propose the likelihood of one of those

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[101] Carnes and Scheer, *Fundamentals of Logic.*

[102] Walton, *Abductive Reasoning*, 8.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Ibid., 9.

alternatives, as inductive reasoning would posit, abductive reasoning seeks to recognize all the

reasonable alternatives, and even non-reasonable ones, and sets about picking one that is the

preferred or best explanation. The process by which the best explanation is determined in this

study is a focus of chapter 3.

Second, this selection is described as a guessing, or "picking the right guess." This may

be logically weaker than deduction or induction, but the use of appropriate scholarship should

result in picking the "best" of the alternatives, or, to use the language above, make the most

informed guess among the alternatives present. Since every scientific theory which stands today

is the result of abduction, as Walton states, the concern for its logical weakness seems to be

countered. Third, abductive reasoning leaves open the possibility that if a better guess, or a more

informed "guess" is made in the future, its intent to recognize the best of the alternatives would

require deference to the new explanation, assuming it is determined a better explanation. This

suggests abductive reasoning requires sufficient research for identifying the best explanation on

the basis of the facts being presented. This research offers better potential for engaging those

with opposing views in assuring the best explanation is determined. Hence, abduction has a

better potential for persuasion.

While this process may sound strange to theologians, it is not new to those in the medical

field. For instance, if a physician sees a young patient with multiple red spots, which are familiar

to the doctor, and the parents of the child inform him that he first had a fever before the

blemishes erupted, the doctor, having been presented with these multiple symptoms, executes his

duties by making the most informed diagnosis (guess) as to the cause. Having been trained well

and having had some experience, he is aware of several maladies which cause fever and red

spots. Yet, these particular spots he knows to be unique to measles. Adding to this awareness the

evidential data that an outbreak of measles has occurred in the child's school, the doctor is

comfortable in diagnosing the malady as measles. He affirms the best explanation for the malady

is measles. This process of diagnosis is abductive reasoning. The formal argument would appear

as follows:

(P1) The child has presented with red spots having broken out after a fever.

(P2) The best diagnosis, given all the data presented, is that this child has measles

(C) This child has the measles.

A brief overview of this argument reveals that the first premise is close to, if not actually, an

absolute statement. There is little doubt that what is presented to the doctor is a patient with red

spots which broke out after a fever. There is no room for arguing against this premise. What is

unique about abduction, which sets it apart from deduction and induction, is premise two. In the

second premise many things are assumed: First, there is an assumed collection of data which

offers some measure of reasonable explanation for the conditions of the first premise. Second,

there is careful evaluation of all possibilities so that the best, or most defendable explanation, is

identified. Third, having made that determination, the unchosen are rejected and the resulting

diagnosis identifies the cause for the symptoms presented. The conclusion (diagnosis) is

determined based on evidence presented, and the informed choice of the best explanation. This

exemplifies a workable understanding of abductive reasoning.

Affirming Abductive Reasoning

To affirm further the choice of using abductive reasoning for this study over deductive

and inductive reasoning, it would be helpful to apply this same process to the aesthetic argument

stated in the introduction.

(P1) Every human culture demonstrates a capacity to apprehend aesthetic value

(P2) The best explanation for this capacity is supernatural causation.

(C) God's existence is the supernatural cause of man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value

In the above argument, the first premise is stated as an absolute. This study provides sufficient data to justify the claim of the first premise in chapter 2. Second, premise two reflects three assumptions: First, there is an assumption that there is data demonstrating the soundness of the first premise. Second, there is an assumption of adequate effort to review all relevant explanations for the declaration presented in the second premise. third, that examination actually reveals the best explanation for the conditions presented in the second premise. Demonstrating an adequate effort has been made to review all relevant explanations for affirming the soundness of the second premise of the aesthetic theistic argument is presented in the third chapter. Third, after considering all relevant explanations, those not chosen are rejected and the best explanation is identified. The conclusion is sound based on the soundness of the process just described. The result of the process is a conclusion, the contradiction of which is implausible.

Summary and Conclusion of the Case for Use of Abduction

Before a summary of the reasons why abduction is preferred in the presentation of this project, it is reiterated that all classical arguments do not require retooling to reflect the abductive form. As was demonstrated in the discussion above, however, deductive reasoning is not always best suited for every form of theistic argument. Clearly neither is abductive reasoning best suited for all theistic arguments. Instead, by following the research of abductive reasoning by Baggett and Walls, theistic apologists and philosophers should more carefully consider using abduction so as to assure a greater potential for persuasion. The following briefly summarizes why future

consideration of abduction is warranted and why it is preferred in this presentation of the aesthetic theistic argument.

As Baggett and Walls have sufficiently argued, especially in the case of values based theistic arguments such as the moral and aesthetic theistic arguments, deductive reasoning may not be the most persuasive form of presentation. Baggett and Walls' discussion of deductive reasoning justifies hesitancy in its use in some cases, especially, it seems, in the case of values based theistic arguments. Likewise, neither is induction the preferred reasoning method for stating the aesthetic theistic argument. As it is common knowledge that no present formal argument is stated inductively. Formally stating inductive arguments can appear clumsy. Induction is not the preferred form of the aesthetic argument's presentation. Despite the certainty that these reasoning methods are logically stronger than abduction, they do not always present a better potential for persuasion. Since apologetic practices include the desire to persuade, this must be taken into account.

Second, it is appealing to realize that abduction puts the onus of responsibility on the naturalist or non-theist to find a better explanation. If, for example, after theism identifies, and adequately defends, the best explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value is divine causation, the naturalist can only counter by producing a better explanation. The naturalist is not free to simply recede to his belief that God and/or supernaturalism do not exist. He must argue why naturalism is a better explanation than supernatural causation. In chapters 2 and 3 of this work the best explanation is identified and justified. Why naturalistic explanations are not the best explanations is carefully explained. An argument, stated abductively, justifies the belief that God's existence is the best explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value. The task of the naturalist can no longer be the mere presentation of an alternative view. He must now

offer evidence that demonstrates his explanation is better. When theists present an argument stating that theism is the best explanation for the aesthetic apprehension, the onus is then on the atheist not only to offer an alternative, but to offer a better alternative and a justification for why that naturalistic alternative is better.

Third, which is similar though not exact to the first, abduction flexes with its contra-interlocutor. To explain, in deductive reasoning the rigidity of the argument is such that it is impossible for the premises to be true and the conclusion false. In spite of this, Baggett and Walls demonstrate that it is less persuasive to the atheist or naturalist who is comfortable with non-theism. In inductive reasoning, it is improbable that the premise is true and the claim be false. This probability reasoning is powerful when presenting evidence, but, as has been presented, it is clumsy in presenting values based arguments such as the moral or aesthetic theistic argument. Though it has a better potential for flexibility and engagement then deduction, there is a reason why no formal theistic argument is presented inductively. Stating theistic arguments in probabilistic terminology is awkward. Yet, induction is extremely powerful when used to confirm an historical event or the existence of the miracles. Hence, induction was not the preferred method for presenting the aesthetic theistic argument. In abductive inference, inference to the best explanation, there is a recognized possibility for alternatives, which makes this type of reasoning the most flexible and potentially the most persuasive of the three. It offers this strength of persuasion by creating the best environment for engaging contra-interlocutors for the purpose of identifying the best explanation. This environment offers greater possibility for persuasion than simple confrontation to alternate postulations, as does the deductive form of reasoning. It is true that abductive reasoning is an intelligent guess based on research.[106] It is also true that of the

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[106] Walton, *Abductive Reasoning,* 9.

three forms of reasoning discussed, it is the weakest in strength of logic. However, it is additionally true that it provides the greatest potential for persuasion as it requires a certain engagement of mutual research between opposing views in order to identify the best explanation for the conditions stated in the premises. A sound abductive argument presents, assuming sufficient research, any claim other than that which is identified as the best explanation is implausible. The abductive form presents the possibility of multiple alternatives and thus demonstrates a greater flexibility for engaging contra-interlocutors in the process. Its researched conclusion presents in such a way that any alternative is implausible.

Fourth, building on the previous thought, while deductive reasoning offers more opportunity for confrontation than engagement, as described earlier in this chapter, and inductive reasoning presents a likelihood, however high, that the conclusion is probable, abductive reasoning offers a greater motivation for research, instruction and common intellectual exercise between contra-interlocutors for determining the best of all recognized explanations. One must consider each proposed explanation in the goal of finding the best. Clearly, the standard or criterion for identifying what is best or better must be discerned. But these are teachable and instructive opportunities for open minds to engage. The aesthetic argument, expressed in an abductive form, tells young minds, for example, that they are not merely being fed data for them to retain. Nor is a probability being suggested, even a high probability. Instead, they each must investigate, and then investigate the investigation, so as to insure the claim being presented is indeed the best explanation. To again reiterate, this exercise is not meant to imply replacing deductive and inductive reasoning, as they are formidable forms of reasoning and clearly the preferred in certain forms of argumentation. Instead, this discussion suggests that deductive and

inductive forms of reasoning, which are logically stronger than abduction, may not always the best environment for persuading opposing interlocutors.

Craig is correct when he observes that faith is not something one obtains only by reason.[107] He has pointedly and admirably distinguished between a magisterial role of reason and a ministerial role of reason.[108] In other words, reason should be a tool of, not a master over, faith. Even in the case of abductive reasoning, faith is not the result of research but the result of the work of the Spirit of God who can, and often does, use research, knowledge and reason to bring someone to faith. Deductive reasoning makes a declaration. Inductive reasoning offers a high probability. Abductive reasoning invites the consideration of the best explanation. All three of these are potential tools for formal argumentation. Only the Spirit of God can use these tools to lead a person to faith. Yet, it seems obvious that the form of inference which provides meaningful interaction between interlocutors would be preferred to those which simply declare and opposing view.

Finally, to conclude this chapter of the discussion, abductive reasoning provides the greatest possibility for truth to be acknowledged continually. When a person is told that this explanation is "the best" it is assumed that if a better explanation comes, it will then take the place of the previous for the best explanation is required in abductive reasoning not merely a good one. Thus, a greater potential for consistent, reasoned pursuit of truth is necessary. Best over good is always better. The abductive form forces the continued pursuit of the best explanation. This encourages constant vigilance of study and sound reasoning. What seems too obvious to even mention, is that the very term "best" is a superlative and as such, it implies that

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[107] William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith, Third Edition* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 46.

[108] Ibid, 47

there is none better. If naturalism cannot provide a better explanation, the best will stand, (and vice versa) even if it is a supernatural explanation. This is perhaps the primary motivation for employing abductive reasoning. Once the best is established, the goal is reached. The only room for more discussion is in the constant vigilance to affirm that the best explanation has been found, whatever that explanation might be. The truths of theism should not fear honest, consistent review.

Addendum to Chapter 1

It is apparent that this project possesses both a primary and a secondary objective, though this was not its original goal. The primary objective remains the offering of a theistic argument for the existence of God based on the reality that man has the ability to apprehend aesthetic value. Like the moral argument, the cause of this uniquely human characteristic deserves to be identified. The primary goal of this study is to argue that the best explanation for the origin of this characteristic is supernatural causation. The secondary objective, which is more accidental than intentional, offers the merits of presenting this theistic argument in the form of abductive reasoning. This chapter affirms abductive reasoning to be the most reasonable and defendable form of argument in presenting the aesthetic theistic argument. The best explanation for the cause of man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value is God's existence.

Chapter 2

The First Premise

Every human culture demonstrates a capacity to apprehend aesthetic value

Having justified the method of presentation, attention can now be fully directed toward the aesthetic theological argument. The goal of this chapter is to define and determine the soundness of the first premise of that argument. The first step toward this goal focuses on the terminology of the premise. Precise understanding of the terminology is necessary if the conclusion of the argument is to be adequately persuasive.

This objective requires several stages. The first is to explicate the locution "apprehension of aesthetic value" as it formulates the essence of the first premise. The second stage focuses more narrowly on identifying the definition of "aesthetic value." Since several volumes have been dedicated to the defining of aesthetics, there must be both succinctness and sufficiency in its defining so as to prevent this study from wandering into interesting deliberations which are not pertinent to the study's thesis. Yet, the need to have at least a minimal but sufficient comprehension of that which is being apprehended by all human cultures is evident if this first premise is to be adequately affirmed. The third stage in achieving a precise understanding of the first premise, so as to justify the claim that aesthetic apprehension is common to all human cultures, involves the consensus of its validity by both naturalists and supernaturalists. Because the execution of this third stage is limited to the empirical data of this consensus, there is little need for extensive evidential research. Little evidence exists to question man's capacity for aesthetic apprehension as present in all known human cultures. Successful execution of these stages adequately defends the first premise. Each stage of the discussion listed above is briefly summarized. The summary of the entire discussion concludes the chapter.

Three realizations are necessary to determine what is meant by "the ability to apprehend aesthetic value." The first of these is the realization of the specific definition of *apprehending*. The second involves a review of four features inherent in the act of apprehending aesthetic value. The third realization is found in the presentation of a list of categories by which apprehension of aesthetics is demonstrated. This listing reveals the complexities of the act of apprehending aesthetic value, bringing it into sharper focus. A summary of this information concludes this section of the discussion.

The Definition of Apprehending

Webster defines *apprehend* as, "1. To arrest or seize, 2. To become aware of, 3. To grasp with the understanding: recognize the meaning."[109] This primary understanding implies that, whatever aesthetic value is, man's apprehension of it includes a grasping and or understanding of its presence or meaning. This reveals that the apprehension of aesthetic value occurs when one "becomes aware" that the object or event (whatever the stimulus) before him has aesthetic value. Once aware of the presence of something, someone, or some experience possessing aesthetic value, the grasping or understanding of that awareness is the apprehension of its aesthetic nature. The grasping of the perception that the stimulus has aesthetic value, or the perception of it, is the apprehending of its aesthetic value. Thus, it is obvious that apprehending aesthetic value is to grasp or discern some measure of a stimulus' aesthetic worth.

Alvin Plantinga offers a principle which provides basic insight into the complexity of this seemingly simple act, "To see that a proposition p is true—in the way in which we see that a

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[109] *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary,* s.v. "apprehend."

priori truths are true—is to apprehend not only that things are a certain way but that they must be that way."[110] To demonstrate how this applies to the understanding of aesthetic apprehension, assuming one subscribes to the truth that p has aesthetic value, the apprehension of that value requires that p must have, by its very nature, aesthetic value. That is, according to Plantinga, it must be that way. He further explains, "Reason is the faculty whereby we learn of what is possible and necessary."[111] Plantinga establishes that, in the process of apprehending aesthetic value, it first requires comprehending that it is necessary for the nature of p to be aesthetic. Using this principle as a basis for understanding the apprehension of aesthetic value, Plantinga is asserting that the apprehension of aesthetics does not originate in man's ascribing aesthetic value to "X" (X being the aesthetic stimulus). Instead, he posits that the apprehension of aesthetic value begins with the realization that X possesses, within its nature, an aesthetic value. This value, such as beauty, magnificence or even hideousness must be perceived as being essential to the nature of X before apprehending it can take place. Contra Kant, as will be demonstrated later, Plantinga ascribes to the view that apprehending the aesthetic value of X requires that X possess aesthetic value. Apprehension, therefore, according to Plantinga, is not the assigning of aesthetic value to X by perception, but is the recognition that aesthetic value is present in the very nature of the stimulus. All of this apprehending requires sufficient intellect, reasoning, etc., to discern the nature of the stimulus. Hence, the apprehension of aesthetic value is the grasping or understanding that the thing being experienced is by nature necessarily aesthetic in value.

Assuming Plantinga's assertions are correct and it is required that the nature of the stimulus has aesthetic value, in order for aesthetic value to be perceived. This requires that the

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[110] Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 105.

[111] Ibid, 105.

apprehension of aesthetic value begins with the perception that the stimulus, by its very nature, possesses aesthetic value. Though the conclusion is apparently lucid, it is yet the case that a satisfactory explanation for the apprehension of the aesthetic experience has not really been established. Authur Shimmamura and Stephen Palmer comment on this frustration, "The flip side of defining art in terms of aesthetic response is the need to understand aesthetic response as suitable to define art."[112] This circular account suggests that apprehending aesthetic value requires ability to apprehend aesthetic value. This is further exacerbated by an equally circular question, "Is beauty perceived because the nature of the thing experienced necessarily possesses beauty, or is it beautiful because it is perceived as having beauty by the one having the experience?" Plantinga's view as presented above, resolves the circularity concern by asserting aesthetic value must be within the nature of the aesthetic stimulus before aesthetic value can be perceived. Succinctly, he posits that the perception of aesthetic value is rooted in the nature of the stimulus, not solely in the perception of the observer or one being stimulated?

Kant, on the other hand, when speaking of apprehending aesthetic value, re-introduces to the circularity question when he states, "Every reference of representations, even that of sensations, may be objective (and then it signifies the real in an empirical representation); save only the reference to the feeling of pleasure and pain, by which nothing in the object is signified, but through which there is a feeling in the subject, as it is affected by the representation."[113] Herein, Kant asserts his views on the judgment of personal opinion. He claims that feelings, which would include one's reaction to aesthetic stimuli, is based on one's taste, preferences or

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[112] Arthur P. Shimamura and Stephen E. Palmer, *Aesthetic Science: Connecting Minds, Brains, and Experience*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 68.

[113] Immanuel Kant, *The Immanuel Kant Collection,* (Amazon; Waxkeep Publishing 2013) loc. 17739-17742, Kindle. (This a single volume).

perception.[114] While Plantinga places the locus of aesthetic value in the nature of the stimulus, Kant places that locus in the perception of the one stimulated. The disagreements held between these two luminaries demonstrate the quagmire involved in an attempt to define aesthetic value fully.

Potentially endless debate of the matter is avoided by reviewing the purpose of this study. The goal of this study is to propose and defend a theistic argument for the existence of God based on man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value. Since this study has already been identified as one built upon evangelical beliefs, it is appropriate to note that Scriptures represent God as the Creator of all things. It seems reasonable to assume that aesthetic value is included among those things which God created. He, therefore, is the source of the beauty of creation. By this act of creation, he gave man the capacity to apprehend that beauty. Thus, aesthetic value probably resides in the thing being perceived and the apprehension of that value is the recognition of that aesthetic value in agreement with Plantinga. Additionally, God himself is described as a being of aesthetic value. Repeatedly there is biblical mention of the glory of God. The Greek term *doxa*, which is the term primarily translated "glory," is defined as a reference to something or someone as having a "regal, magnificent, majestic or awe-inspiring"[115] These qualities are aesthetic and as such ascribe God's glory, i.e., his aesthetic value, as an essential aspect of his nature. God is not glorious because man perceives Him as such, He is glorious because aesthetic value is essential to his nature. It is, therefore, reasonable to conclude that his aesthetic value existed before man could perceive it which seems to prove that aesthetic value is innate within the thing being apprehended and not dependent on man's perception.

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[114] Kant, *The The Immanuel Kant Collection,* loc. 17740, Kindle.

[115] Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000), s.v. *doxa.*

Taking this a step further, since nature's beauty is meant to encourage man to consider the beauty of God (Psalm 19:5), then it is equally reasonable to hold that his creation is by nature beautiful whether man perceives that beauty or not. Hence, beauty is not dependent on perception. This affirms Plantinga's view over Kant's.

On the other hand, not all are theists and thus not all accept the theistic explanation for the origins the universe nor of the origins of aesthetic value being theistic causation. What will be demonstrated, especially in chapter 3, is that non-theistic explanations for the origins of aesthetic value, as the origins of man's capacity to apprehend those values, are weak. Yet, even so, one cannot deny the obvious influence of culture in at least partly determining what does and does not have aesthetic value, especially the aesthetic value of physical beauty. Not all cultures agree, for instance, on what is and is not beautiful.[116] In this sense Kant's observations have some degree of merit. The acknowledgment of a beautiful man or woman in one culture is not a guarantee that people of another culture would agree with that perception. In short, when it comes to theism, there is a strong argument that beauty is inherent to the nature of creation even before man was granted the capacity to apprehend that beauty. Non-theists, on the other hand correctly observe that culture influences the standards of what is and is not beautiful. An attempt to conclude this debate for now places the locus of beauty in the stimulus and cultural

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[116] John Brown, *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* s.v. "beauty," https://www.rep.routledge.com/articles/beauty/v-2 (accessed 2/13/2016). "Realists hold that judgements of beauty ascribe to their subjects either a response-independent property inherent in things or a capacity of things to affect respondents in a way that preserves objectivity. In both cases acute problems arise in defining the property and in explaining how it can be known. Classical Platonism holds that beauty exists as an ideal supersensible 'form', while eighteenth-century theorists view it as a quasi-sensory property. Kant's transcendental philosophy anchors the experience of beauty to the basic requirements of cognition, conferring on it 'subjective universality and necessity'. Sceptics complain that the alleged property is merely a reflection of aesthetic pleasure and hence lacks objective standing. Partly due to its preoccupation with weightier matters, the philosophic tradition has not yet developed a theory of beauty as fully and deeply as it has, say, theories in the domain of morality. For most of the twentieth-century the generally subjectivistic and relativistic bent of the social sciences and humanities, as well as the scorn heaped on beauty by avant-gardism in the arts, discouraged concentration on beauty. However, the turn of the century has brought a remarkable reawakening of interest in theorizing about beauty. The burgeoning fields of cognitive science and evolutionary developmental biology have played a part."

perceptions of beauty can influence man's innate capacity to apprehend that beauty. Clearly, both views have some merit, but for the sake of this work, Plantinga's view is prior to Kant's.

What the preceding affirms is the potential quagmire in debating the locus of aesthetic beauty. The only appropriate response seems to be that the apprehension of aesthetic value can be a response to either the recognition the aesthetic value which is inherent to the nature of the thing being perceived, and this recognition can be impacted by the perception of aesthetic value due to the influences of personal or cultural taste. It is the recognition of this ongoing debate which requires the focus of the aesthetic theistic argument to rest on the commonality of man's apprehending aesthetics rather than the nature of aesthetics itself. As will be demonstrated shortly, it is basic knowledge that whatever it is, or whatever its origins, aesthetic value is apprehended by all human cultures. Basing the argument on man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value, therefore, is not weakened by the intangibility of the origins of that aesthetic value being apprehended. There might be disagreement regarding the locus of aesthetic value, but there is little disagreement regarding the existence of aesthetic value. Hence, the basis of this theistic argument is found in the act of apprehending aesthetic value. A review of this act, which is the basis of the first two premises, begins with identifying a list of features inherent to this phenomenon.

Features of Apprehending Aesthetic Value

Four features inherent in the phenomenon of apprehending aesthetic value are considered. A fifth is then separately considered with the understanding that this fifth feature is not always present, as is the case with the first four, but its review is pertinent to the presentation of the argument. The first four for are, knowledge, experience, choice and sentience. The fifth is a sense of the supernatural. First, this singling out of the fifth feature is explained.

As mentioned earlier, the Kingdom of Heaven, as God himself, is biblically described as beautiful (Psalm 96:6, 27:4). Yet, it is unsupportable to claim that all men accept the notion of God's beauty, or that of his kingdom, as not all have accepted the possibility of the supernatural or metaphysical in which God and his Kingdom exist. Yet, as is soon demonstrated, all men have the capacity to apprehend beauty. Thus, claiming a sense of the supernatural as a necessary feature for experiencing beauty would be unjustifiable. However, those who affirm supernaturalism, particularly those who accept the existence of the God of Scripture, can affirm the sense of the supernatural as a feature of apprehending beauty. This fact should not be ignored. Thus, these features will be reviewed as two groups. The first four are common to both naturalism and supernaturalism. The fifth is only common to supernaturalists.

Cognition

Cognition is the first of the four features which are common to both naturalists and supernaturalists. This is understood to mean "the activities of thinking, understanding, learning, and remembering."[117] Cognition also implies the possession of intelligence. To exemplify this relevance, Jonathan Edwards wrote significantly of the beauty of nature. In his discussion of the nature of man, he makes this observation, "But the beauty of God's constitution of the world, consists mainly, without doubt, in the intelligent part of the world. . ."[118] Edwards asserts in this statement that apprehending the beauty of nature requires cognition, intelligence, or knowledge. Again, elsewhere in that same work, he writes, "God has given man a nature, which, if it be

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[117] *Merriam-Webster Dictionary,* s.v. "cognition." http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cognition, (accessed 4/25/16).

[118] Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 2 (Banner of Truth Trust, 1974), 471. (This is a single volume).

under the influence of true virtue, desires above all things to behold this kind of order and beauty."[119] The nature to which Edwards refers here, requires an intellectual capacity to recognize order and comprehend beauty. Edwards affirms that in order for man to apprehend aesthetic beauty, he must have a measure of cognition and intelligence to recognize it. He also asserts that the source of this cognition is within the nature God has given to man. C. F. H. Henry likewise posits intelligence as necessary for verbal communication to take place between men.[120] Recognizing that the language of poetry or prose portrays aesthetic value, Henry describes that portrayal as a testimony not only of intelligence but is an "extreme example" of aesthetic expression.[121] Henry and Edwards affirm that a measure of cognition is necessary for man to perceive the linguistic portrayal of the aesthetic value of literature.

Immanuel Kant adds support to the necessity of cognition for aesthetic apprehension when he posits, "[I]n a judgment of taste, understanding is always involved."[122] He has already defined "judgment of taste" as "aesthetical"[123] since understanding is synonymous with cognition. Scruton echoes Kant in his observation, "In referring to so many types of things as blue, we are using a metaphor—one that requires a leap of the imagination if it is to be rightly understood."[124] Since intelligence and cognition are pre-requisites for imagination, his statement adds to the affirmation that cognition is a feature of aesthetic apprehension.

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[119] Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards,* 471.

[120] Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, vol. 3, 342.

[121] Henry, *God Revelation and Authority Vol 3,* 342.

[122] Immanuel Kant, *The Immanuel Kant Collection,* (Pembroke Pines, FL: Waxkeep Publishing, 2013), loc. 17752, Kindle. (This is a single volume.).

[123] Ibid. Location 17735

[124] Roger Scruton, *Beauty: A Very Short Introduction,* (London: Oxford University Press, 2011) 1.

