Common Sense Externalism versus Pamalogy

Inference to the Best Explanation in the Light of a Better Possible Explanation

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Abstract

James Carvin reviews a doctoral dissertation by Kevin McCain for the University of Rochester 2011, *Inference to the Best Explanation and the External World: A Defense of the Explanationist Response to Skepticism*. McCain's dissertation advocates an Explanationist response to skepticism. Carvin retains McCain's advocacy of inference to the best explanation, while positing an alternative hypothesis to commonsense externalism that is an improved skeptical hypothesis called Pamalogy. Pamalogy is a multiverse solution to theodicy primarily, which is a metaphysical system of Carvin's own invention, built on *a priori* inferences and axiological notions. Will it do damage to McCain's claim of defeat over skepticism? You decide.

Introduction

Inference to the best explanation is utilized in a number of the propositions posted on the web site that I created to explain a metaphysical system of my own invention, called Pamalogy.[1] Proposition 21 suggests a world that compresses instances of the Universe so that all that could have been bad does not exist and so only that which is good is actualized, leaving only false memory impressions of what is bad for the sake of unique opportunities for Maximized Awesomeness in the Multiverse and for free moral choice. The basis for this belief is given in the inferences of the previous propositions. If Pamalogy is true, then it stands out as a different sort of skeptical alternative in that there are perhaps compelling reasons to believe in the type of external world it suggests, resulting in an improved skeptical hypothesis. This may pose some challenges to those who have been arguing in favor of a traditional view of knowledge and a "commonsense" view of the external world and sensory experience.

Seeing this potential clash, which was something I did not want, I sought out a published dissertation that might summarize as thoroughly as possible an argument against skepticism that I could mesh my thoughts up against. I was not disappointed in my discovery of exactly such a thing written by Kevin McCain in partial fulfillment of his Doctoral Degree in Philosophy at the University of Rochester in 2011.[2] McCain argues that the best defense against the skeptical view is inference to the best explanation, which he terms an "Explanationist Response."

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[1] Pamalogy is short for "Poly Astronomically Maximized Awesomeology." Some of the core tenets of Pamalogy and their basis are listed at https://pamalogy.com/the-foundational-tenets-of-pamalogy/ Pamalogy posits that there is a logical basis for believing that there is a Multiverse accommodating every good possibility, yet not actualizing anything bad. As such, it poses an alternative hypothesis regarding the external world that may be far more compelling than common skeptical propositions.

[2] McCain's dissertation was a lengthier work than a bachelors level class in Epsitemology might normally require. The result will be a lengthier than normal summary outline of McCain's arguments. It is contributed as a labor of love for the sake of Pamalogy, which similarly depends on arguments to the best explanation that McCain defends.

My thesis is that Pamalogy may do some harm to McCain's antiskeptic case because it provides a more formidable counterexample than what I've seen offered by skeptics up till now. McCain responds specifically to local domestic skepticism, which helps narrow the focus. I will agree with his argument to the best inference. At the same time, I will show where and why in his dissertation Pamalogy might bring back a form of skepticism that he, following Jonathan Vogel, termed an "improved skeptical hypothesis" (IMH) (Vogel 660). I should note that this is not a result I wanted, since I am not a skeptic.

I will begin with a brief description of Pamalogy and then a more thorough outline of McCain's basic antiskeptic arguments. Along the way, I will highlight the spots where Pamalogy's proposition concerning reality, (and the lack thereof), might make a difference. I will only very briefly describe the logical arguments leading up to Proposition 21. In this way the reader will see that the theory might have greater substance than a brain in a vat argument in terms of whether it accurately depicts reality, as so many skeptical arguments do, but I will do my best to avoid delving into metaphysics. I expect that, in an effort to preserve the traditional view of knowledge, some might find flaws in my propositions. It might be then that what I have here is a conditional antecedent to offer. If Pamalogy were truly proposed with a logical and convincing basis, then would this pose a problem for the traditional view of knowledge? And would this cause damage to the commonsense assumptions about the exterior world that are so often defended in the field of epistemology? I'll let the reader decide if so led.

I will offer a response to anticipated objections before concluding, again attempting to limit the scope of those responses to epistemological questions which the metaphysical system might address. To mitigate the damage my system might cause, I will advocate a brand of contextualism that disambiguates the word "knowledge" and show how this might work in a multiverse with an unknown framework of reality. I think disambiguation of the word "knowledge" will prove very helpful in terms of the reasons why we want to have knowledge in various contexts. However, I will conclude that language and common understanding are what rules the day.

Background

I should explain before getting started that doing harm to the traditional view of knowledge is more of an unwanted consequence than a skeptical hope for me. While I welcome criticism, I believe in Pamalogy for reasons that I find quite compelling and that is why I'm writing this. It is perhaps uncommon to hear a skeptic say that they believe in an alternative hypothesis that they propose, as is the case here, so I will call myself a "quasi-skeptic" at best, though this is hardly a fair attribution either, given my varied disposition, which includes the endorsement of contextualism.

Moving quickly, both McCain's dissertation and Pamalogy are hefty works so there is a lot to cover in a short space. The best I can do is sketch either one before showing how they interact and I want the bulk of my attention to be on McCain's analysis. I will begin with a quick synopsis of what led up to Proposition 21.

Pamalogical Basis for Proposition 21

It begins with the belief that all logical possibility is a constant in its totality. Something like a proof of the existence of God proceeds from this and then axiological inferences conclude that if Maximized Awesomeness is real, that nothing bad would be included either in Itself or in anything else It directly or indirectly caused. Maximized Awesomeness would be that than which nothing could be greater and not just a possibility, but real. This means that nothing bad exists, which is a contrary notion to what we believe when we believe our senses, (if we are correct that what we seem to perceive is bad).

