

# John Hick's Pluralism— Hypothesis or Religious Worldview? A Comparison with a Religion Specific “Hypothesis”

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*Précis:*

John Hick is arguably the most influential proponent of religious pluralism of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. While his “pluralistic hypothesis” has been analyzed and criticized from many angles, his basic claim to be presenting a “hypothesis” has received a relatively free pass. This essay challenges that claim by comparing Hick’s pluralistic hypothesis with a proposed religion specific hypothesis. Each hypothesis is analyzed in terms of its ability to explain the relevant data from the world religions. In light of this comparison, it is concluded that Hick’s pluralistic hypothesis fails to adequately explain all of the relevant data and that Hick’s pluralism is thus more akin to a religious worldview than to a scientific hypothesis.

In the fourth part of his seminal work, *An Interpretation of Religion*, John Hick proposes a “pluralistic hypothesis” to account for the variety of religious experiences and traditions around the world. In earlier chapters Hick rejects “the sceptical view that religious experience is *in toto* delusory” and argues that it is rational for those who experience the world religiously to “believe and live on this basis.”<sup>1</sup> However, given this epistemological foundation and the observable differences between various religions, Hick argues that religious adherents cannot “reasonably claim that our own form of religious experience, together with that of the tradition of which we are a part, is veridical whilst the others are not.”<sup>2</sup> Thus, Hick offers his pluralistic hypothesis, which claims in short that “the great world

traditions constitute different conceptions and perceptions of, and responses to, the Real from within the different cultural ways of being human.”<sup>3</sup>

Even with the plethora of responses to Hick’s view over the years, it seems that one aspect of his position has been given virtually a free pass, namely, his claim to be presenting a *hypothesis* in the first place. Thus, when the criticisms of his view become particularly troublesome, Hick still has an available recourse: He can respond that he is not really arguing for a view at all; he is simply presenting a hypothesis to explain the observable data. Unless and until someone can offer a rival hypothesis that can explain the data as well or better, there is no reason to abandon his own.

In this paper, then, I take Hick at his word and assess his view *as a hypothesis*. What data are being taken into consideration? How well does Hick’s hypothesis explain the data? Have any data been left out? Could a rival hypothesis explain the relevant data as well or better than Hick’s? It is my contention that if Hick’s view is to survive as a viable hypothesis, it will need to provide adequate answers to these questions. To the extent that Hick’s view cannot provide adequate answers, we cannot continue to speak of it as a hypothesis (or at least not as a viable one) but will need to think of it in other terms.

In the following I first examine Hick’s pluralistic hypothesis, given the relevant data from religious experience and traditions. I am not concerned with assessing the strength of Hick’s hypothesis on the basis of its internal or external consistency *per se*—a task that has been undertaken virtually *ad infinitum* with varying levels of success<sup>4</sup>—but rather on its strength *as a hypothesis*. Again, this will be done by reviewing the general relevant data from religions. Second, I present my own religion specific “hypothesis.” Next, I compare Hick’s pluralistic hypothesis with my posited religion specific hypothesis. Based on this comparison, I then argue that Hick’s pluralistic vision fits the paradigm of a religious worldview much closer than it does the paradigm of a scientific hypothesis. Finally, I conclude that while the viability of Hick’s pluralistic vision can be assessed on its own merits—just as that of any worldview<sup>5</sup>—Hick can no longer deflect the most acute criticisms of his pluralism by maintaining the veneer of

objectivity as one presenting a hypothesis, and thus, he can no longer use his view to assess the relative merits of other religious worldviews.

## Hick's Pluralistic Hypothesis

Hick is very intentional in the designation of his view as a pluralistic *hypothesis* (hereafter PH). His most complete and straightforward single articulation of PH states that

the great world faiths embody different perceptions and conceptions of, and correspondingly different responses to, the Real from within the major variant ways of being human; and . . . within each of them the transformation of human existence from self-centeredness to Reality-centeredness is taking place. These traditions are accordingly to be regarded as alternative soteriological 'spaces' within which, or 'ways' along which, men and women can find salvation/liberation/ultimate fulfillment.<sup>6</sup>

As best as I can tell, there are at least five distinct, though related, tenets of PH as stated above. These can be restated as the following propositions:

- (1) There is a Real.
- (2) The great world faiths embody different perceptions/conceptions of the Real and different responses to the Real.
- (3) The great world faiths embody different perceptions/conceptions of and responses to the Real *from within variant ways of being human*.
- (4) Within each great world faith, the transformation of human existence from self-centeredness to Reality-centeredness is taking place.
- (5) Each tradition (i.e., great world faith) is an alternative soteriological space within which, or way along which,

men and women can find salvation/liberation/ultimate fulfillment.

