

Latter Day Inkling is a U.S.-based research psychologist for the military. He is especially interested in epistemology and natural theology. Other human beings can also operate as part of our cognitive environment, especially when we are dealing with testimony. The idea here is that in a properly functioning cognitive module, the more firmly a belief is held, the more objectively probable it is that it is a true belief, and hence has more warrant. Part of what it means to be properly functioning, in other words, is for there to be a tendency to believe more firmly those propositions for which one has more warrant. Plantinga helpfully provides the example of an "optimistic override". A patient is told that he is terminally ill and has months to live. If he went on the basis of a cognitive module which is designed to generate true beliefs, he would be skeptical about his chances of survival. But the proper function of the optimistic override (henceforth OO) is something different: to preserve happiness, perhaps. If the optimistic override fails to function and the "original" truth-oriented cognitive faculty proceeds unimpeded, warranted true belief (and hence knowledge) results. There is also a connection with the Freudian complaint against religion lurking here