Allen Carlson offers a study of the relationship between aesthetic apprehension and knowledge. He does so by contrasting the views of two philosophers: Noel Carroll and Stan Godlovitch. [125] He reports that Carroll offers two suggested models by which man appreciates the aesthetic value of nature. The first model is something he describes as "the arousal model" which is nothing more than "being moved or emotionally aroused by nature."[126] The second model requires some knowledge of that which is being appreciated or apprehended. In this model the intellect is more involved. This model would refer to such examples as apprehending the beauty of a violin concerto by one who has some knowledge of the discipline and talent necessary to demonstrate an excellent performance. This is both intellectual and emotional but it requires knowledge just the same.[127] The sum of this evidence affirms there is no real apprehension of aesthetic value apart from some measure of intelligence or cognition.

It would be difficult to offer examples of apprehension of aesthetic value which did not include some measure of cognition on the part of the one apprehending. Though it has not yet been made fully clear what apprehension of aesthetic value actually is, what seems certain, so far, is that a measure of intelligence or a cognitive ability is required for such an apprehension to take place. It is also appropriate to assume that cognition is unique to humanity. This uniqueness will be discussed in more detail later. At present, it is clear that there is a necessary feature of cognition or intelligence and the apprehension of aesthetic value.

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[125] Allen Carlson, "Nature, Aesthetic Appreciation, and Knowledge," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, Vol 53, No. 4,* (Published by Wiley for The American Society for Aesthetics, 1995) 393. (JSTOR Accessed 25-05-2015.)

[126] Ibid.

[127] Ibid.

Experience

The second feature of the apprehension of aesthetic value is the encountering or experiencing of something which has aesthetic value. Apprehension itself is an act and that action is an experience. Hence, for apprehension to take place is to engage in an experience. Experience is therefore an unavoidable feature in the apprehending of aesthetic value. Edwards mentions this when he observes that man's experience of God's works is meant to provoke a person to see beauty in them:

> For the beauty of God's works consists a thousand times more in this, than in the other. It is reasonable to suppose, that these will be as publicly visible as the brightness and beautiful order and motions of the heavenly bodies, and the regular successions of the various seasons of the year, and the beauties of nature[128]

The envisioning of God's works is to have a visual experience of those works. Though experiencing aesthetics is clearly not limited to visibility. For instance, the apprehension of the aesthetic value or beauty of a symphonic work requires the audible experience of the performance of that work. The beauty ascertained in the architecture of a Cathedral is a visual and/or proximate experience of that architecture. This affirms the claim that the apprehension of aesthetic value cannot be divorced from experience because it *is* an experience.

This feature expresses theologically as well. To apprehend the beauty of God's grace requires an experience of that grace. The apprehension of the beauty or aesthetic nature of God himself requires some kind of experience wherein God reveals Himself to that person. Aesthetics may be in a measurable sense an intangible thing because there is not an absolute standard for what is aesthetical. However, the apprehension of aesthetic value requires an experience and that experience is tangible. The point remains that the precise definition of aesthetics can still be

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[128] Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 2 (Banner of Truth Trust, 1974), 471.

undiscerned while the fact of man's ability to apprehend or experience it is discernable. Whether

the writer is Plato, Keats or Lewis. It is inconceivable that they would be able to describe the

beauty of love, if they had not experienced its beauty. It is reasonable to posit that the feature of

experience in the apprehension of aesthetic values is a properly basic notion. The apprehension

of aesthetic value is an experience which makes experience one of its inherent features.

Choice

It is also true that this experience is not automatic or mechanical. In other words, not only

is it an experience which involves cognition, it can also require an act of the will. The

apprehension of aesthetics can be the result of a choice that is made. For example, one may

attend the performance of an opera but even in the presence of what the rest of the audience

might claim as an aesthetic experience, if a person's focus is on the events of the previous day or

the conversation he had with his supervisor that morning, or the attire of the woman or man

sitting next to them, and not on the performance, he may be in the presence of aesthetic beauty

but his apprehension of that aesthetic value may not be taking place. He must choose to

participate in the experience before he can apprehend its aesthetic value. Another example,

especially relevant to Christianity, could be the attendance of a performance of a church choral

presentation wherein most in the audience is caught up in the beauty and majesty of the

performance. Yet, if one individual is so focused on how much the event cost, or his jealousy in

not being asked to sing with the choir, it produces a distraction, while he may be in the presence

of aesthetic value, he is not apprehending it. He chose not to participate in the experience

available to him.

While on the surface such considerations may seem mundane, their relevance will be

more clearly understood when academic discipline called *evolutionary psychology* is reviewed in

chapter 3.[129] For now, however, it is helpful to convey that evolutionary psychology asserts that values as morals, love and aesthetic perception are the result of psychological, deterministic mechanisms which have been developed within the human psyche through the process of natural selection. As such they are inevitable, inbred behaviors which result from mechanistic psychological development rather than an act of free cognizant will. At this point it would be inappropriate to get too far ahead in the discussion.[130] In summary, the apprehending of aesthetic values demonstrates the features of cognition, experience and choice. To argue otherwise would be problematic.

Sentience

The fourth feature of aesthetic apprehension is a state of sentience. *Merriam Webster Dictionary* records, "A *sentient* being is one who perceives and responds to sensations of whatever kind - sight, hearing, touch, taste, or smell."[131] It seems obvious that in order to apprehend aesthetic value, one must have the capacity to react to aesthetic stimuli. This requires a demonstration of sentience such as sight, hearing, touch, taste or smell. Such a demonstration would require a certain self-awareness so as to be able to discern the relationship of the aesthetic stimulus to his person via his feeling or reaction to it. Godlovitch offers additional insight as he speaks of man's sensation of nature, it is "not that we are impressed or overwhelmed by nature."

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[129] In an article by David Buss of the University of Texas at Austin, and some of his graduate students, the following appears, "Over the past 15 years, evolutionary psychology has grown from being viewed as a fringe theoretical perspective to occupying a central place within psychological science." See (David Buss, Jaime C. Confer, Judith A. Easton, Diana S. Fleischman, Cari D. Goetz, David, M. G. Lewis and Carin Perilloux, "Evolutionary Psychology: Controversies, Questions, Prospects and Limitations," *The American Psychologist Vol 65, No 2,* (The American Psychological Association, 2010), 126). This article will be addressed in greater detail in the next chapter. This quote was used to affirm the claim of this discipline's recent emergence.

[130] A more complete presentation Evolutionary Psychology follows.

[131] *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* s.v. "sentient", (Accessed 4/24/16). http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sentient.

Instead, he observes that it has to do more with our recognition of the way "we belong to nature."[132] Godlovitch goes on to describe apprehension of aesthetics as "a sense of being outside, of not belonging."[133] These sensations demonstrate the feature of sentience as a necessity for aesthetic apprehension. Godlovitch affirms that the apprehension of the aesthetic value of nature requires this feature. Clearly, one cannot sense the grandeur of nature as being beyond one's self if that person is not first able to sense both nature and one's self. Godlovitch correctly recognizes that the grandeur of nature is overwhelming when one compares it to the relative insignificance of self. One would have to be sentient in order to be able to ascribe himself such relative insignificance. Hence, Godlovitch affirms sentience as a necessary feature in apprehending aesthetic value.

In Scruton's work mentioned earlier, the author pens the following: "Human beings are alone among the animals in revealing their individuality in their faces. The mouth that speaks, the eyes that gaze, the skin that blushes, all are signs of freedom, character and judgement, and all give concrete expression to the uniqueness of the self within."[134] While this statement also affirms the first premise of the aesthetic theistic argument that all human cultures have the capacity to apprehend aesthetic value, it additionally speaks to the present issue of sentience. For example, Scruton asserts that in the realm of biological life, the sensing of self-awareness is unique to human beings. Demonstrating the relationship between a sense of self and a sense of awe or beauty as present in the aesthetic experiencing of nature, requires the feature of sentience be present within the human being.

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[132] Carlson, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, Vol 53, No. 4,* 394.

[133] Ibid.

[134] Roger Scruton, *Beauty: A Very Short Introduction,* 148.
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To further affirm this claim, David Bentley Hart, in his epic work, *The Beauty of the Infinite,* pens the following with his typical linguistic artistry:

> Hence beauty's only "truth" is the truth of a certain power of judgment, while everything of graver import dwells beyond the aesthetic altogether. The beautiful adumbrates nothing beyond the self, and thought must traverse it, even transgress it, to escape either triviality or illusion: the beautiful leaves off where the sublime begins, and the sublime itself falls away when it has sufficiently suggested to reason the formless power of the infinite.[135]

Since to adumbrate is to report or give witness, Hart is positing that beauty gives no report to "anything beyond self." Hence, he affirms that a sensing of self or self-awareness, an expression of sentience, is a necessary feature to the apprehension of aesthetic value.

Given the sum of the evidence presented, it is concluded that sentience, is a necessary feature of aesthetic apprehension. Having successfully argued cognition, experience, choice and sentience as features of the act of apprehending aesthetic value, attention now turns to the fifth feature.

Awareness of Supernaturalism

As previously stated, this feature is unique to those who accept the notion of the supernatural. The necessity of the previous four features find consensus among both naturalism and supernaturalism Yet, because this project is the proposal of a theistic argument, and by necessity a rejection of non-theism, a review of this feature, which is unique to supernaturalists, is in order. Scripture describes God as a being of beauty, "One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple (Psalm 27:4)." Scripture also ascribes

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[135] David Bentley Hart. *The Beauty of the Infinite: The Aesthetics of Christian Truth,* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdman's Publishing Co. 2003), 46-47.

to man a desire to know God, his purposes and his ways (Phil. 3:10). C. F. H. Henry affirms that God reveals himself as knowable.[136] Since it is God's purpose to give man this unique opportunity to know him, since God is knowable, and since it is clear that he is beautiful, it justifiable to conclude that man has been given the opportunity to apprehend his beauty, which, by the very fact that God is supernatural, requires an acceptance of the supernatural.

Karl Barth speaks to this wonder, "It belongs to the nature of the subject that the real proof of our statement that God is beautiful can be provided neither by few nor by many words about this beauty, but only by this beauty itself."[137] The wonder to which Barth is referring is only possible for those who are open to the notion of supernaturalism generally and theism specifically. F. Duane Lindsey in the first of a three-part submission to *Bibliotheca Sacra,* titled, "Essays Toward a Theology of Beauty," cited Jürgen Moltmann's reference to Karl Barth's statement above. Moltmann described Barth as "the only theologian in the continental Protestant tradition who has dared to call God 'beautiful.'"[138] Those of this generation might be surprised by such a claim. While it may have been outside the parameters of acceptable practice, during the days of Moltmann to speak of God as beautiful, the church today is replete with those who have grown up hearing songs and choruses about the beauty of God and His love.[139] Lindsey again surprises the Christian reader when he states, "Theologians have delighted in declaring that

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[136] Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, vol. 1, 20.

[137] Karl Barth, Geoffrey William Bromiley, and Thomas F. Torrance, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of God, Part 1*, vol. 2 (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 657.

[138] F. Duane Lindsey, "Essays toward a Theology of Beauty Part I: God Is Beautiful," *Bibliotheca Sacra* Vol 131, No 522, (Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary, 1974), 123–124.

[139] This sentence could speak to a perception sometimes informally discussed among theists that there is a disconnect between the ivory towers of theistic academia and the people in the average church. The possibility of this disconnect and its implications could be a relevant study.

"God is true" and "God is good," but have usually hesitated to confess that "God is beautiful."[140]

In commenting on these statements, it might be that since God desires to reveal himself to man, and since it is clear that God's nature is beautiful, it is reasonable to state that God has enabled men to apprehend beauty. That apprehension should be expressed in declaration. Scriptures makes it clear that not all have come to know God (1 John 4:7-8). Scripture makes it equally clear that God desires to be known (John 1:10-13). Carefully pondering these revelations leads to the implication that such hesitancy to acknowledge God's beauty, as described by Moltmann and Lindsey is counter to God's intent. It is justifiable to assert that God gave man the capacity to apprehend aesthetic value, in part, so that man would be able to know His majesty and beauty. It is equally obvious that to know the beauty of God, one must accept supernaturalism. This identifies the reasoning for separating this feature from the others when identifying the features of aesthetic apprehension.

Why Awareness of the Supernatural is Relevant

Hesitancy to recognize God as beautiful might make little sense to those today who accept the contents of Scripture as true. In recognizing this, one might question the relevance of including it in the discussion of identifying inherent features of apprehending aesthetic value. To respond, there is more than opinion or theological bias being demonstrated in the discussion of this last feature of apprehension. Since Scripture clearly reveals God's desire for man to know him, especially when considering the purpose of the Passion of Christ, and since the Bible affirms one cannot know him apart from a surrender to him and his will (1 John 5:20), it is clear, from a rational point of view, that those who do not accept or acknowledge this supernatural

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[140] Lindsey, *Bibliotheca Sacra,* Vol 131, No 522, 123.

feature of aesthetic apprehension reflect a conflict with their intended purpose. This is as rational as it is biblical. Man was created to know God and those who do not know him are frustrating God's design and desire for them. In short, they are not functioning as God intends man to function. God desires men to know him and when men choose not to acknowledge this desire, their function, according to God's design, is impaired. Specifically, this is realized in their capacity to apprehend the beauty of the supernatural. Plantinga affirms this, "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."[141] Simply stated, according to Plantinga's reasoning, the reason all people cannot accept supernaturalism as a feature of aesthetic apprehension is their rejection of the supernatural and, by default, God, but the rejection of God is contrary to the intent of God's design. Those who reject the supernatural, according to Plantinga and Henry, are not exhibiting the cognitive function for which they were designed.

Taking the matter further, one might return to Psalm 27:4 wherein the psalmist pleads for God to help him see "the beauty of the LORD," and to Psalm 96:6 where he describes the sanctuary of God as possessing "strength and beauty." Likewise, he might consider the prophet Isaiah and his description of the "day of the Lord." In that day, God is described as a "diadem of beauty for the remnant of his people." These passages demonstrate and declare God's inherent beauty. God's revelation of himself include references to his beauty. God designed man to know Him and this necessarily includes the enjoyment of His beauty. That enjoyment requires, at the very least, an acceptance of the supernatural. It also requires a capacity to apprehend that beauty. Refusing to accept the supernatural, frustrates this intent. It would not be rational for God to reveal himself as beautiful, express a desire to be known by men, express the extreme of this

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[141] Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function,* (New York: Oxford University Press 1993), 4.

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desire in the Passion of Christ, and not give man the capacity to apprehend Him and His beauty. Those who believe in God's existence, and thus the supernatural, are able to recognize that while all men are given the capacity to apprehend the aesthetic value of God, not all men apprehend it. Furthermore, those who do not choose to accept supernaturalism as a feature of aesthetic apprehension are not expressing the intentions for which they were designed. Thus, only those who have accepted the reality of the supernatural accept this feature as of the apprehension of aesthetic value. This is the rationale behind distinguishing it from the previous four features.

Having identified features present in the apprehension of aesthetic value and how they assist in understanding what is meant by the verbal formula "apprehending aesthetic value," the study now continues the pursuit of comprehending the apprehension of aesthetic value by listing the different categories of apprehension.

Categories of Apprehension

That there are multiple categories of apprehension is, perhaps, revelatory. However, it has been a focus of interest for several decades. In 1981, for instance, in the journal *Psychology of Music*, two authors, Andrew Coleman and David J. Hargreaves referenced a study made by Britain's leading psychologists"[142] The study, conducted in the early 20th Century, involved "experimental aesthetics."[143] A reference to the work of psychologist E. Bullogh[144] was reviewed in their study and conclusions drawn partly from his efforts were published. Within Bullogh's

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[142] Andrew Coleman and David J. Hargreaves, "The Dimensions of Aesthetic Reactions to Music," *Psychology of Music,* (Sage Publishing, 1981), 15 (*Psychology of Music* is a peer review Journal and member of Committee on Publication Ethics, available online http://pom.sagepub.com,).

[143] Ibid.

[144] E. Bullogh, "Recent Work in Experimental Aesthetics" *British Journal of Psychology.* Vol 12. 76-99.

article, Coleman and Hargreaves identify "four types of apperception in his research on the appreciation of single colors and simple color combinations, and modified this to take reactions to music into account."[145] Bullogh states these four types of aesthetic apprehension as: "objective, intra-subjective, associative and character."[146] Since the goal of this section is an improved understanding of what aesthetic apprehension is, a review of Bullogh's categorization and the conclusions Coleman and Hargreaves glean from it, seems appropriate. Each of Bullogh's categories are listed and briefly described.

Objective

The first of Bullogh's categories is the *objective*. He described it as an "impersonal view." It is identified as apprehension which focuses on the "properties of the stimulus itself."[147] An example of this could occur in an encounter with an architectural stimulus. In demonstrating this category of apprehension, the observer would focus on the intricacies of the design or the materials used by the architect or the tools required by the craftsman for the building of the structure. Instead of considering the impact of the total structure, this person focuses on the minutia such as materials, design or construction methods rather than the architecture as a whole. Musically, an example of this category presents in one focusing on the way in which the composer contrasted the horns with the strings or a diagnosis of which instruments were used in the composition to achieve a particular effect, instead of apprehending the composition as a whole or how these particular effects contribute toward the value of the whole composition. Such

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[145] Coleman and Hargreaves, *Psychology of Music,*15.

[146] Ibid.

[147] Coleman and Hargreaves, *Psychology of Music,* 15.

focus on the parts rather than the whole is a more impersonal process of how the composer structured the piece instead of the aesthetic value present in the whole composition.

Another interesting example of the objective category of apprehension of aesthetics is demonstrated by those physicists who have postulated something called "the Golden Ratio." This is a mathematical formula which can be used in diagnosing art geometrically by identifying data present and required to achieve symmetry. This mathematical approach to aesthetics has the potential of reducing an intended work of art into an impersonal series of geometric formulas. This discipline is new to many but is an excellent example of the focus on the "properties of the stimulus" rather than the stimulus itself.

To further consider this mathematical approach to aesthetics, two authors, Posamentier and Lehman, published a work discussing this Golden Ratio concept. They define it as follows: "In the simplest form, the golden ratio refers to the division of a given line segment into a unique ratio that gives us an aesthetically pleasing proportion."[148] Throughout the work, which is difficult for a non-physicist to manage, the recurring theme seems to be that even in the construction of the pyramids, there was a mathematical formula used in its development and design to assure aesthetic value. This is their explanation for the presence of the pyramid's symmetry. This assumes, of course, that symmetry is an essential quality of beauty. They establish that this symmetry can be defined as a quantity, represented by the symbol Φ. For those with a passion for physics, the specific formula, in its simplest form, is the result of a straight line being divided into three parts. The first two of those parts are combined and their sum is called L. The third part is called S. There is a mathematical ratio which exists between L and S which, when understood and more fully extrapolated, can result in greater potential for symmetry

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[148] Alfred S. Posamentier and Ingmar Lehmann, (2011-12-20). *The Glorious Golden Ratio* (Amherst: Prometheus Books 2012), 43-44.

in things like construction and other visually aesthetic stimuli. This formula, which will not be explained further as this study is not an exercise in physics, centers on a unique ratio which exists between L and S. This ratio is present in both the line example, called the Golden Ratio, a Triangle, called the Golden Triangle, a rectangle, called the Golden Rectangle, etc. Interestingly, application of the formula to the Golden Rectangle can result in construction of a perfectly proportioned spiral. What is more impressive is that their research demonstrates the use of this formula in both the construction of the Egyptians pyramids, the Greek Parthenon and even the drawing of DaVinci's *Vitruvian Man*. The relevance of this mathematical approach to aesthetics is that by it. the often intangible element of aesthetics is potentially tangible or objective when viewed as a result of a mathematical formula. Interestingly, it offers no application to the apprehension of beauty found in nature or the auditory arts, and certainly has no application for the apprehension of the beauty of God. The Golden Ratio is, however, an excellent example of an objective category of aesthetic apprehension.

Intra-Subjective

The intra-Subjective category of aesthetic apprehension, according to Bullogh, focuses on the moods and impressions which can be evoked by an encounter with an aesthetic stimulus.[149] He makes a point to use the term "idiosyncratic" to describe the moods to which he refers. This leads his reader to believe that he focused on the mood of an individual, not so much on an audience as a unit. The term also leaves the door open for these moods to be unrestricted as the term suggests his focus was on the uniqueness of each individual's mood which could be almost anything. Since the article deals primarily with musical aesthetic stimuli, one can see the obviousness of his recognition when considering the fact that when one hears a funeral dirge, the

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[149] Coleman and Hargreaves, *Psychology of Music,* 15.

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chances are high that the hearer is going to be somber. When one hears a march, the chances are good he is going to feel inspiration. When one hears a lullaby, one is likely to sense a sweet, restful mood. Clearly, this concept is not lost on the musical scores which are used in cinema or television ranging from movies to commercials or even documentaries. Behind the acting or narrator, audible and visual aesthetic stimuli are used in an attempt to set the desired emotional response of the viewer. This category of aesthetic apprehension is the influence on mood when experiencing the aesthetic stimuli.

Examples of this category's aesthetic stimuli are not limited to music. Some architecture, especially ancient architecture might demonstrate moods which range from the depression caused by the darkness within it or exuberance because of how much natural light enters the building. One has only to review the many periods of classical art to recognize that moods are often effected by aesthetic stimuli. It is this mood change or mood stimulus to which Bullogh is referring as this category of aesthetic apprehension.

Associative

Perhaps the most familiar category of aesthetic apprehension is the associative category. Bullogh exemplifies this category's depiction as when one hears a music selection on the radio which initiates the recall of an event, usually of some importance to the person, which associates that song an event remembered, causing an associative response to the aesthetic stimuli.[150] A work of art can similarly cause someone to remember a person or circumstance with which the stimuli associates with that memory. A piece of architecture can similarly be associated with a positive or negative memory in a person's life.

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[150] Coleman and Hargreaves, *Psychology of Music,* 15.

Again, the advertising industry often demonstrates the associative category of aesthetic apprehension. Over the counter drugs are designed to address clinical needs. Yet, were those tasked to advertise the drug to limit that advertisement to information about its clinical benefits, the chances are good that the advertisement would not be very effective. People cannot normally comprehend the technical formulas or processes which go into making and distributing them. They are primarily concerned about what they do and the safety in which they do it. To compel the viewer to purchase their product, the advertiser associates the use of the drug with preserving family or with achieving a better golf score. The increase in interest of the potential purchaser may not be due to the drug itself, but an aesthetic association which is pleasant or appealing. Associating the use of the drug with something aesthetically pleasurable increases the likelihood of the future purchase of that drug. This associative category of apprehending aesthetics is at the heart of a journal article by Antony Aumann. His study leads to the conclusion, "The intuitive view that aesthetic value has nothing to do with philosophical value is mistaken."[151] Though his article focuses on prose and works of philosophy, the point he makes is still valid. There is often an associative relationship between man's idiosyncratic philosophical value identified with an experience and the aesthetic value apprehended in that experience.

Character

The final category of aesthetic apprehensions, according to Bullogh, is demonstrated in those apprehensions which "attributes a mood, emotional character or temperament to a stimulus." [152] The difference between this category and the previous category is that associative

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[151] Antony Aumann, "The Relationship between Aesthetic Value and Cognitive Value" *Journal Articles* (North Michigan University: http://commons.nmu.edu/facwork_journalarticles/87, 2014). 87.

[152] Coleman and Hargreaves, *Psychology of Music,* 15.

aesthetic apprehensions draw *from* an emotion, mood or interest, which one has had or presently

possesses. The character category is comprised of those aesthetic apprehensions, which, when

stimulated, result in a mood, emotion or temperament assigned *to* the stimulus. For instance, if

the works of Edgar Allan Poe, are viewed as emotionally dark at times, that assessment of

darkness assigns an aesthetic value to that work of Poe. Perhaps, one of the most famous

demonstrations of this category comes in the writings of Neitzsche whose unique view of

aesthetics is seen in the following:

> Biological value of the beautiful and the ugly. — That which is instinctively repugnant to
> us, aesthetically, is proved by mankind's longest experience to be harmful, dangerous,
> worthy of suspicion: the suddenly vocal aesthetic instinct (e.g., in disgust) contains a
> judgment. To this extent the beautiful stands within the general category of the biological
> values of what is useful, beneficent, life-enhancing— but in such a way that a host of
> stimuli that are only distantly associated with, and remind us only faintly of, useful things
> and states give us the feeling of the beautiful, i.e., of the increase of the feeling of power
> (— not merely things, therefore, but also the sensations that accompany such things, or
> symbols of them).[153]

Aside from the obvious pessimism and totalitarianism indicative of Neitzsche's work, he is

assigning harm, danger and suspicion to that which is perceived as aesthetically ugly. That which

is useful, beneficial and positively life-enhancing is assigned a character which is aesthetically

beautiful. This assigning of value to aesthetics based on perception of character is an extreme

example of this last category of aesthetic apprehensions.

In contrast to the extreme example of Nietzsche, another example of the character

category of aesthetic apprehension is the biblical use of the term "glory" especially in reference

to God mentioned earlier. That the Scriptures specifically describe God as beautiful has already

been established. Yet the Bible more frequently ascribes the quality of glory, which includes

God's inherent nature of beauty, majesty and wonder which are all aesthetic values. To better

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[153] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power* (New York: Vintage Books, 2011), loc. 7884-7890, Kindle.

demonstrate how this ascription exemplifies the character category of aesthetic apprehension, a definition of the term *glory* is needed. *Baker's Encyclopedia of the Bible* reveals that the term is used two ways when it is referring to God. First, it describes it as an attribute of God referring to his "beauty and splendor."[154] Second, the use of the term is also a reference to God's presence.[155] This is meant as a reference to "particular historical manifestations of his presence." These manifestations include the "image of light, of fire or a pillar of smoke."[156] Rabbinical references to the glory of God speak of the *Shekinah* glory which means a "dwelling glory" of God. [157] These definitions are consistent in their understanding of glory to be a term which ascribes a character of beauty and splendor to the God of Scriptures.

<p style="text-align:center">Summary of the Ability to Apprehend Aesthetic Value</p>

It is tempting to yield to the pursuit of endless potential possibilities raised by the previous discussions which could result in further study of the concept of aesthetic apprehension. However, this section of the study has sufficiently established that there are multiple features present in the phenomenon of aesthetic apprehension as well as multiple categories with which one can identify aesthetic apprehension. This section of this chapter reviewed and defined, the first premise of the aesthetic argument. The next section validates it. A cursory look at what has been stated to this point reveals that there has been no evidence suggesting that the premise is not valid. The next section offers further, more specific insight as to the nature of aesthetic value.

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[154] Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 870.

[155] Ibid.

[156] Ibid.

[157] Ibid.

Ascertaining Aesthetic Value

The first premise of the aesthetic argument asserts the capacity of every human culture to apprehend aesthetic value. This chapter reviews, explains and defends this premise's claim that the capacity to apprehend is in every human culture. Having ascertained the apprehension of aesthetic value in the previous section of this chapter, this section focuses on identifying a workable understanding of what this first premise actually states. The comprehension and validation of this premise involves not only an understanding of the features and categories of the act of apprehending, it likewise requires a sufficient understanding of that which is being apprehended. Hence the question being answered in this section is: What is a reasonable ascertainment of aesthetic value? The path toward that end will include a review of the varied definition of aesthetic value, a proposed resolution to conflicting definitions and a review of three theories for ascertaining aesthetic value. A summary of these thoughts and how they relate to the aesthetic theistic argument will conclude this section of the chapter.

Definitions of Aesthetic Value

A good place to begin the intent of this section is with definition. Webster defines "aesthetics" as a "branch of philosophy dealing with the nature of beauty."[158] While this only provides minimal assistance to the understanding of aesthetics, it does point to a significant relationship between beauty and aesthetics. Particularly, the obviousness of synonymous examples of beauty and aesthetic value. The relationship of these two words becomes more evident as the following discussion proceeds, but it is important to recognize that aesthetic value and beauty, though similar, are not equivalent. While anyone who studies aesthetics or aesthetic

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[158] *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary,* s.v. "aesthetics."

philosophy quickly recognizes, the terms are often used interchangeably. Yet, technically, the two words are not interchangeable. Beauty is an aesthetic value, the same can be said of ugliness, repulsiveness or magnificence and wonder. Hence, the relationship between beauty and aesthetic value can be stated: beauty is an aesthetic value but not all aesthetic value is beautiful. It is also clear that beauty and aesthetic value are inseparable. For instance, one finds it difficult to locate any discussion of aesthetics which does not use the term *beauty* as a reference to it.

The pursuit of a succinct definition of aesthetic value, is frustrated by the consideration of Kant's *The Critique of Judgment.* Parenthetically, Vanhoozer describes this work as the "first major work of aesthetics."[159] In *The Critique of Judgment* Kant offers the following, "The beautiful," he muses, "is that which, apart from a concept, pleases universally."[160] Later he expands this thought, "[T]he beautiful is the symbol of the morally good, and only in this light . . . does it give us pleasure with an attendant claim to the agreement of everyone else, whereupon the mind becomes conscious of a certain ennoblement and elevation above mere sensibility to pleasure from impressions of sense." [161] Herein, Kant reveals thoughts intended to assist in the task of ascertaining aesthetic value. Yet, one should notice his ascription to beauty the perception of something which involves an "agreement of everyone else" is a "symbol of the morally good," One finds it difficult to consider a rational understanding of beauty which reflects both an agreement with everyone else, and common understanding of what is morally good having its locus in individual perception which is where Kant was quoted earlier. It suggests that Kant considers the locus of beauty to be both in the stimulus which is universally recognized and the

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[159] Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "A Lamp in the Labyrinth: The Hermeneutics of "Aesthetic" Theology, *Trinity Journal* 8, no. 1 (Deerfield, IL: Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1987), 32.

[160] Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement,* loc. 881, Kindle.

[161] Ibid., Loc. 3128.

individual's taste.[162] The quandary in which this information leaves the reader is obvious. One is left to believe that Kant intends his readers to perceive that he is intentionally contradicting himself or that he means to imply that both are possibilities. Welchel's explanation of Kant's position doesn't resolve the quandary either:

> Kant's intention was not to drain aesthetic judgment of validity claims, but to point out the intermediate role aesthetic judgment has between the pure reason (science) and practical reason (ethics) which allows for, in fact points to, the existence of God and the universality of morality. One judge's natural beauty to be beautiful without cognitive reflection because of a certain groundedness of man in nature. For this reason Kant even sought to demonstrate that the beautiful in nature was superior to beauty in art, and that the beauty of art was dependent on nature to have made the production of art possible through the natural genius of the artist.[163]

Where does one go to find some succinct definition of aesthetic value which does not requires discerning between Plantiga's locus of beauty being in the stimulus, which is extremely attractive, and Kant's view that it is both, "grounded in man's nature," and is located in the perception of individual taste?

The Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy provides some insight in its description of beauty, "Theorists generally agree *only* on rudimentary points about the term: that it commends on aesthetic grounds, has absolute comparative forms, and so forth (emphasis mine)."[164] These additional comments imply that there is no universal agreement regarding the definition of aesthetic value beyond "rudimentary points." With the assistance of Roger Scruton, Vanhoozer points back to Kant's *Critique of Judgment,* for additional insight, "Aesthetic judgments are not theoretical; they do not contribute to our stock of knowledge about the world.

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[162] Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, Loc. 616.

[163] James Welchel, "Connecting in General: What is Truth in a Post-Metaphysical World," *Journal of Christian Apologetics* Vol 2, no. 1 (Plymouth, MI: Michigan Theological Seminary, 1998), 58.

[164] Edward Craig and Edward Craig eds., *Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. (London: Routledge, 2000), s.v. "beauty."

Rather, aesthetic judgments go beyond the limits of our actual experience of the world and see it 'as if' it had purpose, so much so that one philosopher comments that in Kant's aesthetics we have a "premonition of theology."[165] One wonders if Scruton is lifting his hands in surrender and suggesting that when it comes to a workable definition of beauty, this ascription of it being a "premonition of theology" sounds as if he is suggesting only God knows the answer.

A Proposed Definition of Aesthetic Value

Perhaps this lack of certainty regarding the nature of aesthetics, along with the preoccupation with science pervading present day thinking, partly explains the attrition taking place in the study of aesthetics, philosophy and art today.[166] The tediousness of this labor in identifying a workable definition of aesthetic value leads one to wonder if there is any value in ascertaining it.

In response, one needs to recognize the properly basic notion that there are at least three capacities which separate humanity from the rest of the animal kingdom. These are: man's capacity to recognize and seek truth, man's capacity for comprehending and desiring good (ethics) and man's capacity for apprehending aesthetic value.[167] Since the ability to apprehend aesthetic value helps identify our humanity, failure to seek sufficient comprehension of it diminishes the potential of one's humanity. To describe aesthetic value, with any degree of precision, is to enter into the void described in the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* quote above. Yet, it is into this void one must venture if he is to hope for fully comprehending what it

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[165] Vanhoozer, "A Lamp in the Labyrinth: The Hermeneutics of "Aesthetic Theology,"*Trinity Journal* 8, no. 1 (1987): 32. (The quote Vanhoozer uses to make his point is of Roger Scruton (Roger Scruton, *Kant* (Past Masters; Oxford: Oxford University, 1982), 89.

[166] Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, vol. 1, 165.

[167] Roger Scruton, *Beauty: A Very Short Introduction,* 2.

means to be human. It is, therefore, valuable when attention is given to the comprehension of what man apprehends when he apprehends aesthetic value. To this end, three theories for comprehending aesthetic value are considered.

Three Theories for Comprehending Aesthetic Value

Traversing the path toward a more sufficient comprehension of aesthetic value presently occupies the attention of notables such as F. Duane Lindsey of Dallas Theological Seminary. His study identifies three basic theories regarding the nature of beauty, or aesthetic value, "The first is the formal theory, which locates beauty in certain qualities inherent in realities. In contrast, the second view adopts the idea that 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder;' this is the emotional or psychological theory which locates beauty in the response of the perceiver. The third view, the relational theory, locates beauty in the relationship of the objective qualities to the subjective response." [168] The investigation into the meaning of aesthetic value in this study follows Lindsey's structure. The need for this exercise is justified by the fact that if one is going to argue for the existence of God using the apprehension of aesthetic value as the basis of that argument, it is not only reasonable to make an effort to grasp what is specifically meant by apprehending, as was demonstrated in the previous section of this chapter, but one should at least attempt to identify that which is being apprehended. Using Lindsey's structure, the following offers a succinct attempt to accomplish this by offering three theoretic descriptions of aesthetic value.

The Formal Theory of Aesthetic Value

Lindsey describes the Formal Theory as locating beauty in the nature of the thing being perceived. This is the view verbalized by Plantinga earlier. In this view an objective stimulus is

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[168] F. Duane Lindsey, "Essays toward a Theology of Beauty Part I: God Is Beautiful," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 131 (Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary, 1974): 121.

required to initiate recognition of the beauty located in the nature of that stimulus. An example might be the beauty of nature which is located in nature itself not in the perception of the individual experiencing nature. Another example might be a work of art, the beauty of which is inherent and not dependent on a perception for its beauty. According to this theory, beauty, or aesthetic value is in the object itself rather than a perception attributing beauty to it. In this theory, a universal acknowledgment of the object's beauty is required for it to be ascribed inherently beauty as its aesthetic value. A supernatural example of this theory would be in recognizing beauty in the majesty of God and His glory. God's aesthetic value, in the form of glory or beauty, is present whether it is perceived or not. These examples demonstrate the formal theory of aesthetic value.

The Emotional or Psychological Theory of Aesthetic Value

This theory reflects the common belief that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. That is to say that this theory proposes that the locus of aesthetic value is not innate within the stimulus but its locus is in the perception of that stimulus. In the same paragraph of Kant's work *Critique of Judgment* quoted above, Kant asserts aesthetic value to be subjective. He proceeds to say, "This [ascertaining aesthetic value] denotes nothing in the object, but is a feeling which the subject has of itself and of the manner in which it is affected by the representation." [169] By this statement, Kant is defining the emotional or psychological theory for ascertaining aesthetic value. The result is the belief that beauty is in the perception of the observer and is based on personal or cultural taste rather than an innate quality of the stimulus. More will be said about this theory later but in an effort to achieve some measure of comprehension now, one might consider C. F.

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[169] Kant, *The Critique of Judgement,* loc.616, Kindle.

H. Henry's propositions stated in *God Revelation and Authority.* In the second volume of this *magus opus,* Henry proposes fifteen theses upon which he asserted evangelical Christianity is built. The first of these had to do with God's revelation of himself to man, "Revelation is a divinely initiated activity, God's free communications by which he alone turns his personal privacy into a deliberate disclosure of his reality."[170] This forces the reader to consider the notion that the locus of God's reality, which would include his aesthetic value, is not in the perception of man but is in the nature of God. It is this reality that God seeks to reveal to man. If this second theory is tenable, there is a conflict between it and God's intent to reveal himself to man as stated by Henry. Hence, there is some serious question regarding the validity of this theory.

The Relational Theory of Aesthetic Value

In this third theory, beauty is located in "the relationship of the objective qualities to the subjective response." This theory is exemplified by those who see beauty in an object because of how it might remind them of an event or person who is considered precious to the observer. This is different than the psychological view because beauty is located in the relationship between the stimulus and the observer not in the specific perception of the observer. When a work of art, for example, makes a person think of someone or something precious to them, the locus of beauty is not in the art, nor in the perception of the viewer, but in the relationship that work of art has to what the observer might consider precious. A marching band playing a Sousa march down the main street of a small town might have some appreciating the beauty of the composition, others might be enjoying how the march makes them feel patriotic. But the relational theory would see the locus of beauty in how that old veteran is caused to remember or relate to the day that he and

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[170] Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, vol. 2 17.

his victorious fellow soldiers marched into the city of Paris as a testimony of its liberation in the

Second World War. His perception of the beauty of that march is related to his special, personal

memories.

<center>Summary of the Ascertaining of Aesthetic Value</center>

An adequate summary of this section of the chapter concedes that not much has been

distinctly determined. The concept of aesthetic value has been argued since Plato[171] and is not

going to be fully resolved here. Instead, a reasonable attempt includes some observations helpful

in justifying the soundness of the first premise. Though aesthetic value has the potential for being

both objective and subjective, tangible and intangible, located in the nature of the stimulus as

well as in the perception of the one stimulated, it is clearly a reality that cannot be responsibly

denied. Scruton affirms this succinctly:

> What matters, first and foremost, is a certain kind of judgement, for which the technical
> term 'aesthetic' is now in common use. The suggestion that there might be a supreme
> aesthetic value, for which the term 'beauty' should be more properly reserved, is one that
> we must bear in mind. For the moment, however, it is more important to understand
> beauty in its general sense, as the subject-matter of aesthetic judgement.[172]

The primary question seems to be where one wishes to recognize the locus of beauty or aesthetic

value. Is it in the stimulus itself, the perception of the one being stimulated or is it in the memory

or association one has when encountering the stimulus? Wherever one places the locus, the fact

remains that whether aesthetic value is objective, subjective, tangible or intangible does not deny

the reality of its existence. No research revealed any claim which denies its potential presence.

While it is far from settled as to what it is, where it comes from, and how it might be

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[171] Scruton, *Beauty: A Very Short Introduction,* 2.

[172] Ibid., 8.

apprehended, there is no question of its existence and man's ability to apprehend it. As Scruton states, "The judgement of taste is a genuine judgement, one that is supported by reasons."[173]

For the Christian theist, however, there is more clarity. Since God has chosen to reveal himself to mankind and since it is true that God's nature includes the quality of beauty, majesty, magnificence and other aesthetic values wrapped up in the term *glory,* God's beauty is not located in the perception of man, but in the nature of God. Perhaps this is what Kant had in mind when he stated beauty to be a "premonition of theology."[174] What is clear is that the Christian theist is able to see beauty differently. That is, he sees it as a reflection of the beauty of God's nature. This suggests that Christian theists can perceive aesthetic value differently when they come to recognize that the source of all that is true beauty is the nature of God.

This is not to suggest that atheists or naturalists cannot apprehend beauty. There is Scriptural evidence that God has enabled the hearts of all men to perceive His glory (Romans 1:20). This could explain why secular philosophy has such a difficult time agreeing on the locus for beauty. As Kant says, it is a premonition of theology. Atheism and naturalism will reject supernatural causation of anything. This results in their disagreeing among themselves as to the locus of aesthetic value. It is the role of the theist, particularly the role of this aesthetic theistic argument, to affirm that whatever aesthetic value is, man's capacity to apprehend it is universal and that capacity is partly what separates man from the rest of the animal kingdom.

Ascertaining the Universality of Aesthetic Apprehension

Having reviewed both the act of aesthetic apprehension and the meaning(s) of aesthetic value, the final section of this chapter ascertains the universality of the first premise of the

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[173] Scruton, *Beauty: A Very Short Introduction,* 8.

[174] Vanhoozer, *Trinity Journal* 8, no. 1 (1987): 32.

aesthetic theistic argument. As with the previous two sections of this chapter, the third is also

essential for validating the first premise of the argument. Before a proper commencing can be

made into this section of the study, it is important to clarify the term *universal*. It is the

apprehension of aesthetic value which is universal and not the definition of aesthetic value itself.

Secondly, the use of the term universal in this context is meant only to apply to all known human

cultures and not the entirety of the universe, nor does it apply to supernatural entities as no man

has the experience to validate such a claim. Hence, the claim that the capacity to apprehend

aesthetic value is universal conveys the idea that all known human cultures display a capacity to

apprehend value.

Also, though some measure of understanding of what it is that is being apprehended is

clearly appropriate, the focus of this theistic argument is on the universality of man's ability to

apprehend aesthetic value, not on the basis a universal agreement regarding the nature of or locus

of aesthetic value. While it is enigmatic that every culture apprehends aesthetic value but not all

cultures agree to what aesthetic value is, one cannot deny that aesthetic value exists as it is easily

discernable when it is absent. Instead, this first premise confirms the apprehension of aesthetic

value to be universal.

The evidence which validates this universality as defined is presented in three categories

of evidence. The first of these present evidence which is historical in nature. The second will

include evidence of a more philosophical nature. The third includes evidence of a theological or

biblical nature. A summary concludes this section and this chapter.

Historical Evidence

A list of evidences indicating that there was once a culture that did not have an ability to

apprehend aesthetic value would be either blank or very short. Since before the ancient Egyptian

cultures there is evidence of aesthetic apprehension. The sophistication of the statues, architecture and hieroglyphs which have been unearthed by archaeologists to support this claim is staggering. This observation establishes that the apprehension of aesthetics significantly pre-dates Egyptian dynasties.

> Ancient technology and ancient æsthetic, considered specially, occupy their own domain apart. But there are few, if any, religions which have not prompted the production of monuments, ornaments, utensils, and other ritual accessories; or affected the form and decoration of the instruments of daily life. And as these material expressions of religious ideas, once produced, are capable of preservation independently of their makers, they may be, and often are, the only evidence which has been preserved of the religion of an extinct people, whose beliefs and traditions have perished with it.[175]

Archaeologists report of examples of poetry and literature traceable to the 35th Century BC.[176] Mention has already been made to Vanhoozer's claim that Plato (4th Century BC) was the first (at least in Western culture) to propose a philosophy of aesthetics. Chinese history is aware of much of its ancient culture not only by writings and architecture but in paintings and sculptures. A capacity to apprehend aesthetic value is historically documented as far back as documentation of human cultures exist. One conclusion among archaeologists seems to be that there is no culture which did not have some form of religious expression and in all of these expressions there was some kind of aesthetic display.[177] Historical evidence of man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value is abundant and convincing.

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[175] John L. Myres, "Archæology," ed. James Hastings, John A. Selbie, and Louis H. Gray, *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics* (Edinburgh; New York: T. & T. Clark; Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908–1926), 676.

[176] Mary Lucy Wood, "Kramer of Suma, *Bible and Spade (*Akron, PA: Associates for Biblical Research 1979*)* Vol. 8, no. 2, 68.

[177] John L. Myres, "Archæology," ed. James Hastings, John A. Selbie, and Louis H. Gray, *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics* (Edinburgh; New York: T. & T. Clark; Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908–1926), 676.

Philosophical Evidence

Philosophical evidence for aesthetic apprehension rightly begins with Plato who many recognize to be a key figure in the formalization of what is now called philosophy. Throughout his works he comments on the beauty of a person or his behavior and the significance of beauty in and of one's life.[178] Hence, from the dawn of formal philosophical endeavors, beauty, including its apprehension, has not only recognized but was a frequent topic of inquiry. Augustine, one of the foundational figures responsible for the formalization of theology, recognized the aesthetic value of God. In so doing, he described God as unseen, unchanging, pervasive and supreme to whom all that is beautiful in creation owes its beauty.[179] From those days until the present, the recognition of man's universal capacity to apprehend beauty has been affirmed by such philosophical luminaries such as Anselm, Descartes, Kant, Edwards, Lewis, Plantinga and many others. Rene Descartes represents what many philosophers have asserted,

> But before I examine this with more attention, and pass on to the consideration of other truths that may be evolved out of it, I think it proper to remain here for some time in the contemplation of God himself— that I may ponder at leisure his marvelous attributes— and behold, admire, and adore the beauty of this light so unspeakably great, as far, at least, as the strength of my mind, which is to some degree dazzled by the sight, will permit. For just as we learn by faith that the supreme felicity of another life consists in the contemplation of the Divine majesty alone, so even now we learn from experience that a like meditation, though incomparably less perfect, is the source of the highest satisfaction of which we are susceptible in this life.[180]

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[178] Plato (2015-06-01). *Plato: The Complete Works: From the Greatest Greek Philosopher, Known for The Republic, Symposium, Apology, Phaedrus, Laws, Crito, Phaedo, Timaeus, Meno, ... Protagoras, Statesman and Critias,* (Public Domain: Kindle 2015), loc. 1591-1592, Kindle.

[179] St. Augustine, (2011-08-03). *The Complete Works of Saint Augustine: The Confessions, On Grace and Free Will, The City of God, On Christian Doctrine, Expositions on the Book Of Psalms, ... (50 Books With Active Table of Contents),* Philip Schaff Ed. Marcus Dodds Trans. (Public Doman: Kindle, 2011), loc. 9880-9883, Kindle.

[180] Rene Descartes, *The Rene Descartes Collection: His Classic Works* (Amazon.com: Waxkeep Publishing, 2013) loc. 2898-2903, Kindle.

Yet, one might point to such evidence and suggest that it is heavily favored by those who are described as supernaturalists. Their question would be, "What is the view of naturalists in regard to the capacity of man to apprehend aesthetic value?"

It is significant to note that today's highly secular society also recognizes the universal capacity of man to apprehend aesthetic value. Julian Huxley, for example, writes:

> The important ends of man's life include the creation and enjoyment of beauty, both natural and man-made; increased comprehension and a more assured sense of significance; the preservation of all sources of pure wonder and delight, like fine scenery, wild animals in freedom, or unspoiled nature; the attainment of inner peace and harmony; the feeling of active participation in embracing and enduring projects, including the cosmic project of evolution.[181]

Though theists would obviously take issue with the claim that the apprehension of beauty is for the purpose of participating in the "cosmic project of evolution," the salient point is that Huxley embraces the purpose of man to be the creation and enjoyment of beauty. Thus validating the claim that there is widespread philosophical acknowledgment that aesthetic apprehension is universal. The stimuli for that apprehension is not the issue. The universal capacity to apprehend aesthetic value is the point Huxley is making.

Theological Evidence

In spite of the fact that using theological evidence which assumes the existence of God might appear to be someone circular in this context, it would be unfortunate not to regard the reasoning of theologians and the message of Scripture as evidence for universal aesthetic apprehension. Carl F. H. Henry, as has already been noted, for instance, rationally concludes that God's desire is to reveal himself to man. Since Scripture declares God to be many things, including beautiful and abundant in glory, one can justly assume, accepting the possibility that

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[181]Julian S. Huxley. *Evolutionary Humanism* (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1992), loc. 1001-1004, Kindle.

there is a God for a moment, that God designed man to be able to apprehend his beauty and glory. Thus, there is a rational and reasonable argument from theology and Scripture for the universality of aesthetic apprehension.

As indicated, this evidence trail provided by Henry identifies 15 theses which identify Christianity. The Scriptures' and God's intent to have a relationship with man, the first of these, has to do with God taking the initiative in establishing this relationship:

> Christ's confident declaration to his disciples that the Holy Spirit would lead them into all truth (John 14:26) mirrors his conviction that God himself stands at the center of divine revelation and voluntarily steps out of the otherwise hidden supernatural in order to confront man with the erstwhile unknown and impenetrable. [182]

This initial action taken by the Father has the goal of making it possible for man to have a relationship with Him. God wants man to know him. Since it is God's desire for man to know him and since God's revelation includes the heavens. It is reasonable to conclude that man has from the very beginning of time been given the capacity to know that beauty. Theology affirms that the capacity for man to apprehend beauty is universal.

Summary of Chapter 2

Several important concepts have been established in this chapter. To begin, the first premise of the aesthetic theistic argument declares man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value to be universal. Second, affirming this declaration requires have a working knowledge of what apprehension is. It is now established that there are several obvious features inherent within this apprehension. These are: cognition, experience, choice, sentience, and for the theist, an awareness of the supernatural. Similarly, there are four distinct categories by which a taxonomy

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[182] Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, vol. 2, 19.

of apprehension can be organized: objective, intra-subjective, associative and character. The identification and explanation of these features and categories have helped to identify the concept of apprehension clearly. Validating the first premise also required a review of several ascribed meanings of aesthetic value. Three theories were presented offering further insight into the difficult task of describing aesthetic value. It is arguable that the best of these is that the locus of beauty rests inherently in the aesthetic stimulus. Finally, the chapter concludes by presenting significant evidence for the universality of this apprehension of aesthetic value. A careful review of this data results is a strong validation of the first premise to the point that it might be properly considered a properly basic notion.

Chapter Three

The Second Premise

The best explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value is divine causation.

This chapter gets to the heart of the aesthetic theistic argument. Having validated the first premise: "Every human culture demonstrates a capacity to apprehend aesthetic value.", the study is now tasked to identify the best explanation for man's ability to apprehend aesthetic value. Before undertaking this objective in earnest, it is important to note that the second premise is a reflection of the essential contrast between naturalism and supernaturalism. Naturalism holds that all life has come about by the process of random mutation and natural selection, or evolution, as proposed by Darwin. The modern derivation of Darwinism entitled "neo-Darwinian evolution," reflects adjustments of Darwinism as scientific data and naturalistic doctrines bring more to bear on the original Darwinian theory. As Mendelian genetics demonstrated challenges to the original Darwinian theory, Neo-Darwinism synthesizes the two.[183] Subsequently, naturalists usually assume there is no God, nor do they accept the possibility of supernaturalism. Naturalists see no need of a Creator since they believe all life has come about by natural processes. The idea that God does not nor cannot exist not only defines naturalism but demonstrates its weakness. To explain, for naturalists to concede even the possibility of God's role in Creation would make the claims of naturalism untenable.[184] Hence, most, if not all, true naturalists are atheists. If it can

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[183] *Merriam-Webster Dictionary,* s.v. "neo-darwinism," http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/neo%E2%80%93Darwinism, (Accessed 4/26/16). Heretofore, the term "darwinian" refers to the present neo-darwinian position.

[184] The one possible exception to this statement is the view called theological evolution which holds a divine act provided the materials and conditions necessary for evolution to then develop into the present state of the universe. This view, of course, is not a naturalistic position nor it is a pure supernaturalistic position but is a synthesis of both. When the term naturalist is used, in this study, it is not referring to this hybrid. One could still

then be demonstrated that there is even the possibility of the supernatural, naturalism fails. Naturalistic dogma is clearly presented in the writings of Hume, Huxley, and Dawkins, which will be examined later. The point is the fact that the very essence of naturalism requires a denial of even the possibility of the supernatural. This makes it untenable for naturalists to accept anything as supernatural, much less that a god of any kind had a role in creation.

In contrast to naturalism, theists argue from their belief in the supernatural generally and the existence of God particularly. They accept that science contributes to the furthering of man's understanding of the cosmos, but their recognition of such contributions do not require the acceptance of naturalistic dogma. Theists are necessarily supernaturalists and while they take exception to many of the views of naturalists, their supernaturalism is not negated by the existence of naturalism in spite of the often critical rhetoric of supernaturalism by naturalists.

It is also true that not all supernaturalists are Christian. One can be Jewish or Muslim and be a theist, and thus a supernaturalist. Thus, unless one believes deity to be superhuman not supernatural, he is a supernaturalist. Accepting the existence of a supernatural entity distinguishes supernaturalists from naturalists. Though most Christian theists recognize those who reject the God of Scripture to be in error, they still recognize supernaturalists as those who believe in some kind of divine entity as the cause and/or sustainer of all that exists. Hence, any proposed aesthetic theistic argument, such as this study, necessarily conflicts with the claims of atheistic naturalism. For this reason, the second premise of the aesthetic theistic argument, which seeks the best explanation for man's aesthetic apprehension, necessarily conflicts with naturalist explanations.

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argue that any presence of divine causation results in an abandonment of naturalism. Whether that abandonment is to a hybrid or synthetic position or to supernaturalism, it is still an abandonment of naturalism.

Recognizing that this aesthetic theistic argument unavoidably requires a naturalism vs. supernaturalism debate, this chapter exposes and analyzes that debate, particularly in regard to the explanations both sides offer for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value. At the core of this analysis is the realization that this investigation must result in a claim that either ratifies atheism or ratifies theism. Consequently, the validation of this second premise has significant relevance and potential ramifications.

Identifying "Explanations"

Preparation for entering this debate requires several steps. First, an essential review of the wording of the second premise defines the specific objectives. Specifically, two words require conscientious examination: "best" and "explanation." Since the validity of the second premise of the proposed argument rests on the seeking of an *explanation*, prudence requires a precise identification of what the term signifies. Additionally, a suitable criterion is required to serve as a standard by which the *best* explanation can be identified. By using this criterion and applying the new understanding of the term *explanation*, those explanations proposed by both naturalists and supernaturalitsts can then be adequately reviewed. The explanations offered by both of these parties will be subjected to the same standard.

There are two naturalistic explanations of man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value to be considered. The first is the view of naturalism held from the time of Darwin and is still reflected in Neo-Darwinism, which offers the random biological mutation and natural selection explanation for man's cognitive abilities. These cognitive abilities would include aesthetic apprehension. The first of these naturalistic explanations is labeled the classical naturalistic explanation. The second explanation is a derivation of a discipline first called sociobiology and

now labeled evolutionary psychology.[185] This view suggests that the ability to apprehend

aesthetics is more than biological but is the result of psychological mutation which is initiated by

biological mutation. This second naturalistic explanation will likewise be submitted to review by

the same criterion mentioned earlier. After considering each naturalistic explanation, a brief

review of their weaknesses is presented. This presentation will be followed by a review of how

they measure up to the standards of explanation and the criterion for the best explanation.

Following the discussion of the two naturalistic explanations, a presentation of the

supernatural explanation, or the divine cause for aesthetic apprehension, is reviewed. This

explanation will be similarly scrutinized with the same standards of explanation and criterion just

mentioned. After reviewing all three explanations, an account of why the divine cause

(supernaturalism) is the best explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value is

presented. Upon affirming the supremacy of supernaturalism's explanation, the second premise

is established as sound.

<center>Relevance of "Explanations"</center>

In order to be sufficiently precise when arguing for this second premise, it is necessary to

identify what an explanation really is. Common human experience reveals that words, without an

adequate understanding of what those words imply, are often used in attempts to communicate.

Few people have not had an occasion to witness a failure to receive an intended communication

because words used in the communication connoted something different to the hearer than that of

the transmitter. Since this study's primary intent is to identify the best explanation for man's

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[185] Alvin Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion, and Naturalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 131.

capacity to apprehend aesthetic value, it is only prudent that a clear understanding be established for what an explanation is.

So as to achieve this objective, the study returns to the work of Douglas Walton and his research in argumentation, specifically, as that research pertains to the concept of explanation. The justification for this use of Walton is the realization that he is considered an expert not only in the discipline of argumentation, but his skills are of such a level that he is involved with those who are attempting the highly technical objective of producing artificial intelligence.[186] Also, since his work refers neither to naturalism nor supernaturalism as it is focused on the notion of argumentation in general and abductive inference in particular, it maintains a beneficial objectivity. Hence, there is no basis to claim any bias for or against supernaturalism or naturalism in regard to his assertions. Thus, deferring to his expertise should remove any concerns about inadequate, inaccurate or biased standards.

Walton begins his discussion of explanations by referring to a statement made by Peter Lipton, to whom Walton often refers. Lipton is a fellow expert on logic and argumentation, particularly in the field of abductive inference. Lipton raises the question of why "inference to the best explanation," another way of referring to abductive reasoning, has been "so little developed as a theoretical model of reasoning, given its evident importance and popularity in so many fields." [187] Lipton offers an answer to his own question by observing, "The [abductive] model is an attempt to account for inference in terms of explanation, but our understanding of explanation is so patchy that the model seems to account for the obscure in terms of the equally

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[186] Walton, *Abductive Reasoning,* loc. 244, Kindle.

[187] Ibid. 51.

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obscure."[188] Clearly, by sharing Lipton's view, Walton points out that the lack of comprehension and present use of abductive reasoning is due to the lack of understanding of what explanations are. Lipton observes, as apparent, that no formal theory identifying explanations has been recognized. Walton, agreeing with this assertion, appeals to Jakko Hintikka's affirmation of Lipton's observation. Hintikka states, "[I]n reality, the nature of explanation is scarcely any clearer than the nature of abduction."[189] At least two things become apparent in reviewing these statements. First, abduction is not widely understood or appreciated for its potential use in scholastic contribution. Second, this may be due to the surprising fact that explanation has never been formalized for review.

Since abduction is essentially the affirmation of the best explanation, these two matters (abduction and explanation) are integrally linked. Thus the lack of appreciation for one will result in a lack of appreciation for the other. Hence, the need to standardize formally the term 'explanation" is vital to the validation of abduction and the clarity of the meaning of explanation. To address this need, Walton cites three sources from which he proposes a new theory of explanation. The proposal of this new theory is his effort to resolve the concerns just mentioned by Lipton and Hintikka. He identifies several sources used in his formulating this new theory. First, he mentions "work in AI (artificial intelligence) on explanation patterns . . . plan recognition and explanatory dialogue." Second, he cites "work on simulative reasoning in cognitive science stemming from the experimental findings." Third, he refers to "recent work on argumentation."[190] This research results in his proposal of for the standardization of the concept

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[188] Walton, *Abductive Reasoning,* 51.

[189] Ibid.

[190] Ibid.

of explanation. Walton clarifies, "An account of what explanation is, has to be a vitally important first step of any analysis of abductive reasoning as inference to the best explanation."[191]

Since clear comprehension of the concept of explanation is central to abductive reasoning, and since the theistic argument being presented in this study is stated with abductive inference, it is reasonable to assume that before any just and valid attempt to determine the best explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetics, a clear understanding of what is meant by *explanation* as well as a reasonable criterion for determining the best of those explanations must be determined. For the sake of assuring validity of the second premise and the validity of the whole study, a new theory of explanation, as developed and presented by Walton, and the use of a sensible criterion provides assurance that the results established in the review of these three explanations is equitably and accurately attained.

Walton's new theory for standardizing the concept of explanation and his criterion for establishing that theory, now becomes the immediate focus of this study. By it, an understanding of explanation can be formalized. The following is his new theory:

> The new theory of explanation . . . models an explanation as a dialogue between two agents. In the model, one agent is presumed by the other to understand something, and the other agent asks a question meant to enable him to understand it as well. An explanation is successful if it communicates understanding of a sort needed to enable the questioner to make sense of the thing questioned. This model is based on the concept of an agent having understanding of something, meaning that he can make sense of it.[192]

First, it is essential to note that this clarifying of explanation requires that the first agent seeking to execute explanation must understand something the second agent does not. Second, the first agent must communicate that understanding in such a way that the second agent is able to

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[191] Walton, *Abductive Reasoning,* 51-52.

[192] Ibid., 51.

understand equally, that which is being communicated. Only then is explanation truly taking place. Further, a successful explanation requires that the questioner or second agent, is able to make sense of the answer being presented. Thirdly, it is required that the first agent who offers the explanation must first possess an understanding which makes sense to him before any attempt at explaining to the second agent can occur.

Walton continues his exposé of this theory by acknowledging that explanations come in several categories. The first is described as "empathetic" type of explanation in which one person tries to explain the actions of another person by attributing goals, motives, beliefs, or other kinds of internal states to the other person."[193] The second is a "scientific explanation in which a scientist tries to explain some phenomenon by reducing it to entities and relationships accepted as fundamental in a science."[194] The third category of explanation is explanation "by definition."[195] This is demonstrated by identifying the meaning of words or concepts in such a manner that the hearer can understand the explanation through clarifying the terms used in its presentation.

Walton explains the empathetic type as that which is the result of appealing to a "belief-goal-plan-action"[196] sequence. He notes that this is common in the disciplines of history and law. He explains the second "scientific" type as that which attempts to explain a phenomenon by breaking it down into "entities and relationships accepted as fundamental to science."[197] The third type is characterized by an attempt to use explanation to persuade by using definitions,

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[193] Walton, *Abductive Reasoning,* 51.
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[194] Ibid., 52.

[195] Ibid.

[196] Ibid. 51.

[197] Ibid.

scientific knowledge and exploration or medical and legal knowledge.[198] Whatever the category

of explanation used by the first agent, communicating information to the second agent in a way

that results in his understanding of that which is being communicated is an explanation.

It is the position of this study that using Walton's model for explanation just described

will be a sufficient basis for determining which is the best explanation for man's capacity to

apprehend aesthetic value. Before that step is taken, however, a specific criterion for identifying

the best explanation must be considered. To know what an explanation is does not of itself

achieve the goal of identifying the best explanation. For the best explanation to be determined, a

sufficient criterion is utilized.

A Proposed Criterion for the Best Explanation

As with the case of identifying the nature of explanations, it is similarly necessary to

identify a criterion for determining the best explanation. What has just been revealed in the

explaining of explanations is relevant to this goal but other matters must be considered. For

instance, in spite of the fact that this project is a presentation of a theistic argument, it is

necessary, for the sake of being prudently respectful of all views, to evaluate the theistic and

atheistic arguments with the same standard. The proposed criterion establishes that standard. Its

purpose is to identify qualities necessary for an explanation or argument to be considered

superior. That explanation which best meets that criteria is the best explanation. Once the best

explanation is identified, the soundness of the second premise of the aesthetic theistic argument

has a sufficient basis for its claim.

Before actually presenting more elements of that criterion, it is appropriate to note that

Craig gives sage advice to anyone seeking to use arguments to confront atheism. He warns,

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[198] Walton, *Abductive Reasoning,* 52

"[P]ersons are rational; arguments are sound. We're interested in whether there are sound arguments for God's existence based on premises which are more plausible than their denials. We don't need to make a personal judgment on the rationality or irrationality of non-theists."[199] With Craig's position in mind, a responsible criterion will not use verbiage that refers to atheist's rationality or the lack thereof. Instead, it must focus solely on answering the question: What determines the best or soundest explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value? For the purposes of this study, based on research and rationale, it is proposed that four qualities comprise the ideal criterion for determining the best explanation or argument. These are: clarity, consistency, cogency, and conclusiveness. These four qualities identify necessary elements of excellent explanations or arguments. They are now explained so as to assure both their comprehension and their justification as elements of a sufficient criterion for determining the best explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value.

The Need for Clarity

It is obvious that in order for an argument or a proposed explanation to be sound, it must be clear enough to comprehend. Terms must be clearly defined. Premises must be clearly stated. All data and defenses must be clearly stated in such a way that is both consistent with the claim and comprehendible by those who wish to consider the merits of the information. This seems to be such a basic notion that it is not necessary to affirm it with exemplification. This statement is basic: if the explanation is not clear enough to understand, it is not the best explanation. This standard for the criterion is as necessary for good explanations as it is for good speech. Since most if not all arguments are expressed in written arguments, it is necessary for those who receive the argument to be able to comprehend what is being argued. Hence, clarity of language

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[199] Craig, *Reasonable Faith,* 189.

and the thoughts carried by that language is an essential quality for any explanation to be sound. That explanation which has the most clarity is superior in this regard.

The Need for Consistency

It is possible that consistency is the most significant quality necessary for a sound explanation. To demonstrate what is meant by consistency, it is important that the explanation being presented not conflict with known facts. Secondly, logical consistency of thought must also be present in the best explanation or argument. That is, there needs to be a logical flow from one premise to the next and to the claim. Explanations should be logically consistent from one premise to the next as well as with other established explanations. If a premise of an argument or the explanation of something is to be sound, the procedure by which the argument or explanation is presented must not only be consistent with the known data, it must also be logically consistent so that the premises of the argument, or the progression of the explanation, is clearly toward a common purpose or logically relates to it. For example, premises must be logically consistent with the conclusion of the argument.[200] In the case of the explanation, it must be logically demonstrated as the best resolution of the question being asked and not logically detached or irrelevant. If the second premise of an argument does not logically proceed from the first, or if the conclusion of an argument is not logically consistent with the premises, that argument fails. Likewise, explanations should be consistent with facts and should logically relate to the matter they intend to explain. For them to be sound, both arguments and explanations should be factually and logically consistent.

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[200] Carnes and Scheer, *Fundamentals of Logic,* 3.

The Need for Cogency

        The concept of cogency has to do with the notion of being forceful, convincing, or persuasive. A good explanation or a sound argument should not only be clear and consistent with facts and logic, it should be convincing or persuasive. Such an explanation should not be expressed in subjunctive language or in a hope that future data will make it sound. A good explanation, as a good argument, is stated declaratively in such a way that it persuades the hearer of the explanation toward comprehension. Otherwise, it amounts to a proposal rather than an explanation. An explanation needs to use declarative verbiage based on factual data sufficient to persuade. As will be demonstrated later, it is possible to present factual data in a way which is not persuasive. However, the best explanation demonstrates cogency through well-thought out, clear and consistent data in such a way that it persuades the hearer to comprehend the need to accept the explanation. An argument or an explanation should reflect sufficient grounds for viable, valid certainty or cogency in order to be sound.

The Need for Conclusiveness

        For the purposes of this criterion, the quality of conclusiveness refers to the expectation that a good explanation is not vulnerable to refutation. If an explanation is refutable it does not sufficiently explain. There is a noteworthy difference between recognizing the possibility of additional understanding and the refutation of the present explanation. The first is in reference to a proposal. The second is in reference to an explanation. To claim an explanation as refutable, requires sufficient evidence to question its veracity. Hence, it must be demonstrated as refutable in order to be labeled unsound. If an explanation or argument is sufficiently demonstrated to be refutable in such a manner, it is not the best explanation. The same is true in logical

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argumentation. If the argument is refutable, it is not sound. A note of clarification here is helpful. These elements of criterion do not make it necessary for an explanation to be absolute in its conclusiveness. In the case of abduction, or induction, it must only meet the standard of best explanation (abduction) or high probability (inductive). In the case of abduction, the sound argument or explanation is sufficient enough in its conclusiveness to establish the implausibility of a better explanation. Once a better explanation is revealed, the previous explanation is no longer conclusive nor sound and thus no longer the best. Abduction requires the best explanation. The best explanation will be the most conclusive or the least refutable.

It is possible that a better criterion may one day be presented. Yet, it is presently doubtless that these four qualities are necessary to identify the best explanation as far as the concept of explanation presently exists. What is clear is that if any of these four elements of criterion, as explained, are weak or not present in an explanation, that explanation may not be the best. Hence, this four-part criterion is presently sufficient for the task at hand. This conclusion is demonstrated in the discussion which follows. These four elements or qualities identify the criterion by which the following explanations and arguments are measured. By them a determination is made as to which is the best of the explanations which follow. In addition, the following explanations will be judged by the standards of Walton's proposed explanation theory. Using his theory and this criterion, determining the best explanation or argument for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value is now possible. The specific determination of which of the following explanation best meets these criteria is presented in the summary at the end of this chapter.

Naturalism's Explanations for the Apprehension of Aesthetic Value

Having established the criterion by which the best explanation can be determined,

attention now turns toward the proposed explanations themselves. To this end, study reveals that

there are basically two explanations for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value offered by

naturalistic ideology. These two explanations are notably similar, but are distinct enough to be

managed one at a time without a great deal of repetition. The first is identified as the classic

natural selection explanation. The second is an extension of the first and is rather recent in its

development. It is called the evolutionary psychology explanation. A review of each of these is

followed by some observations regarding their strengths or weaknesses as an explanation. After

the discussion of both, the standard for explanation and the criterion just presented which

determines the best explanation, is objectively applied to both.

Classical Natural Selection Explanation

Every student in public schools has been or will be exposed to the claims of Charles

Darwin and his work *The Origins of Species* and/or, its more contemporary version, Neo-

Darwinism. Usually, this exposure occurs in middle or high school biology classes. The National

Association of Biology Teachers (primarily K-12 teachers), the organization that publishes the

peer-reviewed *American Biology Teacher* journal, has a relevant article posted on its official

website. On this site they post their *Position Statement on Teaching Evolution*.[201] In that

statement appears the following:

> Science teachers must reject calls to account for the diversity of life or describe the
> mechanisms of evolution by invoking non-naturalistic or supernatural notions, whether
> called "creation science," "scientific creationism," "intelligent design theory," or similar

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[201] This can be accessed online at: www.nabt.org/websites/institution/index.php?p=92.

designations. Ideas such as these are outside the scope of science and should not be presented as part of the science curriculum.[202]

Obviously, one of the primary teacher organizations, made up largely of public school biology teachers, openly states for the record, that evolution, or natural selction, is to be taught as the only possible explanation for the origins of life. The teaching of creation or even intelligent design is to be rejected, in their view, because it is supernatural in its philosophy and supernaturalism is simply to be "rejected."

This insistence to refuse the possibility of supernaturalism makes a telling characteristic of naturalism. Namely, to be a naturalist, or at least a supporting member of the National Association of Biology Teachers, one must reject the possibility of supernaturalism. To even consider the possibility of the supernatural, as characteristic of Intelligent Design, is to reject the naturalist position. Since science and naturalism are to be considered synonymous in this regard; anything other than naturalism is simply not scientific in their estimation.

Reviewing how this estimation came to be is not the focus of this chapter. Instead, it is mentioned because it helps to identify the basic rationale behind naturalism's explanation for the apprehension of aesthetic value. Put simply, naturalism begins its explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value by committing first to the presupposition that there is no supernatural explanation because there is no such thing as the supernatural. Their position about anything having to do with the nature of man or the uniqueness of man's capacities begins with this presupposition. Hence, whatever their explanation for the phenomenon of man's capacity for aesthetic apprehension, their response begins with "It can't be God!"

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[202] See website in previous footnote.

If one suffers under the notion that science is committed to considering all options for the sake of finding the best explanation, then it would seem rational to assume that the true scientists are those who consider all possibilities, even the supernatural ones. Today, however, science, especially biological science, seems to be entrenched with an obvious bias. It is as though science, especially naturalistic science, has become the new savior and lord of mankind. C. F. H. Henry comments: "Today, however, many accept not the Spirit-breathed Word of God but the experimentally based pronouncements of science as the one and only avenue to truth and life" [203] Elsewhere, in the same discussion, Henry writes, "By their worldwide coverage of breakthrough events, the mass media lend to the scientist a cloak of omnicompetence and latent omniscience."[204] In short, naturalism and the science which drives that worldview have convinced modern man that natural selection, science and technology is the answer for every legitimate question in life. The result of this perception is a growing secularism prevalent in academia today. Academic theists who offer alternative explanations are being increasingly marginalized. Politicians who question a scientific claim, do so at political peril. Students in public school who seek to defend their faith in God, especially the Christian God of Scripture, literally endanger themselves. This is validated by the media's coverage of recent tragedies involving Christian persecution and rejection. One is forced to ask if it might not be wise to just accept the naturalistic position, due to the level of this oppression. Henry objects to this retreat. Instead he warns that the continuing secularization of mankind will end with tragic results, "The final choice for modern man is between Christianity and nihilism, between the Logos of God and

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[203] Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, vol. 1, 22.

[204] Ibid., 21.

the ultimate meaninglessness of life and the world."[205] It takes little effort to realize that the relevance of the argument, which is the focus of this study, could not be greater.

Despite efforts to confront this travesty, science still rules in the value system of modern man and when science warns that creation teaching and supernaturalism is to be shunned or rejected, that is too often what happens. An explanation for this mumpsimus is the circular reasoning that supernaturalism is not valid. For example, what could be more circular than the argument: science does not recognize the truth of supernaturalism because only naturalistic theory is true? If naturalists are going to provide an explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetics, it is going to be one which stands on the principles of naturalism. It is going to be an explanation which has nothing to do with a creator or the divine.

David Hume is often identified as one of the leading early naturalist philosophers. He associates intellectual progress with the rejection of the supernatural, "[A]s we advance nearer the enlightened ages, we soon learn, that there is nothing mysterious or supernatural in the case, but that all proceeds from the usual propensity of mankind towards the marvelous, and that, though this inclination may at intervals receive a check from sense and learning, it can never be thoroughly extirpated from human nature."[206] In the introduction of Julian Huxley's work *Evolutionary Humanism,* J. James Birx makes a similar observation, "Scientific naturalism and secular humanism continue to challenge entrenched but outmoded beliefs, values, and worldviews. With confidence, Huxley maintains that evolutionary humanism will become our

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[205] Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, vol. 1, 41.

[206] David Hume, *The David Hume Collection: 17 Classic Works* (Amazon: Waxkeep Publishing, 2013) loc. 10939-10941, Kindle.

dominant idea-system of the future."[207] For the true naturalist, it has been established that naturalism challenges and refutes the "outmoded" belief in the supernatural. The unasked but obvious questions are: On what basis have the naturalists established this certainty? Has it been proven that supernaturalism is outdated and no longer valid? Careful consideration of arguments they offer reveal that there is no solid basis as their logic is flawed and their claims unsubstantiated. Yet, it remains that much of academia considers naturalistic claims of science to be irrefutable and absolute. It seems, according to the obvious, that mankind is expected to trade in the God of Scripture for the god of science. All of this comes to bear on the present study because this study forces naturalists to offer a naturalistic cause for several unique qualities of man. Particularly, these qualities include man's capacity and longing for truth, a universal concept that there is good, and, in reference to this study, an explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value.

In *The God Delusion*, author Richard Dawkins, appeals to a well-written atheist Julian Baggini. Baggini states, "What most atheists do believe is that although there is only one kind of stuff in the universe and it is physical, out of this stuff come minds, beauty, emotions, moral values— in short the full gamut of phenomena that gives richness to human life."[208] It is in this quote that one can begin to see the naturalists' specific response to man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value. Their answer is that there is only one "stuff" in the universe and it is physical. Hence, all that is not physical, such as mind, beauty, emotions, and moral value, begins with this stuff and develops through the processes of natural selection. Note that this is a huge assumption

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[207] Julian S. Huxley. *Evolutionary Humanism: Great Minds Series* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books 1992), loc. 53-54). Kindle.

[208] Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion,* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Company, 2008), 34.

with no real offer of proof. There is no effort to explain how this transition occurred. There is no

description of observed data from which such a conclusion is drawn. The whole of the matter is

built on the presupposition that there cannot be anything but the natural. There is no

supernatural; hence, intelligence, morals, the concept of truth, morality, and beauty must have all

come from some evolutionary process which begins with "stuff."

Returning to Huxley, one can almost feel the antipathy toward anything supernatural

when he pens:

> Evolutionary man can no longer take refuge from his loneliness by creeping for shelter
> into the arms of a divinized father-figure whom he has himself created, nor escape from
> the responsibility of making decisions by sheltering under the umbrella of Divine
> Authority, nor absolve himself from the hard task of meeting his present problems and
> planning his future by relying on the will of an omniscient but unfortunately inscrutable
> Providence. [209]

Clearly, Huxley conforms to the naturalistic ideology and has no room for the possibility of the

supernatural or the divine. This is consistently the case when one becomes a true naturalist. This

being so, the classical natural selection answer, when asked to give an explanation for man's

capacity to apprehend aesthetic value. is twofold. First, they will state that it most certainly did

not come from supernatural sources. Second, they will state that it came from the process of

natural selection which finds its origin in physical "stuff."

The extensive referencing just completed raises questions for any honest inquisitor. For

instance, one might ask, "In light of so many claims that supernaturalism is outdated and

irrelevant because it is not scientific, is there any evidence supporting these claims?" The

response seems to be that those who think the supernatural is a possibility are thinking,

unscientifically, and by implication, incorrectly. This is clearly circular reasoning. Science has

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[209] Huxley. *Evolutionary Humanism* loc. 907-910, Kindle.

proclaimed that there can be no supernatural role in the process of man's development because there is no such thing as the supernatural. Upon this presupposition, they are forced to accept the notion that any aspect of humanity which needs to be explained must be explained in terms of objective physical, observable data that has no possible reference to the supernatural. The obvious question is, "Have scientists sufficiently researched all claims for the supernatural and has that research provided support for their claim?"

The answer to this question is found in the research provided by scholars such as Craig Keener and Gary Habermas who provide strong and abundant evidence for the supernatural. Naturalism seems to simply ignore such evidence. To recognize it would result in the undermining of their presupposition, and naturalism would then be ungrounded. On the other hand, several examples of atheistic philosophers exist who, having honestly reviewed the evidence, and have come to renounce their atheism. One of the most notable examples of this is Antony Flew's renunciation of his atheism.[210] First, this is not to suggest that Flew has become a follower of Christ. Second, neither is it to suggest that there are no theists who have converted to atheism. However, these matters of concern do not bear to the point being made. If atheistic naturalism has seen converts to supernaturalism, even one notable example, it would seem that naturalists would be bound by principle to allow for the possibility of the supernatural or deny the mental capacities of men like Flew, Alistair McGrath and C. S. Lewis. All of these are excellent examples of atheists who, after considering the facts carefully and without prejudice, came to reject their atheism.[211]

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[210] See: Antony Flew. *There is a God: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind,* (United Kingdom: Harper Collins 2007); Jordan Monge, "The Atheist's Dilemma," *Christianity Today,* Vol. 57. No 2. (Christianity Today, 2003) 88; C. S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy,* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Harcort, 1955).

[211] See: C. S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy,* (Boston, MA: Houghton, Mifflin, Harcourt, 1995).

The whole of the previous discussion affirms the claim that naturalists are going to offer explanations for the aesthetic apprehension which exclude the supernatural. This is more than an exercise in the obvious. It is an identification of weakness. For a scientist to rule out any possibility, because of an obstinate presupposition, is simply not acceptable scientific procedure. Thus, the classical evolutionary humanist, naturalist, and atheist when refusing to acknowledge the possibility of the supernatural, are being, ironically, unscientific. Yet, their answer to the query regarding the cause of man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value, the cause of man's capacity to apprehend beauty, is evolution, natural selection or survival of the fittest. Huxley verbalizes as much:

> The exploration of the mind has barely begun. It must be one of the main tasks of the coming era, just as was the exploration of the world's surface a few centuries ago. Psychological exploration will doubtless reveal as many surprises as did geographical exploration, and will make available to our descendants all kinds of new possibilities of full and richer living. [212]

Here Huxley exemplifies the classical natural selection explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value. He concludes that the explanation for man's capacity for aesthetic apprehension and the apprehension of all other values such as desire for truth, goodness, and beauty, all of which are psychological phenomena, is yet to be discovered, as they have only barely begun the exploration of the mind. Such an answer, being properly interpreted, admits that naturalists do not know yet. Huxley is admitting that the exploration into the human mind has not yet been sufficient to warrant an acceptable answer. That investigation, according to Huxley's statement, has "barely begun." In what scientific discipline is the answer, "we don't know yet" sufficient? Apparently the only thing of which they are certain is that any explanation for man's capacity to apprehend beauty cannot be supernaturalism.

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[212] Huxley, *Evolutionary Humanism,* loc. 1007-1009, Kindle.

Weaknesses of the Classical Naturalistic Explanation

First, based on Huxley's anticipation for the explanation, as just quoted, it is difficult to assess the weakness of Huxley's explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value. This is due to the fact that it is difficult to critique any view not yet asserted. "We don't know yet" does not engender an immediate response other than a hope that someone will eventually inform the world when naturalism is finally able to provide an explanation. This does not mean that they have not espoused some theories, as scientists are seemingly always offering such. The only certainty that has been expressed for the explanation of man's ability to apprehend aesthetics is their absolute conviction that whatever the explanation is, it will not have any supernatural reference.

In contemplating naturalism's rejection of the possibility of anything supernatural, one must eventually inquire as to how such certainty can be maintained. Henry makes a particularly relevant point when contemplating a similar question:

> The early modern mind, having forsaken the revelation of the living God, had discovered that it could then no longer cling to supernaturalism. Now the later modern mind—the naturalistic temper—soon discovered that it also had unwittingly borrowed more than it dared retain from the biblical heritage. For, although it had rejected the supernatural, even the naturalistic modern mind at the turn of the century nonetheless retained the notion that reality is structured by rational order, by an intelligible pattern, which science presumably could discover by empirical observation and experimentation.[213]

Henry is correctly observing that while naturalism soundly rejects the possibility of super-naturalism, it has not divorced itself from the notion that reality is structured with rational intelligible patterns and intent. That is to say that since it is unlikely that order can come from chaos, or that design can take place without a designer, or that beauty can be apprehended by

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[213] Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, vol. 1. 39.

man without being designed by a Creator Who Himself is able to apprehend aesthetic value, the naturalist, in assuming there must be an alternative, is faced with the challenge of explaining this order, pattern, intent and ability to apprehend morals and aesthetic value. On the other hand, contra the view of naturalists, there is abundant evidence suggesting that God created man to know Him. Hence, since God is inherently beautiful, man had to be given the ability to apprehend the aesthetic value of beauty that he might apprehend any knowledge of God. While science goes on to claim that order cannot be the result of the supernatural, and that alternative naturalistic explanations will confirm their view, they place their faith in explanations which are yet forthcoming.

Several questions come to mind when following Henry's logic. First, since both naturalists and supernaturalists agree that reality is observed to have order and pattern, how is it possible for naturalists to explain this design apart from a superior intelligence or design? Second, how can naturalists rationally posit that prehistoric, early universe, and early earth was simply chaotic in its existence, and then somehow order arose from that chaos? How then do the naturalists explain the presence of such order and pattern in light of the admitted chaos in which life first began? Does it not take extreme faith in naturalism to believe order comes from chaos or that life comes from nothing or cognizance comes from non-cognizance, or the psychological is a derivative of the biological? Is this not the question being answered in the teleological argument, as skillfully presented by luminaries such as William Dembski?[214] No scientific exploration should begin with a presupposition that excludes uncomfortable possibilities.

Plantinga is one of many who have commented on these questions.

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[214] William Dembski, *Intelligent Design: The Bridge between Science and Theology,* (Downers Grove: InerVarsity Press, 1999) Note specifically the discussion in Chapter 6, Part 2.

Now the proposed naturalistic analyses with which I am acquainted are analyses of what it is for an organ or system to have a function; they are not analyses of what it is for an organ or system to function properly, to work the way it ought to work. They try to tell us what it is, for example, for it to be the case that the function of the heart is to pump blood, and the function of the telephone is to enable rapid, convenient vocal communication. They don't try to tell us what it is for a heart or telephone to function properly, to work the way it ought to. And the transition from the one to the other isn't quite as easy as it might seem. We can't say, for example, that a thing is functioning properly just if it is performing its function, whatever that is; for to be functioning properly, at least in the fullest sense, it must be functioning in the way it was designed to.[215]

Plantinga correctly observes that naturalism speaks in terms of "organs or systems" having function. It is this function which is claimed by naturalists to be the eventual catalyst for evolutionary processes. Yet, Plantinga points out that they do not speak of these organs or systems in terms of their proper function. He makes the difference between functioning and functioning properly very clear. He points out that when mere functioning is being done that is not a guarantee that the organ or organism is properly functioning as intended. Organs and systems, in order to survive or reproduce, must function properly. This proper functionality, by definition, only occurs when it is functioning as it was designed. It is the origin of this design which escapes the discussion of the naturalist. If the heart is healthy, it functions as it was designed. If the mind is healthy, it functions as it was designed. These observations are self-evident truths. Only when an organ or organism is functioning as it was designed to function is that organism properly functioning. It is self-evident to assume that a design requires a designer, and yet, rational naturalistic philosophy argues against a designer as that challenges their bias and opens the possibility for the supernatural, not because it is not possible. Naturalists cannot have it both ways. Clearly, the methodological assumptions of naturalism hinder any

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[215] Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function*. 19.

consideration of any supernatural explanation. Yet, at the same time, one cannot concede that organs need to function as they were designed in order to function properly and then argue that it is the mutation of this design which is the basis for the advance of the species. That would require an organ to somehow change into something it was not designed to do so that it can then become a new design with a new purpose and this without any intelligent oversight or cause. To many scientists, for an organ to mutate outside the parameters of its intended function is to present a disease or a medical malady. Yet this, for the naturalist, is the basis for progress by claiming nature did it this way. Are they claiming that nature is sufficiently sentient to manipulate like this? Wouldn't doing so open the door to the possibility of the supernatural? The truth is that no mechanism which proves chance organizes out of chaos or malady results in a biologically altered design having new purpose has ever been demonstrated. Proper function cannot occur outside the behavior for which that organ or organism was designed. Naturalism considers no evidence for how design came to be other than chance. Chance has not been demonstrated as a means to, or basis of, the necessarily intricate design which is necessary to mutate from one species to another. It is not feasible when one realizes that mutation itself requires an organism to act outside the function of that for which it was designed. This would require that the organism not function properly. The naturalist's account for different species seems to raise more question than it answers. It seems clear that the naturalistic claim that there cannot be any explanation which refers to the supernatural is an insufficient explanation for the development of man, much less his universal ability to apprehend aesthetic value.

Further research reveals that not all leading scientists have the same regard for naturalism as those who have been mentioned. For instance, Sir Francis Crick, co-discoverer of the DNA double helix molecule has suggested the biological formation of life from inanimate material is

so inconceivable that he posits the material had to come from outer space riding on something like a frozen meteor.[216] Michael Denton, a microbiologist and professed atheist, has described Darwinian naturalism as "the great cosmogenic myth of the twentieth century."[217] Embryologist Soren Lovtrup of Sweden, stated, "I believe that one day the Darwinian myth will be ranked the greatest deceit in the history of science. When this happens many people will pose the question: How did this ever happen?" [218] In his review of Denton's *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis,* Frederic Howe observes:

> Denton actually is calling for, on strictly scientific grounds, the rejection of Darwinian evolutionary theory, and the development of a new model or paradigm to explain the beginning and development of life. His major conclusion is this: "Whatever view we wish to take of the current status of Darwinian theory, whatever the reasons might be for its undoubted appeal, whether we wish to view it as being in a classic state of crisis as described by Kuhn, there can be no doubt that after a century of intensive effort biologists have failed to validate it in any significant sense. [219]

The reference to Crick and Denton demonstrate non-theistic rejections of Darwinism. While their views do not argue for supernaturalism, they do argue for the weakness of naturalistic dogma which is the present basis of naturalism.[220] To that end, they argue against justifying the present popularity of Darwinism or Neo-Darwinism. In spite of non-theistic scientist's proposals for a replacement to the Darwinian theory, continued commitment to Darwinian naturalistic causation seems to remain entrenched. It could be argued that such uncertainty is a strange basis for

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[216] Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, vol. 6, 178.

[217] Michael Denton, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* (London: Burnett Books, Hutchinson Pub. Group, 1985), 368.

[218] Soren Lovtrup, *Darwinism: The Refutation of a Myth* (London, New York, Sydney: Croom Helm, 1987), 469.

[219] Frederic R. Howe, "Review of Evolution: A Theory in Crisis by Michael Denton," ed. F. Duane Lindsey, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 145 (1988): 459.

[220] See footnote 209

demanding Darwinism be the required view of academia. At the very least, it weakens the

classical Darwinian naturalistic explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value.

Despite the scientific weakness of Darwinism, as voiced by Crick and Denton, and while serious

questions are being raised regarding its scientific viability and the voicing of these questions is

getting louder, natural selection theory remains required teaching in public schools.[221] The

possibility that this reflects a certain unscientific bias is difficult to deny.

Before concluding a discussion of the weaknesses of the classical naturalism explanation,

one more question should be asked. The question has to do with feasibility. Dawkins' reference

to Baggini declares that the universe is made of some elementary common "stuff" and that from

that stuff comes minds, beauty, emotions, and moral value. If man does evolve from this stuff,

who passed on the capacity to apprehend beauty to their posterity, from what source does man

have the ability to apprehend aesthetic value? Baggini suggests that the mindless stuff from

which mind develops necessarily accounts for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value. If so,

what is the evidence, rationale or feasibility behind this claim, other than the need to maintain the

Darwinian developmental theory? Commonality of man's origin in this stuff would suggest a

non-uniformity of appearance as in each particular bird species or other animal species. Birds

may have common features but not all birds can fly. Not all birds can drive their beaks into

hardwood in search of food. All species of birds are unique in their own regard. This implies that

some races or cultures should not be able to apprehend aesthetic value as not all birds are

identical in any one characteristic. Yet, all cultures of mankind seem to be able to apprehend

aesthetic value. Surely, human races are distinct. Yet, there is a common recognition that all

races and cultures have aesthetic appreciation. Natural selection does not offer a sufficient

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[221] See footnote 200.

explanation for this other than rejection of supernaturalism. If the different races of homo sapiens were consistent with the evidence of the different breeds of bird, there would be some races which could appreciate aesthetic value and some which could not. The obvious result of this would be a non-universal capacity for apprehension. The commonality of aesthetic apprehension has to be explained while maintaining the mutations producing different race or species. This is not feasible unless, of course, one assumes that all the mutations of the stuff which resulted in mind happened in such a way that all human beings are able to apprehend aesthetic value. That would, of course, defy credulity. If multiple mutations occurred, men would not necessarily be the same in this regard. In order to account for the similarities and differences within the human race, naturalism's humanity must be a derivation of a common origin. Subsequent change occurred through natural selection. Yet, in spite of this, all cultures have some capacity for apprehending aesthetic value. Humans have different skin color, some have greater intellect than others, some have athletic abilities and others do not. Yet, man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value is common in every culture. There is no culture, properly functioning, which does not have a capacity for aesthetic value. Natural selection does not sufficiently account for this consistency.

What also must be answered, and is not, is that since a mutation supposedly began the process by which man is able to apprehend aesthetic value, where is the evidence which confirms this? Secondly, if man's capacity for aesthetic apprehension is a derivative of the ability of the first pair of human beings, where did they get it? Thirdly, why, with all the differences between human races, is there no culture which does not apprehend aesthetic value?

As this discussion shows, it is clear that there are serious problems with the classical naturalistic explanation. Methodologically, the essential presupposition of classical naturalism closes the door to rational possibilities inherent in a more abductive approach. It is difficult to

argue for naturalism as the best explanation when one is being asked to accept an explanation which is yet forthcoming. Assuming such an explanation is forthcoming, the next question is two-fold. First, how would such an explanation be proven? Secondly, how is it that naturalists have been able to assert dogmatic views on the basis of hoped for evidence and not be called into question by more scientists? These questions and concerns highlight the weaknesses in the classical naturalist's explanation for aesthetic apprehension. By their own admission their claims are not only unprovable, they are, apparently, yet unknown.

Evolutionary Psychology

The discipline known as evolutionary psychology is an augmentation built upon the views of E.O. Wilson's *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis*.[222] According to Plantinga, it was dismissed by many as it was perceived to be "deeply sexist," because it minimized rape and violence as simply a part of the evolutionary process.[223] While Plantinga acknowledges that this view is open to debate, he also affirms that evolutionary psychology is receiving increased attention within the academic community.[224]

> [E]volutionary psychology is an attempt to explain important human traits and behaviors in terms of the evolutionary origin of the human species. The heart and soul of this project is the effort to explain distinctive human traits—our art, humor, play, love, sexual behavior, poetry, sense of adventure, love of stories, our music, our morality, and our religion itself—in terms of adaptive advantages accruing to our hunter-gatherer ancestors back there on the plains of Serengeti.[225]

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[222] Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion and Naturalism*, 130.

[223] Ibid.

[224] Ibid. 131.

[225] Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion and Naturalism*, 131.

The proponents of evolutionary psychology do not disagree with Plantinga's basic definition. Of the many articles published on this topic, one appears in the peer reviewed journal *American Psychologist* published by the American Psychological Association. It is written by one of the major proponents of evolutionary psychology, David M. Buss, Professor of Psychology at the University of Texas at Austin. Apparently in conjunction with several of his students, Buss et.al, published their article intending to identify "controversies, questions, prospects and limitations" of this new discipline. They propose the following definition for evolutionary psychology:

> The fundamental basis of evolutionary psychology dates back to Darwin's (1859) theory of natural selection. Darwin postulated that if variant traits could be inherited by offspring from parents, then those variants that aided an organism's survival and reproduction would be transmitted to future generations at greater frequencies than alternatives. Variants with less beneficial effects—such as those that hinder an organism's ability to survive or reproduce— would not replicate because the organisms possessing them would transmit them at lower rates.[226]

It is important to note that the article identifies not only that it is an extension of Darwinian naturalism, but that the basis of evolutionary psychology is a survival of the fittest view described as "those variants that aided an organism's survival and reproduction." This seems to affirm the definition Plantinga offers. Hence, there is little disagreement regarding the identity and intent of evolutionary psychology. In light of this, in offering their definition, the proponents of evolutionary psychology affirm the claim that "variants with less beneficial effects . . . would not replicate because the organisms possessing these less beneficial effects would transmit them at a lower rate." [227] While this is an extension of the definition, it is a naturalistic one as it is

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[226] David M. Buss, Jaime C. Confer, Judith A. Easton, Diana S. Fleischman, Cari D. Goetz, David M. G. Lewis, and Carin Perilloux, "Evolutionary Psychology: Controversies, Questions, Prospects and Limitations," *American Psychologist,* Vol 65, No 2, (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2010), 110-126.

[227] Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion and Naturalism*, 132.

logical to assume any explanation for apprehension of art based on mechanisms which have evolved over time must also include a reference to the primary tenant of evolutionary theory. The driving force of evolution is the desire to propagate the species as well as to preserve one's self in the present.

Aside from the tremendous assumptions stated in the Buss et.al article, what is not unnoticed by Plantinga is the question of how aesthetic apprehension fits in the foundational principles of evolution, particularly the survival of the fittest as necessary to the propagation of the species. Correctly he observes, "It is hard to see how a capacity to find marvelous beauty . . . would be of adaptive use to our hunter-gatherer ancestors."[228] Providing additional insight to how evolutionary psychologists might provide the necessary enlightenment to address this concern, Plantinga continues:

> Harvard evolutionary psychologist Steven Pinker once told a gathering of musicologists why music had rated only eleven of his 660-page *How the Mind Works*: He told the musicologists why the topic did not merit more attention: music was 'useless' in terms of human evolution and development. He dismissed it as 'auditory cheesecake,' a trivial amusement that 'just happens to tickle several important parts of the brain in a highly pleasurable way, as cheesecake tickles the palate.'[229]

Apparently, Plantinga is suggesting that the plan of some evolutionary psychologists for giving a sufficient answer to how aesthetic apprehension fits within their theory is to allocate aesthetics to the realm of unnecessary and therefore to make the question irrelevant to the discussion. Assuming this to be a possible reason for Pinker's untenable statement, one might entertain the thought that academia can be so blinded by prejudice that it sometimes risks sacrificing integrity to maintain denial of the possibility of supernaturalism.

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[228] Ibid.

[229] Ibid. 131.

The view held by Pinker apparently reflects the notion that the universal capacity of man to apprehend aesthetic value is not important or significant enough to warrant much attention. It is merely "auditory cheesecake." What seems so hard to comprehend is how Pinker justifies this claim. Is his answer to the challenging question of how to explain man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value so meaningless that he is willing to simply relegate the question to irrelevance? Is his explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value to rate the question so low in importance that it need not be considered? Since aesthetic appreciation is viewed as a signal for how the mind works, is he not also relegating understanding of how the mind works to irrelevance? One is left to wonder on what possible basis he made this evaluation of aesthetic value and what evidence to which he points for its justification. Since he believes naturalism, logically, renders all of these categories irrelevant, he provides no answer. Yet, no answer is not an adequate response to the question.

To offer a succinct alternative to his claims requires a minimal review of data which offers sufficient evidence supporting a counter claim. For example, in an article by Saila Nevanen published in *The Arts Education Policy Review*,[230] the author first identifies herself as a representative of the Centre of Expertise on Social Welfare in the Helsinki metropolitan area, Helsinki, Finland.[231] What makes this location relevant to this discussion is the fact that Finnish students involved in that Centre "finished at the top of the rankings for the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in recent years."[232] The article is a commentary on the

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[230] Saila Nevanen, Annti Juvonen, and Heikki Riusmaki, "Does Art Education Develop School Readiness? Teachers' and Artists' Points of View on an Art Education Project." *Arts Education Policy Review*. Vol 115, (Milton Park, Abingdon: Taylor and Francis Group 2014) 72-81.

[231] Ibid.

[232] Ibid.

principles and procedures which contributed to such a high review. Within this article a

statement is made that clearly contradicts the views held by the Harvard Professor Steve Pinker:

> This article describes an arts education project for early childhood, preschool, and elementary school pupils that began in Helsinki in 2000. It began as an arts and history project to encourage children in making art and engaging in cultural activities. The aim of the whole project was to increase children's sensitivity and support their learning, cooperation skills, and self-concept while exploring the surrounding environment and society. The pupils were guided in concentrated and consistent long-term work and constructive action as group members. The project was carried out as a collaboration between teachers and artists. The cooperation between schools, day care centers, and artists continues today, only on a smaller scale. Thus, at least some of the long-term aims of this Finnish education program seem to have been supported.[233]

This account identifies the purpose of the project being reviewed in the article. The students did

well in their assessment rankings and the article offers insight on what was done to help the

students reach that high ranking. The article provides a sufficient background for how the results

of their project came to be and what those results were. One of the foundational principles upon

which the project was built was an emphasis on art education. The article makes it very clear as

to why, "In this article, arts education is seen as an area of education that promotes the many-

sided development of personality, increases knowledge and skills in different fields of art, and

provides possibilities for self-expression."[234] One should note that the authors of this article are

recognized as developers of a project that resulted in their students receiving highest rankings for

the Program for International Student Assessment. Then, they cite a focus on the arts as a key

factor in achieving their success. In other words, rather than postulating aesthetic appreciation as

being "auditory cheesecake," the proof of the contrary is found in the results of this project.

Their efforts proved that among many other things, the role of the arts is essential for excellent

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[233] Ibid., 72.

[234] Nevanen, et.al., *Arts Education Policy Review.* Vol 115, 74.

childhood development. The article continues, "Arts education combines natural expression and interaction; it stimulates a child's own, connecting the magic of art to the logic of science."[235] This evidence contradicts the theory postulated by Pinker who is cited above. At the very least, Professor Pinker being an evolutionary psychologist, and as such feeling justified to relegate aesthetic appreciation to irrelevancy, there is sufficient evidence to question the validity of his claim as well as those of evolutionary psychology.

Returning to the Buss article in *American Psychologist,* the authors continue their assertion that the development of the mind and the psychological features of the mind are due to evolutionary processes. For example, they assert, "Just as physiological adaptations solve specific problems associated with survival and reproduction (e.g., the immune system has evolved as a defense against disease), psychological adaptations too have evolved because they solved problems related to survival and reproduction."[236] This is another declaration that evolutionary processes are not only an acceptable explanation for man's capacity for aesthetic apprehension but claim to be the best explanation for it. After closer scrutiny, however, it is less valid than what might first appear. Either the theory is incorrect and unfounded or there is another better explanation for the motivation of man's thought processes other than continuation of the species and survival of the fittest.[237] To their credit, the authors of the *American Psychology* article go on to state that the advance of evolutionary psychology is limited because of its "lack of knowledge of many selection pressures that humans faced over the millions of years of their evolution."[238] While one must commend this honesty, it is clear that they are

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[235] Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion and Naturalism*, 74.

[236] Buss et.al *American Psychology* 110.

[237] Ibid., 122.

[238] Ibid.

admitting that the theory is based on psychological mechanisms, the existence of which has not

been validated. Basing their theory on principles drawn from data which has not yet been found

or validated raises serious question as to whether or not the theory of evolutionary psychology is

sound, in spite of its growing popularity.

For the sake of full disclosure, it is not only theists who find evolutionary psychology to

be questionable. In the peer reviewed journal *Philosophical Psychology,* Paul Sheldon Davies,

professor of philosophy at the College of William and Mary writes:

> If evolutionary psychology were a promising research program—if the ''evolutionary
> psychology paradigm'' comprised theories and exemplars and methods that were
> explanatory and predictive and fruitful1—then the world as we know it and, indeed, the
> world itself would be quite different, for we would then have evidence we presently do
> not have and life on earth would have evolved in ways it most probably did not evolve.
> But evolutionary psychology is unpromising, leaden with promises it cannot keep.
> Minimal standards of evidence go unmet in its theories and the history of life it assumes
> is twisted to fit just those theories.[239]

Clearly, not all philosophers and psychologists share in the support of evolutionary psychology's

rise to prominence. What is particularly relevant is how Davies affirms the concerns of

Plantinga. The result is that there are significant concerns about the validity of this theory.

Weaknesses of Evolutionary Psychology

Though some of the weaknesses of evolutionary psychology as a viable explanation for

aesthetic appreciation have already been mentioned, further discussion is warranted along with

some other weaknesses not yet mentioned. To be clear, the first weakness of this explanation has

to do with its uncertainty. That evolutionary psychology is becoming increasingly popular as

Plantinga asserts[240] is a true concern in light of the fact that those who define it have to admit

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[239] Paul Sheldon Davies, "Some Evolutionary Model or Other: Aspirations and Evidence in Evolutionary
Psychology." *Philosophical Psychology,* Vol. 22, No. 1, (Washington, DC: Taylor and Friends, 2009) 83

that they do not yet have the needed information to validate their claims. They are making the claims on the basis of an assumption that they will find that validation.[241]

The second weakness of this view is also true of the classical naturalistic explanation considered previously. Evolutionary Psychology requires an irrational assumption that there can be no such thing as supernaturalism. Hence, any acceptable explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value must reflect the views of naturalism. That this negation of supernaturalism is not only unproven but, contra to it, significant evidence is available to counter it, exposes a significant weakness of the evolutionary psychology theory.

There is a third noteworthy weakness in that not all who are opposed to supernaturalism are in agreement with the tenets of evolutionary psychology. Even those who are renowned psychologists recognize the foundations upon which evolutionary psychology is based are insecure. Davies specifically complains that evolutionary psychology is "unpromising, leaden with promises it cannot keep. Minimal standards of evidence go unmet in its theories and the history of life it assumes is twisted to fit just those theories." [242] Such observations call evolutionary psychology into serious question as a viable explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value.

A fourth weakness has to do with its foundation upon the Darwinian theory of natural selection. Setting aside the fact that the natural selection model itself is unprovable and its popularity is unwarranted, evolutionary psychology claims to be built on that model which is almost completely biological in nature. Yet, evolutionary psychology claims it reasonable to

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[240] Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion and Naturalism,* 133.

[241] Huxley. *Evolutionary Humanism* loc. 907-910, Kindle.

[242] Paul Sheldon Davies, "Some Evolutionary Model or Other: Aspirations and Evidence in Evolutionary Psychology." *Philosophical Psychology,* Vol. 22, No. 1, (Washington, DC: Taylor and Friends, 2009), 83.

build its theory upon a biological basis without offering explanation for how the processes of biological evolution might somehow initiate psychological mechanisms which result in cognition and other capacities such as aesthetic apprehension. Their answer assumes a mechanistic explanation forthcoming, which demonstrates biological mutations as the origins of psychological mechanism by which mind can develop. The basis of their argument on forthcoming evidence weakens their explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value. "The proof is coming" cannot be accepted as a tenable foundation for belief.

Measuring the Naturalists Explanation

In summarizing naturalism's proposed explanations for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value, there is first the weakness demonstrated in the rejection of any possibility for supernatural explanations. This is due to the supposed wisdom that whatever explanation there might be, it has to be naturalistic because there is no such thing as the supernatural, as if by man making up his mind makes his decision any more real. Second, despite the naturalist's claim that biology or psychological mechanisms are the basis for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value, there is sparsity of proof for their claim. Their hopes are weakly based on anticipated proofs which have not yet materialized, much left been offered or proven. Thirdly, their views are replete with examples of ignoring such evidences supporting intelligent design or miracles, such as the resurrection, because of their admitted bias requires that any suggestion of the supernatural be rejected. While scientists claim to be seekers of truth, they reject the possibility of truths which do not fit this presuppositional bias. Finally, their proposed rational objections to disciplines such as theistic arguments are inaccurate, unprincipled, and irresponsible. Arguments they propose to the contrary, especially in the case of Richard Dawkins, are replete with error and misstatements. Craig is to be commended for his response to Dawkins' *God Delusion*. In

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Craig's work *Reasonable Faith,* Craig exposes the implausibility, irrationality, falsehood, and unnecessary skepticism of Dawkins' claims.[243] Since a reasonable claim can be made that Dawkins, though a brilliant physicist, and one of the more popular atheists in the country, there is apparent reason to question whether or not he is truly adequate to represent non-theistic philosophical views. In light of the criterion established at the beginning of this chapter, how these naturalistic explanations satisfy the requirements must now be reviewed.

Remembering Walton's theory of explanation cited above, focus is now directed toward a review of the explanations offered by naturalism. One must recall Walton's theory, "An explanation is successful if it communicates understanding of a sort needed to enable the questioner to make sense of the thing questioned."[244] To apply this standard, it must be asked: Do the naturalistic explanations communicate an "understanding of a sort needed to enable the questioner to make sense of the thing questioned?" The evidence presented seems to suggest the answer to this question is negative. How can an explanation meet this standard of explanation when it is built on the certainty of what must yet be discovered, as claimed by Huxley?[245] How can an explanation meet this standard if those who offer their psychological views are in conflict with other psychologists? How can either of the naturalistic explanations meet this standard when their bias limits them to a rejection of any answer that is not naturalistic in its viewpoint? Does such bias represent knowledge or blind presuppositions? Do their explanations demonstrate the needed understanding which makes its hearers understand their views? One must recognize that there is weakness in their explanations for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value.

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[243] William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith, Third Edition,* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008) 169-173.

[244] Walton, *Abductive Reasoning*, 51.

[245] See Page 113.

Applying the Criterion to Naturalistic Explanations

In addition to the definition of explanations, a proposed criterion of four very basic, obvious, self-evident qualities an explanation must now be applied to the two naturalistic explanations. These four qualities of this criterion being applied are: the need for clarity, the need for consistency, the need for cogency, and the need for conclusiveness. Each of these applications appear below.

The Need for Clarity

Applying the first element of this criterion requires a consideration of the clarity of the naturalistic explanations. Since an explanation can be clear and still incorrect, it is only appropriate to admit the clarity which exists in each of the two naturalistic explanations. They both clearly state that any explanation cannot be supernatural. They both clearly state that the explanation must be in agreement with the Darwinian natural selection theory. They both clearly claim biological roots for the psychological traits of man. They both infer or clearly proclaim that the evidence supporting their explanation is forthcoming. Obviously, in this regard, they are quite clear.

The Need for Consistency

In regard to consistency, one can say they are consistent with the Darwinian claims. They are also consistent in their rejection of supernaturalism. Yet, they are clearly not logically consistent as any theory based on information that is admittedly not yet present nor tested is weak at best. Clearly it is inconsistent to claim to be scientists seeking truth while at the same time making assertions on evidence which is not yet discovered nor tested. Clearly it is inconsistent to claim that the psychological mechanisms by which man makes decisions is the

result of the evolving of biological "stuff" when that assertion is based on evidence not present nor is there adequate explanation for how "stuff" evolves from one form to another. Consistency would require factual or reasonable data which is observable and thus verifiable, so that the conclusions could be demonstrated as consistent with other known data.

The Need for Cogency

Thirdly, is the matter of cogency. That is do these explanations sufficiently persuade those adequately informed? Are their explanations demonstrably viable? The answer to these questions is obviously negative. Minds of such caliber as Plantinga, Craig, Habermas et.al are not persuaded by the evidence presented. That is not to suggest that those who hold naturalistic views are of lesser intelligence. Instead, brilliant naturalistic minds are frustrated when they recognize that not all academics agree with their views. They insist, that they must persuade all academia to accept their biased explanations. Several academicians resist, however, because the explanations being offered are not sufficiently cogent. Simply put, they are insufficiently persuasive to any honest mind seeking meaningful justification for belief in naturalism. Additionally, how can naturalistic explanations meet the criterion's standard when it is openly admitted, by naturalists, that the proof of their claims are yet to arrive. This suggests that they are stating their explanation on the basis of future hopes, not present reality. Explanations based on verification yet to be obtained are not cogent explanations. Finally, to answer a question with no answer is not to answer the question. If naturalism is built on a presupposition that there is no supernaturalism, and evidence abounds which supports the existence of the supernatural, to dismiss this evidence because it does not fit their presupposition is to answer by not answering. Their presupposition so binds them that it is impossible for them to consider non-natural explanations simply because they are not naturalistic. This is a striking lack of cogency.

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The Need for Conclusiveness

The fourth element of this criterion seeks evidence that their explanations are conclusive in that they clearly offer an irrefutable explanation. There are those within academia who are not supernaturalists who raising doubts "as to whether evolutionary claims, by their very nature incapable of falsification, can properly be classed as truly scientific hypothesis." [246] Such doubts are adequate grounds for assessing their explanations as failing to meet the conclusiveness element of the criterion. If an explanation cannot meet or exceed the standard of conclusiveness presented by alternate views, it must be dismissed as the best explanation. Since there is within the worldview of naturalism those who disagree with Darwinian claims, while remaining non-theistic in their views, one could argue that if naturalism is able to entertain multiple views why can't naturalism accept even the possibility of supernaturalism as well. Their lack of conclusiveness does not offer a stable refutation of theistic causation of man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value. The application of the above criterion reveals serious shortages in the naturalist's explanation of man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value.

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The Supernatural Explanation of Man's
Capacity for Aesthetic Apprehension

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Having demonstrated that naturalism's explanation for man's ability to apprehend aesthetic value fails to meet either the standards of explanation set out by Walton or the proposed criterion for adequate explanations, it is apparent that naturalistic explanations for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic is questionable. Yet, that realization that the views of naturalism have weaknesses does not, by itself, establish supernaturalism's explanation as the best. Determining this requires presenting a viable argument for the superiority of the supernatural

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[246] Michael Denton, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*, 75.

explanation. The goal of the following section offers this argument and demonstrates that the best explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value is divine causation. In so doing, this section demonstrates the soundness of the second premise of the aesthetic argument.

This demonstration is presented in several stages. In the first stage, there is an obvious need to present a sufficient argument for whether or not acceptance of supernaturalism is rational or reasonable. Sufficient evidence and reason is required to affirm a justifiable belief in the existence of supernaturalism. In the second, after justifying the existence of supernaturalism, there remains the matter of determining it qualifies as an adequate explanation for the causation of man's ability to apprehend aesthetic value. The third stage offers justification in believing divine causation is the best explanation for man's aesthetic apprehension. The final stage will be a review of how well the supernatural explanation meets Walton's standards for explanation and the same criterion applied to the naturalistic explanations. The conclusion of this chapter will be a brief summary of how the second premise is validated.

The Possibility of Supernaturalism

Several approaches could be taken in an effort to demonstrate the justification for belief in God's existence. However, because of the particular focus on the apprehension of aesthetics, it is appropriate to limit the number of approaches so as to not get too off course, while at the same time sufficiently demonstrating the possibility of supernaturalism. To this end, three approaches are used to present sufficient evidences. The first reviews philosophical arguments. The second reviews evidence which argues for the miraculous, particularly the resurrection. The third reviews what some scientists are really saying about the theory of Darwinian naturalism. Particularly, this third approach will focus on noted scholars who see naturalism as scientifically invalid. In so doing, the particular point will be made that the deficiencies of the anti-

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supernatural views open the door for the consideration of the supernatural or divine causation as the best explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value.

Philosophical Argument

In the interest of brevity, the Classical Apologetic Method includes multiple theistic arguments. Each of which offers significant reason for justifying belief in the existence of God. Since God has been described by both naturalists and supernaturalists as a supernatural entity, it is reasonable to assume that any argument for God's existence is, by default, an argument for the supernatural. Equally true, and the point being made here, is that any argument for the supernatural is an argument for the possibility of God's existence. This is a foundational notion and need not be defended further. Most naturalists simply do not except the existence of God because they cannot, and subsequently do not, accept the notion of the supernatural. If they ever opened their minds to the possibility of supernaturalism, they would cease being true naturalists. This realization makes it apparent that to argue for theism, by default, is to argue for the supernatural. The reverse is also true. This opens the door to the realization that any theistic argument is, by default, an argument for supernaturalism.

The theistic arguments, verbalized specifically in Appendix 1, are meant to demonstrate a justifiable belief in God's existence. Hence, they demonstrate a justifiable belief in supernaturalism. The ontological theistic argument, for example, has been deemed reasonable since Anselm. The teleological theistic argument, originally introduced by Kant, opens the door for the possibility of a divine or supernatural purpose or design for all things. This further affirms the possibility of supernaturalism. The same can be said of the cosmological theistic argument, especially the Kalam version of it. Since everything which began to exist has a cause, the cause of the universe and the nature within it must come from outside the realm of the natural for it is

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unreasonable to hold that nature can cause itself to begin to exist. Thus, supernaturalism is a

reasonable explanation for the existence of everything that is. C. S. Lewis's verbalization of a

moral argument, later discussed by Baggett and Walls, is a reflection of the notion that because

man is the only animal on this earth capable of discerning what is good, moral, or ethical, and

this human capacity is universal, there needs to be an explanation. Baggett and Walls

demonstrate that the best explanation is divine causation. Similarly, the objective of this study is

to add the aesthetic theistic argument to this list. This study seeks to demonstrate that divine

causation offers the best explanation for the apprehension of aesthetic value over other

naturalistic explanations.

While it has been claimed that weaknesses exist in each of these classical arguments, as

previously referenced in Dawkins' work *The God Delusion,* he, like most others, reviewed them

for assumed weaknesses one at a time. His failure to undermine their individual validity has been

demonstrated by Craig and McGrath.[247] Yet, it is significant to realize that when these arguments

are taken cumulatively, they present even a more formidable affirmation for the existence of the

supernatural. Feinberg's cumulative case apologetic methodology reflects this principle. He

observes:

> [T]he kind of cumulative case that I am defending, [demonstrates that] the elements of
> the theist's case may tend to reinforce one another. Not all arguments may fail as proofs
> at just the same point. It is possible that one element reinforces an argument just at the
> point of its weakness. For instance, one may pose psychological explanations for
> someone's belief that he or she has a sense of God's presence because one thinks that
> God's existence is doubtful. But the theistic arguments may be advanced to show that
> God's existence is not contrary to reason. To use Plantinga's terms, it is rationally
> acceptable to believe that there is a God. Or put in terms of buckets, unless the holes in
> all ten buckets line up perfectly so that the water will spill out, one bucket may so
> reinforce another bucket so that the ten leaky buckets will indeed make a bucket that will

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247 See footnote 267.

carry water. The apologist is arguing that Christian theism is the best explanation of all available evidence taken together.[248]

So as to avoid any potential for confusion, it is acknowledged that each of these classical arguments, even taken one at a time, make a formidable claim for the existence of God. It must not be taken that Feinberg is suggesting otherwise. The concept of "leaky buckets" does not suggest any of these arguments fail in their purpose for presenting a justifiable reason for God's existence. But whatever 'leaks' are claimed to exist, that leak does not invalidate the belief in God's existence. In contrast, neither do of the theistic arguments establish proof of God's existence. It has already been demonstrated that this is not their intent.[249] Reason alone does not result in belief. That requires surrender on the part of the believer. Yet, in observing Plantinga's statement, as Feinberg, when theistic arguments are used in combination with each other, an even stronger cumulative argument emerges whereby it becomes even more obvious that "it is rationally acceptable to believe that there is a God."[250] Thus, supernaturalism can be even more affirmed by using the theistic arguments cumulatively. As significant as this is, there is more within the realm of philosophy to which one can appeal for affirming both the existence of God and the subsequent existence of supernaturalism.

Returning to Plantinga's work *Warrant and Proper Function,* mentioned earlier. As stated, this work is an effort to identify a reasonable causation for belief. That is to say, he desires to validate the notion that a belief which has "warrant" (loosely this term would imply that such a belief is justified), is the result first of all of a "cognitive apparatus which is

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[248] Cowan, *Five Views on Apologetics,* loc. 2448-2460, Kindle.

[249] See Introduction.

[250]Ibid.

functioning properly."[251] To briefly reiterate, for the purpose of making an additional

observation, Plantinga specifically defines this concept of properly functioning as "working the

way it ought to work in producing and sustaining it."[252] This demonstrates that cognition, even

that which is functioning properly, may fall short of warrant. Many people, even while having

their cognition in good working order, can claim to see something which is not really there.

Every human being has probably had such an experience which explains that properly working

cognition, by itself, is not sufficient for true warrant. This is why Plantinga adds the following to

the necessary conditions for warrant: "your faculties must be in good working order, and the

environment must be appropriate for your particular repertoire of epistemic powers. It must be

the environment for which your faculties were designed."[253] For example, the human body is

comprised of organs, all of which have appropriate design, and when functioning as designed,

the body is cognitively demonstrating the warranted belief that these organs are doing as they

were designed to do. However, if one subjects the human body to the freezing temperatures of

the Antarctic, it will not be long before organs are not functioning properly. Is this because they

were not designed properly or is it because they were designed to function properly in an

"environment appropriate for proper function?" Hence, for a belief to have warrant, it must not

only be the result of a sufficient cognition of a mind or consciousness which is functioning

properly, but that mind or consciousness must be in an environment conducive to proper

cognitive function.

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[251] Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function,* 4.

[252] Ibid.

[253] Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function,* 7.

One may continue down this path of rationalization one tedious step at a time. However, if one fast-forwards to the destination of this exercise on can make a new observation. Having established that belief is the result of properly functioning cognitive abilities which are functioning within an environment conducive to that proper function, one comes to the question of how it is possible for mutation to take place from one species to another. One must recognize that even natural selection demonstrates a measure of design. Someone or something has given everything in this universe purpose, a design which determines proper or improper functioning. Belief is intertwined within the notion that one can recognize what is and is not proper function, and those things which are functioning properly are doing as they were intended within the environment conducive to their function. One later recognizes that human beings, including their capacity for cognition, are "constructed according to a design plan."[254] In other words, one can claim that a warranted belief requires not only a properly functioning cognition which is at work within a conducive environment for that working, but that this capacity is the result of how man is constructed or designed. In other words, warranted belief requires a recognition that man has the capacity to comprehend his design and the purpose of that design. This understanding allows the conclusion that those who reject God's existence, specifically his role in the design and development of all life, are not functioning properly. God designed man to know him and be known by him. In short, supernaturalism offers rational purpose *for* man's existence while naturalism offers only the purpose *of* existence. The warrant for man's existence comes through properly functioning cognition, comprehending the purpose of his existence. This warrant for existence is only feasible through the realization of a divine cause. The result of this exercise is the realization that belief in the supernatural is more rational than the belief in naturalism. Only

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[254] Ibid, 13.

in supernaturalism does man have purpose for existence, the longing for which is characteristic of human beings. Naturalism, on the other hand, can only offer the purpose to exist.

At this point, it is necessary to once again return to C. F. H. Henry for some much needed counsel regarding the very notion that one can prove God's existence by reason.

> Without allowing a higher role to reason, and to revelation in the context of reason, the countercultural alternative can only take the form of a counter-myth, another pretentious construct which, as a further transitional episode in the history of man, affirms in its case the central importance of personal and community values[255]

Henry's argument here is that both reason and revelation are necessary if one is going to effectively comprehend value and need of redemption. This argues the case for supernaturalism. He insists that one must not suggest that philosophical reasoning alone is the pathway for proving supernaturalism or the existence of God. Nor is it likely, in spite of the *a priori* positions of reformed epistemological and presuppositional apologetic methods, that simply assuming the existence of God or the inerrancy and authority of the Bible, has persuasive impact on a culture which increasingly denies the validity of both. If one seeks to impact the world with the message of the truth about God, one must consider Paul's example, as demonstrated in 1 Corinthians 15, wherein he helped people to see the validity of his proclamation by using an argument for the supernatural event of the resurrection. That is, by appealing to evidence and reason. In that chapter, Paul appeals to the monumental evidence for the resurrection, an act which demands the recognition of a supernatural being. He also conveys the theological and philosophical reasoning behind the event. In other Pauline writings, he is consistently presenting rational explanations for why divine revelation is the most rational standard for life (see Romans 8:1; 12:1).

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[255] Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, vol. 1, 119.

In addition, one could consider Plantinga's argument mentioned earlier. He posits that properly functioning cognition, requires that cognition to function in the way in which it was designed and that this cognition takes place in an environment which allows or encourages its designed function. While it is true that no amount of cognition of itself results in religious faith without divine revelation, claiming the fact of God's existence and thereby claiming the reality of the supernatural to be *a priori* is, to those who have not experienced divine revelation, difficult to grasp. It actually suggests that a lack of recognition or a lack of willingness to recognize God's revelation of himself, his purposes and ways, suggests a cognition which is not functioning properly. To explain this suggestion further, Henry's great five-volume tome *God Revelation and Authority,* demonstrates that God has been revealing and continues to reveal himself to man out of a desire to know and be known by man. Assuming for a moment that this is true, only the impaired would refuse to acknowledge that if God's desire for man is to know him and be known by him, God would most assuredly have given man the cognitive capacity to experience him. It is not, therefore, too much of a stretch to claim that God designed man so that, when functioning properly, as he was designed by the Creator, he experiences God. The warrant for man's belief, therefore, is to recognize and trust in the reality that he was designed to recognize and receive the revelation of God. Both faith and reason or cognition is the means by which man trusts this fact. When man is functioning as he was designed to function, he will see and know the truth of God's existence. Supernaturalism is not anathema to those who have experienced the supernatural. This seeing and knowing the supernatural is the result of both reasoning, revelation and belief. To have either without the rest does not bring one into a comprehension of God. Proper function, therefore, which includes man exercising his intended

purpose of knowing and being known by the Father, is itself a justification for belief in a

supernatural God.

The Evidence for Miracles

In addition to the philosophical evidence for the supernatural the evidence for the

phenomena known as miracles also adds to the justification of belief in God. The work of Gary

Habermas, in collecting voluminous data which evidentially supports the historicity of the

resurrection, and Craig Keener's work, providing abundant medical evidence for events

unexplained by laws of nature, gives significant support for the high probability of the existence

of the supernatural. In addition to these luminaries Richard Swinburne, in his work, *The Concept*

of Miracle, offers his view regarding the nature of the miraculous.

> A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience
> has established these laws. The proof against a miracle from the very nature of the fact, is
> as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined. Why is it more than
> probable, that all men must die; that lead cannot, of itself, remain suspended in the air;
> that fire consumes wood, and is extinguished by water; unless it be that those events are
> found agreeable to the laws of nature and there is required a violation of these laws, or in
> other words, a miracle to prevent them. [256]

Though also affirming the existence of the miraculous, C. S. Lewis offers a contrasting view, "If

the laws of Nature are necessary truths, no miracle can break them: but then no miracle needs to

break them. It is with them as with the laws of arithmetic."[257] Lewis then illustrates his view:

> If I put six pennies into a drawer on Monday and six more on Tuesday, the laws decree
> that— other things being equal— I shall find twelve pennies there on Wednesday. But if
> the drawer has been robbed I may in fact find only two. Something will have been broken
> (the lock of the drawer or the laws of England) but the laws of arithmetic will not have
> been broken.[258]

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[256] Richard Swinburne, *The Concept of Miracle,* (London: Macmillan St Martin's Press, 1970) 14.

[257] C. S. Lewis, *Miracles: A Preliminary Study,* (New York: Harper Collins, 1947), 92

[258] Lewis, *Miracles,* 92.

Lewis uses this example to explain that no laws of arithmetic were violated. Instead, an outside influence, caused unexpected results. The law of arithmetic was not violated. Instead, the result that law mandates was not the result which occurred. An outside influence changed the results. Lewis uses this to discourage the view that miracles are a violation of the laws of nature. In the case of the miraculous, laws of nature remain intact. A miracle occurs when a force outside those laws influences the conditions making for a different result than what the laws of nature predict. How do these definitions help explain the resurrection? Is it more feasible to approach the resurrection with such absolutism towards the laws of nature that no amount of evidence could justify the claim that they were broken on that day? Or, is it possible that the laws of nature are themselves subordinate to some supernatural entity? The answer to these questions would require sufficient evidence that some outside influence, greater than the laws of nature, caused something to result which is different than the expectation governed by the laws of nature.

Since the naturalist holds that Scriptural evidence for the resurrection is circular reasoning in that the claim for the resurrection would in effect be the Bible arguing itself, it is helpful to offer non-biblical or para-biblical evidence denying the miraculous, including that of the resurrection. As has already been mentioned, evidence has been presented by Craig Keener and Gary Habermas, which establishes a high probability of the historicity of the resurrection. A brief review of those who have reviewed the work of Keener and Habermas, support the respectability of their work among academics. For instance, Michael Kruger of the Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte NC, published the following in *Themolios:*

> Every once in a while a book comes along that is long overdue within the academic community. Craig Keener's *Miracles* is just such a book. Ever since the rise of the Enlightenment, academic circles have been inculcated with a naturalistic, anti-supernatural bias that pervades almost every discipline, from sociology to anthropology to psychology. And the discipline of biblical studies is no exception to that rule. When it comes to the miracles contained in the NT accounts, scholars have been chronically

skeptical of their veracity and credibility. Keener's work is designed to challenge that bias. His intent is not to *prove* the truth of the NT miracles, nor of modern ones, but simply to show that the accepted predisposition against the *possibility* of miracles is intellectually indefensible.[259]

Gilbert Bilezikian of Wheaton College comments further on the respect Keener within the academic community:

> Craig Keener has won respect within the evangelical precincts of NT scholarship on the merits of his vast encyclopedic knowledge within his areas of research, his seemingly inexhaustible command of bibliographic resources, the meticulously conscientious quality of his scholarly endeavors, the reliability of his exegesis, and the fresh insights he has brought to several arenas of ongoing discussion. [260]

Suffice it to say that Keener is not some peripheral pseudointellectual lunatic emblazoned with a passion to prove the miraculous. As a seriously respected scholar, he has chronicled massive evidence to establish the notion that anti-supernatural assumptions about the impossibility of miracles is simply not defendable.

In regard to the respectability of Habermas' work, Norman Geisler of Southern Evangelical Seminary offers a critique of *New Dictionary of Christian Apologetics* edited by W. C. Campbell, Jack and Gavin McGrath, and C. Stephen Evans. The critique is in the form of a book review published in the peer-reviewed *Christian Apologetic Journal.* In this critique, Geisler mentions a "striking lack of recognition of some of the top evangelical apologists and their works. In the article on 'Jesus Historical' the crucial work by Gary Habermas is not mentioned."[261] This lack is mentioned again later in the review as Geisler comments, "The major

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[259] Michael J. Kruger, "Review of Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts by Craig S. Keener," *Themelios:* Volume 37, no. 1, (2012), 67.

[260] Gilbert Bilezikian, "A Review of *Gift Giver: The Holy Spirit for Today*. By Craig S. Keener" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 45, no. 3, (2002), 535.

[261] Norman Geisler, "A Review of New Dictionary of Christian Apologetic," *Christian Apologetics Journal* 6, no. 1, (2007), 125.

apologetic view called *Evidentialism* omits references to major proponents of it like John Montgomery and Gary Habermas when the latter even wrote an article for this Encyclopedia."[262] In these two statements by the academic luminary Norman Geisler, he is critical of the work he is reviewing because he considers a discussion of Christian evidential apologetics without mentioning or referring to the work of Gary Habermas to be a striking omission. In another journal, Daniel Akin[263] offers a book review of *Jesus Under Fire,* edited by Michael Wilkins and J. P. Moreland. Akin's favorable review of the work includes another affirmation of the academic reputation of Gary Habermas.

> Gary Habermas of Liberty University addresses the issue, "Did Jesus Perform Miracles?" He addresses such issues as ancient parallels of other miracle workers, the historicity of their historicity. Habermas points out the importance that worldview considerations play in one's acceptance or denial of the supernatural, and that clearly the JS takes a naturalistic approach to these kinds of issues. Habermas goes on to point out that unless one in an a priori manner has ruled out the miraculous, there is no real reason for rejecting the miracles as they are recorded in Scripture.[264]

In addition to his recognition of Habermas' standing among evangelical apologists, Akin also offers a review of Habermas' contribution to the work being reviewed. Akin affirms Habermas' work when he points out that "unless one in an a priori manner has ruled out the miraculous, there is no real reason for rejecting the miracles as they are recorded in Scripture." [265]

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[262] Ibid. 127.

[263] Dr. Akin is the President of Southeastern Seminary

[264] Daniel L. Akin, "A Review of Jesus Under Fire," *Faith and Mission* 12, no. 2, (1994), 94–95.

[265] This statement has significant bearing on the point being made that supernaturalism is defendable. For instance, the comments just reviewed regarding Keener and Habermas not only ascribe true possibility, if not probability, to the argument for miracles and the supernatural so much so that unless one has simply decided "a priori" that the supernatural is impossible, that there is "no real reason for rejecting the miracles as they are recorded in Scripture." What is evident is that in spite of what has been made to be the popular perception of naturalism, there is no real reason to reject supernaturalism, specifically as it has been evidenced in Scripture. Hence, there is a strong evidential argument for supernaturalism.

Scientific Review of Naturalism

In addition to the philosophical and evidential support for supernaturalism, it could be surprising to some that there is also scientific evidence for supernaturalism. For example, molecular biologist Michael Denton of Australia, in his 1986 work *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis,* cites and responds to a 1959 quote of Thomas Huxley, a renowned naturalist and atheist. Huxley is quoted as saying, "The first point to make about Darwin's Theory is that it is no longer a theory but a fact . . . Darwinianism has come of age so to speak. We are no longer having to bother about establishing the fact of evolution."[266] In response to this Denton states, "Now of course such claims are simply nonsense. For Darwin's model of evolution is still very much a theory and still very much in doubt when it comes to macro-evolutionary phenomena."[267] To fully comprehend what Denton is stating, one must comprehend the difference between microevolution and macroevolution. The first designates an evolution or adaptation within species which is not challengeable. When insects or birds are forced into different climates, for whatever reasons, over time birds of the same species will develop different anomalies as will insects. Evolution within the parameters of each species is common enough to observe and verify. What has not been observed is the mutation from one species to another species. This is called macroevolution, and there is little or no evidence to substantiate this phenomenon. It is to this distinction that Denton is referring. As such, evolution is yet a theory, and it is, as Denton suggests in the title of his book, in crisis. It is this point to which Denton is referring when he speaks of there being great doubt when it comes to macro-evolutionary phenomenon.[268]

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[266] Michael Denton, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis,* (Bethesda, MD: Adler and Adler Publishers Inc. 1986), 75.

[267] Ibid.

[268] Denton, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis.* 75.

What this implies is not only the great weakness of the argument for naturalism, but it is a

strong support for the claim that there has to be a better explanation. Alister McGrath offers a

real insight into how this better explanation might be found. In responding to Dawkins' *The God*

Delusion¸ McGrath and his wife have offered *The Dawkins' Delusion* which is a refutation of

Dawkins' atheistic claims. For this task, McGrath is uniquely qualified as he explains in the

following:

> Dawkins and I have thus traveled in totally different directions but for substantially the
> same reasons. We are both Oxford academics who love the natural sciences. Both of us
> believe passionately in evidence-based thinking and are critical of those who hold
> passionate beliefs for inadequate reasons. We would both like to think that we could
> change our minds about God if the evidence demanded it. Yet, on the basis of our
> experience and analysis of the same world we have reached radically different
> conclusions about God. The comparison between us is instructive, yet it raises some
> difficult questions for Dawkins.[269]

As he addresses the claims Dawkins made in *God Delusion* McGrath states the following in

regard to scientific validation of God and supernaturalism:

> The one inescapable and highly improbable fact about the world is that we, as reflective
> human beings, are in fact here. Now it is virtually impossible to quantify how improbable
> the existence of humanity is. Dawkins himself is clear, especially in *Climbing Mount*
> *Improbable,* that it is very, very improbable. But we are here. The very fact that we are
> puzzling about how we came to be here is dependent on the fact that we are here and are
> thus able to reflect on the likelihood of this actuality. Perhaps we need to appreciate that
> there are many things that seem improbable—but improbability does not, and never has,
> entailed nonexistence. We may be highly improbable—yet, we are here. The issue, then,
> is not whether God is *probable* but whether God is *actual.*

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[269] Alister McGrath and Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion: Atheist Fundamentalism and the Denial of the Divine,* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2007) 9. (On the inside panel of the dustcover, the following appears: "Once and atheist himself, Alister gained a doctorate in molecular biophysics before going on to become a leading Christian theologian.").

In this brilliant observation, McGrath is scientifically and philosophically asserting that since the highly improbable reality of man's existence is in fact a reality, it seems ill-advised to question the probability of God in light of the substantial evidence which has been given for his existence. One of the more potent scientific examples of the possibility of supernaturalism and the divine is found in the science of Intelligent Design. In speaking to the matter of Intelligent Design, Michael Behe offers the following:

> There is an elephant in the roomful of scientists who are trying to explain the development of life. The elephant is labeled "intelligent design." To a person who does not feel obliged to restrict his search to unintelligent causes, the straightforward conclusion is that many biochemical systems were designed. They were designed not by the laws of nature, not by chance and necessity; rather, they were planned.[270]

Behe wants his readers to comprehend that scientifically, not theologically, there is an unavoidable "elephant" which needs to be addressed, and science is simply not addressing it. His claim could not be simpler nor more direct. All the evidence he has gained as a molecular biologist and all the evidence from others in similar fields establish the fact that there was a Master Designer at work in the development of biological life. The intricacies that demonstrate this principle are largely microscopic hence Darwin could not have known. However, the evidence has been there and only recently discovered.

Could one claim that philosophical arguments, historical evidence and scientific investigations stand together as proof of God's existence? To do so would be a mistake. What it does demonstrate is the probability that something heretofore considered improbable by scientists, is now probable and that life was designed by someone or something which is vastly

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[270] Michael J. Behe, *Darwin's Black Box* (New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 2001). loc. 3274-3276, Kindle.

intelligent and powerful. Few things could be more appropriate here than to quote Antony Flew as he gives the reason for his conversion from atheism to theism:

> Why do I believe this, given that I expounded and defended atheism for more than a half century? The short answer is this: this is the world picture, as I see it, that has emerged from modern science. Science spotlights three dimensions of nature that point to God. The first is the fact that nature obeys laws. The second is the dimension of life, of intelligently organized and purpose-driven beings, which arose from matter. The third is the very existence of nature. But it is not science alone that has guided me. I have also been helped by a renewed study of the classical philosophical arguments.[271]

It is fascinating to see Flew's three-point reasoning for his change of heart. He lists three scientific reasons: 1. Nature obeys laws, 2. Intelligent Design, and 3. The very existence of nature. Secondly he lists classical philosophical arguments. It should be noticed that these are the precise arguments as the one being proposed by this study.

The result of these revelations is the obvious conclusion that if one is not committed to an a priori excluding the possibility of supernaturalism, it is possible if not likely, that a divine cause is responsible for the design found in nature. This design includes the capacity for man's apprehension of aesthetics. Likewise, miracles can be best understood as the result of supernatural forces invading and interrupting natural processes. The philosophical possibility of God's existence is not only a true possibility, but God's existence is a better explanation for these anomalies than the natural explanations mentioned previously. Yet, before ending this discussion there is one more source of evidence which should be considered. If, as has been demonstrated, supernaturalism or a divine cause is a better explanation than a natural cause for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value, then it is only reasonable to consider the teachings of Scripture.

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[271] Antony Flew, *There Is a God* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009), 88-89.

Summary of the Supernatural Explanation

Two questions are vital in determining the validity of the supernatural explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value. First, has it made a sufficient explanation so that its message is a sufficient explanation? Second, has it excelled the naturalistic explanation in meeting the criterion presented above? The answers to these questions are critical to the success or failure of this study's thesis. Each of these will be considered below.

The Explanation Question

In accord with Walton's description of explanation cited earlier, in order for explanation to be sufficient, one who knows more about a particular subject must communicate that knowledge in such a way that the one to whom the information is directed has opportunity to gain the same understanding. Explanation is clearly communicating information from one party to another so that the second party has equal understanding of the information as that possessed by the first party. This does not require the second party to agree, but it does require that the second party sufficiently understand the purpose or claims of the first party. With this standard in mind, one must ask if the supernatural explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value presented is sufficient to qualify as an explanation. It is obvious that the answer to the question is affirmative. Because a supernatural God exists and He desires man to know Him, it is reasonable to believe that He, as the Supernatural One created nature, including man. Specifically, he created man according to a design which intends for man to seek and know God. Apart from believing the supernatural does not exist, this explanation is far more sufficient as an explanation than that which is offered by either of the naturalistic explanations mentioned above.

Applying the Criterion

To argue that supernatural causation is the best explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value further requires an assurance of the existence of the supernatural in light of naturalism's claim to the contrary. Sufficient evidence has been set forth to reject the naturalistic claim. By demonstrating philosophically, evidentially, and scientifically the claims of anti-theism are weak, one is then able to allow for the existence of the supernatural. The next question is whether or not the explanation is better than naturalism's explanation thereby making it the best explanation. For this evaluation, the supernatural explanation is reviewed under the same criterion to which the naturalist views were submitted.

The Need for Clarity

The need for a clearly stated explanation has been presented. The explanation is of the second premise of the argument being presented. "The best explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value is divine causation." Naturalists have negated this premise sighting either the classical argument for Darwinian naturalism or their newer idea based on the Darwinian model, psychological evolution. The supernatural position has used philosophy, evidence, and science to refute those explanations. Hence, both the natural and the supernatural views are expressed clearly. But the clarity of the supernatural explanation exceeds the clarity of the naturalistic explanation. This is realized when one regards the fact that clarity must include sufficient explanation. Both naturalistic explanations for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value are clear. Yet neither present sufficient explanation in light of the obvious rejection of those who are scientists.

The Need for Consistency

There are two things which must be considered when using this element of the criterion. First, is the question of whether or not the explanation is consistent with known facts. Second, is the question of whether or not the explanation is logically consistent in that it logically flows from one point to the next. It has been demonstrated that the naturalist explanation struggles in this regard as many of their claims do not correspond with facts that actually exist. Their claim is based on vital facts which are yet forthcoming. The supernatural explanation, on the other hand, based on the assumption of God's existence is very consistent. God, as supernatural creator of all that is, uniquely designed man to have the capacity to apprehend aesthetic value. In regard to the need for consistency with the facts presented, the supernatural explanation has advantage over the naturalistic explanation.

The Need for Cogency

In the criterion above, the concept of cogency has to do with its being persuasive or convincing. That the supernatural explanation excels in this element of the criterion can be demonstrated in several ways. First, as has been demonstrated, it aligns more consistently with the facts and is thus is more cogent. Second, the supernatural explanation has been enough to see such atheistic scholars like Antony Flew, who rejected fifty years of defending atheism to admit the existence of God, to Alister McGrath, who began as an atheist in Oxford, only to see the cogency of the argument for God, ultimately becoming a Christian apologist today. Thirdly, there are many scholars who deny the dogma of Richard Dawkins, even those who are professed atheists. These facts make for a significant claim that the supernatural explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value has more cogency than that of the naturalist explanation.

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In addition to the arguments for supernaturalism presented by these brilliant men, the facts, data and multiple arguments which affirm it demonstrate the superior cogency of supernaturalism over naturalism. From the eyewitness accounts of Scripture to the volumes of evidence presented in the work of Keener and Habermas, the cogency of supernaturalism is superior. From the writings of Augustine, Anselm, Edwards, Lewis, Plantinga and Craig, and many others, there is powerful argumentation for the cogency of supernaturalism. Thus, the supernatural explanation seems to demonstrate superior cogency over that of the naturalist explanation.

The Need for Conclusiveness

According to the criterion stated above, the need for conclusiveness refers to the expectation that the explanation being reviewed is not vulnerable to honest refutation. Clearly, if an explanation is able to be sufficiently refuted, it is not a sufficient explanation. One has to consider the endurance supernaturalism has displayed against the arguments of naturalists since Darwin's publication of *Origin of the Species* in 1859. Since Plato, supernaturalism has been accepted and continues to be accepted as a viable reality. Philosophers have consistently called supernaturalism into question, especially since the Enlightenment. Yet, while science struggles with the inexplicable inconsistencies of Darwinian naturalism, theists have consistently and vocally defended the rational, reasonable and powerful arguments for supernaturalism and the divine. From Anselm to Plantinga, Augustine to Craig and Habermas, there has been a consistent argument for a supernatural God. Some might say it is overwhelming, but it is, at the very least, worthy of consideration. On the other hand, the case for naturalism which once seemed to be a house to stand forever, has seen its foundations begin to crumble. It has been demonstrated, as

even those sympathetic to atheism find, that naturalism is unsustainable. Hence, supernaturalism seems to have superior conclusiveness over naturalism.

Concluding Thoughts Regarding the Second Premise

It would seem that the second premise of the proposed aesthetic argument passes the test as the best of those offered. It is because naturalism has been demonstrated to be inadequate for withstanding the scrutiny of those willing to ask the needed questions. Clearly, not all things popular are correct or valid. Popularity does not make a position valid. In a society which holds such value on how one feels about something, it is needful to remember that feelings and truth are two different things. Just because one feels like naturalism should be the correct path to follow, does not mean it is the correct path to follow. As has been presented in this chapter, naturalism is not the best explanation for man's existence and is thereby not the best explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value. Supernatural, Divine causation has been shown to be the best explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value and this demonstration validates the second premise of the aesthetic argument.

Chapter 4

The Conclusion and Its Justification

Having established the validity of the first and second premise, it remains only to acknowledge that the two validated premises result in a valid conclusion. The argument stands as valid. God's existence best explains man's ability to apprehend beauty. God who is both divine and supernatural in his nature is the best explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value. This realization is due to the fact that it is the best explanation of those known explanations. Theism is the best explanation for the existence of the universe and all that is within it. This conclusion is justifiably based on the information in the previous chapters.

Why This Argument Matters

A resulting question to consider has to do with why this effort was ever attempted in the first place. Does it matter that theism can be validated by an aesthetic argument? Does it matter that one can argue for the existence of God? This apologetic question deserves particular consideration. As is obvious, apologetics is the focus, the primary discipline of this study. Remembering that not all theologians see the priority of apologetics (see introduction), there are those who identify themselves as scholars who would claim apologetics as not necessary, believing faith alone is sufficient. These would be called irrational fideists. According to Kenneth Boa and Robert M. Bowman Jr, in their tome *Faith Has Its Reasons,* such a fideist is someone who argues that "the truth of faith cannot and should not be justified rationally." [272] Boa recognizes that there have been distinctions drawn between rational and irrational

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[272] Kenneth Boa and Robert M. Bowman Jr. *Faith Has Its Reasons: Integrative Approaches to Defending the Christian Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: InerVarsity Press, 2005), 338.

fideism.[273] The description he gives of irrational type ascribes an unwillingness to consider apologetic questions with any other answer than "just believe."[274] Yet, there are fideists, whom Boa describes as rational, who would simply state that "the truths of faith cannot and should not be justified rationally."[275]

On the other side of the theistic spectrum are those who hold reason and rationality as essentials for the Christian faith. Boa describes this view as Classical Apologetics.[276] Fortunately, at present, it is the prominent view of Christianity that orthodoxy is the best defended with a combination of both faith and reason.[277] Those whom Boa identifies as utilizing this approach range from Anselm to B. B. Warfield to the contemporary Craig.[278] It is only proper to note that those who promote a faith which works in conjunction with reason do not negate the need for logic. Craig makes a significant effort in his work *Reasonable Faith* to demonstrate a compatible relationship between reason and faith.[279] Yet, he too recognizes that too often students lean toward the "extremes of fideism or theological rationalism."[280]

The point of these observations is that there are several approaches to apologetics and not all of them are effective even within the Christian community. This is the background upon which it is just to produce an apologetic work such as this study. There are actually several

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[273] Boa, Bowman, *Faith Has Its Reasons.* Loc. 337, Kindle.

[274] Ibid., loc. 338, Kindle.

[275] Ibid.

[276]. Ibid. loc.341. Kindle.

[277] Ibid. loc. 49. Kindle

[278] Ibid. loc. 50 ff., Kindle.

[279] Craig, *Reasonable Faith,* 29-58.

[280] Ibid. 58.

reasons which justify this effort. First, as has been mentioned, the general populace is deeply

entrenched in the error and misguidance of Darwinian naturalists who deny supernaturalism.

While many of the populace still believe in the idea of God, particularly the idea of Jesus Christ,

the acceptance of these ideas is declining generation by generation. The popularity of Richard

Dawkins and others like him is due not to his philosophical expertise but to his appeal as a rebel

against the establishment of religion. McGrath queries as to how "a gifted popularizer of the

natural sciences, who once had such a passionate concern for the objective analysis of evidence,

[could] turn into such an aggressive anti-religious propagandist with an apparent disregard for

evidence which was not favorable to his case." [281] Dawkins is an iconic figure among naturalists

today. It can be assumed that a study such as this one will not be received well by the present

secular society so dominated by naturalistic thought. Neither will it be received enthusiastically

by those religious thinkers who do not see the need for logic's defense of faith. To both

naturalists and irrational fideists, religion and science should not mix, and religion and

philosophy contradict each other. To justify the effort inherent to this study, in light of these

circumstances, the following explanations are given. It is hoped these explanations will not only

justify the effort but will demonstrate the need for additional effort.

To Affirm and Defend the Role of Apologetics

It is disturbing to realize that there are academics who seem to view apologetics as some

kind of benevolent tumor sucking the attention of students away from the more needed

objectives like prioritizing evangelism and missions. With all due respect to vital theological and

missional areas of study, if students do not realize the need to verbalize why they believe what

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[281] Alister McGrath and Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion,* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007) 12.

they believe and why it is more rational to believe the Word of God than not, they are simply not

relating to the mindset of this post-Christian society.[282] There may have been a time, in the not

too distant past, where a higher regard for Scripture was held in Western culture. Since that time,

as shall be demonstrated, that luxury is no longer the case. Assuming people once generally

accepted the truths of Scripture would have been acceptable. Reports indicate however, that day

is surely passing if not already passed. George Barna, for example, regularly polls the populace

regarding their shifts in religious opinions. His research demonstrates that 52% of American

society now believes Jesus was not sinless and that he committed sins while here on earth.[283] In

addition, fewer than half of those millennials (late teens to 25 years of age) surveyed stated that

they had made some kind of commitment to following Jesus Christ. This compares to 71% of

Elders (those over 65 years of age), 65% of Boomers (40-65 years of age), and 59% of

Generation Xers (25-40 years of age).[284] This demonstrates a slow but steady decline in the

acceptance of Christian ideals from one generation to the next. In response to this decline, it is

possible that the time has come for some of the truths of this study to be revealed so that the

coming generation might understand that something which is popular is no assurance that it is

correct.

It would seem obvious that one of the motivators for this decline of interest in the things

of God is due, at least in part, to the indoctrination students are receiving as implied by the

National Association of Biology Teachers mentioned earlier. These organizations' governing

documents establish themselves to be opposed to anything which contradicts Darwinian

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[282] Craig, *Reasonable Faith.* 16.

[283] This information can be obtained at the following URL: https://www.barna.org/barna-update/culture/714-what-do-americans-believe-about-jesus-5-popular-beliefs#.VuGy9oTUhPY.

[284] Ibid.

naturalism.[285] Such a presupposition strongly implies there no need to consider God as Creator or anything else, as he had no role in the development of the universe. They hold that all which exists is has come about by a process known as natural selection. When suggesting a query as to why this study matters, one might be driven by the view that the whole notion of creation versus evolution is an old problem which doesn't have any real relevance anymore. Stuart Hackett offers strong counsel for such intellectual laziness:

> Unless we are prepared to surrender the validity of our highest ideals of knowledge, beauty, and morality, we must posit, beyond the nonrational origins which determine belief, a guiding intelligence, a "Supreme Reason" in whom we must thus believe, if we are to believe in anything. The choice then must be determined on valuation grounds: either we believe in God, or the whole structure or all our beliefs sinks to nonrational dimensions.[286]

Based on Hackett's statement, the naturalism presupposition is not only in error, it is potentially dangerous. Such revelations provide a strong justification for this study which in essence contrasts the error of naturalism with justified belief in theism. In addressing these concerns, there is justification to provide this information and more to coming generations so as to enable them to make more well-informed choices concerning their purpose for existence and the design of all that exists. It is both personally and eternally risky to believe there is no God or that there is no accountability to a Designer who gave each person a purpose, design, and function. Addressing these concerns is one of the roles of Christian apologetics, and as such the effort to develop this study is defendable and justified. Secondly, it is not only those who do not have faith who need this awareness. Those who do have faith need to be equipped with this awareness not only for their own personal growth in faith but so that more believers are made able and

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[285] See footnote 200 in Chapter 3.

[286] Stuart C. Hackett, *The Resurrection of Theism: Prolegomena to Christian Apology,* Second Edition, (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2009), 149.

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available to help non-believers in knowing the truth. Thus, from the standpoint of meeting these needs, the goals of this project are justified.

To Affirm and Append Classical Apologetics

Further justification for this study begins with the observation that there are several good apologetic methodologies presently available. That is, there are several effective methods available to accomplish apologetic goals. Some might be considered stronger than others, depending on one's theological sensitivities, but several are identified as effective.[287] One of those methods is the classical apologetic method. This method is identified by its primary use of theistic arguments ranging from Anselm to present day. As noted earlier, while he was an atheist, Antony Flew compared these several theistic arguments to "leaky buckets." Boa quotes his exact statement, "If one leaky bucket will not hold water there is no reason to think that ten can." [288] Richard Swinburne responded to this critique by noting that it is possible to jam 10 leaky buckets together in such a way that the holes do not line up, thus allowing the jammed buckets to hold water.[289] This leaky bucket exchange between Flew and Swinburne has been referenced in demonstrating the philosophical support of premise 2 found in Chapter 3. It is this cumulative potential, demonstrated in the exchange between Flew and Swinburne, which strengthens the already formidable theistic arguments. The additional justification for this study is demonstrated by the fact that not only does the cumulative use of theistic argument strengthen their potential but adding another theistic argument and using all of them cumulatively strengthens classical

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[287] See Appendix 1 for a brief overview and critique of the five most common apologetic methods.

[288] Boa *Faith Has Its Reasons,* 212.

[289] Ibid.

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apologetic methodology even more. By formalizing aesthetic apprehension into a theistic

argument strengthening classical apologetics is possible.

It is important to note, as Boa properly points out, that classical apologetics, particularly

the theistic arguments, are most effective when their limitations are properly understood. It has

already been made clear that theistic arguments are not intended to provide a proof of God's

existence but to offer a justifiable belief in His existence. Theistic arguments provide an

opportunity to engage non-believers where they are. That is to say, the great strengths of theistic

arguments is that they "affirms the applicability of reason."[290] In other words, this method

"emphasizes the inescapable character of logic and reason."[291] Stuart C. Hackett,[292] defends that

assertion, "[T]he Christian faith should be defended in terms of criteria which center in rational

objectivity as the norm of truth and evaluation."[293] The aesthetic theistic argument identifies with

and strengthens classical apologetic methodology because it also defends theism using rational

objectivity as the norm of truth and evaluation.

Another justification for this study is that it engages in the "unavoidable role of

worldviews."[294] As Christianity is more and more challenged by the differing cultures and

worldviews, it is important to have every possible tool for openly and honestly engaging in those

worldviews using language and processes that are universally logical and rational. Again, this

can only be successful when the goal is to assert the justifiable belief in God's existence. The

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[290] Boa, *Faith Has its Reasons* 127.

[291] Ibid.

[292] Stuart C. Hackett is the former Division Chairman of Philosophy and Religion at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

[293] Stuart C. Hackett, *The Resurrection of Theism: Prolegomena to Christian Apology,* Second Edition, (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2009), 7.

[294] Boa, *Faith Has Its Reasons*. 129.

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next step toward faith can only be made by the individual under the leading of God's Holy Spirit using the revelation of Scripture (Rom. 10:17).

The justification of this project is due in part, to its strengthening of classical methodology by appending it with an additional argument. One of the reasons for using abductive reasoning is that its use seeks the best argument for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value. This seeking of the best explanation allows the door to remain open for other views but requires that those other views demonstrate how or why they are a better explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value. To this end, the justification of this study includes the realization that the aesthetic theistic argument not only appends the present theistic arguments, but by itself, offers strong justification for the belief in God's existence.

To Contribute to the Argument for Theism's Cogency

As defined in the previous chapter, cogency has to do with being forceful, convincing, or persuasive. Conceding the cogency of the other theistic arguments, justification for this study includes not only support for theistic arguments generally, but specifically, it strengthens to cogency of all. Since theism among the populace today is reducing in popularity, it is necessary to call on all available resources which demonstrate the superior cogency of theism. While some object to this idea because of their belief that all that is needed is faith, stronger persuasion of the masses is more likely by using rational reasons to encourage their receptivity to the biblical message, beyond the notion that the Bible says so. Hackett clarifies this assertion, "The Christian worldview both needs and embodies a thoroughgoing, rational apologetic as a manifestation of its relevance to the contemporary mind, together with the companion conviction that no existent system of Christian apology adequately meets this need." [295] An apparent undercurrent in what

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[295] Hackett, *The Resurrection of Theism,* 7.

motivates Hackett is a clear passionate desire to persuade his readers of the need for a Christian worldview which is able to withstand honest, but intense rational scrutiny. One might conclude that he assumes that any truth worthy of faith is worthy of a such a cogent defense. This study is further justified as it has demonstrated that passion for cogency in the presentation of the aesthetic theistic argument.

To Offer Another Argument for God's Existence

One more justification for this study is its obvious intent simply to offer another strong argument for God's existence. Once the claim that the capacity to apprehend aesthetic value is common among all human cultures, the inevitable question surfaces as to the origin of that capacity to apprehend. Previous philosophical approaches to the matter of aesthetics is limited to identifying the nature of aesthetics and the theological potential of such studies. The resulting quagmire of differing opinions is yet to offer the theistic impact desired. Clearly, the beauty of God, the Glory of God, the wonder of creation, and even the beauty of the prophetic and theological synthesis which is apparent in Scripture should be a project for present and future consideration. However, the omnicultural capacity of man to apprehend aesthetic value, and the theistic implications of that common apprehension, is a potential no longer waiting to be reviewed. This study is justified in offering a theistic argument based on the notion that the best explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value is divine causation. Belief in God's existence is further justified by this argument. The very uniqueness of humanity's capacity to apprehend truth, goodness, and beauty is best explained by divine causation. The effort demonstrated in executing and presenting this study is, therefore, adequately justified.

Summary of Why the Argument Matters

The conclusion resulting from the two premises of the aesthetic theistic argument is that God exists. That is, the non-existence of God is implausible. God's existence is the best explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value. The justification for this study has been made by making the following observations. First, the study is justified because it affirms and defends the role of apologetics. Both among those who profess a Christian worldview and those who do not have verbalized doubts regarding the role of apologetics. Part of the justification of this project, i.e. why it matters, is that it addresses these concerns and affirms and appends the role of apologetics within Christian theology.

Second, the justification for this project has been affirmed by its role in appending and affirming the effectiveness of the Classical methodology of apologetics. Offering the verbalization of an additional theistic argument does not negate the other arguments but lends further strengthening to the whole. Doubtlessly, weaknesses will be proposed regarding the aesthetic theistic argument. Yet, in addition to responsible defense of each individual argument against such claims, consideration of the cumulative strength of all theistic arguments offers significant resistance to these individual claims of weakness. Adding to that cumulative approach another theistic argument offers even greater potential for logistic strength. This potential for strengthening the cumulative impact offers further justification for this study.

Third, it has been demonstrated that the study offers a contribution to the cogency of the arguments for theism. Affirming the present strength of a justified belief in theism in the present theistic arguments is substantiated. This study demonstrates augmentation to the cogency of theism. This is particularly the case in regard to the ongoing theism versus atheism debate motivated by the present neo-Darwinian naturalism yet existing in several academic circles. In

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light of the general affirmation of academia's tendencies toward naturalism, this study's cogent

denial of the validity of naturalism helps to justify the need of this study and others like it.

Finally, the study simply offers a rational argument for the existence of God. Never

meaning to suggest that belief in God is the result of anything other than by God's grace through

faith, it is nonetheless true, especially in the present post-Christian culture, that being able to

verbalize a rational argument for God's existence is helpful in encouraging people to see their

need to reach out in faith. For these reasons, this project is considered justified.

Conclusion

This study has dealt with many academic disciplines in its effort to present an aesthetic theist argument. This multi-disciplined study is necessary due to the nature of the topic and the desire for a sufficient precision of thought. The thesis of this study is based on the notion that all human cultures demonstrate a capacity to apprehend aesthetic value. Upon that basis, a proposed theistic argument was presented and defended. This theistic argument has two premises and a conclusion:

(P1) Every human culture demonstrates a capacity to apprehend aesthetic value

(P2) The best explanation for this capacity is supernatural causation.

(C) God existence is the supernatural cause of man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value

As has been noted, the form in which this argument is presented is abductive reasoning. Hence, the thesis of this study, God's existence, can be rationally justified through the abductive reasoning used in presenting this argument. As with the case of other forms of logical reference, when premises are stated, resulting in a claim, all those premises must be true in order for the claim to be valid. This need dictated much of the content of this study. The premises have been validated and the conclusion stands as sound.

Since the need for identifying and justifying the use of abductive inference was obvious, the first chapter focused on that task. Relying heavily on Douglas Walton, this chapter identified three prominent forms of logical inference, deductive, inductive, and abductive, offering a review of the strengths and weaknesses of each. The chapter concluded that abductive form of inference was the most suited form in which to present the aesthetic theistic argument.

The second chapter sought to affirm the validity of the first premise. Since the premise centers on the terminology *apprehending aesthetic value* this chapter identified and clarified that

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terminology. Through the use of multiple sources, apprehending was discovered to represent the value of seizing, becoming aware of, or understanding the meaning of some concept or thought. Four features were presented as being necessary for apprehension to take place: cognition, experience, choice, and sentience. These features were each identified, explained, and justified as sufficiently necessary to the process of apprehension. In addition, different categories of apprehension were identified and defined. The four categories were: objective, intra-subjective, associative, and character. The meaning of apprehension was established.

The second focus of the second chapter was toward ascertaining the concept of aesthetic value. Since the locution *aesthetic value* describes all human cultures are able to apprehend, it is necessary to identify what is represented by the term. The study revealed aesthetic value to be very difficult to identify with precision. Several definitions, theories, and philosophical views were identified and discussed. A proposed definition of aesthetic value rose from an attempt to formalize the many views into a sense of unity. The proposed definition consisted of three potential views of attaining aesthetic value: the formal theory, the emotional or psychological theory, and the relational view. Each of these theories was identified and discussed. The chapter ended with a rigorous discussion of the premise's conclusion that attaining aesthetic value was actually common to all known cultures. This claim was validated by considering the historical, philosophical and theological evidence for the claim. Upon the consideration of the presentation of chapter 2, the first premise was validated.

The goal of the third chapter is to validate the second premise. Since this is the central premise of the argument and the feasibility of the argument rested significantly on whether or not this premise could be validated, significant attention was focused toward attaining that objective.

Inherent to that effort was to recognize that this premise required a review and comparison of the claims of naturalism and supernaturalism.

Since abductive reasoning requires the identity of the best explanation, attention was directed toward specifically identifying the meaning of the concept of "explanations." Returning to the writings of Walton et.al. for insight into the concept of explanation, the chapter established that not much had been done to formally recognize this concept within the scope of logical argumentation. Walton's recognition of this deficiency resulted in his offering a formalized definition of "explanation." This definition was used for this study. In essence, a model for explanation requires a minimum of two people, wherein one has information or understanding which the other does not. Communicating the content of that information in such a way that the second person is able to receive or understand the same information was identified as an explanation.

After demonstrating this model for explanation it was then necessary to establish a criterion whereby it could be determined which explanation was best. This criterion had four elements within it: the need for clarity, the need for consistency, the need for cogency, and the need for conclusiveness. Each of these elements of the criterion were also identified and explained.

The focus of the discussion was then turned to three explanations which had been identified as all known explanations for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value. It was at this point that the study became focused on the theism/atheism debate which has formally occupied philosophers and theologians since the Enlightenment. This discussion, however, was more particularly focused on the naturalism versus supernaturalism facet of the debate which rose to prominence after the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859.

The first explanation to be discussed was labeled the classical naturalistic explanation. This view holds that all of life began as "stuff" and that this "stuff" has evolved over the billions and billions of years into life as it is presently known. Several weaknesses of this explanation were identified as it was reviewed through the spectrum of Walton's formal definition of explanation and the criterion previously mentioned. The second explanation to be reviewed was labeled evolutionary psychology. This view is an extension of the previous view and is admittedly built upon the Darwinian natural selection model. This view assumes that just as the stuff which resulted in the development of biological complexities known today, so this same stuff eventually developed mind which itself is the result of psychological mechanisms which themselves evolve in the same manner as do biological mechanisms. Using the same standards as those used to evaluate the classical naturalistic explanation were used to evaluate the evolutionary psychology explanation. Several weaknesses were identified within this second proposed naturalistic explanation as well. The criterion identified significant weaknesses in these two explanations.

The supernatural explanation was then similarly reviewed. This explanation was also labeled the theistic model. Before dealing with the specific question, an argument for supernaturalism was presented. This was accomplished with a three-fold argumentation: the philosophical support, the evidence for miracles, and the scientific support for supernaturalism. These three elements of support for supernaturalism also identified divine causation as an explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value. The supernatural explanation was then subjected to the same criterion as that of the naturalistic explanation. The results made it clear that a supernatural, divine causation, (God) was the best explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value.

The fourth chapter briefly recognized that with the two premises having been validated, the resulting claim was also valid. Hence, best explanation for man's capacity to apprehend aesthetic value is God's existence. At that point, the thesis was validated.

In addition to this brief summary of results of the study, the fourth chapter also affirms the justification of effort given to execute this study. Specifically, the question of what benefit there might be to the completion of the study. Several reasons were given. Among these were: to affirm and defend the role of apologetics, to affirm and append the classical method of apologetics, to contribute to the perceived cogency of theism, and to offer another argument for God's existence. The parameters and goals of the study, including both its thesis and its justification as set out in the introduction of the paper, have been accomplished.

Appendix 1

Theistic Arguments

Since the aesthetic theistic argument is designed to append and strengthen present theistic arguments, a presentation of the more popular forms of theistic arguments is appropriate. Louis Berkhof identifies several "So-Called Rational Proofs for the Existence of God."[296] He describes these arguments reverently, "They are important as interpretations of God's general revelation and as exhibiting the reasonableness of belief in a divine Being."[297] According to Berkhof, the most popular among these are the Ontological, Cosmological, Teleological and Moral Arguments.[298] A brief description of each of these provides a helpful background for the study as well as identifying the locus of the Aesthetic Argument presented by this study.

Ontological Argument

Though Berkhof mentions Descartes, Samuel Clarke and Hegel as proponents of this argument, he recognizes Anselm as the originator of it. Anselm states the view, "We have in ourselves the idea of an absolutely perfect being. Now, perfection implies existence. Hence, God exists."[299] A formal view of the argument is as follows:

(P1) A being whose non-existence is inconceivable is greater than a being whose non-existence is conceivable

(P2) God is the greatest conceivable being

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[296] Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 26–28.

[297] Ibid, 28.

[298] Ibid, 26.

[299] Anselm, S., Archbishop of Canterbury, & Deane, S. N., *Proslogium; Monologium; An Appendix, In Behalf of the Fool, by Gaunilo; and Cur Deus Homo*, (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2009), i-ix.

(C) God's non-existence is inconceivable: God exists.

One must remember that while theistic arguments offer meaningful justification for belief in God, they do not prove the existence of the Christian God of the Scriptures. Clearly, evidence for the innate idea of such perfection may imply many things. Additionally, there is some distance left to go before one can use this argument to justify belief in the Christian truth claims.[300] In spite of this, this theistic argument is a very sound justification for belief in God's existence.

Cosmological Argument

The Cosmological Argument has "appeared in several forms."[301] Yet, in general, they each imply that everything which exists has a cause. The universe exists, therefore it has a cause. The weakness of this particular brand of the Cosmological Argument is found in recognizing that if all things have a cause, then God's existence must have a cause and that would call into question the biblical claim of His eternality.[302] A more appropriate and justified form of the cosmological argument is the Kalam Cosmological Argument popularized by Craig.[303] Craig cites this form of the cosmological argument as follows:

(P1) That which begins to exist has a cause

(P2) The universe began to exist

(C) The existence of the universe must be due to a cause. (God is implied as this cause)

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[300] Lewis Sperry Chafer, "Theology Proper," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 95 (1938): 267ff. In this article Chafer offers a similar presentation of these classical theistic arguments.

[301] Berkhof, *Systematic Theology,* 26.

[302] Ibid, (Berkhof observes: "Hume called the law of causation itself into question, and Kant pointed out that, if every existing thing has an adequate cause, this must also apply to God, and that we are thus led to an endless chain.").

[303] Craig, *Reasonable Faith,* 96-99.

Craig summarizes, "That which *begins* to exist has a cause. The universe began to exist. Therefore, the existence of the universe has a cause.[304] By adding the term *begins* the Kalam version of the cosmological argument avoids the need to address the thorny question of the cause of God's eternality. He has always existed and as such has no beginning. Craig uses this argument effectively to validate the justification for believing the cause of all, which began to exist, is God.

Teleological Argument

Berkhof reveals that Immanuel Kant saw this argument as superior to the previous two. Yet, Kant did not believe it proved the existence of God nor a Creator, but "only a great architect who fashioned the world." [305] Berkhof verbalized this argument in the following way, "The world everywhere reveals intelligence, order, harmony, and purpose." .[306] Using this observation he claims it to imply the existence of an intelligent and purposeful being capable of producing such a world. Yet, in spite of his affirmation, Kant points out that this argument does not prove the existence of God nor does it prove a Creator. All it argues is that a great architect fashioned the world.[307]

A contemporary theistic demonstration of this argument can be found in the Intelligent Design movement which has been promoted by such academic luminaries as Michael Behe,[308]

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[304] Ibid.

[305] Immanuel Kant, *The Immanuel Kant Collection: 8 Classic Works* (Amazon: Waxkeep Publishing, 2013), loc.7840-7841, Kindle.

[306] Kant, *The Immanuel Kant Collection: 8 Classic Works,* loc. 7840, Kindle.

[307] Ibid.

[308] Michael J. Behe, *Darwin's Black Box* (New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc. 2001), loc. 3274-3275, Kindle.

Philip E. Johnson,[309] Michael Denton,[310] and William Dembski[311]. These men argue that because there is so much evidence of design in the universe, there must be a designer. Behe was previously quoted in his remark that among naturalists, Intelligent Design is "the great elephant in the room."[312] By this he seems to imply that scientists' avoidance of the issue is quite obvious. Yet, the presence of design offers a strong basis for justifying belief in a divine Creator/Designer.

Moral Argument

Developed from the thoughts of C. S. Lewis and others, and reflected in the excellent works *Good God* and *God and Cosmos,* by David Baggett and Jerry Walls,[313] the moral argument has been recognized as another significant theistic argument. Together, these authors establish the notion that morality of some kind is a properly basic notion. They cite such evidence as "No culture believes it appropriate to torture children for fun," establishes this premise.[314] From this notion, they proceed to argue theism as the best explanation for this universal morality. They discuss some of the many alternatives proposed by both naturalists and theists, but Walls and Baggett demonstrate that the best answer for universal morality is its

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[309] Philip E. Johnson, *Darwin on Trial,* (Washington DC: Regency Publishing, 1991), Though the entire book is relevant, particular attention should be given to Chapter 2.

[310] Michael Denton, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis,* ((Bethesda: Adler and Adler Publishing, 1986), Chapter 3 is of particular relevance to this study.

[311] William Dembski, *Intelligent Design: The Bridge Between Science and Theology,* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999) Part 2, Chapter 4 is of particular relevance to this study.

[312] Behe, *Darwin's Black Box,* loc. 3274, Kindle.

[313] See footnote 27.

[314] Baggett and Walls, *Good God: The Theistic Foundations of Morality*, 9.

divine origin. [315] This argument, like the other theistic arguments, does not settle the matter of theism completely, but it does adequately argue that the best answer for the origin of morality is God.

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[315] Ibid. 100.

Appendix 2

Apologetic Methodologies

Since it is appropriate to know why Christians believe what they believe, it would be helpful to identify and comprehend certain methods for attaining this goal. A recent work which supplies this need is a published series of discussions and counter discussions between five noted apologists and theologians. The editor of the work is Stephen B. Cowan entitled, simply enough, *Five Views of Apologetics.*[316] The five contributors are William Lane Craig, Gary R. Habermas, Paul Feinberg, John Frame and Kelly James Clark. Craig presents his argument for the Classical Method of apologetics. Habermas presents his evidential methodology. Feinberg presents an approach which he defines as Cumulative Case. Frame offers the Presuppositional Method and Clark presents what he describes as Reformed Epistemology. A brief description of each of these methods provides a helpful overview of apologetic methodology.

Classical Apologetic Methodology

The Classical Apologetic Methodology as presented by Craig,[317] is largely a philosophical approach. The theistic arguments associated with this method identifies it as such. A brief overview of some of the more popular of these arguments will demonstrate this. They are the ontological argument, the teleological argument, the cosmological argument, and the moral argument. The aesthetic argument being proposed adds to this particular list.

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[316] Cowan, *Five Views on Apologetics,* loc. 77, Kindle.

[317] Ibid., loc. 364, Kindle.

Evidential Apologetic Methodology

The Evidential Apologetic Methodology, presented by Gary Habermas,[318] is also effective and bears a great resemblance to the arguments for the resurrection used by Paul in 1 Cor. 15. Therein Paul lists eyewitnesses or groups of eyewitnesses to the resurrected Christ. In essence, this method seeks out and presents evidence for validating the biblical and Christological claims of Christianity. Examples of this method would include the way archaeology and historical evidence demonstrate significant probability for Christian truth claims. These offer rational justification for belief in those truth claims. Interestingly, in *Five Views,* Cowan states Habermas to believe that anyone who "grants that miracles can be used to prove God's existence is an evidentialist."[319] This observation sometimes results in a potential clouding of the distinction between examples of classical and evidential methodology used by Craig and Habermas. This contributes to the belief that while the classical and evidential methodologies could be the strongest of the five, a clear distinction between the two may not always be possible.

Cumulative Case Apologetic Methodology

The Cumulative Case Apologetic Methodology is somewhat difficult to define briefly as it seems to be more a collection or drafting of several apologetic methods together with other relevant evidence, depending on which combination might best suit the particular discussion. A proposed justification for this methodology is presented by Joseph Wooddell who explains the value of the cumulative case by pointing to an encounter Antony Flew had with Basil Mitchell.

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[318] Cowan, *Five Views on Apologetics,* loc. 1332, Kindle.

[319] Ibid. Loc. 5739

In that encounter, Flew is said to have equated this approach to that of using ten leaky buckets with the expectation of holding water.[320] Feinberg, in his contribution to the Cowan work,[321] agrees with Mitchell's response that such buckets could hold water if they were jammed together in such a way that the holes did not line up.[322] While this is a reasonable assertion by Mitchell and Feinberg and deserves significant consideration, it suggests the idea that this methodology is more a combination of other methods, rather than offering a unique individual methodology. The limitation of space and purpose of this project prohibits commenting on this methodology further. However, it should be noted that Craig's response to this method seems uncharacteristically critical. This raises some concern.[323] Yet, it is clear that Feinberg brings some significant thoughts to the table in Cowan's work. However, a general consensus could suggest that the cumulative case method for apologetics needs further consideration.

<div align="center">The Presuppositional Apologetic Methodology</div>

The Presuppositional Apologetic Methodology presented by John Frame[324] is built upon the presupposition that the Bible, in its original autographs, is God's Word, inspired and inerrant.[325] From that presupposition, Frame argues all apologetics should be by, and through, the Bible. Since the Bible's accuracy and authority is the foundation upon which all apologetics

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[320] Joseph Wooddell, *The Beauty of the Faith: Using Aesthetics for Christian Apologetics,* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011), 36.

[321] Cowan, *Five Views,* Loc. 2147 ff. Kindle.

[322] Ibid.

[323] Ibid, Loc. 2544. Kindle,

[324] Ibid. Loc. 3070 ff. Kindle.

[325] Wooddell, *The Beauty of the Faith,* 39-41.

should be based, according to Frame, that which appeals to philosophical reasoning, formal argumentation or historical evidence is unnecessary or of secondary consequence at best.

While the position of this study both affirms and supports an inerrant view of Scriptures, one must recognize that the naturalist rejects anything which is called "supernatural."[326] Subsequently, if the goal of apologetics is to persuade non-theists to accept the notion that belief in God is justifiable, and the naturalist does not accept the Scripture's inerrancy as a properly basic notion, as does Frame, the naturalist will perceive this methodology as circular or inadequate in its reasoning. He would claim that this presupposition about the Bible is using the object of the debate as a means to justify itself. Stated in these terms, one must confess there is a circular nature to this reasoning. For the naturalist, this circular reasoning is clearly problematic. While there is much for presuppositional apologetics to contribute to those who are already theists, it is suggested that as an apologetic methodology, when used to confront naturalism, has limitations.

<center>Reformed Epistemology Apologetics Method</center>

A similar observation can be made regarding Reformed Epistemology Apologetics Methodology. In presenting this method, Clark contends, similarly to Frame above, that evidence and argument is not necessary for knowing something to be true.[327] Instead he asserts that there are many things one can know without reliance or requirement of evidence. He contends that the knowledge that there is a God is one of them. In short, the whole presentation of theistic arguments and much of classical methodology is not necessary due to the fact, according to Clark's perception, that the knowledge that the knowledge of God's existence is a properly basic

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[326] Huxley, *Evolutionary Humanism,* loc. 825-826, Kindle.

[327] Cowan, *Five Views,* loc. 3885, Kindle.

notion.[328] Since naturalism is built on the premise that there is nothing supernatural, this method is likely to be perceived by them as possessing the same vulnerability of circular reasoning as that of the presuppositional method just discussed. Again, as with the presuppositional method, those who are theists can be greatly benefited by a knowledge of this methodology when confronting one another. a, on the other hand, could regard this methodology as circular in its reasoning, failing to be persuaded by it.

As a result of this overview, it seems apparent that the most persuasive methodology for attaining the goal of persuading naturalists or atheists that a belief in the existence of God is justifiable is the classical or evidential apologetic methodology, or some combination of the two. This, of course, is dependent upon one's definition of the evidential apologetic methodology, which, as was noted by Cowan above, is perceived differently between Craig and Habermas. Understanding this makes it understandable as to why this project seeks to be associated primarily, with the classical apologetic methodology.

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[328] Wooddell, *The Beauty of the Faith*, 41.

Appendix 3

The Relevance of This Study to Worldviews

In the introduction of his work *Global Theory from Kant to Hardt and Negri,* Gary

Browning observes:

> Global theory provides the mood music of contemporary academic and political
> commentary. . . . Theoretical understandings of the world can take many forms,
> embracing causal analysis, historical periodization, ethical and ideological appraisal and
> conceptual clarification.[329]

Since worldviews are examples of "global theory," in that they meet the definition "theoretical

understanding of the world," it is obvious that Browning believes one's worldview or *global*

theory acts as a filter through which one come to apprehend history, ethics, moral values,

ideologies etc. One's worldview significantly influences the basis of one's moral and ethical

values, or whether such concepts are even valid. It would be difficult to deny that worldviews

exist and it would also be difficult to deny that every person has not apprehended a worldview of

some kind, even if he is unaware of it. Consequently, awareness of one's foundational notions,

one's worldview, should be a concern for every person, especially those seeking to be critical

thinkers. The obvious question is: How might one choose, or come to adopt, his worldview? That

is, how does one come to have a worldview? Secondly, how does one come to trust or be assured

of the validity of his or any worldview? For example, should one simply accept that view which

is most popular assuming that its popularity establishes it as worthy? Is there a standard by which

one comes to know the validity of a worldview?

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[329] Gary Browning, *Global Theory from Kant to Hardt and Negri,* (Houndsmill, England: MacMillan Distribution Ltd., 2011), 1.

In the post-Christian, multicultural environment of the present day, there exists a growing demand for tolerance and relativism.[330] Yet within this environment there are challenges for those who identify themselves as being of the Christian faith. For instance, the secular culture questions why one would prefer a Christian worldview over naturalism and its derivative, humanism, since these are becoming more popular? The more popular worldview, especially among academia. Seems to lean toward atheistic naturalism. In light of the potential for rejection or even persecution, why should one accept an opposing, unpopular view? Such questions, or similar ones are being directed toward Christian college students attending secular schools today. As a result, these students face serious challenges regarding the rationality of their Christian heritage. After all, Christianity requires belief in a God who claims to be the Truth. Naturalism, on the other hand, held by most modern academics, consider absolute truth to be impossible or irrelevant and archaic. Between the naturalistic and Christian worldviews, many academics have chosen naturalism.[331] Is it feasible to think that current college students with faith in Christ are adequately equipped with sufficient critical thinking skills to address or stand against the temptation to yield to the pressure of the popular naturalistic academics? Central to this question is an awareness that naturalism is not the most rational and verifiable worldview. Do college students, especially Christian college students, have this awareness? Theistic arguments, along with other elements of critical thinking, can help these students see better and more viable

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[330] A thorough discussion of the views expressed here is found in Craig's response to Feinburg's presentation of "Cumulative Case Apologetic Method" in Cowan's *Five Views on Apologetics,* loc. 2678ff, Kindle.

[331] The present preference of general academia for a naturalistic worldview over that of a Christian or theistic worldview can be validated by several sources. Representative of which are: Julian Huxley, *Evolutionary Humanism,* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1992), loc. 1693, Kindle; Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion,* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2008), 125, and Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 197.

alternatives to naturalism. They can and should be shown that popularity is not the best criterion for determining the soundness of an idea.

One of the many opportunities facing evangelical Christianity today is to reverse the present popularity of naturalism. Its presence has infiltrated both the general public, and even the church.[332] Evangelicals, especially evangelical academics, hold that it is indeed rational to believe that truth is correctly rooted in theism. This project stands as a reflection of this belief. The task of sharing this message with both the world and the church is both necessary and possible. Additionally, this can be done in a reasonable, supportable and compassionate way. In contrast to the present atmosphere wherein the majority of academia chooses to prefer non-theistic views, this study reflects the belief that the theistic, supernatural worldview is more reasonable and more justifiable than the naturalistic and atheistic worldview. For this reason, this project emphasizes the contrasts between the worldviews of theism and atheism, or naturalism and supernaturalism.

The primary point of conflict between these two views centers on the fact that the theistic worldview assumes supernaturalism. It holds to the belief that there is a divine entity existing outside the boundaries of nature. Naturalists, on the other hand, reject the possibility of such beings as they reject supernaturalism. Additionally, Christians believe that God is personal,

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[332] R. J. Berry, *God's Book of Works: The Nature and Theology of Nature*, Glasgow Gifford Lectures (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2003), 10. Berry states, "Darwin had made belief about God all or nothing: either God was an active participant, immanent in the world, or completely absent. Since present academia affirms naturalism, the conclusion of Berry's comment is that more and more Christian youth are being confronted with the idea of an absent God." In the foreword of his work, He describes himself as a Professor of Genetics. Additionally, he states: "Besides being a natural scientist, I am a Christian. Although I am prepared to believe in religion without revelation, it seems to me highly unlikely that any God worth believing in would not seek to reveal himself (or herself—I do not want to pick quarrels over imponderables) in some effective way." His self-description seems to be contrary to his statement regarding Darwin. If Darwin has made belief about God "all or nothing," how is it possible to be both a natural scientist and a Christian? The fact that he believes this self-description to be important enough to state publicly, suggests that he has somehow managed to synthesize naturalism and Christianity. This seems to affirm the claim of naturalism's influence in the Church.

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supremely intelligent, responsible for creating all that is, and rules firmly but graciously over creation. Naturalists deny such claims.

The Naturalistic worldview claims that all phenomena related to life can be scientifically, empirically or rationally explained within the purviews of natural selection or evolution and that there is no existence outside the boundaries of nature. Hence, naturalists are generally atheistic as they cannot allow for the existence of a supernatural being. They also hold to Darwinian or, more recently, Neo-Darwinian concepts and secular humanism. They encourage and demand that their values are uniquely valid for inclusion within educational curriculum. [333]

Relating what has been said to the purpose at hand, this study affirms theism as superior to other worldviews as it provides a more rational basis for belief. Sufficient evidence and arguments given with the study validate this claim. Since identifying, clarifying and explaining the reasoning and evidences supporting such a statement is the role of apologetics, it is accurate to identify the following study as such. In particular, this study identifies with the classical apologetic methodology.[334] It verbalizes and affirms a theistic argument based on man's ability to apprehend aesthetics.

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[333] Huxley, *Evolutionary Humanism,* loc. 1463, Kindle. Huxley states, "Thus the evolutionary idea must provide the main unifying approach for a humanist educational system, and evolutionary biology could and should become a central or key subject in its curriculum."

[334] A more detailed discussion of the several apologetic methods and why this study fits within the "classical apologetic methodology" is found in Appendix 2

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