By (1) Hick means to assert that there is some ineffable Ultimate Reality. Hick develops this in the ensuing chapters by discussing how the Real is experienced both as the *Personae* and the *Impersonae*, though in itself the Real transcends the categories of personal-impersonal (as well as all other non-formal categories). The main thrust of (2) is that the great world religions all relate to the same Reality, though each does so through different embodiments. Tenet (3) is perhaps the most ambiguous, but it seems to make a correspondence between the different ways religions relate to the Real and the different *cultures* (i.e., “ways of being human”) in which the religions are found.

Tenet (4) encapsulates what Hick takes to be the primary function of religion, namely, to transform human existence from self-centeredness to Reality-centeredness. Further, (4) asserts that this transformation is actually taking place within each great world religion. Finally, (5) states the means by which this transformation takes place, that is, the soteriological space or way that each religion creates. With these five tenets of PH specified, we can now move to specify the relevant data and assess how well (1)–(5) explain the given data and thus how well PH works as a hypothesis.

## The Religious Data

Hick tends to be a bit general in his presentation of the data PH is intended to explain. As he explains in one passage, his “project here is to outline [PH] without attempting the impossibly large task of filling in every detail of the map which it proposes.”<sup>7</sup> While this could be seen as an evasion of the problems PH faces when encountered with the data, a more generous reading might recognize that the amount of data to be considered is indeed too vast to be discussed in any detail and thus forgive Hick for some generalizations. Nevertheless, I believe that we can still identify (generally) the religious data that Hick considers relevant to the problem of religious diversity and for which

PH is offered. These religious data (hereafter RD) can be enumerated as the following five propositions:

- (6) There have been many religious people over the ages who have reported experiencing the world religiously (including billions today).
- (7) “[T]here are a number of different . . . traditions and families of traditions witnessing to many different personal deities and non-personal ultimates.”<sup>8</sup>
- (8) For each great religious tradition there are cultural contexts in which it arose and within which it operates.
- (9) Within each of the great religious traditions there have been (and are today) people who have achieved sainthood.
- (10) Within each of the great religious traditions there is a similar ethical core guiding the respective religious adherents.

Again, while Hick does not explicitly articulate all of these propositions in exactly the above manner, a reading of his arguments for PH can glean something close to RD.

Two observations can be noted about RD. First, the majority of the five propositions is uncontroversial and can be accepted by nearly anyone who has studied the great world religions. Perhaps (8) and (10) would be disputed by some, but it would only require a bit of further clarification to make them as generally accepted as the others.<sup>9</sup>

The second and arguably most important observation about RD is that each of (6)–(10) has a striking correlation with each of (1)–(5), respectively. Indeed, the five points of PH can be seen as offering explanatory analogues for the five pieces of RD. From (6) and Hick’s argument that religious experience cannot all be delusory, Hick proposes (1) as the explanation of how religious experience could in some sense be veridical. Then, given that varied religious experience is in some way veridical and (7), Hick proposes (2) as the explanation of how the Real can be the “ground of this varied realm of religious phenomena.”<sup>10</sup> Hick proposes (3) as an explanation of how and/or why the Real relates in different ways through different religious traditions,

based on his analysis of (8). Regarding conflicting truth claims, Hick states, "Each such belief has arisen within a complex religious tradition or family of traditions to which it is integral, and each such belief contributes to one or more of the religio-cultural 'lenses' through which the Real is humanly perceived."<sup>11</sup> For Hick the data from (8) is therefore nicely explained by (3).<sup>12</sup>

Perhaps the strongest and most compelling piece of data for PH is (9). The major thrust of PH rests on the argument that all major religions provide avenues for human transformation to take place. Proposition (9) provides empirical evidence for Hick that this is taking place, and Hick thus explains this data by offering (4). Finally, Hick argues for the explanatory basis of the connection between (9) and (4) by observing the religious teachings of the major religions themselves and aptly notes (10). In (5) Hick interprets the data from (10) as providing the means for (4). Building off of each other, then, and taken together as a whole, (1)–(5) seem to individually and collectively explain (6)–(10) quite well.