Pamalogy doesn't know how evil is not real. It just takes it for granted that it is not, no matter which Universe one is referring to. On the opposite side of the spectrum of possible good and evil, it assumes that it would be better if every type of good thing was continually happening, which is why it assumes there are many Universes, so that all that could be good, not only does happen, but is never lacking and is always happening. This entails counterintuitive notions of time, of identity and of

permutated Universes that together achieve every good possibility continually. It is very different than the more common type of unsurpassable single Universe proposed by theists such as Leibniz.[3]

Since Pamalogy's theodicy is to suppose evil does not exist, it proposes that the perception of bad things involves challenging realities. These involve a number of alternative explanations to the "commonsense" view. As an example, evil could be part of a dream, thus not real. It could be part of a simulation or type of *Matrix* with the same result. It could exist in a future that will never be reached. Or it could exist as bypassed logical possibility that never actually appears at all, except in memory. These are just some examples, the last of which makes sense in an all permutating multiverse. Now if a person is in a Universe that splits, this entails the splitting of an identity, so whereas, the "commonsense" view might suppose that it is ludicrous to believe that a moment ago we might not have existed, the Pamalogist would find compelling reason to think that such an affront to common sense might actually be true on account of theodicy. It might make the best sense to see each Universe as a network that hasn't yet unraveled into all of its possible good futures, and individuals in those Universes, as networks, as well. The sense of "I" then is more like a uniform "we" in Pamalogy.[4]

Solving for a Pamalogical theodicy leads us to Proposition 21, which reads as follows:

Proposition 21 – That Empirical Knowledge is Limited with Respect to Justified Belief

1. Most humans believe in a world of ideas and in an "outside world.' That is, there are thoughts that include deductive inference and mathematics that can be known as relations of ideas *a priori*

[3] For an excellent summary of Leibniz's concept of unsurpassability, I recommend Strickland, Lloyd. *Leibniz Reinterpreted* (Continuum International Publishing Group London and New York 2006).

[4] For brevity, I will expound no more on Pamalogical metaphysics. Suffice it to say on networked identity, that this solves Derek Parfit's cloning problems. Does one of us die when we are cloned? When a Universe bifurcates, which Pamalogy proposes happens innumerable times every moment, a network of perceiving identities enjoys a different history than the other portion of the network. No one dies. However, if all evil possibilities are bypassed, then there are quantum leaps over its possible courses. This provides more opportunity for networks to choose new awesome possibilities based on those conditions, but it requires that the whole Universe be instanced anew, rather than include those bad instances as reality. The result is what I will call "compressed reality."

and there are also what appears to be perceived, such as objects or actions in the world *a posteriori*. The latter is called "empirical knowledge." Knowledge, among other things such as justification, entails belief in a proposition that is true. (Definition)

2. It is sometimes speculated that one might be dreaming when perceiving something, hallucinating, receiving sensory perception as a brain in a vat, or living as a cyber being in a simulated reality of some intelligent design. There are many alternative explanations for perception to the notion of an "outside world" that might undermine the justification for a belief in what is perceived." (basic)
3. The compression of reality so that no evil is actualized in any world, yet may include in actualization various memory impressions of that which was not truly actualized, provides an opportunity for the Maximization of Awesomeness in a unique way to respond to hypothetical conditions. It is also an example of how reality is often not what it seems because it may leave a memory perception of bad things that have not actually been actualized. (from Propositions, 1,4, 13 and 14)
4. If any good can come from such unperceived circumstances, alternative realities in Universes are not merely possibilities in the spectrum of Maximized Awesomeness, but inevitabilities. (From 3, Proposition 2)
5. Since sometimes these underlying possibilities may be true, and since this certainly is often the case with respect to compressed reality in a selectively actualized world, much and possibly most of what is perceived in such a world is inaccurate. (from 1,4)
6. In worlds with compressed reality, certainty exists only for numerous mathematical and logical propositions. (from 5)
7. Among humans, calling anything regarding the outside world "knowledge" is likely to be inaccurate when based on perception *a posteriori*. (from 5,6)

The seventh item of Proposition 21 is followed by Proposition 22, which offers a contextualist response to solve this problem, rendering the conclusion (7) false. This then should suffice for sketching the problem of Proposition 21. Now let's look at McCain's defense of the "commonsense" view (CS) of the "exterior" world. (I will refer to this view as (CS) henceforth.)

The Explanationist Outline

McCain's thesis is divided into five chapters. In will cover the first three and then begin offering some mesh up with Pamalogy as we proced with McCain's solution in chapter three. In the first chapter, he preps up for his thesis by analyzing the arguments made by skeptics toward (CS) and narrows his target. That is, he makes distinctions between global and local (Feldman 109), weak and strong, propositional and doxastic, full and partial, domestic and exotic, fallibilist or infallibilist skeptics. He calls strong skepticism about propositional justification "strong$_p$" and strong skepticism about doxastic justification "strong$_d$." He then clarifies that he is only addressing "strong$_p$-full-local-domestic-fallibilist" skeptics (McCain 11). He does this because he believes this particular brand of skepticism is the most challenging for proponents of (CS) to overcome, so proceeding to defeat them will perhaps finally put them to rest. McCain then argues that the skeptic's arguments against CS either involve closure or underdeterminism and shows that the former entails the latter. He deliberates over whether they are equivalent. For his own purposes, he can treat them as if they are equivalent, which somewhat simplifies his task.

In chapter two he modifies the underdeterminism argument to strengthen it with the condition that S knows that CS and the Skeptical Argument (SA) are incompatible:

- U1*) If S's evidence does not favor CS over SA (***and S knows CS and SA are incompatible***), then S's evidence does not propositionally justify CS for S.

- U2*) S's evidence does not favor CS over SA (***and S knows CS and SA are incompatible***).
- U3*) S's evidence does not propositionally justify CS for S. "

McCain then starts his case against SA by reviewing Alan Hazlett's Security (McCain 42) and hinge proposition (Hazlett 200). Security S's justified hinge belief that p is defeated only if S has sufficient reason to believe ~p." Hazlett's primary argument for belief in p, is that a significant amount of knowledge can arise from what hinges on p.

The idea is pragmatic, not epistemic, but it is for the sake of an epistemological system, so somehow that makes it ok.

C.F. Wright defines hinge beliefs as "beliefs whose rejection would rationally necessitate extensive re-organization of – or more, might even just throw into confusion – our highly complex conception of what kind of thing should be taken as evidence for what kind of proposition." (Cf. Wright, "Wittgensteinian Certainties" p.43)[5]. While Pamalogy does stand to throw a wrench into the system if one accepts it, I will propose a way through conditional reasoning where it won't have these catastrophic results.

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[5] In chapter two, McCain shows that much hinges on hinges. P.F Strawson: hinge propositions: "in order for self-conscious thought and experience to be possible, we must take it, or believe, that we have knowledge of external physical objects or other minds." (2 Strawson, P. F. (1983), *Skepticism and Naturalism: Some Varieties*, Columbia University Press, p. 21)

Thomas Ried: hinge propositions: "I resolve not to believe my senses. I break my nose against a post that comes in my way; I step into a dirty kennel; and, after twenty such wise and rational actions, I am taken up and clapt into a mad-house." (Reid, T. (1997), *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense*, Pennsylvania State University Press, p. 170).

Hazlitt on Hinges: "It seems that we can distinguish two senses in which a belief might be justified with respect to the end of having a lot of knowledge. The first is the usual sense on which we call a belief justified when that belief comes from a reliable faculty like perception, memory, intuition, etc. The second is the sense considered here, the sense in which we call a belief justified just in case having that belief is a necessary condition on having a lot of beliefs (and hence a lot of knowledge).