If RD are as uncontroversial as I have suggested, and if they comprise the primary data to be explained, then it would seem that PH does explain the data quite well and that it should therefore be regarded as a viable working hypothesis, as Hick has suggested. Hick's ensuing arguments for PH would then only strengthen its credibility as a hypothesis and perhaps move it from a working hypothesis to a more established theory. However, RD may need to be reconsidered before coming to such an optimistic conclusion for PH.

## Reassessing the Data

The above section has shown that if one accepts RD as the primary data to be explained, then PH can be shown to work quite nicely as a hypothesis (whatever else its strengths or weaknesses may be on other grounds). However, the strength of a hypothesis lies not only in how well it can explain a certain set of data but also in whether it accounts for all of the data relevant to the case. Since it appears that PH has explained RD quite well, the next question regards what other data it might be leaving out. Here PH may run into a bit of difficulty.

Consider the amount of violence committed in the name of religion across the world and throughout world history.<sup>13</sup> Might not this information count as data to be considered (as our ‘new atheist’ friends continually remind us)? Indeed, Hick is keenly aware of these travesties. Based on this information, he assesses “the great world traditions” accordingly:

Taking the great world traditions as totalities, then, we can only say that each is an unique mixture of good and evil. Each has been and is responsible for or associated with immense contributions to human welfare; each has also been and is responsible for or implicated in vast evils afflicting some part of the human race.<sup>14</sup>

Hick thus summarizes:

It is not possible, as an unbiased judgment with which all rational persons could be expected to agree, to assert the overall moral superiority of any one of the great religious traditions of the world. This is the rather modest conclusion to which our discussion points.<sup>15</sup>

Modest though it may be, Hick’s conclusion is at best irrelevant and at worst contrary to PH.

Two of the fundamental tenets of PH are (4), that the transformation of human existence from self-centeredness to Reality-centeredness is taking place within each of the great world faiths, and (5), that the great world faiths offer the means for this transformation to take place. Based on (9) and (10), these tenets are well supported. However, based on the data from religious violence and Hick’s own comments regarding this data, (9) must be amended to include the following:

- (9\*) Within each of the great religious traditions there have been (and are today) people who promote violence.

Hick could argue that (9\*) is merely the result of the particularist commitments of these religious adherents and that if PH were accepted, religious strife would be eradicated. But again, this misses the point, which is simply that PH only works as a hypothesis if it can adequately explain the data as it stands. Hick attempts to circumvent the unwanted data by discussing it in terms of the criteria for assessing religions, given the truthfulness of PH, rather than the criteria for assessing PH, given the facts of RD. By doing so he does not allow anything that does not fit his criteria to be counted as data. But by putting the proverbial cart before the horse here, Hick unwittingly acknowledges that he is not utilizing the full scope of RD for PH.

Moreover, even (9\*) does not complete the data to be explained by accounts of religious violence. For surely the violent actions of many religious people are not always completely isolated from the teachings of their respective religions. Thus, in addition to (9\*), (10) will also need to be amended to include the following:

- (10\*) Within each of the great religious traditions, there are teachings that guide respective religious adherents to violent actions.

Here again, Hick acknowledges that (10\*) is the case, but he refuses to count it as data for PH. Rather, based on PH he offers criteria intended to weed out any of this unwanted data from his overall religious picture. As prime candidates for weeding, Hick proposes the “Hindu doctrine of reincarnation and the closely related Buddhist doctrine of rebirth . . . the Jewish doctrine of ‘the chosen people’ . . . the Muslim doctrine of the *jihad* . . . [and] from Christianity . . . the doctrine of double predestination . . .”<sup>16</sup> Hick argues, “Such doctrines cannot be defended by an appeal from divine love to divine justice,” and thus they “cannot express the unqualified love, limitless compassion or generous forgiveness which constitutes the common ethical ideal.”<sup>17</sup> However, this assessment seems to arbitrarily trump (9\*) and (10\*) with (9) and (10). Until Hick can find a way to integrate all of the relevant data—(9\*) and (10\*) included—into his hypothesis, PH will fail to offer a viable explanation for the diversity of religious experiences around the

world. Perhaps, then, an alternative hypothesis based on the entirety of the available RD could be offered. To this project we now turn.

## A Religion Specific “Hypothesis”

Thus far it has been argued that PH works well with the data that it includes but that the omission of other important data weakens PH’s explanatory power. The current task is to provide an equally compelling hypothesis that not only explains Hick’s data equally well but also takes into account the data that Hick omits. For this I propose a religion specific hypothesis (hereafter RSH). For the sake of discussion, no particular religious tradition will be singled out, but rather, the hypothesis will be based on the way one holding to a non-pluralist view of religions could interpret RD from within the commitments of one’s own religious tradition. Taking into account (6)–(10), including (9\*) and (10\*), I propose the following five tenets of RSH:

- (11) There is a Real.
- (12) The great world faiths offer different perceptions/conceptions of what the Real might be and different responses based on each faith’s corresponding perceptions/conceptions of what the Real might be; and, to the extent that a particular great world faith’s perceptions/conceptions of and responses to what the Real might be correspond to the way the Real actually is, that great world faith offers the corresponding extent of truth about the Real.
- (13) The great world faiths embody different perceptions/conceptions of and responses to what the Real might be *based on numerous cultural, historical, scriptural-revelatory, and doctrinal factors.*
- (14) Within each great world faith, sincerely religious people behave in sincerely religious ways—many toward moral transformation, some toward moral denigration; and, the extent to which a great world faith’s soteriological solution addresses the *actual* primary soteriological

need is the extent to which sincerely religious people behaving in sincerely religious ways within that tradition may be able find the true soteriological solution.

- (15) Each great world faith offers different soteriological solutions based on what each faith takes to be the primary soteriological need, that is, salvation, liberation, or ultimate fulfillment; and, the extent to which a particular great world faith's understanding of the primary soteriological need corresponds to the *actual* primary soteriological need, and the extent to which that faith's soteriological solution meets the actual primary soteriological need, is the extent to which that faith offers a way in which men and women can find the solution to their primary soteriological need.

Both PH and RSH are in agreement that there is a Real (from (1) and (11)) and that religious beliefs and practices are conditioned by various factors (from (3) and (13)), though the latter offers a more comprehensive understanding of what these factors might include. The two hypotheses primarily differ in that PH regards the Real as ineffable and all great world religions as thus relating to the Real in equally valid ways (from (2)), while RSH is committed to the view that some information about the Real is knowable and thus that some world faiths present more truth about the Real than others (from (12)). Moreover, on PH all great world faiths provide equally valid soteriological means, by which are understood ways for human transformation to take place (from (4) and (5)), while for RSH there is only one actual primary soteriological need, and the differences between the religions in assessing that need and providing a solution for it point to their respective potential efficacy regarding that primary need (from (14) and (15)).<sup>18</sup>

It seems, then, that PH and RSH simply provide fundamentally different ways of viewing RD. It could be argued by a defender of RSH that PH has not taken into consideration the full account of the data (as I have argued above). On the other hand, Hick would likely respond that RSH has not only interpreted the data wrongly, but that it is wrongheaded to begin with. After all, RSH holds that some religions

offer more access to Reality than others, which according to Hick is simply an unacceptable assertion in today's religious atmosphere. Indeed, Hick argues that we cannot

reasonably claim that our own form of religious experience, together with that of the tradition of which we are a part, is veridical whilst the others are not. We can of course claim this; and indeed virtually every religious tradition has done so, regarding alternative forms of religion either as false or as confused and inferior versions of itself . . . [but] the only reason for treating one's tradition differently from others is the very human, but not very cogent, reason that it is one's own!<sup>19</sup>

Thus Hick would argue that RSH fails by treating the religious experiences within one tradition as veridical and those in other traditions as less than fully veridical. While RSH may indeed be committed to such a position, ultimately PH resorts to a similar picture as well by arguing that most of what is experienced within the world religions is—literally speaking—*false*. According to Hick particular religious commitments still contain mythological value in evoking “an appropriate dispositional attitude to” the Real, but regarding the “literal conformity of what is said to the facts,” every religion falls short of the mark on PH.<sup>20</sup> Perhaps an addendum to (2) might thus be added:

- (2\*) The great world faiths' embodied perceptions/conceptions and responses to the Real have no correspondence to the way the Real actually is, and thus the great world faiths offer no literal truth about the Real.