Wright calls this second notion "entitlement," (Cf. Wright, "Wittgensteinian Certainties") ... "hinges are beliefs that are justified with respect to our epistemic project."

For his part, Hazlett states up front that hinge beliefs can be defeated in every point of his three-point strategy for defeating skeptics:

1. Admit that hinge propositions are defeasible (Hazlett 207)
2. Account for actual world skeptic scenarios - "Our theory of justification must respect the fact that hinge beliefs are defeasible, but it must also respect the fact that they are quite hard to defeat, even when it seems they might easily have been false." (Hazlett 209)
3. Security - "one is always justified in believing hinge propositions unless one has sufficient reason to believe their negation." (Hazlett 209)

McCain doesn't buy Hazlett's defense against Skeptics. He finds there could be an island in which ~(CS) was the norm. (McCain 44). He also thinks a vast number of beliefs can be formed even by a solipsist using a conditional form (McCain 46). I would agree and argue that conditional thought is actually quite pragmatic. If one does not know the framework underlying reality, that doesn't mean good decisions can't be made based on an apparent framework with plenty of conditional propositions. This is a point I will elaborate on in my final remarks.

McCain then adds sub arguments (McCain 49) to his already revised underdetermination argument in what he calls an enhanced underdetermination (UE):

- UE-1) If S's evidence does not favor CS over SA, then S's evidence does not propositionally justify CS for S.
- UE-2) CS and SA are empirically equivalent.
- UE-3) If CS and SA are empirically equivalent, then S's evidence does not favor CS over SA.
- UE-4) Therefore, S's evidence does not favor CS over SA.

Wittgenstein: "The hinges must stay put. My life consists in my being content to accept many things." (OC341-4)

- UE-5) Therefore, S's evidence does not propositionally justify CS for S.
- UE-6) Therefore, CS is not propositionally justified for S.

He thus presents the skeptics strongest argument he can and proceeds to break it down. He starts with the challenge that for the skeptic evidence of an external world is just a rival theory, which is effectively equivalent in their minds (McCain 55). Then he points to Laudan and Leplin (Laudan 207), who argue against the skeptic's equivalency belief.[6] Accordingly,

- 1) A hypothesis can be confirmed by observations that are not part of its empirical consequences.
- 2) Observation of empirical consequences of a hypothesis does not always provide evidence for the hypothesis.
- 3) If (1) and (2), then it is not the case that if two hypotheses are empirically equivalent, then they are underdetermined.
- 4) Therefore, it is not the case that if two hypotheses are empirically equivalent, then they are underdetermined.

Laudan and Leplin use the example of a televangelist who preaches to seven-year-olds that reading the Bible daily will cause puberty. McCain argues against the second premise, seeing in it nothing more than a defeater (McCain 58). He also finds it critical that all of the data for each hypothesis be shared. The adolescents did not have that privilege. At best this amounts to a local partial argument against skepticism (McCain 61).

In chapter three, he reveals his real weapon against the skeptics, the Explanationist Response (ER), a different way of saying inference to the best explanation (IBE) or abduction but renamed so as not

[6] Laudan, asserts that "to deny a theory is not to assert one and to list observations is not to theorize about them."

to be stuck with certain associations. He follows Vogel's formulation of it (McCain 69) instead of Musgrave's[7] (Musgrave 2006), which is propositional in its formulation so it looks like this:

- ER-1) F1, F2, …, Fn are facts in need of explanation.
- ER-2) Hypothesis H explains the F_i.
- ER-3) No available competing hypotheses would explain the Fi as well as H does.
- ER-4) H is probably true.

McCain admits that the word "explains" is weak in this formulation, so he goes on to explain it. The most extensive description he has found is in James Beebe[8] Here is an excerpt (Beebe pp.609-11):

- (3.1) Ontological Simplicity I: Other things being equal, a theory that postulates the existence of fewer entities should be preferred to a theory that postulates more.
- (3.2) Ontological Simplicity II: Other things being equal, a theory that postulates the existence of fewer kinds of entities should be preferred to a theory that postulates more.
- (3.3) Explanatory Simplicity I: Other things being equal, a theory whose structure is more elegant or straightforward should be preferred to a theory that is less elegant or straightforward.
- (3.4) Explanatory Simplicity II: Other things being equal, a theory that raises fewer further explanatory questions should be preferred to a theory that raises more.

[7] Musgrave's version looks like this:
MER-1) "It is reasonable to believe that the best available explanation of any fact is true.
MER-2) F is a fact.
MER-3) Hypothesis H explains F.
MER-4) No available competing hypothesis explains F as well as H does.
MER-5) Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that H is true."

[8] McCain relies on Beebe heavily. I will argue he uses Beebe's examples inappropriately, as they seem to be intended for different cases of inference to the best explanation than what a meta-explanation such as a framework for reality hypothesis might require.

- 3.5) Explanatory Simplicity III: Other things being equal, a theory that posits fewer primitive explanatory notions should be preferred to one that posits more.6
- (3.6) Psychological Simplicity: Other things being equal, a theory that presents an easier to understand relation between explanans and explanandum should be preferred to a theory that presents a less easy to understand relation.7
- (3.7) Explanatory Breadth: Other things being equal, a theory that explains a wider range of phenomena should be preferred to a theory that explains a narrower range.
- (3.8) Explanatory Depth: Other things being equal, a theory that provides a more illuminating explanation of the relevant data should be preferred to a theory that provides a less illuminating explanation.
- (3.9) Coherence with Background Knowledge: Other things being equal, a theory that fits better with other widely accepted theories and background knowledge should be preferred to a theory that fits less well.
- (3.10) Intrinsic Plausibility: Other things being equal, a theory that is more intrinsically plausible should be preferred to a theory that less intrinsically plausible.
- (3.11) Avoidance of Ad Hoc Elements: Other things being equal, a theory that has fewer ad hoc elements should be preferred to a theory that has more.9
- (3.12) Fecundity: Other things being equal, a theory that gives rise to more novel predictions and ⁄ or further explanations should be preferred to a theory that either blocks or leads to fewer predictions and explanations.
- (3.13) Conservatism: Other things being equal, a theory that results in a smaller change in one's overall view should be preferred to a theory that results in a larger change.
- (3.14) Modesty: Other things being equal, a theory that is implied by but does not imply another theory should be preferred to the stronger theory.

- (3.15) Testability: Other things being equal, a theory that has more readily testable consequences should be preferred to one that has fewer such consequences.

McCain ultimately uses a portion of this list against the skeptical hypothesis (SA) is it compares with (CS) and determines that (CS) wins on more fronts than it loses. This breaks equivalency and undermines underdetermination even in its enhanced form. But Beebe's list is inadequate to describe the essence of Explanationism. Lipton seems to capture it best saying, "we may characterize the best explanation as the one which would, if correct, be the most explanatory or provide the most understanding" (Lipton 59).[9]

McCain points out that inference to the best explanation (IBE) is an epistemological method with a longstanding history with wide use, intuited even by children. Skeptics that reject it are not domestic, but exotic, and that is not the type of skeptic he is targeting (McCain 73-4). He says there are four things that an argument against such a skeptic must do (McCain 64): (1) explain what is wrong with the skeptic's argument, (2) explain why we sometimes find skeptic arguments worrisome, (3) provide a response against skeptics for ordinary people, not just epistemologists familiar with ER and (4) retain our justification. In my opinion, the last point is odd. It's as if McCain is afraid we might forget that we've won the argument, but if it were not for Pamalogy, I would admit that he does accomplish all four of these goals as he rounds out chapter four.

Back to the matter of summarizing the essence of IBE or Explanationism, McCain says "the most straightforward way to make sense of this idea is as H providing an answer to a "why question"—why did F occur, why is F true, or why does F have the features that it does?" (McCain 68). He specifies that "explanations construed as answers to why-questions can be understood both causally and non-causally."

[9] I will be arguing that understanding a hypothesis and *why* it is a best explanation is more important than comparing H1 and H2 on a check list like Beebe's, which certainly prompts reasons, but not necessarily the most important ones.

For the purposes of arguing against the Skeptical Hypothesis, causal explanation is what matters." Thus, we might ask why there is a brain in a vat or an evil demon and come up short. The causality for Pamalogy, by contrast, is well defined. The reason reality is not what it seems is that it is compressed. The reason it is compressed is so no bad possibilities are realized. The reason fresh instances of the Universe take place, is so that new opportunities for awesomeness may arise from every condition. The reasons are wholly good and sensible, even logically necessary.

McCain explains there are four types of Explanationism, as per Lycan[10] (Lycan 417): weak, sturdy, ferocious and "holocaust." McCain is only advocating the weak version. This only requires IBE to justify its conclusions (McCain 75). Stronger forms begin with explanatory inferences that might justify conclusions. McCain doesn't think his argument for CS against SA requires this. This is important since it skirts skeptical comebacks to ER-3. Once it is then established that there is no equivalence between CS and SA but rather CS is a better argument than SA, the skeptic has no solace in even the enhanced underdeterminism (UE) McCain has offered. He then shows why all four of the things that must be done to defeat a skeptic are accomplished through ER (IBE), or weak Explanationism, as he has it.

Critiquing McCain's View

McCain appeals to common sense as the best explanation again in chapter four. He emphasizes that the best explanation is "something that provides understanding." "when H explains F, H provides understanding of F— understanding of why F occurs, why F has the features it has, and so on. The most

[10] These are as follows:
Weak Explanationism: explanatory inferences (inferences to the best explanation) from a given set of premises can epistemically justify a conclusion.
Sturdy Explanationism: Weak Explanationism + explanatory inferences can justify conclusions without being derived from some other more basic form of ampliative inference.
Ferocious Explanationism: Sturdy Explanationism + explanatory inference is the only basic form of ampliative inference.
Holocaust Explanationism:1 Ferocious Explanationism + all inferences and reasoning, including deductive, is derived from explanatory inference.

straightforward way to make sense of this idea is to construe explanation as providing answers to “why-questions”(McCain 94).

While I certainly agree with this initial premise, I found his examples to be far less potent than they could have been, especially given the test case he used, which is a modified form of the Cartesian evil demon. I’ll use Pamalogy as a counter-hypothesis in addition to the evil demon McCain uses (McCain 109). Here is a summary:

1. "Quantitative Parsimony - an explanation that posits fewer individual entities is preferable to an explanation that posits more.” On this test, McCain adds up how many things there are for the SA demon to pretend exist and compares this to how many things CS says there are. The number is about the same so the test seems meaningless. The fact that the number is about the seem really explains nothing about why or what and adds nothing to understanding, so I really see little merit in this test. Furthermore, in the example of Pamalogy, the why would have come down to the imagination and power of Omniscience that exists in Maximized Awesomeness. Every number belongs to every possibility so when every good thing is happening, the surprise would be why there weren’t more things to observe or remember and think of, rather than less, but it certainly would handle any number of things to account for. As it stands, the number is equivalent because both what the CS advocate sees and what the Pamalogy advocate sees is the same. The only difference is the Pamalogy advocate supposes the bad stuff there may be anywhere exists solely as false memory, for whatever that’s worth.
2. “Qualitative Parsimony - an explanation that posits fewer kinds of entities is preferable to an explanation that posits more.” Here again, McCain finds (McCain 115) little difference between the results of the SA demon types of things and the CS types of things. To me, this is a very similar, very shallow and dubious tie breaker for equivalency. The Pamalogy alternative would suppose there was an innumerable number or types of unseen things and individual things both. While

this type of test might make sense if we were trying to rule out possibilities and knew that the ore factors that went into something, the less likely its success, then quantitative and qualitative parsimony criteria would make sense, but for understanding a grand hypotheses, whether of an evil demon Perfection Itself, which would certainly contradict it, arguments from quantity make no sense.

3. "Explanatory Simplicity - an explanation that posits fewer fundamental explanatory regularities is preferable to an explanation that posits more." McCain thinks that the demon has to duplicate geometric regularity here, which causes a difficulty, making me wonder whether he's umping his own game. That all depends on how clever and powerful we suppose the demon is. Maximized Awesomeness, by contrast, assumes max power and smarts before the question is asked. It has all the explanation you need built right in. It could easily develop a grid with eleven dimensions and add in Universes with entirely different laws, cross crossing in a googolplex of ways, with as many good reasons and if there would be any good thing resulting from it doing so it would. In short, this is another example that has little bearing on the words of Lipton regarding understanding, except as it might pertain to Pamalogy. In this case, oddly, simplicity is a mark against what by understanding and knowing the why, would actually be the best explanation. Simplicity is the sort of criterion you would use if hypothesis involved a cover up in a web of lies. McCain fails to use the test for that purpose, which I'm thinking Beebe probably was thinking of. The idea that there is less simplicity in the existence of many things, if it could be said there were fewer in CS world than SA world, seems a rather meaningless point for determining a framework for reality itself – a whole operating system for perception.
4. Explanatory Questions - an explanation that raises fewer unanswerable explanatory questions is preferable to an explanation that raises more. McCain confess that "CS does raise some unanswerable explanatory questions. Vogel is clearly correct when he says that CS appeals to

unexplained regularities such as fundamental laws of nature and that it does not offer an account of “the existence of the world as such” (McCain 121). He doesn’t think the SA demon wins here though, because he sees that reality tacked on with a demon that has to pose all the same questions in a virtual world. Pamalogy has lots of answers to questions like why does there seem to be evil in the world, but leaves many of the same questions that CS and the SA demon leave unanswered a perplexing mystery, even if it’s partially solved. We might also add more questions, like why don’t we see more cool things? And then we might get surprising answers like, you were looking at something really different and cool a moment ago and just didn’t know it while now you have a totally new cool perception. I still wind up asking in response to all of this, why more or less unanswered questions matters in terms of seeking the best explanation. It’s what those questions are that matters. CS can’t explain why there is something instead of nothing and their only explanation as to why they have consciousness is that a brain happens to be alive but they can’t say why it is that they themselves occupy that brain so as to be its alleged perceiver. The demon’s explanation is, actually, better than theirs. If they were a brain in a vat, their lifespan would only be the length of time they could sustain the living organism, but the demon can create an eternal soul for all we know. That puts the odds of their existence at any present moment in time at something much more probable if the demon can make them perceive forever. It’s puzzling why a demon would do that. It’s not puzzling at all why Maximized Awesomeness would do that. In my view, CS loses on both counts here, which is sad, because I think that the existence of an external world is a perfectly fine paradigm for reality.

5. “Conservatism - an explanation that fits better with background information or prompts fewer revisions to one’s overall set of beliefs is preferable to an explanation that fits less well or prompts more revisions.” This final test McCain performs results in some more fairly unconvincing points of comparison about how a believer in the traditional view of knowledge would have a lot to give

> up if they were to revise their views to agree that they are being deceived by a demon in a Matrix. I really don't see why McCain chose this and thought it would serve as proof. In all five tests it seems he was trying to fit a square shape into a round hole. In no case was he driving us toward understanding, causality or the whys of his explanation except perhaps when he spoke of coherency and instantaneous reaction in defense of the senses, but that argument is no more potent that G.E. Moore looking at his hands (Huemer 603).

McCain ends his tests here, somehow wrestling a victory from it, knowing he only needs to best his opponent by reaching the top half of a 50:50 proposition that started out equal. So long as he could count out exotic, go local and stay fallible and domestic, he could win this with a puff of air. I'm not sure why he chose items 1-4 and 13 from Beebe's list. If I had to pick, I would have chosen fecundity, explanatory breadth, depth, coherence and plausibility. If I were McCain, I'd choose testing. No one can prove there's an evil demon or that moments keep getting deleted and stored in memory as the instruments are re-instantiated into all good worlds. A Pamalogist can only say why that would happen. We have to appeal to *a priori* justification and theory. That's why I say it's all about axiology, baby!

Critique of Objections

Now that I've shown how Pamalogy might be a challenge to CS as an "improved skeptical hypothesis," especially if its own propositional inferences were sound, it might also be shown that the five objections McCain meets in chapter five still stand up as he seeks to defend the Explanationist Response (ER). McCain also offers two bonus hypothesis H to rival CS. First there is the Disjunctive Skeptical Hypothesis (McCain 126) and second, the Chance Hypothesis (McCain 128). The first is no stronger than a potential explanation that might compete alongside more plausible explanations. The second has the one advantage of being qualitatively and quantitatively parsimonious. I've already explained why this type of criterion is a misfit for determining whether CS is a better explanation than SA. It doesn't explain an operating system for reality. It's designed to explain things like why there was trash in my yard yesterday

or who stole the cookie from the cookie jar. Pamalogy should be viewed alongside these hypotheses though as with CS. In the first case, not all hypotheses approach anything plausible. I think that's the point McCain was making as he supposes CS is more plausible, even obvious, but he's not thinking of any plausible SA. One may deny the plausibility of Pamalogy based on their assessment of the *a priori* propositions it posits. Alternative skeptical theories do need to approach something that warrants belief. CS warrants belief *prima facie* by instinctive dogma, if nothing else. Coherency of the senses and other factors also give it an edge. How much of an edge that is is something of a judgement call. And that's all he needed to argue for a non-equivalency that would defeat skepticism once and for all. I'm not so sure he has that same edge over Pamalogy. The luck hypothesis would, of course, just seem silly, except it speaks of the world spontaneously appearing and making sense randomly. Pamalogy let's order come of chaos wherever there is something good to be found in such a thing, but luck is hardly it's operating principle. The will of Maximized Awesomeness is always good, whatever method may be employed including luck, I suppose; but with or without luck driving it in any reality operating system or framework, it is still a most intelligent will.

Moving on to the traditional non-skeptical objections to IBE, McCain first looks at Fumerton's "no cause" argument (McCain 134-5). Fumerton (Fumerton 208) asks whether our sensory experiences have or need a causal explanation. The argument is similar to the circular inductionist argument that supports induction using inductive inference. McCain argues that if he were targeting exotic skeptics instead domestic ones that might matter. Exotic skeptics deny logical arguments, especially *a posteriori* ones.

Next, Ram Neta (Neta 299) supposed that CS could not explain our sensory experiences. Neta agreed that our senses explained our sensory data but that no matter what we believed about the outside world, our sensory data itself was left unexplained. McCain points to Beebe here (McCain 139), who mentioned several relevant features of sensory experience that were at least useful for making inferences to the best explanation, even if they couldn't explain the sensory experiences themselves. Pamalogists

would raise a metaphysical experience relating perception of perceivers to the exploitation of goodness in all its possibility according to the will and imagination of Omniscience. At least they could tell you why we perceive if not how. Arguments about demons and evil geniuses might fall short of that.

Beebe and Fine[11] (Fine 85) then object to using a more questioned source to question a less questioned source. Beebe prefers to put it this way: ”In the context of a debate about the epistemic credentials of a particular belief source one should not appeal to a belief source whose credentials are far more widely in dispute than the source one seeks to defend“ (Beebe 626)."[12] McCain disagrees with Beebe here. He is defending "perceptual beliefs from skeptical attacks" using IBE to do so. He has to. It’s not like perceptual beliefs can up and defend themselves in any way skeptics would be convinced. Furthermore, IBE/ER is a longstanding empirical practice (McCain 143-144).

He tackles the van Fraassen (Van Fraassen 143) ”bad lot“ objection next. This is where the whole lot of theories are bad ones. It has two possible levels. The first is that at least one hypothesis or set of hypotheses that one might believe has a truth demand (response to this below). The second is that there needs to be at least some reason to believe a theory might be justified. McCain suggests putting a minimum acceptable hypothesis qualification standard on IBE but he only defines this as "inference to the best explanation *that is good enough*" (McCain 144).

Van Fraassen had more than one objection about bad theories posed to Explanationists. His next one is called “Indifference.” The idea was that he’d seen so many bad theories that he had no expectation to see a good one. Anything new coming along wouldn’t possibly be a good theory. McCain takes a more positive view, thinking the more cases the greater the background info and likelihood of better theories

[11] This is a very fine point that is a bit of a rabbit trail from my main argument but it demonstrates the thoroughness of McCain’s thesis.

[12] Personally, I’d be more upset at McCain’s misuse of Beebe’s criteria for inference to the best explanation than his defense of a standard commonsense principle using a less ubiquitously commonsense principle such as abduction defending it.

and at least something worth believing. There is also no theory more tested and proven than CS.(McCain 148). I would argue that IBE has been around and tested for a long time, as well.

McCain then rounds out his defense by responding to the idea that an IBE hypothesis must have a “truth demand.” Lipton, Fumerton, Vogel, Beebe, all advocate a truth demand feature in various ways. Vogel concludes: " so far as the truth-demand goes, inference to the best explanation is on just as good or bad a footing as any other kind of inductive inference.” (Vogel Manuscript 6)[13] (McCain 153). He responds to this demand in several ways.

First, it doesn’t apply to his weak Explanationism. Any comparison with induction, means the complaint would merely fail to defeat exotic skepticism, rather than domestic. "Domestic skepticism does not contest the legitimacy of our accepted methods of reasoning. Inference to the best explanation is most assuredly one of our accepted methods of reasoning." (McCain 154) "Since inference to the best explanation is one of our accepted methods of reasoning, it is not implausible to think that objections that attack inference to the best explanation, such as the Truth Demand, transform domestic skepticism into exotic skepticism." (McCain 155)

Second, IBE qualifies as Explanatory Reasoning: "Carnap (1968), Kyburg (1956), Lycan (1988), and Psillos (1999) all claim that both basic forms of deductive reasoning and basic forms of inductive reasoning are justified by rational reflection." Thus, McCain does not cop out on the Truth-Demand objection by only targeting domestic skepticism with ER for CS. "One promising approach for responding to the Truth Demand is to appeal to the inductive evidence that is readily available for the claim that the explanatory virtues utilized in inferences to the best explanation are connected to the truth." (McCain 156). Enoch and

[13] The essence of this demand is that if there is going to be an explanation, it better be one that compels us to believe it is true. Since it is a matter of justification rather than knowledge, this should be understood in the context of a fallibilist framework.

Schechter (2008), Harman (1965), (1973), (1986) and Lycan (1988) all view IBE as a fundamental form of reasoning. I agree wholeheartedly.

Third, it has been proven using inference to the best explanation that IBE works.- James Van Cleve (1984) uses induction to prove induction usually works. McCain explains why this is circular reasoning since abduction isn't the premise it is just the method used by it. This brings McCain to the formulation of an argument he defends:

Argument IBE

The best explanation of the fact that it seems that most inferences to the best explanation have true conclusions is that most inferences to the best explanation have true conclusions. Hence, the majority of all inferences to the best explanation have true conclusions." (McCain 161) And the one last point, this argument doesn't appeal to anything in the external world but simply says something "seems to be."

Assessing the Damage

If I haven't said anything about any of McCain's responses to an objection as I've summarized them, that means I agree with his response, perhaps strongly. For the most part, this is true. I strongly support IBE and I think his case for CS is about as thorough as we are likely to see. Generally, my objection is to McCain's own poor use of IBE itself to explain the why of sensory experience in an external world. He might, for instance, have offered a compelling case for evolutionary development of sensory receptors of various types, comparing animals with larger olfactory systems than those of humans, and such but instead quoted from BonJour[14] (Bonjour and Sosa 85) and others to describe instantaneity and cohesiveness. I understand why. He is preoccupied with laying out principles and epistemological concepts but in this case making a case is the very case that makes CS a superior hypothesis in comparison to SA.

[14] BonJour's observation that the various sensory perceptions "fit together and reinforce each other in a coherent fashion, presenting a relatively seamless and immensely complicated picture of an ongoing physical world" and of their "involuntary" and "spontaneous character." (McCain 96)

As a Pamalogist, I am particularly aware that a good explanation of the why of consciousness is directly related to the why of sensory perception in an external world and these are both entailed by the why of life. And then finally the why of life for the particular perceiver that is communicating their experience and why right now in this very moment. This might involve providing some evidence of what they are as a perceiver. If the Pamalogist has answers to these questions but CS doesn't then the Pamalogist has a better explanation of sensory experience than CS. IBE works for the Pamalogist.

Mitigating the Damage – a Solution

The upshot of Pamalogy as the improved skeptical hypothesis (ISH), is therefore quite devastating to the Explanationists' goal of defeating the skeptic. The irony in this is that Pamalogists are not skeptics any more than quantum physicists are. Studying the smallest components of the fabric of the Universe, quantum physicists claim that no one knows anything. They can't because sub-atomic particles can't be individually measured as to speed and direction or location beyond probability curves, much less all of them. They can agree that they somehow constitute reality but they can't know reality beyond general principles. It is not necessary to know where every molecule and sub-atomic particle is at a given moment, or to know exactly what they are in order to understand the content of a framework. It is not even necessary to know the what of the framework itself to say that we know something. We knew enough to observe that the lazy brown dog jumps over the fence. If we were dreaming as we said it, that observation would apply to the content of that dream world If we were in a computer generated Matrix, the content of the simulation game would be equally valid and mean the same thing for that world paradigm context.

Not knowing the quantum state of the vast number of subatomic particles is a similar epistemic status we are in when we don't know whether we are in a simulation, or whether a better hypothesis is that we are dreaming. Knowing the operating system for the framework of reality doesn't matter for the dreamer or for the *Matrix* subjects in the game, or for the Berkeleyan idealist. What matters is the content of those realities regardless of how they are generated. Speculation about how they may be created may

serve to improve religious or spiritual experience in the wonder of contemplation. Or it may help a physicist create nuclear fusion or step backward in time. The reason for wanting knowledge, including certainty varies contextually. But while there may be some unique reason such as these for wanting to understand some framework type things with certainty, common knowledge and understanding does not require it, so I find some irony in what we are calling commonsense (CS) here. If it is common to believe in an external world, then let the common sensor operate according to that common sense and stop worrying about a framework above her pay grade. Religion might be an exception, as this is more common if it is not esoteric. Since Pamalogy is a metaphysical system, it may benefit from thoughts about framework as it contemplates the wonderwork of God, still not knowing how and exactly what, but assuming at least, that there is a good purpose in every experience, even if that purpose is also unknown in terms of how it fits together with all other purposes in the grand scheme of things as an emergent phenomenon.

Seeing then that the quest to know involves widely varied contexts and purposes and that the subject S with the lowest level of any need for certainty is that unexceptional common sensor, for some reason attempting to describe the framework of reality as consisting of an external world apart from the realm of ideas as it insists on a low standard for the word, “knowledge,” it is clear that the idea of knowledge is a great source of confusion for many people. If I were to seek an inductive argument to prove the point, I would say that the field of epistemology has been marked by an endless debate between skeptics (SA) and misnomered common sensors (CS) ever since Pyrrho of Ellis was brought to Plato’s academy through Arcesilaus. To say then that a low standard is the “right” standard is to confess fallibilism, which might be fine in any situation in which certainty were not imperative. But if one is a physicist seeking to clone a living being in a tele-transporter, a different level of certainty would be required. Does the physicist “know” that Captain Kirk will safely be tele-transported to Alpha Centauri as each subatomic particle in each atom in each molecule is accurately measured? That level of crunch power

might be beyond any present cyber capacity. The Pamalogist will suppose that Truth itself arises from the total set of logical possibility as an abstract body of Knowledge and that this is the holy grail the skeptic alone ought to worship. Clearly, this less “common” sense of the term has its purpose, which history itself empirically demonstrates. That is why Pamalogy also offered Proposition 22, the conclusion of which is simply that “the use of the word “knowledge” often changes depending on context.”

Perhaps, also, I might offer that a disambiguation of the word knowledge would be helpful. It might even be handled in a way that McCain disambiguates what he means by skepticism, as he targets a very specific brand of it even adding the subscripts p and d to the strong skepticism to which he refers, so that he can specify he means the propositionist and not the doxologist. The subscripts I might use are as follows:

- Knowledge O. This is Omniscience with a capital K. It is the totality of Truth with a capital T.
- Knowledge S - high standards knowledge that a global skeptic would be satisfied with.
- Knowledge C - lower standards knowledge that Feldman, Edwards and others feel is the common usage of the term.
- Knowledge L - low standards that are substandard, where belief is unjustified, not causally connected or belief is weak or shallow
- Knowledge I – an upgrade in importance or new information changes a level of required certainty and increases the standard
- Knowledge P - Perceptive knowledge. This is primarily for Pamalogists. It is similar to Knowledge C except that it doesn't ignore Knowledge S. It is a subjunctive, where if the framework of reality is not causing false perception, then those perceptions are epistemically basic and justified as such.
- Knowledge F – This would be knowledge as familiarity. English is particularly difficult in its failure to separate knowledge as familiarity from knowledge of facts. Hispanics use saber and conocer.

Of course, when speaking, subscripts are omitted. Unfortunately, no one person can change language. Language changes over time and words are made official these days only when search engines and spellchecking software is made to recognize them. Spoken language could grow through use. If only there could be a meeting of a standards committee every now and then the way there is in, say, developing computer protocols like HTML or MIDI. In any event, we are wasting our energy if our disagreement is merely about a confusion of meaning. If for some reason, we might benefit by taking a

red pill so that we can open our eyes to an alternative framework for reality, then at that time the debate with skeptics becomes relevant. Are we in need of escaping an evil demon who is so deceiving us? Are they harvesting our flesh as they nourish our brains? Would that be a problem? The why questions entirely valid and urgent. If my Pamalogy ISH has damaged McCain's CS, then at least it offers back a subjunctive framework of reality for tracking the truth with the counterfactuals, however remote, for such things as "if we are brains in vats, then I'd still like to play golf today in my acute imagination, and could I not hook my shots today, please Mr. Demon?!" If Mr. Demon is just imaginary, so be it. I'm still playing golf.

Illogical Logic and Weaknesses in the Pamalogical Solution

Any good philosophy paper must anticipate objections to one's own ideas, so beyond the fact that invariantists will obviously continue to insist on using language their own way since it already works, at least for them, so that I and all of the skeptics who might find my constructions convenient, just need to get with their program, I must also assess the other weaknesses in my own argument. Of course, as a metaphysical system, Pamalogy's weaknesses are better handled in a paper on Metaphysics than Epistemology so I won't dwell on this much, except to say that any defeaters to Pamalogy's propositional inferences would certainly weaken the case that it is a genuine ISH. While those of us who take great solace in the idea that there are innumerable Universes handcrafted by the imagination of Omnibenevolence to exhaust every good possibility without end and find such thoughts a great source of joy may be most disappointed to be informed that our program is without actual merit, I nevertheless would anticipate that there are several arguments that will meet up against a great deal of detraction. Despite any double slot experiments showing light acting both as a particle and a wave that might support it, Multiverse theory is reputed by some to be unprovable. I might disagree with that notion, offering various axiological grounds of the type that many proofs for theism have been offered in the past, but that also will be met with the various popular objections raised by agnostics. And it's not just agnostics. It's theists. Strickland says Leibniz never met a proof of God he didn't like yet he, and a majority of

theologians, prefer the concept of a single Universe to a Multiverse. Leibniz was outspoken on this throughout the course of his life, insisting and expounding on his belief that, "of all the possible ways to make the world, one has to be preferred to all the others - one which ... in a word, is the simplest and the richest."[15] (Strickland 39)

There is also a more technical grounds that might weaken the case for Pamalogy and that is that it may not qualify as an improved skeptical hypothesis. McCain (McCain 104), quoting (Vogel 1998 660) states: "[T]here are two primary constraints on an ISH. First, it "should invoke items corresponding to the elements" of CS. Second, an ISH "should also posit, as holding of these items, a pattern of properties, relations, and explanatory generalizations mirroring" CS's. He describes this as "extracting an explanatory skeleton or core" from CS. By doing this the ISH would be isomorphic to CS. Does the Pamalogy hypothesis actually do this? Can these weaknesses be overcome? I will answer this question in the next section.

A perhaps more practical and significant weakness I see in the Pamalogy argument against CS is its lack of current popularity, a matter which at first glance might seem trivial and even irrelevant. Let me explain. To be realistic, if any are willing to entertain a theistic proposition at all these days, in any encounter with Pamalogy, the detractors among them would likely wind up weighing the merits of non-determinism theories that support anthropocentric theodicies against the compressed reality spoken of in Proposition 21, where there is no evil in any Universe to account for in the first place. If popularity or a majority opinion matters, hardly anyone is aware of Pamalogy at the time of this writing. The greatest weakness of the Pamalogical argument for skepticism and its subsequent contextualist solution is thus, from my own point of view, that it lives as a phantom in cyber space in relative obscurity.

[15] McCain cites (A VI iv 2231)

Dealing with Pamalogy's Weaknesses

If Pamalogy loses on popularity, it might make up for it because it possesses one unique strength. While some may believe that it fails in logical proof to positively make the case that it is true, it certainly meets objections posed by atheists that other theistic formations have failed to adequately overcome. As such, it might be viewed even more strongly as a quasi-skeptical case against CS and McCain's Explanationist Response to strong$_p$-full-local-domestic-fallibilist skeptics.

That means maybe there might be a reason to keep Pamalogy around, even if its hidden in the closet for now. All well and good about that but that is not the sense of popularity that matters. Popularity is directly at issue here in the context of any discussion about "common" sense. Let the reader understand: when an appeal to common sense is being made, such as that being made by McCain and traditionalists like Feldman, I don't find it unreasonable to speak of popularity at all because they are turning it into an epistemic issue. I would never make an appeal to popularity, or complain about its lack, in any other circumstance, as in typical circumstances I find that truth and popularity are almost entirely independent, and I sometimes even wonder whether they are magnetically oppositional. But in the context of appeals to "common" sense, the two notions are intertwined in the idea of what is common. If Pamalogy is uncommon, then how can it appeal to common sense? Whereas, if it were to change status so that it was a household word, it might morph itself into an assumption made by everyday "ordinary" people. In that world, people everywhere might recognize how reasonable Pamalogy is. And that would be truly disastrous for CS.

Once again, I'm not looking for disaster but to avoid and mitigate it. Contextualism is rejected out of popularity for common use of a term, as well. So is my list of disambiguating subscripts for knowledge.

To overcome these weaknesses, I think friendship is the best response. I can offer that Pamalogy accommodates externalism because it assumes that any good in any paradigm for reality is worth realizing. It may not know which paradigm is real and pertains to any Universe that it may appear to be in

at any given moment but it certainly has no objection to externalism (or realism or materialism, as Berkeley would have it). Pamalogy is simply open to other notions, as well, content with suspending judgement. It stands as a multi-hypothesis in relation to CS since it views every possibility as a potential for good and includes CS as one of those possibilities. Pamalogy is your frenemy, if not a friend. Keep her close. When knowledge is ruled by "common sense" how common something is is the very means to overcome. Keep her close and she may grow on you.

There is no smooth segue from that to addressing the problem of isomorphism. To get back at Vogel and McCain's demand for a qualified ISH, what exactly are the elements of CS? The feeling of perception? The coherency and spontaneous simultaneity and regularity of it? If so, then I would argue that Pamalogy does correspond isomorphically, but it does much more because it posits a host of alternate Universes with it, as well, doing so in a way that depends on the power and will of a Truth as abstraction to perform it. This notion, while it may be a good explanation for the Universe and perception of any you right at this moment, has to compete against the alternative explanation posed by CS, which one might assume is that a Universe appeared out of a fluid vacuum 13.7 billion years ago, as outward observation and many calculations according to what has become a standard model for cosmologists speculates with great simplicity and elegance. Be that as it may, neither does Pamalogy deny that such an origin of all things, which ultimately passed through time so that the evolution to a you and a me might take place in this world at this moment. A many worlds argument doesn't exclude isomorphic similarity any more than a film excludes a photograph. It is simply a richer media. Does this qualitative difference disqualify it as an ISH candidate? I really don't see why that should be the case.

There is one other point that is not entirely isomorphic though. And that is that the bad parts are all unrealized. The reality Pamalogy presents is compressed. If there is an analogy between a film and a photograph, it's been edited. Or if it is a collection of photographs, only select pictures were included. This would make no qualitative difference to any real moment in which good things were taking place and

if memory still perceived the bad stuff, even though it wasn't real, all else would still be perceived as a duplicate. So, I don't see any of this as excluding Pamalogy from ISH.

Beyond this, as I already addressed, the IBE arguments McCain chose for ER were disappointing. Largely, I think the criteria listed by Beebe were designed for other types of arguments rather than a meta-Universal framework for reality hypothesis. Simplicity and number don't seem to matter when we are dealing with phenomena like entropy and demons with seemingly unlimited powers. This is especially the case with the level of knowledge and power that Truth Itself would possess if it were true. So in a sense, simplicity is exactly what you get from it – one simple explanation for everything, but such a benefit hardly compares, in my view, to the why of everything, once that is explored and shared in understanding.

Conclusion

Common sense is circular and circulates. I have not argued against any of McCain's defenses of Explanationism. I have used Explanationism to defend Pamalogy as the ISH the ER requires. I would conclude that I have made a sufficient case for the notion that Pamalogy would be a much better counterexample to CS than a brain in a vat or an evil demon and is such an improved hypothesis. There are, indeed, other competing hypotheses. A simulation theory of sorts makes good sense to me as an alternate hypothesis, but this theory and dream theory and any other hypotheses would be included in the multi-hypothesis that Pamalogy presents on account of its possibility exhausting Multiversism. Yet in any of these scenarios, evil is non-existent so this, technically makes it less than perfectly isomorphic. If this can be overlooked and Pamalogy accepted, such a belief restores the most potent case for the existence of God known to philosophy and would make Pamalogy something tenable as a defeater to CS, among other things.

McCain has evaluated the skeptical case, reducing it to an enhanced version of an already difficult underdetermination argument, only to shoot this even tougher formulation down with a complete

analysis of the commonsense case against it. He demonstrates why all but an inference to the best explanation fails to show anything more than equivalency between the skeptical alternative hypothesis concerning the external world and what he views as the commonsense hypothesis. He formulates this hypothesis in a way that is less vulnerable to valid attack both among IBE detractors and skeptics by targeting strong propositional domestic fallibilists. This is the precise type of skeptic that might be interested in deducible arguments such as those offered as Pamalogical tenets. Pamalogy accepts McCain's defense of IBE. In a sense, McCain makes Pamalogy's case as the best explanation by paving a way for it through a very thorough epistemological case. That is why I chose this topic. Having now evaluated the weaknesses and probable criticisms laid against Pamalogy as a formidable candidate against what I say is a misnomer as the commonsense view regarding the exterior world and sensory experience, I have offered an IBE of my own that seems stronger to me than McCain's own case. The strength of that argument rests largely in certain metaphysical considerations that were not the subject of this thesis. As such, the work must find its way into the of religious philosophy and metaphysics, where it can be properly vetted accordingly. In the meantime, I have addressed the weaknesses remaining in my argument, including the weaknesses of the mitigating solutions I have proposed. That is, we would do well to adopt a contextualist view of knowledge. And we really don't have to follow IBE criteria so much as get to the gist of what it is, which is to explain why things happen and to understand.

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