Whether or not this premise is less wrongheaded than those of RSH is difficult to decide, but it clearly does not bode well for the argument that because RSH considers some religious experiences as less than veridical, it is therefore arbitrary or irrational and should accordingly be rejected. In fact, on RSH it seems that quite a few more of the claims from those within various religions can be accepted as possibly true than on PH. For example, if it is literally true that the Real is as

described by Muslims, then Christians and Jews assert the true claim that the Real is personal and monotheistic; Buddhists and Hindus still assert many true claims about ethical behavior; Shintos still make true claims about the existence of lesser spiritual beings; etc. In other words, RSH is not an all-or-nothing enterprise, as Hick suggests. A good argument could be made that RSH salvages quite a bit more of the literal truth-claims of religious adherents than PH. Since both RSH and PH are attempting to explain the phenomena of religious diversity without discounting any more RD than necessary, whichever hypothesis can account for the most religious truth-claims seems to have more in its favor *vis-à-vis* a hypothesis. It is my contention that RSH may very well edge out PH in this regard.

However, Hick still has one trump card left: On RSH many people fail to attain the solution to the primary soteriological need. From a monotheistic perspective, this could entail the sobering consequence that many people in the end will be damned.<sup>21</sup> Even from an Eastern perspective, this may entail that many people will never become liberated or reach Nirvana. This does *prima facie* pose a problem for RSH.

But then, what *from the data itself* suggests that everyone will be saved, liberated, or find ultimate fulfillment? There are data suggesting that moral transformation takes place in various religions, but according to Hick, the data are ambiguous over whether this transformation is typically for good or ill. Moreover, there is no obvious necessary link between moral transformation and salvation/liberation/ultimate fulfillment. Hick clearly sees a connection, but many religions explain things differently. It seems, then, that while Hick may have many good reasons to believe that all will be saved/liberated/ultimately fulfilled, this belief has no basis in RD. Instead, I would argue that Hick's pluralistic project rests on more fundamental presuppositions or worldview commitments, akin to those of religious worldviews. It is simply an empirically unsubstantiated faith commitment that leads Hick to believe that all will ultimately be saved/liberated/fulfilled. This of course is none the worse for Hick's faith commitment, other than the fact that it cannot be treated as a tenet of a hypothesis based on observable RD.

## Conclusion: Hypothesis or Worldview?

Most religious adherents would scoff at the idea that the religious Ultimate which they worship—be it Yahweh or Shiva or Allah—is a postulate offered to explain a given set of data from religious experience. Because of this understandable sentiment, it is a bit artificial to call RSH a hypothesis. Each religion's view of the world is based on a variety of scriptures, doctrines, traditions, and religious experiences. These views are not formed merely by analyzing RD. In this respect RSH would be more rightfully regarded as a religion specific *worldview*. Its ability to explain the phenomenon of religious diversity is only secondary to its commitment to explain how to best relate to the Real. Such a worldview could be summarized as follows:

(RSW) The Real is best described by one great world faith, and there is one primary soteriological solution to the actual primary soteriological need.

Happily, most religious adherents would prefer to understand their faith commitments as a worldview rather than a hypothesis, and this is none the worse for the religious adherents' faith.

Likewise, I submit that PH should more rightfully be regarded as Hick's pluralistic *worldview*, which could be summarized as follows:

(PW) The Real is experienced equally well through all great world faiths, and all great world faiths offer equally efficacious soteriological solutions based on equally valid assessments of soteriological need.

Both RSW and PW already presuppose certain things about the world before considering what the relevant RD allows, which in turn does not allow either to assess the data in a disinterested way. Again, this is no fault of the worldviews *per se*, for perhaps truth on such matters is not best attained through empirical investigation. If not, then so much the worse for empirical investigation. Still, these presuppositions require that RSW and PW do not hide behind the mask of RSH and

PH. Happily for RSW, it rarely attempts this guise; unfortunately for PW, it does.

Very little of what has been said above has anything to do with the merits of Hick's pluralism *per se*. The aim of the present work has simply been to show that Hick's pluralism is much more akin to a religious worldview than it is to an empirical hypothesis. Hick's presuppositions don't allow for his view to be truly considered a hypothesis. Much of the data that needs explaining is either ignored or is bracketed by Hick's pluralistic worldview. While I have argued that much of the religious data can be better explained by a religion specific view, this point is secondary to the argument that neither Hick's pluralism nor a religion specific view should be treated as a hypothesis. Rather, as worldviews, both Hick's pluralism and any given religion specific view can and should be assessed on the strengths and weaknesses of their own doctrines and dogmas.<sup>22</sup>

## Notes

1. John Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, 2d ed. (New Haven: Yale, 2004), 235, 233.
2. *Ibid.*, 235.
3. *Ibid.*, 376.
4. See, e.g., Philip Quinn and Kevin Meeker, eds., *The Philosophical Challenge of Religious Diversity* (New York: Oxford, 2000).
5. See Hick, *Interpretation*, Part Five: Criteriological, 297-376.
6. *Ibid.*, 240.
7. *Ibid.*, 340.
8. *Ibid.*, 233.
9. All that (8) is claiming is that each great religious tradition had its origin in some particular cultural context—*viz.*, the ancient Israelites for Judaism, first century Judeo-Greek culture for Christianity, ancient India for Hinduism and Buddhism, seventh century Mecca and Medina for Islam, etc.—and that the regional practices of each great world faith over the ages and today cannot be separated from the cultural context in which it is practiced. This is not to say that none of the faiths have been able to transcend their original cultural contexts; indeed, most of them have to a greater or lesser extent. Rather, it simply means that in the religious thought and practice of any particular individual or regional worshipping community, the cultural context will inevitably be an influential factor.

Similarly, (10) does not imply that every great world faith has an exact

analogue to the Ten Commandments or the Eightfold Path. It simply states that at the core of the ethical teachings of each great world faith, there can be found a comparable ethical thrust, which may be articulated in various ways. Hick suggests the Golden Rule as this unifying ethical thrust, and I think we can do no better.

10. Hick, *Interpretation*, 350.
11. *Ibid.*, 269.
12. Keith Yandell thinks I am being too generous with Hick here. For if the Real is completely ineffable, then it is extremely difficult to see how it could be used as the explanation for any empirical data of any kind. If by the very nature of the Real, no non-formal properties can be ascribed to it, then it seems difficult to see how the Real could serve as the explanation for the data of religious experience. But I suppose it is better to be too generous than not generous enough, so we will bracket Yandell's important criticisms for the sake of our discussion.
13. For example, in his essay, "Political Tolerance in an Age of Renewed Religious Warfare" (in Mehdi Amin Razavi and David Ambuel, eds., *Philosophy, Religion, and the Question of Intolerance* [Albany: State University of New York, 1997], 29), Robert Cummings Neville offers an account gleaned from the *New York Times* of religious violence in Europe alone: "In Europe of course there is the war between Roman Catholic Croats, Christian Orthodox Serbs and Muslims in Bosnia; the simmering conflict between Catholics and Orthodox in Croatia; the ongoing battles between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland; the intermittent violence in Germany between right-wing Christian Germans and the Muslims and Orthodox from Bulgaria, Romania, the Balkans, and Turkey; the conflicts in Romania of the Orthodox Catholic ethnic Hungarians and the Gypsies; the conflicts in Russia between the Orthodox and the Muslims in Chechnya and Ingushetia, and between the Orthodox and the secular heirs of communism; the continued fighting in Georgia between the Muslims and Orthodox."
14. Hick, *Interpretation*, 337.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*, 340.
17. *Ibid.*
18. This of course does not mean that there could not be other lesser problems that other religions might be able to address. For example, if the *actual* primary soteriological need is to break free from the cycles of rebirth, then Buddhism has best assessed the problem and likely offered the best solution as well. Still, many people may also have the very real existential problem of being burdened by the guilt of their sins, in which case Christianity may provide a remedy, though this remedy would not be for the primary human soteriological problem of the cycles of rebirth, which the doctrines of Christianity would have misdiagnosed.
19. Hick, *Interpretation*, 235.

20. *Ibid.*, 348.
21. Notwithstanding monotheistic universalist views.
22. An earlier version of this essay was presented at the Evangelical Philosophical Society Midwest Regional Meeting held in Chicago, Illinois on 28 March 2008 and was also included as an appendix to my thesis, “Nonevidentialism, Pluralism, and Warrant: Plantinga, Hick, and the Epistemological Challenge of Religious Diversity” (M.A. thesis, Trinity International University, 2009). Special thanks to my thesis readers, Harold Netland and Keith Yandell—as well as those in attendance at the EPS meeting—for helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper.