

NATURALISM AND THE LAST JUDGMENT

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It must be thought that either God or nature governs all things.¹

INTRODUCTION

Frederick the Great became king of Prussia, just across the Baltic sea from Sweden, in 1743. Frederick liked to call himself “the *philosophe* of Sans Souci” (his palace at Potsdam). The king “rejected and disliked Christianity and all revealed religion, predicting that Christianity would not last more than another two hundred years.”² Little did he know that, at least spiritually speaking, the first Christian church would not last another twenty.

After putting aside his career as a scientist and philosopher and following his call to be a revelator, Emanuel Swedenborg, a contemporary of Frederick the Great, wrote *The Last Judgment* and *Continuation concerning The Last Judgment*.³ In these books he records the things he heard and saw in the spiritual world and asserts that “all the predictions in the Apocalypse are at this day fulfilled,” including the end of the first Christian church. Both books sound hopeful notes regarding the future of the human race on this planet in the universe. Order has been restored to the spiritual world. Spiritual captivity and slavery have been removed. Spiritual freedom has been reinstated so that people can “better perceive interior truths” and thus “be made more internal” (*LJ* 74). There is a joy in heaven and also “light in the world of spirits, such as was not before” (*CLJ* 30). “A similar light also . . . arose with men [people] in the world, from which they had new enlightenment” (*ibid.*). “The state of the world and of the church before the Last Judgment was like evening and night, but after it, like morning and day” (*CLJ* 13). To those familiar with the eighteenth

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century, this sounds simply like more liberty-loving Enlightenment optimism and luminescent metaphor.

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw the growth, spread, and domination of the worldview known as naturalism. Naturalists hold that nothing spiritual or supernatural exists: there is only nature and natural ways of knowing it. If, as a result of the Last Judgment and Second Coming of the Lord, there is new light in the world constituting a bright fresh mental morning, then why has naturalism been the dominant worldview for Western intellectuals? One would think that with the enlightenment available to the human race, we would see the growth of spiritualism, not naturalism.⁴ This is puzzling. True, Swedenborg also wrote that “the state of the world hereafter will be altogether similar to what it has been heretofore” (*LJ* 73). Concerning the civil aspect of life, there will continue to be politics, peace, and war. As for ecclesiastical matters, the “divided churches will exist” as before, teaching their doctrines, and the “same religions as now will exist among the Gentiles” (*LJ* 73). These predictions have certainly come to pass. But given the growth of naturalism and the momentous events reported by Swedenborg, it can seem as though the previous two centuries constitute a rather gray dawn in this world.

Out of the variety of worldviews that existed in the eighteenth century, naturalism is the one that is specifically cited in the Heavenly Doctrines. Passages containing concepts related to a number of worldviews can be found in the Doctrines, and deism (the idea of a Grand Mechanic who wound up the clockwork universe) is particularly relevant since it was a very popular worldview among some intellectuals during Swedenborg’s lifetime. Despite its existence in public writing since at least 1682, the term for deism is, surprisingly, not used in the Heavenly Doctrines.⁵ So the explicit use of the terms for naturalism in both narrative and expository passages in the Heavenly Doctrines is significant.

This leads to several important questions which this paper will answer: does “naturalism” in the Heavenly Doctrines refer to the same thing that philosophers today call “naturalism”? Is it the same thing as “materialism”? Are there any significant differences between naturalism and atheism? Some Christians are today aware of naturalism and claim that it

is a “secular faith”. Do philosophical naturalists agree? Do the Heavenly Doctrines agree with this?

Naturalism existed prior to the Last Judgment, and it has not only continued to exist after it, but has grown. Why? Is there one cause of naturalism, or are there multiple causes? As we will see, the Heavenly Doctrines point to not just one cause, but many. Interestingly, one cause would strike any professional philosopher, at first glance, as non-theological, non-intellectual, and far-fetched: adultery.⁶ This raises a new set of questions. Is there a link between the history of marriage, or sexual relations in general, and the rise of naturalism? One contemporary Christian theologian has argued that such a link exists.⁷ Can a New Church thinker concur? It is at this point, when naturalism affects how we think of ourselves, how we treat one another, our views on love, family, and society that it ceases to be merely a matter of intellectual curiosity and becomes a vital concern for every single person.

We will begin to answer these questions by first considering the status of naturalism among today’s philosophers. After defining naturalism in relation to materialism and positivism, we briefly examine in part two what Swedenborg the philosopher and some of his contemporaries had to say about the topic. In the third section of the paper we explore what Swedenborg the theologian reveals concerning naturalism, both its causes and its effects. This is followed by a section in which we strive to understand the reasons for the growth of naturalism after the Last Judgment. Arguments both for and against naturalism are considered in section five. Section six includes a brief consideration of the future prospects of both naturalism and its opposing worldview, spiritualism.

DEFINING NATURALISM

That naturalism is the reigning worldview among Western philosophers there can be no doubt:

[S]cientific naturalism is the current orthodoxy, at least within Anglo-American philosophy. . . . Naturalism has become a slogan in the name of which the vast majority of work in analytic philosophy is pursued, and its

pre-eminent status can perhaps be appreciated in how little energy is spent in explicitly defining or explaining what is meant by scientific naturalism, or in defending it against possible objections.⁸

Barry Stroud, past president of the Pacific Division of the American Philosophical Association, states that “what is usually at issue is not whether to be a naturalist or not, but rather what is and what is not to be included in one’s conception of ‘nature’.”⁹ The same thing is asserted by a leading naturalist, David Papineau. Naturalism “is widely viewed as a positive term in philosophical circles—few active philosophers nowadays are happy to announce themselves as ‘non-naturalists’.”¹⁰ Christian philosopher Charles Taliaferro states that today “the goal is either to accommodate consciousness, minds, value et al, as denizens of a physical world or to eliminate them. Either way materialism [a form of naturalism] is the order of the day.” Quoting William Lycan, he continues: “Few theorists question the eventual truth of materialism.”¹¹

The General Concept

“Naturalism” is a word that is used broadly in the sciences, arts, and humanities. The term can refer to someone who studies nature, especially by direct observation. A botanist or zoologist is sometimes labeled a “naturalist.” The famous ornithologists, John James Audubon and William MacGillivray are called “naturalists.” In literature and art the term means a faithful adherence to nature, a realistic portrayal of something. For example, in the nineteenth century there was a group of writers, including Emile Zola and Gustave Flaubert, that adhered to principles of naturalism, meaning that a writer should apply objectivity and precision in his or her observation and description of life, without idealizing or imposing value judgments. One might say that this was an attempt to import some of the techniques of modern science into literature.

Naturalism in philosophy has some of the same connotations as “naturalism” and “naturalist” in other contexts, especially the scientific study of nature, but it is more all-encompassing. As philosopher Michael Rea states, the question, What is philosophical naturalism? is difficult to answer. It is “vexed by the fact that the house of naturalism is a house

divided. There is little agreement about what naturalism is, or about what sort of ontology it requires."¹² Indeed, a number of terms—scientism, materialism, physicalism, reductionism, positivism—related to naturalism have been coined and these require some sifting as well. There are several forms of, or themes within, naturalism too: ontological, methodological, epistemological, and semantic. Like the terms "theism" or "Christian" we will find that the meaning of "naturalism" is complex.

We will begin with "perhaps the most familiar definition" of naturalism, namely, "the rejection of supernatural entities such as gods, demons, souls, and ghosts."¹³ Most commonly, naturalism is defined as anti-supernaturalism.¹⁴ This is consistent with an older definition, which is labeled the "negative" definition of naturalism. John Herman Randall, Jr. states that naturalism can be defined negatively as "the refusal to take 'nature' or 'the natural' as a term of distinction."¹⁵ It is:

opposed to all dualisms between Nature and another realm of being—to the Greek opposition between Nature and Art, to the medieval contrast of the Natural and the Supernatural, to the empiricist antithesis of nature and Experience, to the idealist distinction between Natural and Transcendental, to the fundamental dualism pervading modern thought between Nature and Man.¹⁶

In other words, naturalism has no room in it for any *other* kind of entity, substance, cause, force, or process besides nature. It is a form of monism, the position that reality is one, or is composed of one kind of thing (substance, force, etc.); this one thing is natural or nature. So if one has some notion of what supernaturalism is, and theism, deism, spiritualism, and forms of transcendentalism are all kinds of supernaturalism, then one can understand naturalism by thinking of it as the *opposite* of supernaturalism, spiritualism, theism and forms of transcendentalism. This "negative" definition of naturalism arose first because forms of spiritualism constitute humanity's ancient worldview.

In contrast to the negative definition of naturalism, there is what is often called the "positive" definition and it is more complex. "Positively," Randall explains, "naturalism can be defined as the continuity of analysis—as the application of . . . 'scientific methods' to the critical interpreta-

tion and analysis of every field.” “There is no ‘realm’ to which the methods for dealing with Nature cannot be extended.”¹⁷

Here is a very brief definition of naturalism of the positive sort. Naturalism is

In general the view that everything is natural, i.e. that everything there is belongs to the world of nature, and so can be studied by the methods appropriate for the studying of that world, and the apparent exceptions can be somehow explained away.¹⁸

Two themes in this definition, and in naturalist writings in general, can be discerned. One is ontological (concerning the being of nature): “a commitment to an exclusively scientific conception of nature”, and the other is methodological and epistemological (concerning authentic knowledge): “a reconception of the traditional relation between philosophy and science according to which [the method of] philosophical inquiry is conceived as continuous with science.”¹⁹ The methodological commitment of naturalists is reflected in Roy Bhaskar’s definition of naturalism, which is that

there is (or can be) an essential unity of method between the natural and the social sciences. It must be immediately distinguished from two species of it: *reductionism*, which asserts that there is an actual identity of subject-matter as well; and *scientism*, which denies that there are any significant differences in the methods appropriate to studying social and natural objects . . .²⁰

In other words, the naturalist holds that society and individual human beings, or anything else one cares to name, can be, and moreover *ought* to be, studied in the same way as the rest of nature. If something is not studied according to scientific methodology, then it ought not to receive our epistemic assent (it is not “real” knowledge).

These two elements of naturalism also appear in the summary of it given by Wagner and Warner. Importantly, these authors link them to one of the aspects of naturalism that most appeals to the modern mind: objectivity.

Contemporary naturalists may take either an epistemological or an ontological starting point. Basic to the epistemological approach are the epistemic merits of science. . . . Underlying the ontological approach is the idea that reality is physical reality. The thrust of naturalism on this view, is that we should believe only in physical things. Although many philosophers combine these ideas (indeed, an entailment seems to run at least from epistemological to ontological naturalism), they represent somewhat distinct fundamental intuitions. A likely source for this bifurcation is the possibility of emphasizing either of two elements in the conception of objectivity. . . . A focus on the idea of an objective world may lead to an ontological formulation of naturalism. Focusing on the process of scientific inquiry would tend to yield an epistemological version.²¹

This definition is helpful because it is given in sympathetic language, one that emphasizes that naturalism is rooted in human beings, their intuitions, and their decisions regarding what it is most important when formulating a position. While there is significant philosophical debate and confusion surrounding the term “objectivity,” Wagner and Warner are correct in associating this concept with naturalism.²² Naturalists tend to think of themselves as being objective, while regarding spiritualists or theists as having fallen victim to subjectivity, or wish-fulfillment, and many people in Western culture think approvingly of natural science as the home of objectivity.

The definitions we have explored thus far have contained a methodological, or epistemic, commitment and an ontological commitment. However, according to Christian philosophers William Lane Craig and J.P. Moreland, naturalism usually contains not just two, but three commitments:

(1) different aspects of a naturalist epistemic attitude (for example, a rejection of so-called “first philosophy” along with an acceptance of either weak or strong scientism); (2) a Grand Story which amounts to an etiological account of how all entities whatsoever have come to be told in terms of an event causal story described in natural scientific terms with a central role given to the atomic theory of matter and evolutionary biol-

ogy; and (3) a general ontology in which the only entities allowed are those that bear a relevant similarity to those thought to characterize a completed form of physics.²³

This definition includes both the methodological (in 1) and the ontological aspects (in 3) of naturalism. Craig and Moreland adding the narrative aspect indicates that naturalism is not merely an academic position, but a worldview. As a worldview it contains implications for ethics, politics, our understanding of human beings, and the meaning of life. The narrative aspect of naturalism appeals to the imaginative and affective aspects of people, something that makes it more than just “dry” metaphysics or methodology.

Craig and Moreland mention “scientism” in their definition and this, too, is an important term. Science plays a dominant role in all things naturalist, especially the positive and methodological definitions. “Most naturalists would affirm Wilfrid Sellars’s slogan that ‘science is the measure of all things: of what is that it is and of what is not that it is not’ . . .”²⁴ This statement, which is based on an ancient Sophistical saying of Protagoras, captures “the heart and soul” of naturalism.²⁵ According to Mario de Caro and David Macarthur,

Perhaps the most common reason cited in favor of this view [naturalism] is some version of what might be called the “Great Success of Modern Science Argument.” It argues from the great successes of the modern natural sciences in predicting, controlling, and explaining natural phenomena . . . to the claim that the conception of nature [given by] the natural sciences is very likely to be true and, moreover, that this is our *only* bona fide or unproblematic conception of nature. It is the latter claim that earns scientific naturalism the label of “scientism.”²⁶

De Caro and Macarthur are not alone in making this assertion. Linda Wiener and Ramsey Eric Ramsey state that they join with other authors in defining scientism as the view “that science is the proper and exclusive foundation for thinking about and answering every question” which becomes “a worldview characterized by its authoritarian attitudes, its totalizing drive to encompass every question, and its disregard and disdain for

alternative views."²⁷ This is similar to the position held by the British philosopher Tom Sorell. He defines scientism as

the belief that science, especially natural science, is much the most valuable part of human learning—much the most valuable part because it is much the most authoritative, or serious, or beneficial. Other beliefs related to this one may also be regarded as scientific, e.g. the belief that science is the only valuable part of human learning, or the view that it is always good for subjects that do not belong to science to be placed on a scientific footing.²⁸

To illustrate the way that scientism and naturalism are intertwined, the last notion in Sorell's definition is often referred to as "naturalizing" something. For example, epistemology, the study of knowledge and belief, is one of several fields within philosophy. Following Kornblith, one can say that the question, How ought we to arrive at our beliefs? is, on the traditional view, best left to philosophers.²⁹ The non-normative question, How do we arrive at our beliefs? is assigned to psychologists. The question, Are the processes by which we do arrive at our beliefs the ones by which we ought to arrive at our beliefs? is supposed to be answered by comparing the answers to the first two questions. Kornblith takes "the naturalistic approach to epistemology to consist in this: question 1 cannot be answered independently of question 2."³⁰ So naturalism can mean greater inter-disciplinary cooperation and, for philosophers, a systematic attempt to pay attention to and use empirical research that relates to one's area of specialty. However, he observes that the most radical kind of naturalized epistemology was promoted by the famous Harvard professor W.V.O. Quine, who held that epistemology "simply falls into place as a chapter of psychology, and hence of natural science."³¹ Epistemology is replaced by a rigorously scientific psychology, one modeled on physics and chemistry.

Naturalism sounds like a very modern worldview, and to the extent that it is exclusively tied to modern science, it is. However, naturalism in both its negative and positive meanings is at least as old as the Roman philosopher Lucretius (99 BC–55BC) who, in his poem *De Rerum Natura*, set out to persuasively transmit the teachings of two Greek philosophers:

the hedonist Epicurus (341 BC–271 BC) and the atomist Democritus (born c.460 BC). Lucretius rejected a supernatural existence of the gods, the soul, and a life after death. Moreover, he attempted to provide natural, or “scientific” (in the ancient sense), explanations for a variety of phenomena. The influence of this ancient naturalism has been ably traced by George D. Hadzsits (in 1935) and more recently by Benjamin Wiker (in 2002).³²

The goal of converting parts of philosophy into natural science continued into the 1990s, yet not everyone held to scientism. At *Reasons to Believe: An Interdisciplinary Conference on Naturalistic and Non-naturalistic Perspectives* at Elizabethtown College in 1997, Owen Flanagan, an academic who specializes in the philosophy of mind, gave several meanings of the word “naturalism,” ranging from the least controversial to the most controversial. His description includes both positive, negative, and scientific elements. Naturalism can mean that

- Philosophers should respect and accept the claims of scientists
- When philosophical claims and scientific claims conflict, the scientific claims should be accepted
- Philosophical questions do not differ from scientific questions except in their level of generality
- Only science and a science-oriented philosophy can explain reality
- There is no room or need for immaterial forces, events, objects, or beings
- Ethics can be done without theological or other transcendental (e.g. Platonic) foundations
- The only viable view of reality is materialism or physicalism

Flanagan categorized himself as a naturalist in the sense that he holds to a non-reductive form of materialism when it comes to explaining the human mind (a reductive form is physicalism, i.e., everything is a form of physics and can be explained by physics).³³ The editors of *Naturalism in Question* draw the same distinction between naturalism and physicalism:

Although every physicalist . . . is committed to scientific naturalism, not every scientific naturalist is a physicalist. On a pluralist conception of science, a scientific naturalist might think there are entities such as acids

or predators or phonemes that chemistry or biology or experimental psychology commits him to that are not (reducible to) physical entities, and that, consequently, the explanations of say, biology are not reducible, even in principle, to the explanations of physics.³⁴

However, Wagner and Warner observe that “since self-described physicalists also endorse chemistry, ecology, neuroanatomy, and the like, the line between the two classifications [physicalism and naturalism] blurs.”³⁵ Notice that Flanagan must specify that he holds a materialist form of naturalism. This is because “it is no good simply to identify the supernatural with the immaterial, since there are many immaterial things that we are perfectly happy to countenance: for example, concepts and numbers.”³⁶ Ever since Plato launched his theory of the Forms, the ontological status of concepts, numbers, and geometric entities has been in continuous dispute.

A very comprehensive definition of naturalism was published in 1967 by Arthur Danto. It includes the elements of other definitions we have reviewed and amplifies them. He specifies fourteen tenets of this worldview.

1. “The entire knowable universe is composed of natural objects” which exist within the spatiotemporal and natural causal orders.
2. “. . . we need never go outside the system of natural objects for explanations of what takes place within it. Reference to non-natural objects is never explanatory.”
3. “A natural process is any change in a natural object or system which is due to . . . natural causes. There are no non-natural processes.”
4. “Nature is in principle intelligible in all its parts, but it cannot be explained as a whole. For this would presumably require reference to a natural cause, and outside nature . . . there are no natural causes to be found.”
5. Natural method is “(a) explaining natural processes through identification of the causes responsible for them and (b) testing any given explanation with regard to consequences that must hold if it is true.” “The natural method is the way in which one set of natural objects—men—operate upon the rest of nature.”
6. “. . . natural processes are **regular**. The natural method seeks, accordingly, to establish natural laws.”

7. “. . . all philosophers must function in the natural order as other humans do and, in order to do this successfully, must spontaneously apply the natural method.” People from various walks of life seek natural explanations.
8. “Reason is the consistent application of natural method, and natural science is the purest exemplar of reason.”
9. “Knowledge of the world at a given time is what science tells us at the time about the world.” But since this may be revised or rejected in the light of further applications of the natural method, “there is nothing ultimate or eternal about knowledge . . .”
10. “If the formal sciences [e.g. math, logic] are about anything, it will at least not be a realm of timeless numerical essences, and at any rate logic and math are appreciated in terms not of subject matter but of function, as instruments for coping with this world rather than as descriptions of another one.”
11. “To say that outside science there is no knowledge to be had is not to say that it is only through science that people should relate to nature, for there are many ways of experiencing the world. Nevertheless, the only mode of experience which is *cognitive* is scientific . . .”
12. It is not “the aim of naturalism to insist that all natural objects are really reducible to one favored *sort* of natural object or that only the objects or the descriptions of objects recognized by the natural sciences are *real*. All natural objects are equally real . . .”
13. “The universe at large has no moral character save to the extent that it contains human beings among its objects and thus contains entities that have and pursue values.” “The natural method alone, not some special moral intuition, provides the key to dissolving moral disputes, and moral theories may be treated no differently from scientific theories with respect to determination of their strength through testable consequences. Naturalism, although otherwise morally neutral, *is* committed to institutions that permit the operation of natural method in moral and political decision . . .”
14. “Naturalistic philosophy, unlike other philosophies, claims no special subject matter and uses no special tools. Its method is the natural method . . .”³⁷

How much of this definition could a New Church person agree with? Not much. Later on we will see the extent to which Swedenborg knew about and rejected naturalism, but let us make a preliminary accounting of the matter using Danto's fourteen points. A Swedenborgian could agree with some points in 1, 5, 6, (that the space-time universe is knowable by natural methods which lead to natural laws) and the last part of 9 (scientific knowledge can be revised) quite readily. All other tenets are incompatible with the New Church worldview. As for point 12, that all natural objects are equally real, I think that since the New Church metaphysics includes discrete degrees as well as continuous degrees in the natural world, this must be rejected.³⁸ Certainly ordinary English usage rejects this metaphysical egalitarianism; a piece of plastic fruit is less real than one that was just picked from a tree. I suppose a naturalist would assert that this merely shows that ordinary language is stuck in its anthropocentric pre-scientific past and should be reformed. Point number 8, that science is the purest exemplar of reason, is highly contentious just from a philosophical standpoint alone. Why shouldn't logic or mathematics be granted this honorific title? Probably because it might lead to a kind of transcendental Platonism, which Danto rules out in point 10. But is it the case that this value judgment concerning science as the best exemplar of reason can be established by the natural method? Even if one could do so, the process seems circular. Insofar as Danto's, or any other naturalist's, message is "Pay attention to science and make use of its findings," a Swedenborgian can agree. To this extent, Swedenborg himself was a naturalist!

Danto's tenets of naturalism were written forty years ago and the definition of naturalism has not significantly changed since then. The most current description of naturalism is written for the online *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* by the naturalistic philosopher David Papineau who states that naturalism can be separated into an ontological and a methodological component.

The ontological component is concerned with the contents of reality, asserting that reality has no place for "supernatural" or other "spooky" kinds. By contrast, the methodological component is concerned with the ways of investigating reality, and claims some kind of general authority for scientific method.³⁹

Papineau's definition is consistent with Danto's and, as we have seen, with other's definitions. His "methodological naturalism" is consistent with what other philosophers have called epistemic naturalism, which is the view that science and philosophy have the same aims and methods. These are "to establish synthetic knowledge about the natural world, . . . , and to achieve this by comparing synthetic theories with empirical data."⁴⁰ By "science" Papineau means "natural science." He notes that the term "methodological naturalism" has been used in other ways, namely that "natural science itself requires no specific attitude to religion, and can be practiced just as well by adherents of religious faiths as by atheists or agnostics." This, it seems to me, is a statement of historical fact.

Naturalism, however, is not merely a set of methodological tenets or dull guidelines without consequences. In fact it is so much more, and this is important to bear in mind. According to John Herman Randall naturalism is

an attitude and temper . . . It undertakes to bring scientific analysis and criticism to bear on all the human enterprises and values so zealously maintained by the traditional supernaturalists and by the more sophisticated idealists.⁴¹

Naturalism has personal and cultural dimensions. Randall says that naturalists have their opponents: naturalism should "marshall its resources" for its tasks and clear the "obstacles which anti-naturalism would set in its way."⁴² Naturalism is an action plan with an agenda. Naturalists want to surpass supernaturalists at explaining life, guiding behavior, educating young minds, and influencing public institutions and debate. This is reflected in Danto's tenet number 13 above. Religious people, at least the supernatural ones, are benighted opponents. They can be overcome by arguing against their claims for a transcendental God and personal survival after death, by conquering territory previously held by "spirit," by naturalizing religion itself, and by naturalists being friendly, helpful, artistic, and promising that naturalism will be as fulfilling for human beings as supernaturalism or as idealism ever was. Once supernatural religion is defeated, it will be replaced by what amounts to the "religion" of natural-

ism and the “church” of science. Note well Randall’s use of religious language:

Men must have a *faith* in the ultimate principles of scientific verification . . . What Church, or what Party, can proclaim a Truth or Good which measured by its power—and it is the politics of power we are discussing, the power to bring knowledge and wisdom and to render men steadfast in their *devotion*—can compare with the principles of scientific verification . . . ? Assuredly, the anti-naturalists are right: our world is perishing for want of *faith*. The faith we need, the faith that alone promises *salvation*, is the faith in intelligence.⁴³

Not everyone writes as fervently about the aspirations of naturalists and the promise of naturalism as John Herman Randall, (in fact contemporary naturalists and secular humanists would be embarrassed by this use of religious language) but Randall’s language echoes that of the first major American naturalist.

John Dewey (1859-1952), the leading American pragmatist philosopher of the early to mid-twentieth century, proposed that society disconnect the religious values with which he agreed from supernatural religion, and instead make a scientific understanding of humanity and democracy our new religion. Dewey urged people to make this new faith “militant.”⁴⁴ This was the beginning of what has become known as “secular humanism” in the U.S.⁴⁵ And the effort to promote naturalism in all aspects, especially as a cultural force, continues today. This is clear from the activities of Prof. Paul Kurtz and those associated with the Council for Secular Humanism. This group, which is dedicated to ushering in a completely secular society, publishes two magazines, many books, including ones for children, secular humanist manifestos and declarations, holds regular conferences, lectures, meetings, and summer camps for families, and has established “Centers for Inquiry” in New York, Indiana, Michigan, and Canada. Commenting on the last federal elections, Kurtz writes that “[a]lthough the Religious Right lost the battle, I reiterate that it is surely not the end of the Culture War. . . . We need to be prepared for the continuing Culture War that seeks to overturn the Enlightenment and all that it represents in our democracy.”⁴⁶

Naturalism, Materialism, and Positivism

As we have already seen, there are different kinds of naturalists: some are physicalists, others are materialists (and there are different kinds of materialists).⁴⁷ Just as “naturalist” can refer to positions outside of philosophy, so can the term “materialist.” In common parlance a “materialist” is someone who holds that comfort and wealth are the highest values in life, and so has a tendency or commitment to be more concerned with attaining natural, as opposed to spiritual, goals and values. The bumper sticker on the back of a luxury sport utility vehicle, “The one with the most toys wins,” sums up this kind of materialism nicely. Most philosophical materialists want to dissociate themselves from the air of greediness that permeates the term “materialist” and instead emphasize their assertion that everything that exists is made of matter and can be explained only in terms of matter (broadly construed). They would not deny that they reject spiritual values and goals, or that they endorse the material nature of ethics, politics, aesthetics and other realms of value, but they would deny that such rejection leads to greediness.

The ancient Greek materialist view, atomism, has been overturned by the findings of modern science, especially Einstein’s physics. So today’s materialists, when asked what matter is, simply defer to today’s physicists for the answer to that question. Today’s materialism is not simplistic; it can be as sophisticated as current physics. In general, materialism usually concerns the composition of things, while naturalism is a broader outlook and is equally concerned with methodological and epistemological issues. However, materialism can also function as a synonym for naturalism.

Unlike materialism, Positivism got its official start with the French sociologist and philosopher August Comte relatively recently. Comte’s *Course in Positive Philosophy* was published from 1830 to 1842. Comtean positivism is famous for its assertion that human thought has evolved through three stages, from the primitive to the mature: theological, metaphysical, and the scientific stage. Comte dreamed of a day when masses of human beings could be studied like other natural masses and sociology (a term he coined) would be a kind of physics of society, used for its beneficent control and development.

In the early twentieth century a related, but different, form of positivism developed through philosophers associated with the Vienna Circle and non-Viennese thinkers such as A.J. Ayer and Ernest Nagel. The movement to promote the verifiability principle, atomism in language and metaphysics, and the fact-value distinction became known as logical positivism. The well-known Polish philosopher Leszek Kolakowski summarized this kind of positivism. He pointed out that logical positivism is “a normative attitude, regulating how we are to use such words as ‘knowledge,’ ‘science,’ ‘cognition,’ and ‘information’” and the positivists desire to “distinguish between philosophical and scientific disputes that may profitably be pursued and those that have no chance of being settled.”⁴⁸ Kolakowski discussed the tenets of positivism in terms of four rules they promulgated.

The first rule is that of phenomenalism. “This may be briefly formulated as follows: there is no real difference between ‘essence’ and ‘phenomenon’.” Expressed differently, “[w]e are entitled to record only that which is actually manifested in experience; opinions concerning occult entities of which experienced things are supposedly the manifestations are untrustworthy.”⁴⁹ So positivists reject explanations that rely on the notion of “spirit” but also ones that rely on a philosophical concept of “matter.”

The second rule is nominalism. This means that “we may not assume that any insight formulated in general terms can have any real referents other than individual concrete objects.”⁵⁰ Consequently, there is no referent for “the triangle” or “the good.” Such universal terms are merely linguistic and mental constructs. In the world of our experience, we find only individuals, not universals.

The third rule “denies cognitive value to value judgments and normative statements.” “For instance, the principle that human life is an irreplaceable value cannot be so justified: we may accept it or we may reject it, but we must be conscious of the arbitrariness of our option.”⁵¹ Why is this the case? It is a result of the previous two rules:

For, by the phenominalist rule, we are obliged to reject the assumption of values as characteristics of the world accessible to the only kind of knowledge worthy of the name. At the same time, the rule of nominalism

obliges us to reject the assumption that beyond the visible world there exists a domain of values “in themselves,” with which our evaluations are correlated in some mysterious way. Consequently, we are entitled to express value judgments on the human world, but we are not entitled to assume that our grounds for making them are scientific; more generally, the only grounds for making them are our own arbitrary choices.⁵²

This means that moral judgments are the result of subjective affective preferences. Of course this rule would also apply to other areas of life in which normative judgments are made, such as aesthetics, law, and etiquette. Since positivism itself is a set of norms, one supposes that it, too, is an arbitrary choice and a subjective preference. As critics of both positivism and naturalism have pointed out, this self-referential incoherence undermines the rational basis for this view.

The fourth rule is the “belief in the essential unity of the scientific method.” In other words, “the methods for acquiring valid knowledge, and the main stages in elaborating experience through theoretical reflection, are essentially the same in all spheres of experience.”⁵³ So instead of using one method in physics and a different method in sociology or political science, the same method should be used in all three. We have seen this commitment to the unity of the sciences in the attempt to naturalize all aspects of life, and we shall see this commitment critiqued in the section of this paper on the arguments against naturalism.

There is significant overlap between positivism and naturalism, yet the two are not identical. One can be a naturalist, of some sort, and not be a positivist. While naturalism is the predominant worldview among Anglo-American philosophers, positivism is not. According to Craig and Moreland, “in a recent retrospect of the twentieth century, Tyler Burge has remarked that ‘the central event’ in philosophy during the last half century has been ‘the downfall of positivism and the re-opening of discussion of virtually all the traditional problems in philosophy.’”⁵⁴ This is good news for “big tent” or pluralistic naturalists and supernaturalists, including Swedenborgians.

NATURALISM, SWEDENBORG, AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

Swedenborg, being well educated at university, a voluminous reader, and a well-connected traveler, knew about naturalism before his spiritual eyes were opened. Indeed, his 1734 work *The Infinite and The Final Cause of Creation* is a sustained attempt to persuade his naturalistic contemporaries to become theists. As the subtitle of the book—*Outlines of a Philosophical Argument*—shows, Swedenborg sketches the various ways that one can reason with naturalists using methods and terms acceptable to them.⁵⁵ His goal is to develop a line of reasoning to lead the human mind to acknowledge “God as infinite, and as the cause of the finite, and consequently of nature,” so that “it no longer rests in the primitive substance of nature, so as to make God and primate nature one and the same; or to attribute all things to nature” (*Inf.* p. 29). As we saw in the previous section, to make God and nature the same, or to attribute all things to nature, constitute forms of naturalism.

Swedenborg analyzes the reasoning of philosophers to see where their thinking leads them to mistakenly take a naturalist position: “by his own imperfect investigations and analyses, [the philosopher] becomes a worshipper, not of God, but of nature” (*Inf.* p.18). For example, some philosophers seek the Infinite in terms of space or time, and when they cannot find it there, they “secretly” conclude that “the divine essence is probably not infinite, but indefinite, and . . . that the Divine is the prime being of nature, and consequently that nature and God are in a manner one and the same” (*Inf.* p.17). Thinking in terms of space and time, and also trying to apply “geometrical conditions” or analogues of quantity also cause the mind of the philosopher to take this path (*Inf.* pp. 17, 30).

Other causes of naturalism include the thought that nature has such “great and vast resources, which seem to transcend both sense and perception” that it is impossible to assign any limits to it, and so it must be God (*Inf.* p. 81). “On these grounds they deified the universe in its largest sense; and the more readily as their admiration for the whole was filled and illustrated by their knowledge of the astounding marvels and harmonies, of situation, figure and motion . . .” (*Inf.* p. 81). Others “deified the minimal or atomic world; from the same cause as before, viz., from admiration or

ignorance of its properties . . .” because “under the operation of reason the minimum seems more and more to approach the indefinite, or to exceed the limits of conception” (*Inf.* pp. 81-2). Here we see the way that eighteenth century science and mathematics were used to support naturalism instead of theism.

Swedenborg frequently shows sympathy with his interlocutors. He reflects upon the ways that people use reason, which is finite, in order to strive to comprehend God, who is infinite. Poor reason gets lost in mazes of its own making when undertaking such a Herculean task. He agrees that nature is marvelous, and if one thinks of nature as proceeding from the Infinite, it is indeed a divine work (*Inf.* p. 82). Swedenborg uses the experience of wonder and awe, which he himself must have had, to persuade the naturalist to become a theist:

For the greater adorers and worshippers of nature we are, the more we go back to the causes and primitives of nature; the more also we come to simple principles, and the more we acknowledge that all the others originate successively from the natural primitive; and the more again we are led to wonder at the state of this natural primitive [what today’s physicists call the singularity]. . . . I am anxious therefore that the reasoner should center all his admiration in that first or least principle with which he supplies me; for by this means will it not all end in the cause of that principle? . . . Therefore in proportion as we worship nature, and believe in her as the origin of natural things, in the same proportion we may become worshippers of the Deity; because, out of the entirely perfect succession of things, modes, causes, contingents, we may experience *deeper wonder* over primitives, than others can do in contemplating the whole field of derivatives. (*Inf.* p. 38; emphasis added)

But Swedenborg can also be very critical of naturalists. He observes that when we find a clever, well-built machine, even though we attribute a force and power to it, we don’t give credit to, or congratulate, the machine itself. Instead, we praise its inventor and craftsmen. Using argument by analogy, he says that nature is like a machine, and while it too has force and power, it is finite and all praise and wonder should be given to its Infinite Maker (*Inf.* p. 43).

The most trenchant criticism is the one in which he compares modern naturalists to ancient idolaters. In what has become a well-known move against the supernatural religious believer, and in anticipation of thinkers such as the Scottish Enlightenment philosopher David Hume, Swedenborg links the ignorance of natural causes and fascination with the miraculous to—not the origin of supernatural religion—but to modern naturalism, that is, the deification of nature and the universe (*Inf.* p. 81). Modern philosophers, having failed to rationally grasp the nature of God, conflate God with nature and the infinite with the finite, which reason can grasp.

And thus the source of error among the idolatrous vulgar is identical with its source among those philosophers who make an idol of nature: the only difference being what there is between the gross and the subtle, between the more and less plausible, between reason little developed and reason overdeveloped. (*Inf.* p. 74)

Not only is the use of the category of idolatry an interesting foreshadowing of the revelation to come, but this accusation would have been *deeply* offensive to his contemporaries who fancied themselves, as moderns, so much wiser and better than their inferior ancestors or the “barbarous” (non-European) nations of the eighteenth century.

(An aside: Some of the comments in *The Infinite and the Final Cause of Creation* seem to be directed at Baruch (Benedict) Spinoza (1632–1677), a Dutch philosopher, and monistic thinkers like him. There are a few references to Spinoza in Swedenborg’s *Philosopher’s Notebook*, but they refer to comments made by Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (1646–1716) about the Dutch lens grinder.⁵⁶ Did Swedenborg have first-hand knowledge of Spinoza’s philosophy? Spinoza and his (then) scandalous pantheistic movement, which Heinrich Heine called an “open secret,” have received attention recently by academics.⁵⁷ This is an area for further research, especially the ways in which the political and hermeneutical aspects of Spinoza’s work relate to his monism.)

Regarding naturalism as a target of criticism: was Swedenborg arguing against a straw man? Not at all. According to the historian of philosophy, Aram Vartanian, many continental philosophers after Descartes attempted to solve the problems in his metaphysical dualism and advance

his promotion of science by adopting some form of naturalism. For example, in 1651 the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes published *Leviathan*, a book in which he attempted to work out a philosophy consistent with the materialistic assumption that all reality is matter in motion. Ralph Cudworth (1617–1688), the Cambridge Platonist, in his 1678 work *The True Intellectual System of the Universe: wherein all the Reason and Philosophy of Atheism is confuted*, observes that theists and Christians have helped the atheistic cause by persuading people that the universe was derived from the necessary and unguided motion of small particles of matter in a vortex without the direction of any mind. This led to “the Atheists . . . laughing in their sleeves and not a little triumphing, to see the cause of Theism thus betrayed by its professed friends and assertors.”⁵⁸

Vartanian states that “The heretical tendency of Cartesianism must, in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, have made considerable headway, for in 1692 the Jesuit Daniel’s widely-read satire, *Le Voyage du Monde de Descartes*, took up at length several of the topics already discussed.”⁵⁹ Pere Daniel was convinced that it was a bad idea for Cartesians to elude theology, that this was a way of refusing to submit to its authority. If they succeeded, there would be “dangerous consequences that favored heretics, infidels, and libertines.”⁶⁰ Then the Abbe Jean Meslier’s 1729 *Testament* supported the idea that Cartesians believed that the whole universe and all its works could result from natural forces alone.⁶¹

But it was the French doctor and philosopher, Julien Offray de La Mettrie (1709-1751), author of *L’Homme machine* (Man a Machine, published 1748), who

laid down the first and most radical materialist thesis of the period. His automatist conception, put from 1748 at the *philosophes’* disposal, soon found application in a fuller ideological context. It was mainly through La Mettrie’s efforts that Cartesian mechanistic biology, together with its consequences for moral determinism, became the basis of a consistently materialistic view of man. Also contributing to the biological phase of scientific naturalism, . . . were Buffon, Maupertuis, and D’Holbach. Each of these thinkers, carrying out certain implications of Descartes’s philosophy of organism, participated in the special progression of ideas that

terminated in the complex of evolutionary materialism best set forth by Diderot.⁶²

In 1754 the French thinker Denesle wrote *Examen du materialisme*, “which contended that Descartes’s rejection of finalism could only have resulted in the type of naturalistic science, which, at the time, was steadily gaining favor everywhere.”⁶³ The “rejection of finalism” refers to the elimination of ends, or teleological causality (purpose), from modern scientific discourse.

Vartanian’s assessment of the status of naturalism in the eighteenth century reveals how science became a weapon in an ideological battle waged by naturalists in their culture war with the first Christian church:

What scientific naturalism meant to the eighteenth century is illustrated, for example, by the description of it given in a typical (and perhaps the most successful) attack on Diderot’s group: Moreau’s *Nouveau memoire pour servir a l’histoire des cacouacs*. The caricatural exaggeration of this diatribe reveals the salient features of the materialist ideology. The land of the “cacouacs,” that is, the camp of scientific naturalism, takes as its gospel the various and latest physical or biological theories of Buffon, Diderot, Maupertuis. The author devotes many pages to recounting how the life of the “cacouacs” is built upon the interpretation of nature thus obtained, with a ritual to match. The telling point of Moreau’s satire is a portrayal of scientific naturalism as a rival of the traditional theology, indeed to the point of having taken over, by its multiple functions, the authority of established religion for its adherents.⁶⁴

Jacob Nicholas Moreau published his book on the Cacouacs in Amsterdam in 1757, the same year that the Last Judgment took place. Swedenborg makes the same point as Moreau, namely that naturalism, while not a religion, functions like a religion for some people.

Suppose the faith is that nature is the creator of the universe. It follows from this that the universe is what is called God, and that nature is its essence. . . . All these consequences, and many more of the same sort, are

contained in that faith that nature is the creator of the universe, and emerge from it when it is laid open.⁶⁵

Swedenborg analyzes naturalism as a faith, as a religiosity, that is, something that functions like a religion, but is not.⁶⁶ Naturalism has become a pseudo-religion, or what a contemporary American philosopher, John E. Smith, has called a “quasi-religion.”⁶⁷ The naturalists, beginning with Lucretius and re-surfacing with some Enlightenment philosophers, such as David Hume, have been eager to give a scientific explanation of religion with the hope that naturalizing religion will explain it away. Here Swedenborg, who had the idea even before he penned the Heavenly Doctrines that eighteenth century Europeans could worship nature and so be classified as modern idolaters, continues that line of analysis. As we will see, in the final work of his life *True Christian Religion*, he turns the tables on the naturalists by giving a theological explanation of naturalism, in effect spiritualizing the naturalist and his or her commitments.

THE HEAVENLY DOCTRINES AND NATURALISM

Now that we have seen that naturalism was a serious force to be reckoned with in the late seventeenth through the eighteenth centuries and that Swedenborg was aware of this prior to his enlightenment, we turn to his theological works. When Swedenborg penned them, he used forms of the neo-Latin terms for naturalism (*naturalismus*, *naturalismum*, *naturalista*, *naturalismo*) about seventeen times. They were used over several years: from the 1763 work *Divine Love and Wisdom*⁶⁸ to the many uses in *True Christian Religion* published in 1771. While “naturalism” is sometimes used as a synonym for “atheism,” the philosophical concept is readily identified in passages that pre-date *Divine Love and Wisdom*. For instance, *Arcana Coelestia* 8944⁶⁹ and *Heaven and Hell* 353⁷⁰ discuss the learned who do not acknowledge the Lord, but instead acknowledge nature. Although the term is not used, Swedenborg clearly demonstrates an understanding of the ontological form of naturalism.

Beyond the mere use of the term, when we analyze the passages in which naturalism is discussed, we find that the various contemporary

meanings or kinds of naturalism are included. Certain passages address the use of methodological naturalism. For example, in *Intercourse between the Soul and the Body* §9⁷¹ Swedenborg observes that some people base all their reasoning on their senses. Consequently, the evidence for their beliefs is sensory. So it is no surprise that they “ascribe all rational things” to nature and “absorb naturalism as a sponge does water.” In other words, having taken the epistemic position that only beliefs that can be supported by evidence from the natural sciences are justified, such a position leads one to accept naturalism as a worldview quite readily. The same position is taken by satans when they have a debate with angels in *True Christian Religion*. “What is more evident than that nature is all in all?” “Are not the bodily sense the witnesses of truth?” they rhetorically ask, appealing to evidence from the eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and skin. It is all nature! (TCR 77).

This same memorable relation in which the spiritual contest between angels and satans is recounted contains the positivistic form of naturalism also. The satans, who are in a fury, state that “God” is a word without meaning, unless nature is meant. This is the nominalism that Kolakowski gives as the second rule of positivism, and its origin can be traced at least back to the Scottish Enlightenment philosopher David Hume.

Swedenborg also has an awareness of the second element of naturalism mentioned by Craig and Moreland, namely the Grand Story which combines the atomic theory of matter and part of evolutionary biology, in *True Christian Religion* § 20. Without an idea of God as first substance in a human form, we tend to think of God as nature in its first principles, or as the expanse of the universe. Moreover, people who think in this manner also conceive of the origin of humans as a result of the concatenation of elements fortuitously adopting a human form. Of course the theory of evolution was developed after Swedenborg’s lifetime, but the idea that human life is the result of a fortuitous accident can be found in ancient Epicurean philosophy which was revived during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁷² It is the denial of Providence, not the effects of environment upon the diversity of species, that is at issue here.

It has been said that evolution made atheism intellectually respectable, partly because it supposedly provided, or it could in theory provide, an explanation of how life arose by purely natural means.⁷³ This idea

circulated through the intelligentsia of the eighteenth century as well as our own. The naturalist *philosoph* Denis Diderot, who, like Swedenborg before him, wrote on the development of the chicken in the egg, asserted that the chick developed by purely natural means without design or purpose. In his *Dream of d'Alembert*, (written in 1769) Diderot asserted that “from inert matter organized in a certain way and impregnated with other inert matter, and given heat and motion, there results the faculty of sensation, life, memory, consciousness, passion, and thought.” This development “overthrows all schools of theology.”⁷⁴

The naturalistic notion that life emerged from non-life through purely natural means is clearly rejected by Swedenborg. In the work *Divine Providence* he states that naturalists think that everything is governed by natural light and heat, or to update the statement as a physicalist would, that everything is governed by whatever today's physicists say are the fundamental forces and substances of nature. Swedenborg asserts that these are dead. So he rhetorically asks: “Does not what is itself living govern what is dead? Can what is dead govern anything?” Then, directly addressing a crucial belief of the naturalist which is part of the Grand Story: “If you think that what is dead can impart life to itself you are spiritually insane, for life must come from life” (*DP* 182:3).

More evidence of Swedenborg's awareness of naturalism is found in *Intercourse between the Soul and the Body* 17. There he states that when thinkers are ignorant of the doctrine of degrees, they end up in a form of atomistic naturalism. This leads them to “naturalize” what is spiritual, including human rationality (they equate it with the minds of animals) and the human soul (it is a “breath of wind”). This is quite similar to today's naturalistic epistemology which seeks to dispense with the transcendental metaphysics of mind and the idea of consciousness as spiritual. Recall that in Danto's definition of naturalism from the 1960s, he repeatedly asserts that human beings are only natural objects (in points 5 & 6). Today's neurophilosophy does not even countenance the idea of a soul. In 1986 the well-known Existentialist philosopher William Barrett published *Death of the Soul: From Descartes to the Computer* and biologists and philosophers continue to practically equate human beings and animals, especially the higher primates.⁷⁵

Usually Swedenborg uses the term “naturalism” as a synonym for atheism. For example, in *Arcana Coelestia* 8783 he writes that people who trust their own intelligence and exalt themselves above others reject the Word. This is “very evident from the fact that they who are atheists and naturalists, as they are called, are those who are learned. This the world knows, and they themselves know.” Swedenborg saw the closed and darkened understandings of people in the spiritual world who had “confirmed themselves in favor of nature from the visible things of the world, until at last they became atheists” (*DLW* 357). Here Swedenborg asserts that a person can become a naturalist to such an extent that he or she is an atheist. So whether one is called an atheist or naturalist often amounts to the same thing.

But “naturalist” is not always strictly used as a synonym for “atheist.” For example, in *True Christian Religion* the phrase “*naturalista atheus*,” that is, “naturalistic atheist,” is used twice (382, 759:3).⁷⁶ This phrase implies that there are other kinds of atheists. Also, a person can be a theist outwardly by speaking about God, reading the Bible, attending church and by being well-behaved, yet inwardly be an atheist. So as far as intellect and behavior are concerned, such a person is not a naturalist. The person believes, or is willing to state publicly, that God created the world, that there is a life after death, and that one should not act in uncivil or immoral ways. Internally, however, such a person thinks that evil actions are allowable, does not shun them because they are sins against God but merely for the sake of reputation and wealth, and so does not have a conscience. Thus the person is at heart an atheist, but publicly not a naturalist and does not associate with people of that ilk. All people in the whole world, whether Christian, Muslim, or gentile, who lived a merely externally holy life constituted “the first heaven” in the world of spirits during the Last Judgment. Such people are said to be natural, not spiritual, but not philosophical *naturalists* in public (*LJ* 69).

This distinction between being “natural” and not an intellectual naturalist was especially the case for Christians of the Reformed Protestant churches. Since they had an external connection with heaven, but an internal connection with hell, they “could not be torn away in a moment,” so they were “detained in the world of spirits” (*CLJ* 18). These people

underwent processes of separation during the Last Judgment (CLJ 16). However, people who were openly atheistic and at the same time openly naturalists, that is, those who “did not believe in God, who condemned the Word, and rejected from their hearts the holy things of the church” did not go through the processes of the Last Judgment. Instead, they proceeded directly into hell (CLJ 17).

Since most of the passages use the terms “naturalist” and “atheist” interchangeably, one should not make too much out of this distinction. Another reason is that there are general teachings such as this: everyone in hell worships nature (TCR 77:4). This kind of statement should guide our interpretation of the use of the terms “atheism” and “naturalism.”

What can we conclude regarding naturalism and the Heavenly Doctrines? We can conclude that Swedenborg knew what naturalism was, that he repeatedly addressed it and condemned it, and that naturalistic positions and themes have changed so little over the past 250 years that the important parts of the definition of naturalism are contained in the Heavenly Doctrines. As in the eighteenth century, so also today, intellectuals and others assert that the universe created itself, that the cosmos and the human beings in it are accidents, that humans are merely complex animals, that there is no God, there are no angels, no devils nor any other supernatural beings, that natural science is our only means of acquiring knowledge of reality, that only scientific explanations are legitimate, and so on. What *has* changed since the Last Judgment is that more people, at least in the West, believe in naturalism and more people openly assert and accept naturalism. It is no longer a scandalous secret.

Let this illustration suffice to show that Western society’s attitude toward naturalism is quite different now. When the French physician Julien de La Mettrie published his materialistic view of human beings in *The Natural History of the Soul* in 1745 he lost his post as medical officer of the Gardes Français and on July 9, 1746, the Parliament of Paris condemned the book to be burned by the public hangman.⁷⁷ La Mettrie the atheist, the Epicurean, fled to Holland, and, after the publication of *Man A Machine* in 1748 had to seek refuge with Frederick the Great in Berlin.⁷⁸ Some two and a half centuries later, people in the West hardly raise an eyebrow at such naturalistic books, sentiments, or persons.

Also, as we have seen, the terminology has changed, and there are more detailed expressions of naturalism as philosophers and other intellectuals have tried to “cash out” their program and clarify their commitments, but these are variations on a theme.

The Heavenly Doctrines on the Causes of Naturalism

It is important to identify the causes of naturalism for two reasons. First, people who are committed to living a spiritual life should know what causes naturalism so that they can avoid wandering from the path that leads to heaven. Second, if we are to help the Lord actualize what we pray for every day, namely that His will be done on the earth as it is in heaven, then we must identify the causes of naturalism at work in ourselves and in society and strive to counteract them. There are several causes of naturalism, not just one.

The first and spiritually mildest cause of naturalism is ignorance. An ignorance of the sun of heaven, influx from it, the spiritual world and its state, have led some people to think that “the spiritual is a purer natural; consequently, that the angels are in the ether or in the stars; and that the devil is either man’s evil, or, if an actual existence, that he is in the air or the abyss; also that the souls of men, after death, are either in the interior of the earth, or in an undetermined somewhere till the day of judgment . . .” (DLW 350). Ignorance of the spiritual sun as a cause of naturalism is also cited in *Intercourse between the Soul and the Body* 9. In this work Swedenborg adds that an ignorance of discrete degrees can lead people to adopt naturalism when they investigate the nature of the human soul, mind, and the life after death (ISB 16–17). The reason is that without the concept of discrete degrees, one ends up with a form of monism.

There is a second cognitive cause of naturalism: the propensity to think of everything, including spiritual and Divine matters, only in terms of space and time. Reasoning about such things from space and time “is like thinking from the thick darkness of night about those things that appear only in the light of day. From this comes naturalism” (DLW 69). To counteract this propensity, people need to learn how to raise their minds above ideas drawn from space and time. Swedenborg claims that every

person who has an understanding is able to transcend in thought the spatiotemporal plane of nature (*ibid.*).

A third cause of naturalism is theological falsity, specifically the doctrine of faith alone.⁷⁹ The false doctrine of faith alone is said to be “the source of the naturalism which prevails at the present time” because it “makes no account of repentance, of the law of the Decalogue, and of works and charity” (*Inv.*9). Without these goods, a person remains natural and fails to become spiritual. Thus faith alone is not the cause of methodological, reductive, or some other form of philosophically sophisticated naturalism. Instead it is the source of moral naturalism which implies ontological naturalism through the person’s behavior because moral naturalism (disordered love of the world and self) is the “default” setting of human nature.

Swedenborgians tend to be aware of this falsity of faith alone, and well they should. Yet attention should not be completely absorbed by this doctrine, or the falsities of the trinity of persons in the Godhead and the vicarious atonement, important as these are, to the exclusion of the other causes of naturalism. The Heavenly Doctrines do state that the growth of the hells prior to the Last Judgment and the Lord’s Second Advent was due in part to “those who had falsified the Word by convincing themselves of their fictitious faith in the three Divine Persons.” But the hells also grew because of “so-called Christians” who had accepted naturalism or nature-worship (*TCR* 121). In other words, hell was populated by people who were outwardly pious Christians, but who in fact lived selfish, materialistic lives.

This means that problems with the intellect alone, such as ignorance and false beliefs, are not the only causes of naturalism. The human will, or the affective domain of the mind, is also a source of error. Certain attitudes, which combine affections with the intellect, are identified as causes. For example, conceit and the pride of self-intelligence can cause naturalism.⁸⁰ Swedenborg says that even though people have the intellectual capacity to think what is true and see things spiritual and Divine in their own light, they sometimes do not *wish* to do so (*DLW* 69). Like the prisoners in Plato’s cave allegory, some people do not want to elevate their thinking for fear of what they might see.⁸¹ Even a “satan can understand truth as well as an angel when he hears it, but he does not retain it, because

evil [desire] obliterates truth and substitutes falsity" (*TCR* 77:3). If not properly controlled, the loves of self and the world overwhelm the understanding to such a degree that people became nauseated at the mere thought of anything spiritual.

The misuse of science is another cause of naturalism,⁸² but one that is not really separate from conceit and the pride of self-intelligence. This claim is an important, and for a naturalist, very contentious one. Theists assert that in the history of science there is plenty of evidence that a person can be a good scientist and also a supernaturalistic theist, such as Robert Boyle who was a seventeenth century Christian chemist, or Francis Collins, who is a contemporary theistic biologist. Theists maintain that it is not science itself that causes naturalism, but a misuse of science. As Vartanian wrote of the French Enlightenment thinkers: "For the *philosophes*, by and large, natural science, in addition to being the means of ascertaining objectively truths of a certain category, was an effective instrument of ideology."⁸³ Scientific knowledge can be used to confirm a belief in nature or a belief in God. In fact, people who believe in a "Divine operation in all the details of nature, are able by very many things they see in nature to confirm themselves in favor of the Divine, as fully as others confirm themselves in favor of nature, yea, *more* fully" (*DLW* 351; emphasis added). Science is a tool that can be used for good or for evil. Scientific knowledge is like wealth which can be used for heavenly purposes or worldly and hellish purposes. It can be used to confirm and illustrate a theistic worldview or a naturalistic worldview.

Another cause of naturalism is a life of evil (*TCR* 77) when it comes to general intentions, that is, the loves of self and the world (*AC* 5116:4, 6201, 8378). In particular, the Heavenly Doctrines link committing adultery with naturalism (*AE* 981:2; *AC* 2747, 5084; *ML* 464, 500). Spiritually, this seems to be the most serious and damaging cause of naturalism. It is this last cause, adultery, which would strike almost any contemporary Western philosopher as a shocking and unbelievable assertion. It deserves further investigation.

The Link between Naturalism and Adultery

Why do naturalism and adultery make one?⁸⁴ And in what way do they “make one”? First, we must be clear about what the Heavenly Doctrines mean by adultery. It certainly means the physical act of sex outside of marriage. For example, when a husband has sex with the wife of another man, a widow, a virgin, or a prostitute from a loathing and aversion to marriage, these behaviors destroy marriage love. They all are instances of adultery (AE 1010:4). Another passage broadens adultery to include not only sex outside of marriage, but even within marriage if it springs from a love of adultery (AE 988:6). In *Married Love and True Christian Religion* various meanings and degrees of adultery are spelled out. *Married Love* states that there are four degrees of adultery, which range from mild to the most grave: adultery of ignorance, of lust, of reason (deliberate), and of the will (purposeful) (ML 478).

The discussion of adultery in *True Christian Religion* is organized around the sixth commandment. “In the natural sense, this commandment forbids not only committing adultery [in act], but also having obscene desires and realizing them, and so indulging in lascivious thoughts and talk” (TCR 313). “In the spiritual sense committing adultery means adulterating the various kinds of good in the Word and falsifying its truths” (TCR 314). This kind of adultery has been committed by members of both the former Jewish and Christian churches. “In the celestial sense committing adultery means denying the holiness of the Word and profaning it . . . The holiness of the Word is denied and profaned by those who in their hearts ridicule everything connected with the church and religion . . .” (TCR 315). The typical naturalist denies the holiness of the Word, indeed, he or she often emphasizes its harmfulness along with its worldly, man-made features, concluding that its origin is natural. The typical naturalist also ridicules the teachings and practices of churches and religion, calling them forms of superstition, dogma, myth, stupidity, immaturity and so on.

Next, which way does the causality run? Is it the case that being a naturalist leads one to commit adultery? Or does committing adultery make a person more likely to adopt naturalism? While the Heavenly Doctrines indicate that either one is possible, there are several passages

which state that committing adultery causes a person to become a naturalist. In several places the Heavenly Doctrines categorically assert that adulterers are not Christian, in fact, they are not religious; even more, they are not spiritual, but natural (*AC* 2750; *AC* 10,175; *Life* 77; *ML* 432:2; *ML* 495; *ML* 497; *AE* 982:5; *AE* 985:4). This is especially true of the two worst degrees of adultery: purposeful adulteries arising from the will, and deliberate adulteries arising from a persuasion of the intellect (*ML* 495). There are three degrees of naturalistic people: the natural properly called, the sensual, and the carnal, each degree worse than the previous one. Adultery leads people into these degrees of naturalism (*ML* 496). This kind of naturalism can become a worldview, but the way the term “natural” is being used here, it is a naturalism of morality and character primarily. So in this case, the cause is immoral behavior from a defective character and the effect is a naturalistic outlook. This does not mean that a person who commits adultery on Saturday will not attend church on Sunday because he or she has suddenly thrown one worldview, theism, out the backdoor while ushering naturalism in through the front. Spiritually though, an adulterer has made it more likely that this shift in outlook and then behavior will take place (*AE* 982:5). A person might continue to live, hypocritically, in a pious manner, especially when there are worldly benefits to be gained by doing so, but pious behavior is not the same as religion (*HH* 360, 535).

On the other hand a person who is, cognitively speaking, a naturalist from philosophical conviction, tends to see humans and animals as the same, or extremely similar. This view of human beings usually involves the rejection of immortality, the soul, and the internal human. Or, if the soul and the internal part of the human are not rejected, they are “naturalized,” that is, seen to be parts of the brain or electro-chemical reactions and nothing more. On such a view of humans, what then is love but a kind of neural satisfaction and why live under outmoded restraints on such satisfaction when agreement between consenting adults is all that is needed to achieve satiety?

There is also a theological naturalism that supports adultery. “Adulteries are less abhorrent with Christians than with the Gentiles, and even with some barbarous nations, for the reason that at present in the Christian world there is not a marriage of good and truth but a marriage of evil and

falsity.” This passage is referring to the doctrine of salvation by faith alone to the exclusion of good works (AE 1008:2). The reason why the fact that “chastity of marriage makes one with religion, and the lasciviousness of adultery makes one with naturalism” is “unknown at this day” is that “the church is at its end, and is devastated as to truth and as to good” (AE 981.2). When the church (as a spiritual organism, not a social one) is in such a state, people come to believe that “adulteries are not detestable things and abominations, and thus [they] come into the belief that marriages and adulteries do not differ in their essence, but only as a matter of [civil] order” (AE 981.2). Is there any empirical or anecdotal evidence to support this claim? Yes. Since space precludes a full treatment of this important subject, let the following illustrations suffice.

Pierre Bayle, the son of a Huguenot minister, was born in southwestern France in 1647.⁸⁵ First he was a tutor, but eventually became professor of philosophy and history at a municipal academy in Rotterdam, Holland. He died in 1706. Bayle published the *Dictionnaire historique et critique* in 1697 in Rotterdam.⁸⁶ While it was very large (five volumes) and very expensive, it was also very successful.

A few statistics will serve to give some idea of Bayle’s influence in the eighteenth century. The *Dictionary* was, despite its size, one of the most popular and widely read books of the time. Two editions had appeared by 1706, the date of Bayle’s death. By 1750 no fewer than nine French editions of the complete work had appeared, as well as three English editions and one in German. The selections given in this volume are taken from the English translation of 1734-1738, the very edition recommended by [Thomas] Jefferson. In addition, numerous abridgments were made, including two, in 1765 and 1780, at the instance of Frederick the Great. There is some reason to believe, indeed, that the *Dictionary* was the most popular book of the century in France.⁸⁷

Here is an excerpt from the article on Martin, or Matthias Knuzen in Bayle’s *Dictionary* which illustrates the awful blend of naturalism and infidelity in Christendom prior to the Last Judgment. This lengthy quotation serves to give one a feeling for the mood of the times.

Knuzen (Matthias) a native of the country of Holstein, arrived to such a degree of extravagancy, as publickly to maintain Atheism, and undertook great journies to gain proselytes. He was a restless man, who discovered his impieties first at Konigsberg in Prussia. He boasted, that he had a great number of persons of his opinion in the principal towns of Europe, and even seven hundred in the single town of Jena.

[These are his words. "No one will impute it to me as a crime, if, with my companions (an infinite number of whom, at Paris, Amsterdam, Leyden, in England, at Hamburg, Copenhagen, Stockholm, and even at Rome, and the adjacent places, agree with me in opinion) I look upon the whole Bible as a fine invented tale, with which the beasts, that is the Christians, captivating their reason, and running reason mad, are delighted." We must not imagine, that he used the stratagem of state-conspirators, who, to bring more people over to their party, always pretend they have a vast number of accomplices. It is more probable he spoke in this manner, because that he was a hare-brained fool.]

His sect was called the *Conscientiaries*, because he said, there was no other God, religion, or lawful magistracy, than conscience, which teaches all men the three precepts of justice, to do no injury, to live honestly, and give every one his due. He drew up a summary of his system, in a short letter, of which several copies were spread.

[Micraelius's continuator has reduced the contents of the letter to six articles. "I. That there is neither God, nor devil. II. That the magistrates are to be looked upon as nothing, the churches are to be despised, and the priests rejected. III. That knowledge and reason, together with conscience, which teaches to live honestly, hurt no body, and give every one his own, is in the room of magistrates and priests. IV. That there is no difference between marriage and whoring. V. That there is but one life: that after the present there is neither reward nor punishment. VI. That the Scripture contradicts itself." This system, besides its horrible impiety, is also plainly extravagant; for one must be stark mad, to believe that mankind can subsist without magistrates. It is true, they would not be necessary, if all men would follow the dictates of conscience, which this impious man exhibits to us; but are they followed even in those countries, where judges

punish, with the greatest severity, the injustice done to our neighbour? I do not know but it may be said, that there is no impertinence, be it never so extravagant, but may teach us some truth or other. The follies of this German shew us, that the ideas of natural religion, in a word, the light of conscience, may subsist in the mind of man, even after the ideas of the existence of God, and the firm belief of a life to come, are extinguished in it.]

It is dated from Rome. You will find it entire in the last editions of Micraelius. He dispersed also some German writings. All this was confuted in the same tongue, by John Musaeus, a Lutheran professor.

This sect began about the year 1673.

A book was printed against Knuzen at Wittemberg in the year 1677.

[The title of it is, *Exercitatioines Academicæ II de Atheismo Renato des Cartes & Matthiæ Knuzen oppositæ* Autore Valentino Greissingio Corona-Transsylvano Elector. Saxon. Alumno. This I have from a book of Caspar Sagittarius.]⁸⁸

Here is another illustration: this is an excerpt from a “Letter to Lady R., 1716” by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Lady Montagu (1689–1762) was a well-known British literary figure. This letter of advice to a young aristocrat reveals her circle’s attitude toward marriage.

No woman dares appear coquette [flirt] enough to encourage two lovers at a time. And I have not seen any such prudes [a person who is overly modest or proper] as to pretend fidelity to their husbands, who are certainly the best natured set of people in the world, and look upon their wives’ gallants [a stylish man who is attentive and polite to women, a lover] as favourably as men do upon their deputies, that take the troublesome part of their business off their hands. They have not however the less to do on that account: for they are generally deputies in another place themselves; in one word, ‘tis the established custom for every lady to have two husbands, one that bears the name, and another that performs the duties. And these engagements are so well known, that it would be a downright affront, and publicly resented, if you invited a woman of quality to dinner, without, at the same time, inviting her two attendants of lover and husband, between whom she sits in state with great gravity.

The sub-marriages generally last twenty years together, and the lady often commands the poor lover's estate, even to the utter ruin of his family.⁸⁹

Lady Montagu adds that the woman is expected to get a pension from her lover, and the amount is as well known as their annual rents. As one scholar of English society has noted, "[e]ven pious and chaste upper-class women in the late eighteenth century turned a blind eye to their husband's infidelities, so long as only sexual passion and not deep emotional attachment was involved."⁹⁰

Finally, consider these statements from one of the *philosophes* who was a contemporary of Swedenborg's, Claude-Adrien Helvétius (1715–1771). This author of *A Treatise on Man: His Intellectual Faculties and His Education* was a materialist and hedonist. The main problem concerning happiness is the discontent that arises from a lack of new sensory stimulation. Consider Helvétius' ruminations on this problem:

Little account is now made of Platonic love, the corporeal affection is preferred, and this in fact is not the least poignant. When the stag is inflamed by this last love, from timid he becomes brave. The faithful dog quits his master to follow his favourite female; if he be separated from her, he neglects his food, he trembles in every limb, and sends forth hideous howlings. Can Platonic love do more? No: I declare therefore for corporeal love. M. Buffon does the same, and like him I think that of all loves it is the most agreeable, except however for the idler; for him the coquette is the delicious mistress. When she enters an assembly adorned in that gallant manner, that gives all room to hope for what she grants but to very few, the idler is roused; his jealousy is inflamed; his discontent vanishes*. A coquette therefore is the mistress of an idler, and a fine girl for a man of business. Note* The ruling passion of a coquette is to be adored. For which purpose she constantly excites the desire of men, and scarcely ever gratifies them. A woman, says the proverb, is a table well provided, that we view with a different eye before and after the repast.

The chase after a woman, like that of game, should be different according to the time we have to employ in it. When we have only an hour or two, we go out with a gun; when we have more time than we

know how to employ, and wish for long exercise, we set the dogs to rouse the game. A woman of address will afford the idler a long chase.⁹¹

After praising cohabitation prior to marriage, so that “if they do not agree, they part, and the girl goes to another,” Helvétius argues that laws concerning marriage should be changed so that the “inconvenience of divorce will then be insignificant, and the happiness of the married parties secured.” “To conclude, if the variable and roving desires of men and women urge them sometimes to change the object of their tenderness, why should they be deprived of the pleasure of variety, if their inconstancy, by the regulation of wise laws, be not detrimental to society?”⁹²

While a naturalist could use some very worldly reasons to support a faithful heterosexual monogamous relationship, such as the financial well-being of his or her children, the descriptions of naturalists and their conversations in the Heavenly Doctrines as well as excerpts from their own books suggest that they view marriage as a mere social convention which can be overridden by a person’s desires. Naturalists set up very external criteria for making judgments. The criteria exclude spiritual realities such as the soul, the spirit, and transcendental good and truth. From such superficial bases for judgment arises “the madness of many today, that they do not see anything evil in adulterous affairs” (ML 478).⁹³

This madness is chillingly summarized by David Blankenhorn in his recent book, *The Future of Marriage*. Dorian Solot and Marshall Miller have written a book, *Unmarried to Each Other*, and founded an organization, the Alternatives to Marriage Project. They have “emerged in recent years as tireless campaigners for not-marriage.”⁹⁴ Instead of marriage they are in favor of cohabitation, polyamory, and same-sex “marriage,” that is, the legal recognition of same-sex couples.⁹⁵ Blankenhorn describes several people who dislike traditional marriage and advocate for a diversity of alternatives: Jonathan Rauch, Judith Stacey (a professor of sociology at NYU), Evan Wolfson, Ellen Willis (also a professor at NYU), Maria Bevacqua (women’s studies professor at Minnesota State U.), David L. Chambers (law professor at University of Michigan), John Corvino (philosophy professor at Wayne State U.), queer theorist Michael Warner, Irene Javors (a therapist and community organizer) and so on.⁹⁶ After surveying the people, organizations, books, and websites, there can be no doubt that

there is a movement in the U.S. to undermine traditional marriage by advocating for legal, economic, social, and moral acceptance of various forms of “diverse relationships” because, in their eyes, all relationships are the same. To these people, traditional marriage is a mere social convention, not something rooted in the nature of reality. Unless, that is, one thinks of humans as animals, but then since animals display a wide range of sexual behavior, this legitimizes just about anything humans would like to do. This merely natural attitude is expressed in popular culture through these lyrics:

You and me baby ain't nothin' but mammals
 So let's do it like they do on the Discovery Channel
 Do it again now
 You and me baby ain't nothin' but mammals
 So let's do it like they do on the Discovery Channel⁹⁷

The Heavenly Doctrines clearly assert that adultery is evil and that marriage (heterosexual monogamy) is good. Committing adultery breaks one of the Lord's commandments in the Decalogue, and in spirit it “is all sin against the Decalogue, for he who is in that is in all the evil of the Decalogue.”⁹⁸ The love of adultery communicates with the deepest hell (*DP* 144:3). Indeed, adultery *is* hell (*Ljpost* 339) and hell *is* adultery: nothing is more profane (*AC* 9961:4). Committing adultery closes heaven, and the influx from heaven is not received by a person again until there is actual repentance.⁹⁹

The Effects of Naturalism

There are several negative effects or manifestations of naturalism mentioned in the Heavenly Doctrines. I include this list with references primarily as an aid to future research:

- 1) The belief that humans and animals are the same (*AC* 3646-47; *ML* 151r)
- 2) The belief that if humans have a soul, it is merely natural (*AC* 5084: 4,6; *ML* 151r)

- 3) The belief that humans have no immortal soul and thus no life after death (*AC* 5084:5; *ML* 151r; *TCR* 178)
- 4) The belief that the mind, our thinking and willing, is only natural and that changes of state in the mind are the result of natural forces only (*TCR* 178)
- 5) The belief that all delight of life consists in luxury and sensuous pleasures and the development of “life styles” based on this, in other words, an increase in the acceptance of hedonism (*AC* 8378, 6201)
- 6) The belief that supernatural, or spiritual, religion is “a tale devised by the clergy in pursuit of honors and profit,” so religion is bunk and religious believers are “out of touch with reality” and “lackeys of the priests” (*TCR* 177)
- 7) The worship of nature, a rise in the practice of paganism (*HH* 353-54; *DLW* 267; *AE* 1220; *TCR* 121, 178)
- 8) An increase in the number of learned, or academics, trying to convince people that naturalism is true, or the learned just assuming that naturalism is true and that inferior people will follow their lead (*AC* 3483, 6316, 8627-28; *HH* 353-54; *ML* 500:2; *Inv.* 27; *TCR* 639)
- 9) The breakdown of marriage and destruction of society (*AE* 981:2; *AC* 2747, 5084; *ML* 464, 500)
- 10) A rise in the practice and acceptance of bestiality (*AE* 1006:3)

It would be interesting to see if these effects could be empirically verified through social science research. For example, the well-known naturalist philosopher, Peter Singer, who holds a chair in ethics at Princeton University, together with Paola Cavalieri founded the movement to grant rights to the great apes. It is called the Great Ape Project (whose motto is “equality beyond humanity”). According to its website, in March 2007 the parliament of the Balearic islands of Spain presented a resolution requesting a declaration of support for the Great Ape Project.¹⁰⁰ Singer also wrote a very favorable review of a book on bestiality.¹⁰¹ Given Singer’s metaphysical and ethical naturalism (he is a preference utilitarian, which is a form of hedonism), this is not surprising. But one would need to conduct some surveys to find out if bestiality is practiced more widely than it used to be, or if it is accepted by more people because they believe that there are no morally significant differences between humans and animals.

Are there any positive effects from the growth of naturalism? Could the prominence of naturalism be useful in some way? Three admittedly speculative possibilities come to mind.

First, naturalism, particularly in its ontological form, may produce gentiles. It is sad to contemplate the slaughter and cruelty brought about by naturalistic regimes in Russia, China, North Korea and elsewhere, but this may have been a form of creative chaos in which people were disrupted from their inherited religious patterns and forced to “wipe the slate clean.” *If this is the case, perhaps naturalism has produced gentiles who will be open to new religions. While some of these people may have false beliefs from their new naturalistic environment, it is possible that the false beliefs from their old religions have either been weakened or removed by these brutal governments. In countries that have democratic governments naturalism may loosen the hold of the falsities of the old church and produce gentile states in people. As one of the promoters of the naturalistic movement has written, naturalism has benefited modern society by freeing it from “the constraints of a repressive theology.”*¹⁰²

Next, by promoting science and historical critical hermeneutics, methodological naturalists have made it more difficult, if not intellectually impossible, to maintain a literal stance regarding all parts of the Bible. As Swedenborg notes in *The Last Judgment*, due to continued biblical literalism and the advancements of science, people have lost faith in a spiritual world and the things of the church. They ask within themselves, “How can the stars fall from heaven upon the earth when the stars are larger than the earth? How can bodies eaten up by worms, consumed by putrefaction, and scattered to all the winds, be collected again for their own souls?” (*LJ* 15) For theologians who use an allegorical approach to scripture, this movement can help them make their case. In effect, if one is going to believe in the Bible at all, one must interpret at least parts of it in an allegorical or spiritual manner. There are signs that interest in this mode of hermeneutics is reviving, even amongst Protestants.¹⁰³ (Catholics have always had this mode, so interest in it among them is not as surprising.)

Third, by ceaselessly promoting science, methodological naturalists have produced amazing discoveries about the natural world that can be used to confirm a belief in an orderly rational God. By combating superstition and magic, naturalism encourages a disenchanting view of nature.

This can make believing in miracles more difficult, but it can also open people's eyes to the "everyday" miracles all around them. There is no predicting what impact scientific discoveries will have upon religion and spiritualism. The discovery of "the God gene" (or *a* God gene) could end up reinforcing the notion that humans naturally need God the way we need energy and companionship, thus making atheism (ironically) "unnatural."¹⁰⁴ This is another area for future research.

The Prominence of Naturalism after the Last Judgment

Even though we have some understanding of the causes of naturalism, there is still the question of why naturalism has grown in strength and become so prevalent in Western society since the Last Judgment. One would think that with new freedom of thought in religious matters and new light coming through the spiritual world to enlighten people's minds naturalism would decline and in its place spiritualism or transcendentalism would increase. There are four reasons that naturalism, rather than spiritualism, has become increasingly accepted, or at least openly accepted.

First, for things to become orderly, often there is a period of chaos. Anyone familiar with the past two hundred and fifty years, especially the last one hundred years, of world history can easily see that the human race has passed through a time of tremendous chaos. The chaos occurs so that "things that are not compatible may be separated from one another" (*AC* 842:3). This is part of the process of the Last Judgment itself, and I think it is a necessary phase in the reforming of society. Just as evils must be seen before they can be combated on an individual basis (in the microcosm), the same is true on the level of society (the macrocosm) (*DP* 278). Naturalism grew so that it could be made manifest, especially its consequences, and then judged for what it really is. This is particularly true of the naturalism that was in the first Christian church, covered up by social forms of piety, ranging from manners to institutions. We must choose either God or nature as our governor (*DP* 182:2). If naturalism continued to remain hidden from people's consciousness, then we would not be presented with a clear choice, thus remaining in an underdeveloped state of mind.

While atheism and naturalism have long been dominant modes of thought and life in Europe, it has taken longer for America to “catch up.” The relatively recent publication of several books, with titles such as *The God Delusion*, *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon*, *God: The Failed Hypothesis*, *How Science Shows that God Does Not Exist*, and *God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*, and the launching of a new group called “The Brights” constitute something of a “coming-out” for naturalists.¹⁰⁵ But this is a continuation of a process that started quietly in the seventeenth century prior to the Last Judgment and has grown quite loud. One theist and critic of naturalism, Phillip E. Johnson, welcomes this development:

. . . I conclude that the new atheist crusaders are dangerous only to themselves. Once they step out of the protected haven called “science,” they invite the public to examine their philosophical biases and lay themselves open to a devastating rebuttal that will readily be forthcoming. That is why I look forward to the prospect of an intellectual battle in which the evolutionary naturalists are not longer able to cloak their vulnerabilities in the manifest falsehoods of the “Inherit the Wind” mythology that they have exploited for so long.¹⁰⁶

Second, in *Apocalypse Explained* 981:2 it is asserted that naturalism and adultery make a one. This logically implies that spiritualism or supernatural religion and marital fidelity make a one. In fact, this is what the work on marriage states: true marriage love is the repository of the Christian faith and only religious and spiritual people can come into this love (*ML* 57, 116, 239–40, 443). Swedenborg reports that the hell of the adulterers was growing in his day, and that it was being filled by people from the so-called Christian world (*AC* 824). Christians are adulterers above all others in the whole world, and the worst adulterers are so-called Christians (*AC* 1032:8; 2744; *AC* 5060:3; *AC* 8904:2; *HH* 374). In fact, Western “Christian” society is so immoral that not only is there no shame in committing adultery, but adultery is held to be honorable, and people who believe otherwise are laughed at (*AC* 6666:3; *AE* 1008:2). True married love is real, but “today is so rare that people do not know what it is like, and scarcely that it exists” (*ML* 57). Few Christians go to the Lord or live what the

church teaches (ML 337). Once some angels called together several hundred Europeans “distinguished for their genius, learning, and wisdom,” and asked them if they saw any difference between marriage and adultery. “All but ten replied that statutory law alone makes a distinction . . .” (ML 478:2). If adultery leads to naturalism and Christian Europe was and is plagued by adulterous behavior and attitudes which tolerate or celebrate it, then it is no surprise that naturalism is so prevalent in Western society. Since America is in several ways an extension of European culture, then it is not surprising that adultery and naturalism have increased in the U.S. as well.

Speaking of the learned, a third reason for the prominence of naturalism is that a disordered love of self often includes an unjustified pride in one’s own intelligence. If the group which constructs the framework for society is an intellectual elite which lacks humility, and this group engages in immoral behavior and justifies it with false ideas and specious arguments from theology, philosophy, or science, then these cultural leaders model behaviors and beliefs that other members of society are inclined to emulate. Arrogant educators and the proud in heart are atheists, for they reject Divine Providence, heaven, hell, a life after death, and the truths of faith. This leaves only nature and oneself in which to believe. Swedenborg writes that in the other life “an immense number” of the “educated of the European continent at the present day” are atheists (AC 9394). And we must remember that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, “the learned” were not secular professors at public universities. There were just as many clergy, or professors who had to take holy orders, as there were *philosophes* outside of the universities, who were “the learned.” During a debate between two angels and two satans over whether God or nature is ultimate reality, Swedenborg saw them surrounded by a large number of people who were famous for their learning when they lived in the natural world. This group of intellectuals was very fickle in their faith, at one moment they supported the angels, the next moment they supported the satans. They then told Swedenborg a secret:

We looked down to earth to see those distinguished for their learning and we found six hundred out of a thousand on the side of nature, and the rest on the side of God. And those who were on God’s side, because they

spoke not from the understanding but only repeating what they had been told, kept saying that nature came from God. (TCR 77:5)

Swedenborg is reporting that while the learned in the spiritual world are fickle, a majority of the learned in the natural world are naturalists, and the theistic minority here hold their position not from a deep understanding of philosophical theology, but from memorization based upon someone else's authority. Thus theism is not getting much support from the spiritual world, in fact it is being undermined there, and it has a very weak foundation in the natural world. So it is no surprise that when Swedenborg conversed with angels about the future of our world after the Last Judgment, that the angels "have slender hope" for the people of Christendom, but much hope for "some nation far distant from the Christian world, and therefore removed from infesters" (LJ 74). This nation is "capable of receiving spiritual light, and of being made a celestial-spiritual man" (LJ 74). Unfortunately, the name of this nation is not given.

The fourth reason for the growth of naturalism is the influence of a very materialistic and hedonistic sphere from people in both the spiritual and natural worlds. Our thoughts are influenced by sensuous spirits, who indulge the pleasures of the body and reject thought beyond what they sense, including thought about eternal life. Again, we should remember that the people that Swedenborg met in the spiritual world were often not scientists but church leaders who had covered up their materialism with a cloak of piety. Swedenborg reports that "spirits of this kind abound in the other life at the present day, for troops of them come from the world" and the influx from them prompts people to indulge their "natural inclinations" and to live for self and the world (AC 6201). In other words, there is strong peer pressure to be a naturalist and live a hedonistic life-style, both of which make a person reject a spiritual view of human life—so much that such a person loathes the very mention of eternal life.

ARGUMENTS CONCERNING NATURALISM

In general, philosophy concerns itself with reason and the giving of reasons for one's positions and beliefs, or adopting the most reasonable of

them. To philosophers, the person with the best arguments wins the contest of ideas. This means that even an argument that is very technical and contains little or no rhetorical devices, is very exciting because arguments are at the center of action. Also, in a broadly democratic culture, or one that aspires thereto, engaging in reasoned debate rather than violence to persuade others to adopt a policy or course of action is essential. So it is important to be familiar with the reasons and arguments both for and against naturalism. This is not an exhaustive treatment of all the arguments for and against naturalism, but I think there are enough to show what philosophers take to be the strengths and weaknesses of naturalism. While there is some overlap between arguments for and against naturalism and arguments supporting theism, we will not be reviewing arguments that attempt to prove the existence of God and objections to these. This is apologetics and there are very helpful books one can consult regarding this.¹⁰⁷

In the next two large sections of the paper I quote philosophers at length. The reason for this practice is that when professional philosophers write for one another, their arguments are frequently complex and very carefully worded so as to avoid becoming easy prey to objections. This makes summarization not only difficult, but can also lead to inaccuracies and misunderstanding. Reading these arguments may not be easy, but it does give the reader an accurate idea of the work that goes on in philosophy while advancing one's understanding of the intricacies of the issue. Depending upon one's cast of mind, the thrill of tracking the jousting motions of the different camps through the twists and turns of the debate may be experienced.

Arguments For Naturalism

We will begin with arguments from Sidney Hook (1902–89), a professor of philosophy at New York University, student of John Dewey, and an advocate of pragmatism, naturalism, and socialism. Hook characterizes the use of any other method of knowing besides science as a “failure of nerve.”¹⁰⁸ In the quotations that follow, note well Hook's emphasis upon the commitment to methodological naturalism, particularly through his use of the word “evidence.”

The intelligent demand for evidence need not paralyze the pioneers of truth who catch glimpses of what may until then be undreamed of. For the sciences themselves do not demand complete or exact confirmation of an hypothesis to begin with, but only enough to institute further inquiries; and the history of science is sufficient evidence that the discipline of its method, far from being a bar against the discovery of new truths, is a positive aid in acquiring them. As for decreeing what does or can exist, there is nothing in scientific method that forbids anything to exist. It concerns itself only with the responsibility of the assertions that proclaim the existence of anything. It does not jeer at the mystical swoon of rapture; it only denies the mystic's retrospective cognitive claims for which no evidence is offered except the fact of the trance.

Scientific method does not entail any metaphysical theory of existence and certainly not metaphysical materialism.¹⁰⁹

Naturalism is opposed to all known forms of supernaturalism, not because it rules out a priori what may or may not exist, but because no plausible evidence has been found to warrant belief in the entities and powers to which supernatural status has been attributed. The existence of God, immortality, disembodied spirits, cosmic purpose and design, as these have been customarily interpreted by the great institutional religions, are denied by naturalists for the same generic reasons that they deny the existence of fairies, elves, and leprechauns. There are other conceptions of God, to be sure, and provided they are not self-contradictory in meaning, the naturalist is prepared in principle to consider their claims to validity. All he asks is that the conception be sufficiently definite to make possible specific inferences of the determinate conditions—the *how*, *when*, and *where* of His operation.

So long as no self-contradictory notions are advanced, he will not rule out the abstract logical possibility that angelic creatures push the planets any more than that there exists a gingerbread castle on the other side of the moon. All he demands is the presence of sufficient precision of meaning to make it possible to test, let us say...the existence of extrasensory perception. The possibility of extrasensory perception cannot be ruled out a priori. Here, as elsewhere, the naturalist must follow the preponderance of scientific evidence. He therefore welcomes those who

talk about the experiential evidence for religious beliefs as distinct from those who begin with mystery and end in mystery. He only asks to be given an opportunity to examine the evidence and to evaluate it by the same general canons which have led to the great triumphs of knowledge in the past. It is natural in this case, as in the case of extrasensory perception, that he should scrutinize with great care reports which if true would lead him radically to modify some of his earlier generalizations. The unusual must clear a higher hurdle of credibility than the usual. But only on its first jump. Unfortunately, for all their talk of appeal to experience, direct or indirect, religious experientialists dare not appeal to any experience of sufficiently determinate character to permit of definite tests. There is a certain wisdom in this reluctance. For if experience can confirm a belief, it can also invalidate it. But to most supernaturalists this is an inadmissible possibility. We therefore find that the kind of experience to which reference is made is not only unique but also uniquely self-authenticating. Those who are not blessed by the experiences are regarded as blind or deaf or worse!¹¹⁰

In these passages Hook tries to take the position of a completely objective inquirer, claiming that science is metaphysically neutral with regard to supernaturalism and that he might believe in supernaturalism, but by golly, there just isn't any plausible evidence. By "evidence" Hook means scientific evidence, since for him there is no other kind, at least none that is epistemically reliable. But science is not a metaphysically neutral method or set of methods. Scientists prefer to work with things that can be physically observed, counted, measured, controlled in some manner, and duplicated. Not all phenomena occur under these conditions. By claiming that science is its only method, naturalism does, (contrary to Hook), rule out *a priori* various entities and our belief in them. Hook is like a man who, having discovered how helpful a microscope is when seeking knowledge of various entities, declares that microscopy is the only method that can be trusted to give us knowledge of reality *tout court*. If we don't have any microscopic evidence for the existence of something, then we don't have any evidence for it at all.

Hook's naïve realism concerning the objectivity of science has been exploded by the findings in the history and sociology of science. During

the last quarter of the twentieth century, we have become increasingly aware that scientists are subject to the same sorts of cognitive, affective, economic, etc. distortions as the rest of us mere mortals. Granted, the scientific method dampens bias significantly, but bias remains nonetheless and the entire enterprise is shot through with values and value judgments. This is powerfully illustrated in the various fields of medicine.¹¹¹

Next, consider the arguments for naturalism put forth by the American philosopher Arthur Danto along with some comments and questions of my own.

- “[N]atural objects are the only objects about which we know directly, and it would be only with reference to their perturbations that we might secure indirect knowledge of non-natural objects, should there be any.” This argument rests on the following assumptions: that we have direct knowledge of natural objects; that we have, at best, only indirect knowledge of non-natural objects; that direct knowledge is better than indirect; that one natural entity (humans) can know other natural entities entirely by natural means.
- People everywhere seek natural explanations. “Recourse is taken to non-natural explanation only in moments of despair. But a non-natural explanation merely underscores the fact that something cannot be explained...at the moment—it does not provide an alternative kind of explanation or intelligibility.” The premises in this argument are empirical claims. Are they true?
- “All non-natural explanations, the result of using non-natural methods, are in principle replaceable with natural explanations.” This is a very large promissory note. When will we know that it has been paid? What are the criteria for success?
- “Non-naturalists contradict in their practice what they profess in their theories. Naturalists alone hold theories consonant with their practice.” In other words, when a hail storm destroys his crops, the farmer does not attribute the storm to Divine action. Instead, the farmer blames the storm on the atmospheric conditions that brought it about, and this is a naturalistic explanation. To blame God for the hail storm is a non-natural explanation or attribution. Since we do not indulge in this practice in our daily lives, the naturalistic theory alone is the one

that reflects this and is congruent with it. So theists and supernaturalists hold theories that are inconsistent with the way they live; their worldviews are not congruent.

- “Science is naturally self-corrective if we think of it as it is, as a method to which its own doctrines are unremittingly subjected.” In other words, science is the only discipline we can trust because it has self-correcting mechanisms built into it. This is a form of the “science is successful, so you should believe in naturalism” argument. The phrase “its own doctrines” must refer to specific theories, otherwise Danto puts himself in the awkward position of claiming that the fundamental assumptions of the scientific method are unremittingly critiqued by the outcomes of the scientific method, which is a circular argument and question-begging process.
- Unlike others who merely wrangle ineffectually, “naturalists will be engaged in helpful clarifications of problems which arise in the course of human life.” In other words, theists or supernaturalists are impractical and unhelpful. If you really cared about people and their problems, you’d be a naturalist.¹¹² One could argue that scientists are the people who are most effective at solving problems in life. Most scientists are naturalists, therefore, it is the naturalists who are most helpful to others in this life. If one counts donations of time and money to charitable causes as being helpful toward others, it is not the case that naturalists are most helpful. Social research shows that theists are most helpful, even when donations to ecclesiastical bodies are removed from the data.

Here are Danto’s replies to the objections aimed at naturalism along with some commentary:

- “It is not the aim of naturalism to impoverish experience” by saying that “the only mode of experience which is cognitive is scientific.” In other words, humans have lots of kinds of experience, aesthetic and affective for example, and naturalists don’t want to be seen as excluding them and so impoverishing human life.
- “Nor is it the aim of naturalism to insist that all natural objects are really reducible to one favored *sort* of natural objects or that only the

objects or descriptions of objects recognized by the natural science are *real*. All natural objects are equally real, and the descriptive vocabulary of the sciences does not exhaust the reality of nature." This reply is similar to the first one. It too is made in response to an objection that charges naturalism with impoverishing our experience of nature, or elevating the scientific description of nature above all others, say, the poetic description of nature.¹¹³

In his online encyclopedia entry, philosopher David Papineau rejects the suggestion that naturalism rests on "some kind of unargued commitment" which "seems to be supported by the historical contingency of naturalist doctrines."¹¹⁴ Instead he asserts that "naturalist doctrines, . . . are closely responsive to received scientific opinion about the range of causes that can have physical effects." In his view, naturalism rests on the "widespread acceptance of the doctrine now known as the 'causal closure' or the 'causal completeness' of the physical realm, according to which all physical effects can be accounted for by basic physical causes (where 'physical' can be understood as referring to some list of fundamental forces)." The widespread acceptance of the causal closure doctrine occurred by the middle of the twentieth century. "The causal closure thesis implies that any mental and biological causes must themselves be physically constituted, if they are to produce physical effects. It thus gives rise to a particularly strong form of ontological naturalism, namely the physicalist doctrine that any state that has physical effects must itself be physical."¹¹⁵

In my opinion, the causal closure doctrine seems like an assertion of naturalism, or a part of it, not something independent of it that can be used to support it. The same seems to apply to physicalism. Also, linking the acceptance of that doctrine to the findings of science does not do away with its contingency, for the findings of science are themselves contingent, as other naturalists have asserted. Papineau's assertion ultimately rests on the "appeal to science" and its success. But he raises a very important philosophical point, namely, how are we to understand causality? The Heavenly Doctrines take a position directly opposite to the naturalists when they claim that all causes are spiritual, or are in the spiritual world (*DLW* 119). The New Church view of reality is also shot-through with purpose; it is a highly teleological view of nature (*DLW* 168, 189, 197, 241).

There is much work to be done in explaining exactly what this means and how it relates to our understanding of science and the natural world. This is another opportunity to conduct some very important research in the future.

Arguments against Naturalism

At the beginning of this paper we saw that naturalism is the reigning worldview of today's Western philosophers. This does not mean that there are no critics of naturalism. Even though naturalism is *the* position to hold, and has been for most of the twentieth century, during the past twenty-five years a number of arguments have been advanced against it. These arguments have been produced by both theistic and secular philosophers. What follows are quotations from both sets of philosophers along with my summarizing statements.

Let us first consider one of the arguments made by a Christian philosopher. As we have seen, according to the naturalists we should believe in naturalism because of science. Since this is the most frequent reason given for naturalism and typically the most powerful today, the truth or falsity of this claim is crucial to the debate between naturalists and spiritualists. In this argument, "The Incompatibility of Naturalism and Scientific Realism," Robert C. Koons attempts to drive a wedge between a certain understanding of science and ontological naturalism.¹¹⁶

[The typical] defense of naturalism presupposes a version of scientific realism: unless science provides us with objective truth about reality, it has no authority to dictate to us the form which our philosophical ontology and metaphysics must take. Science construed as mere instrument for manipulating experience, or merely as an autonomous construction of our society, without reference to our reality, tells us nothing about what kinds of things really exist and act. (49)

Koons argues that scientific realism and naturalism are incompatible by showing that

the following three theses are mutually inconsistent: 1. scientific realism
2. Ontological naturalism (the world of space and time is causally closed)
3. There exists a correct naturalist account of knowledge and intentionality (representational naturalism) (49)

By scientific realism, I intend a thesis that includes both a semantic and an epistemological component. Roughly speaking, scientific realism is the conjunction of the following two claims:

1. Our scientific theories and models are theories and models of the real world, including its laws, as it is objectively, independent of our preferences and practices.
2. Scientific methods tend, in the long run, to increase our stock of real knowledge. (50)

Koons then explains that his argument requires two assumptions, which he labels PS (Preference Simplicity) and ER (Essential Reliability).

I will argue that nature is comprehensible scientifically only if nature is not a causally closed system—only if nature is shaped by supernatural forces. . . . My argument requires two critical assumptions:

PS: A preference for simplicity (elegance, symmetries, invariances) is a pervasive feature of scientific practice.

ER: Reliability is an essential component of knowledge and intentionality, on any naturalistic account of these. (50)

After giving a defense of PS and ER (50–55), Koons moves to the proof of the incompatibility of the three theses.

Proof of the incompatibility.

1. Scientific realism, representational naturalism, and epistemic reliability entail that scientific methods are reliable sources of truth about the world.
2. From practices of science it follows that simplicity is a reliable indicator of the truth about natural laws.
3. Mere correlation between simplicity and the laws of nature is not good enough: reliability requires that there be some causal mechanism connecting simplicity and the actual laws of nature.

4. Since the laws of nature pervade space and time, any such causal mechanism must exist outside spacetime. By definition, the laws and fundamental structure of nature pervade nature. Anything that causes these laws to be simple, anything that imposes a consistent aesthetic upon them, must be supernatural.
5. Consequently, ontological naturalism is false.

Hence one cannot consistently embrace naturalism and scientific realism (55–56). Koons then tests his position in the following manner:

David Papineau and Ruth Garrett Millikan are two thoroughgoing naturalists who have explicitly embraced scientific realism. If the preceding argument is correct, this inconsistency should show itself somehow in their analyses of science. This expectation is indeed fulfilled. (56)

In a recent paper [1995] Malcolm Forster and Elliot Sober offer a justification of the scientific preference for simplicity that seems to be compatible with scientific realism and yet which does not acknowledge any sense in which simplicity is a reliable indicator of the truth.(58)

A pragmatic justification of our scientific practice, when combined with representational naturalism, yields the conclusion that scientific theories must be interpreted non-representationally, either as mere instruments for generating empirical predictions, or as conventional constructs valid only for a local culture. Pragmatism, by eschewing any commitment to the objective reliability of scientific methods, cannot be combined with a naturalistic version of scientific realism. (61)

Koons concludes:

Philosophical naturalism, then, can draw no legitimate support from the deliverances of natural science, realistically construed, since scientific realism entails the falsity of naturalism. If scientific theories are construed non-realistically, it seems that the status of ontology cannot be affected by the successes of natural science, nor by the form that successful theories in the natural sciences happen to take. If scientific anti-realism is

correct, then the “manifest image” of the scientific world-view must not be taken as authoritative. Instead, that image is merely a useful fiction, and metaphysics is left exactly as it was before the advent of science. (61–2)

Koons has developed an interesting dilemma for the naturalist, which can be stated in this somewhat over-simplified manner. On the one hand, if natural science is accurately telling us about the nature of reality, then naturalism is false. This of course would not be acceptable to a naturalist. On the other hand, if natural science is not accurately telling us about the nature of reality, then naturalism can be true, but not in its ontological form. This means that we are not justified in claiming that only nature exists, and this leaves the door open for theism and forms of spiritualism. So the other horn of the dilemma is not acceptable to a naturalist either.

Another argument against naturalism, one that has received quite a bit of attention, has been formulated by Alvin Plantinga. Plantinga is probably the most well-known Christian philosopher in America today. He is a professor at Notre Dame University who specializes in epistemology and the philosophy of religion. Like the previous argument, he attempts to drive a wedge between science and naturalism by posing a dilemma. Plantinga’s claims have been summarized by James Beilby.

Not only is theistic belief rational, but one who denies the existence of a creative deity and accepts contemporary evolutionary theory is irrational in doing so. More accurately, the conjunction of metaphysical naturalism (N)—namely, the view that only natural objects, kinds, and properties are real—and evolution (E) is, according to Plantinga, self-defeating. Those who accept both N and E have a “defeater” for the belief that human cognitive faculties, so evolved, are reliable. This defeater . . . cannot itself be defeated and thereby constitutes a defeater for any belief produced by those cognitive faculties, including the beliefs which comprise N&E. Therefore, despite the fact that metaphysical naturalism and evolution are typically thought of as very closely and comfortably connected, taken together, their conjunction cannot rationally be held.¹¹⁷

Plantinga's argument should *not* be mistaken for an argument against evolutionary theory in general or, more specifically, against the claim that humans might have evolved from more primitive life forms. Rather, the purpose of his argument is to show that the denial of the existence of a creative deity is problematic. It is the conjunction of naturalism and evolution that suffers from the crippling deficiency of self-defeat, a deficiency not shared by the conjunction of *theism* and current evolutionary doctrine.

Plantinga's argument involves three steps. First, Plantinga claims that the objective conditional probability that we have reliable cognitive faculties, given naturalism and evolutionary theory, is either low or, since it is difficult to even start to specify relevant probabilities, inscrutable. Hence: (1) $P(R/N\&E)$ is either low or inscrutable [where R stand for the proposition: "Human cognitive faculties are reliable"].

According to Plantinga, the mechanisms of evolution select for adaptive behavior, not necessarily true belief, and it is not obvious that adaptive behavior guarantees, or even make probable, true belief. Evaluating the first step of Plantinga's argument involves considering the nature of evolutionary mechanisms and the nature of the relationship between belief and behavior from an evolutionary point of view.

The second step of Plantinga's argument involves the claim that one who accepts N&E and comes to realize the truth of (1) acquires a defeater for R. Hence: (2) If S accepts N&E and (1), she has a rationality defeater for her belief in R. Even the inscrutability of $P(R/N\&E)$, according to Plantinga, is sufficient to give one who accepts N&E a reason to withhold belief in R. Further, this defeater cannot itself be defeated since any prospective defeater-defeater would involve beliefs which would be subject to defeat as well.

It seems clear that if the naturalist, or anyone for that matter, came to believe that she had a defeater for R, then the third and final step of Plantinga's argument would certainly follow: (3) S has a defeater for all of her beliefs, one of which is N&E.¹¹⁸

Less rigorously, we can re-state the argument this way: Naturalism is a sealed mental box that does not allow any transcendental help when it comes to the truth of our beliefs or the reliability of our belief-generating

organs. A theist can claim that even though our brains might be just complex monkey-brains, we receive epistemic assistance from God and His angels when it comes to the formation of beliefs, our rational assessment of them, and the organs used to generate them. This means that we have a transcendental basis for confidence in our ability to (eventually) know the truth. We can know some true things some of the time, because God knows all true things all of the time and He designed us to be finite knowers in His all-knowing image.

If a naturalist holds that all our beliefs are produced by evolutionary processes, and that these are governed by chance, then our beliefs are also produced by chance and we are not justified, or warranted, in placing a high degree of confidence in them. In other words, naturalism undermines the trust we have in our brains and there is no source outside of the “box” of nature that can be used as a source of reliability to shore up the belief-generating organs and processes. So if everything, including belief, is the result of selection pressures from the environment and there is no Divine Hand designing or directing those pressures, but only chance, then we are not warranted in attributing a high degree of reliability to our beliefs or our brains. This forces the naturalist into a dilemma: one can believe in either naturalism or evolution, but not both. Yet evolutionary theory is part of the naturalist creation narrative and is what makes this position a worldview and not just boosterism for science.

Michael Ruse, a leading philosopher of biology, has replied to Plantinga’s dilemma by asserting that even if we are systematically deceived in our beliefs, the theory of evolution can still account for this. Survival and reproduction are reliable touch-stones for small scale deceptions, and “if there are no good reasons to suspect deception, then it should not be assumed.”¹¹⁹ Moreover, even if systematic deception was the case, we could never check our condition against the “real” world postulated by metaphysics. “One simply has to pull back from a correspondence theory of truth and go with coherence at this point.”¹²⁰ Ruse acknowledges the fact that Plantinga is aware of these moves and argues against them, but Ruse denies that the circularity of coherence is vicious: “rather, as the success of science (including evolution) shows, you get an ever-bigger and better picture, as you (that is, the human race) get ever-more experiences and put them into the picture. You get a reinforcing

circularity.”¹²¹ Obviously Ruse, like other naturalists, is relying on a form of the “success of science” argument here.

Now let us turn to the arguments against naturalism made by other philosophers. There are two main arguments in “The Charm of Naturalism,” which originally appeared in the American Philosophical Association’s *Proceedings* because it was given by Barry Stroud as a presidential address. It was re-printed in *Naturalism in Question*.¹²² The first argument against naturalism is that it is self-referentially incoherent. Stroud points out that there are sharp disagreements over what counts as “nature” and that “those disagreements are not themselves to be settled by what can be recognized as straightforwardly ‘naturalist’ means. So one thing that seems not to have been ‘naturalized’ is naturalism itself” (22). This is quite ironic. Naturalism boldly claims that everything must give way to scientific investigation and that we must bow before its results. This means that everything from axiology and epistemology to religion and worldviews must be naturalized. Yet naturalism cannot live up to its own standard, for there are disputes about what nature is and what naturalism is that cannot be settled in accordance with its own commitments. So naturalism is self-defeating.

Yet there is one sense in which one can begin to naturalize naturalism, namely by investigating the properties of the people who believe that it is true. If we confine naturalism to people who report that they are atheists, it turns out that naturalists “tend to be more educated, more affluent, and more likely to be male and unmarried than Americans with active faith,” according to a study by the Barna Group.¹²³

The second argument that Stroud presents is this:

“Naturalism” seems to me in this and other respects rather like “World Peace.” Almost everyone swears allegiance to it, and is willing to march under its banner. But disputes can still break out about what it is appropriate or acceptable to do in the name of that slogan. And like world peace, once you start specifying concretely exactly what it involves and how to achieve it, it becomes increasingly difficult to reach and to sustain a consistent and exclusive “naturalism.” There is pressure on the one hand to include more and more within your conception of “nature,” so it loses its definiteness and restrictiveness. Or, if the conception is kept

fixed and restrictive, there is pressure on the other hand to distort or even deny the very phenomena that a naturalistic study—and especially a naturalist study of human beings—is supposed to explain. (22)

Stroud, like previous thinkers, has posed a dilemma. Either naturalism is inclusive or exclusive (restrictive and fixed). If naturalism is inclusive, then it is not definite; it is loose and might let in entities that are usually labeled “supernatural.” If naturalism is exclusive, then it distorts or denies the very phenomena it is supposed to study. Thus naturalism is either open to the supernatural or it is not capable of giving us an accurate comprehensive account of reality, which means that there is more to reality than nature. Either horn of the dilemma seems to open the door to spiritualism, and this is precisely what the naturalist wants to either keep out, “naturalize,” or ignore.

Stroud proceeds to illustrate his point by examining two large areas of philosophy that are highly problematic when exclusive or restrictive naturalism is seen as the only or best option. These two areas are morals and mathematics.

Naturalism is widely understood to imply that no evaluative states of affair or properties are part of the world of nature. On that assumption, either evaluative thoughts and beliefs take as their “objects” something that is not to be found in the natural world at all, or their contents are equivalent to something that is true in that world, so they are not really evaluative. (30)

This is a continuation of Stroud’s dilemma. Values are not part of nature; nature is value-free or value-neutral. From this naturalistic assumption it follows that value judgments or beliefs, such as “Killing for revenge is immoral,” refers to something not in nature. A naturalist cannot abide this because it opens the door to spiritualism and the idea that morals have a transcendental basis, one that might ultimately empower God or revelation as a source of moral authority. This, from their point of view, would be a disaster.

Yet as John E. Hare has argued, a modern moral theory such as Immanuel Kant’s deontology, cannot be sustained without some transcen-

dental assistance.¹²⁴ The reason is that Kant's moral theory includes a gap between the demand of the moral law for impartiality and the fact that our natural capacities are unequal to the demand. Something is needed to bridge the gap between the "ought" of the moral demand and the "can" of our human nature. Kant bridged this gap through his appeal to the idea of a holy being and supernatural assistance, but this of course is not allowed in naturalism. So Hare has analyzed three secular strategies for dealing with this problem. One is to increase the capacity of human nature to meet the demand (which would result in a dubious picture of human nature), another is to reduce the demand so that it fits our natural capacities (which results in watered-down morality). A third strategy is to find a substitute for divine assistance to bridge the gap. He analyzes the development of evolutionary ethics in this light and it turns out that it is highly problematic.

The other option, that the contents of moral judgments or evaluations are the same as something that is true in nature, say a certain electrochemical state in one's brain, means that this judgment or belief is not prescriptive, only descriptive. This option is intolerable because it either distorts what we take morality to be, or it abolishes morality entirely, and holding a position that does this would make naturalists rather unpopular.

Like Stroud, Richard Foley has also argued that naturalism and scientific realism cannot both be true because science cannot explain the nature of justification, partly because this is an ethical matter.¹²⁵ The answer to the question, What should I believe? cannot be given by a series descriptions about some part of nature or about what I actually do believe. If one answers, You should believe in science, one can always ask why one should accept science as a method of inquiry. But the answer to this question cannot come from within science, otherwise it would beg the question. Ironically, this means that the epistemic imperatives promulgated by naturalists and positivists are, themselves, incapable of being justified through naturalistic means. Still, What am I to believe? "is a question we must answer if we are coherently to back our beliefs and decisions with reasons."¹²⁶

"The same pattern," Stroud asserts, "is present in the philosophy of mathematics, where the quandary is perhaps most obvious, and has cer-

tainly been widely acknowledged" (32). One problem with naturalizing math and logic is that if they are seen as mere human conventions, or products of non-human nature, they are the results of contingent truths.

But it could not have been otherwise than that seven plus five is twelve or that everything that is both red and round is red. No contingent truths, however important, could be adequate to express such necessities. What is more, any naturalism that takes a specifically scientific form, and says that the natural world is the world described exclusively in the terms of the natural sciences, would seem forced to accept truths of logic and mathematics anyway. (33)

It can no longer be identified as simply the world that a scientific naturalist believes in, since if he now accepts logical and mathematical propositions, they are not excluded from what he believes. If this still counts as naturalism, it will be a more open-minded or more expansive naturalism. It does not insist on, or limit itself to, a boundary fixed in advance. It will have expanded to include whatever has been found to be needed in order to make sense of everything that is so in the natural world. (33)

Again, Stroud has placed a dilemma before the naturalist. If he or she holds a restrictive view of nature and naturalism, then this leads to either the exclusion of things that we commonly use and believe in, such as mathematical entities, or it leads to a distortion of those things, which undermines the goal of naturalism to be a rigorously descriptive and objective project. On the other hand, if a naturalist holds to an unrestricted or open form of naturalism, this does not amount to anything more than promoting the scientific investigation of something, and the term naturalism might as well be dropped. If the term is not dropped, it signals that naturalism is really an ideology, which is certainly not science. The result of this dilemma, as with previous arguments, is that a wedge is driven between naturalism and science, and the two are incompatible. This is certainly the opposite of what naturalists assert and desire.

There is another interesting point in Stroud's speech which is not an argument against naturalism, but is still a problem for naturalists.

The point is that conclusions of naturalist epistemology can be drawn only from the study of what actually goes on with human beings. If it turns out that women's knowledge differs in certain ways from men's, for instance, or poor southern black's knowledge from that of affluent urban whites, that is something that a naturalistic epistemologist should welcome, or at any rate should not resist. Studies in the sociology, economics, and politics of knowledge could also be called "naturalist epistemology" too. The lively interest in such matters these days is certainly on the whole a good thing. Not because naturalism is a good thing, but because coming to see more and more differences among things in the world—if they are actually there—is almost always a good thing. (26–7)

A tough-minded naturalist like Papineau would deny that Stroud presents a problem for him on the basis that the social sciences he lists—sociology, economics, and political science—are not really sciences, or are really extensions of the natural sciences and their findings. But I think Stroud has touched a nerve here. If we take the findings of these social sciences seriously, it means that they could uncover aspects of people's knowledge that are politically controversial if not downright dangerous. It also means that these same investigative methods and their conclusions can and should be applied to people working in the natural sciences and in philosophy. This is something that most naturalists will probably want to resist, and this for two reasons. First, the natural sciences and philosophy, being embodiments of reason, should be above the influence of things like money, race, gender, class, power and political commitments. Second, if the people in the natural sciences and philosophy are not immune to these kinds of influence, then the objectivity of their inquiries and their results is undermined and some sort of Postmodern account of the sciences will be supported. But Postmodernism tends to put all disciplines on an equal footing, or to exalt the study of language above the sciences (since the truth or falsity of their theories is communicated through language) and this removes the natural sciences from their privileged place in the hierarchy of knowledge.

We now consider the arguments against naturalism written by John Dupre in "The Miracle of Monism."¹²⁷ One of the reasons it is such a vigorous essay is that it applies categories of analysis and critique to

naturalism, such as mythology, that are associated with supernaturalism and the “soft” disciplines, and these are anathema to most naturalists. Even the title seems to be a direct response to a book by J.L. Mackie entitled *The Miracle of Theism*. Dupre also links the acceptance of naturalism to poor healthcare practices and the domination of the “medical model” of health, which an increasing number of people can relate to and have criticized. This criticism is important because it shows that naturalism is a worldview whose ideas and attitudes have “real life” consequences, not just theoretical ones.

Dupre claims that the naturalist’s commitment to both empiricism and monism is incompatible. So this version of naturalism is self-defeating. “Monism,” he says, “far from being a view of reality answering to experience, is a myth. And myths are just the sort of thing that naturalism, in its core commitment to anti-supernaturalism, should reject” (39). A main bridge from naturalism to monism is through the explanatory reach of science. If this is combined with the idea that science is a continuous and homogenous activity, “and even more specifically that its explanatory resources depend on its sole concern with the material structure of things, then we are well on the way to naturalistic monism” (30). Monism is a myth that derives its credibility from the myth of the unity of science. Dupre then analyzes attempts to construct this unity through two means: a unity of method and a unity of content.

Paradoxically, while unity of scientific method is intuitively a far more plausible thesis than is unity of content, contemporary philosophical defenders of science generally defend the latter rather than the former. So let me begin by mentioning some reasons why the idea of unity of scientific method has gone into decline. (42)

[The British philosopher of science, Sir Karl] Popper’s ideas had a great deal of influence with scientists and surely had a significant effect on the kind of scientific work that was carried out. It is my impression that many scientists still consider Popper’s the last word on scientific method; and no doubt this is especially true among those scientists employing quantitative or experimental methods in fields also explored by more qualitative and discursive approaches. But although there are still a few able

defenders, among philosophers of science Popper's view of science has been very largely rejected. There are some serious conceptual problems that have contributed to this, most centrally a persisting worry about the great difficulty of falsifying hypotheses: given a recalcitrant observation, how does one decide whether the observation was inaccurate, some unknown factor has interfered, some unquestioned background assumption is erroneous, or finally, that a hypothesis under test is false? It seems that this variety of options always leaves it open to a scientist to rescue a hypothesis. And the work of [philosopher of science Thomas] Kuhn and others has even made it plausible that this is almost always the right thing for a scientist to do. (43)

Dupre concentrates on the concept of falsification that is part of Popper's philosophy of science. Popper thought that scientists do not really try to prove that a theory is true. Instead, they try to falsify it or find something that will disconfirm it. After all, it only takes one observation of a non-elliptical orbit to show that a theory which holds universally that planets have elliptical orbits is false. Yet scientists do not always reject theories when faced with counter-evidence, and the history of science has shown in some cases that the scientists were justified in pursuing a problematic theory. Dupre says that Popper's falsificationism has not illuminated

the ways that various kinds of scientific work contribute to the growth of scientific knowledge. . . . the variety of scientific practices makes any uniform account of scientific method unlikely. Methodologies have developed in wholly different ways in response to different kinds of problems, and the methodologies we have accumulated are as diverse as those questions. (46)

Dupre then turns to the other kind of unity that shores-up the miracle of monism, the unity of content, specifically as it occurs in neurology and the philosophy of mind.

The problem is simply that to replace mind talk with brain talk requires that the latter can serve the purposes of the former. But it is exceedingly unlikely that this is so. Even if, in some sense, we are talking about the

brain when we refer to features of our mental lives, there is not the slightest reason to believe that, say, my belief that the U.S. stock market will crash soon can be identified with some well-defined part of my brain; still less that the same part of my brain will consistently correspond to just this belief; and least of all that everyone has a structurally identical part of their brain if, and only if, they believe that the U.S. stock market will crash soon. And it seems that it is this last that would be needed if there were to be some piece of brain talk with which, in principle, one could replace this bit of belief talk. (I suggest, indeed, that this is a place where the supernatural qualities of monism appear clearly. Magical powers are being attributed to brain cells on the basis of no empirical evidence, merely from metaphysical commitment.) (49)

After Dupre has discussed the two aspects of the myth of the unity of science, he offers a powerful exposé of the functions of the myth.

Unity provides solidarity and protects the weaker brethren.(52)

Unity, in short, distributes epistemic warrant. The claim to be scientific is not an important one for solid-state physicists or organic chemists, it is one they take for granted. But on the more controversial margins of science such claims are all-important. Economists claim to be scientific in ways that their more interpretative rivals among the social sciences cannot aspire to, and evolutionary psychologists claim to be uniting the study of humanity with science in ways that must spell the end of more traditional exceptionalist accounts of our species [such as ones given by philosophy or theology].

The status of "science" might . . . much better be used as an honorific to be bestowed on investigative practices when they have provided convincing evidence of success in their investigations.

On the other hand, if there [really] is just one system of interconnected truths that constitutes science, a science moreover that ultimately, at least in principle, exhausts the truth about the world, then everything depends

on establishing the claim of one's practice to belong to this totality. And if such could be done on general grounds that do not require the demonstration of actual empirical successes, the relevance of such claims will obviously be greater still. Here I suggest we see Science as a whole in its supernatural guise. Just as membership of the True Church guarantees redemption, so membership of the One True Science guarantees credibility. (53)

This last line is very damaging to the naturalist position, for Dupre has analyzed the way that the unity of science functions in human society, a kind of naturalistic explanation for naturalism, and then explained it using terminology usually reserved for religion.

The next step is to show that not just a theoretical debate about the nature of science and naturalism is occurring. Instead, naturalism has had, and continues to have, harmful real-life consequences when it comes to medical care.

The consequences of the ideology of scientific unity are not limited to matters merely theoretical. Reductionist models of scientific unity have a particularly and potentially damaging effect on the practice of science. The ultimate goal of articulating unified science in its full glory leads naturally to a preference for seeing phenomena as depending on the internal structure of the entities that produce them rather than emphasizing the influences of the environment. Probably the most serious practical consequences of this tendency are in the human sciences, and most especially in the medical sciences. Consider, for instance, the several million American children (mostly boys) recently discovered to be suffering from Attention Deficit Disorder Syndrome but, happily, being treated with apparent success with the drug Ritalin. It is somewhat surprising that such a widespread disorder should have been unknown a few decades ago. But of course that doesn't mean that there were not numerous sufferers. (53–4)

No doubt among these millions are some seriously sick children. But I do not find it a bit surprising that many children now, and in the past, have had difficulty paying attention in schools. I do doubt whether this proves

that there is something wrong with these children's heads that is appropriately treated with psychotropic (and, apparently, addictive) drugs. Schools are, after all, often boring. The fact that powerful drugs can alleviate the manifestations of the syndrome shows very little. Threats of violence may be equally effective at concentrating the minds of recalcitrant students, but this would not prove that they were suffering from corporal punishment deficiency syndrome. There are many ways of influencing behavior. It is evident that there is some kind of mismatch between the dispositions of the problem child and the social context in which that individual is placed. Such a mismatch could, on the face of it, be addressed by changes to the child, to the environment, or both. I do not deny that changes to the child brought about by the ingestion of psychotropic substances may, in the end, be the best solution in many cases. . . . My worry is that the reductionist perspective on science makes this sort of response look natural, if not inevitable. Millions of drugged children . . . are, arguably, the price we pay for action on the basis of this myth. (54)

Is Dupre's concern unfounded? No. Since the people associated with naturalism believe nothing except what physics teaches, and believe that no one else is justified in accepting the truth of propositions not founded on physics, they reject medical therapy that is not based on the "medical model." For example, an article entitled "Mystical Medical Alternativism" states that alternative forms of treatment "posit numerous forms of energy alien to physics" and the goals of "alternativism" are to "make health science a sham and to desecularize healthcare."¹²⁸ According to the naturalists, these are two of the deadliest sins—pseudoscience and religion—one can commit. The alternative treatments described in the article include Alternative 12 Steps, Bach flower therapy, homeopathy, karuna reiki, Pranic psychotherapy, stress pattern processing, and vibrational medicine. Some of these treatments might be shams designed to prey on people who are ill merely to profit from their illnesses. This is immoral and ineffective and should be exposed as such. However, I have seen both homeopathy and Bach flower treatments work on infants. I have no scientific explanation for why or how they work (the placebo effect does not apply here), but that they can work, I do not doubt. Since this is the case, I do not want naturalists controlling my access to healthcare treatments by

means of federal agencies such as the Food and Drug Administration or the National Institutes for Health.

Here is Dupre's conclusion:

Monism is surely not grounded on empiricism. For one thing, if it were, there would be no need of the vast amounts of work expended in the elaboration of eliminativist, instrumentalist, and supervenientist theses designed to explain the empirical failures of monism. More simply, our empirical experience of nature is, on its face, an experience of a huge diversity of kinds of things with an even huger diversity of properties and causal capacities. Some of these properties are open to causal inspection; others require careful . . . scientific investigation. Neither causal experience nor detailed investigation suggest that all these properties are best understood through attention to the physical stuff of which things are made. The advance of science does in deed lend credence to the view that we do not need to appeal to supernatural things in explaining phenomena. One variety of supernatural things are those that are made out of non-physical stuff, like angels or Cartesian minds. So we may allow that naturalism commits us to the monism that insists that all stuff is material, even physical, stuff. The corollary that insight into the properties of stuff holds the key to understanding the properties and behavior of all those diverse things that are made of that stuff is another matter altogether. And this indeed is the kind of doctrine that suggests the attribution of supernatural powers to physical stuff in a way wholly inimical to naturalism. (55)

Somewhat surprisingly, Dupre's own position is a kind of naturalism: he advocates a "pluralistic naturalism" based upon the great diversity of kinds of things in the world and the great diversity of the means of inquiring into them. Some of the virtues of science also characterize the non-sciences, and while Dupre provides illustrations of this, he states that "[w]hat is most valuable about this picture of diverse and overlapping projects of inquiry is that it makes unsurprising what seems empirically to be the case, that complex phenomena are far more likely to be understood if a variety of distinct but complementary approaches are brought to bear on them" (56).

In other words, Dupre rejects the unity of science approach to the study of phenomena and instead encourages a variety of disciplinary studies. This, he observes, is a more accurate reflection of our experience with the way the world works. Dupre also rejects W.V.O. Quine's notion that philosophy is continuous with science (57). Since he is a pluralist when it comes to science, his question to Quine, the famous Harvard "god-father" of late twentieth century philosophy, and his followers is: *Which science is philosophy supposedly continuous with?* Dupre's view is that philosophy emphasizes different epistemic virtues and has different goals.

Finally, here are two more arguments that parallel ones that have been raised against supernatural religion. Let us label the first one the "fear argument".

#1. The Fear Argument

It is irrational to believe anything based on fear.

Naturalism is based on fear.

Therefore it is irrational to believe in naturalism.

This parallels the arguments made by Lucretius, Nietzsche, Fierbach, and probably most famously, Freud. These thinkers have argued that supernatural religion must be false due to its psychological origin, namely, fear or some sort of wish-fulfillment. Secular, "tough-minded" philosophers have used this line of thinking to belittle the religiously committed for believing in God on a very subjective "soft-minded" basis. So it is shocking, fascinating, and wonderful to have a contemporary philosopher at the height of his career at New York University, Thomas Nagel, admit that atheism, that is naturalism, has the same psychological origin: "The thought that the relation between mind and the world is something fundamental makes many people in this day and age nervous. I believe this is one manifestation of a fear of religion which has large and often pernicious consequences for modern intellectual life."¹²⁹ Nagel has a fear of religion, so he *wants* atheism to be true.

In speaking of the fear of religion, I don't mean to refer to the entirely reasonable hostility toward certain established religions and religious institutions, in virtue of their objectionable moral doctrines, social prac-

tices, and political influence. Nor am I referring to the association of many religious beliefs with superstition and the acceptance of evident empirical falsehoods. I am talking about something much deeper—namely, the fear of religion itself. I speak from experience, being strongly subject to this fear myself: I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn't just that I don't believe in God and, naturally, hope that I'm right in my belief. It's that I hope there is not God! I don't want there to be a God; I don't want the universe to be like that.¹³⁰

The fear argument as stated above is valid, but unsound. The reason is that the truth of its first premise "It is irrational to believe anything based on fear" is dubious. This premise is open to the following sort of case that functions as a counter-example.

Suppose I live in a town in which a number of my fellow citizens fall ill and die despite receiving good medical care. (Unbeknownst to me, a strain of the Ebola virus has grown and is beginning to spread.) I come to hold the belief that I should flee from the town for my dear life and I base this belief on my fear of death. Almost no one would say that I was acting irrationally even though my belief is generated by fear. So at a minimum, for the argument to be sound, the first premise must be modified: "It is irrational to believe anything based on an unjustified fear." However, I think the larger point is still sound, namely, that if theistic or spiritual beliefs are based on non-rational features of the human mind and are really psychological projections, then the confession of Thomas Nagel makes it plausible that atheistic and naturalistic beliefs are also based on non-rational features of the human mind and are therefore really psychological projections. As Donald Campbell, past president of the American Psychological Association and a naturalist said, he *wanted* to do away with a supernatural transcendent authority in morality and that is why he supported the idea of evolutionary ethics.¹³¹

While this does not prove that spiritualism is true and naturalism false, it certainly does level the playing field between the two positions and seriously undermines the exclusive association of objectivity with naturalism. As the American philosopher William James (1842–1910) pointed out in his famous exchange with William K. Clifford (1845–1979),

when it comes to naturalism versus religion, psychological passion occurs on both sides, not only on the side of religion.¹³²

Here is the second argument directed against naturalism. It is designed to show the social pathology of naturalism. Let us label it the “mass murder” argument.

#2. The Mass Murder Argument

Mass murder is immoral.

If naturalism leads to mass murder, then it is immoral to be a naturalist.

Naturalism does lead to mass murder.

Therefore it is immoral to be a naturalist, or to believe in naturalism.

Both Fascism and Communism are political expressions of naturalism. Fascism is based on an interpretation of Darwinism and racial science. Giovanni Gentile, Mussolini’s philosopher, completely naturalized religion by equating spirituality with the State. Marx was a vehement naturalist in the negative sense, that is, consistently decrying the horrors and superstitions of supernaturalism. In his *Towards a Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right*, Marx wrote that German theory is practically radical because “it starts from the decisive and *positive* abolition of religion. The criticism of religion ends with the doctrine that *man is highest being for man*. . . .”¹³³ And what is man but the nexus of material forces? Communism is based on Marx’s, and other theorists’, dialectical materialism. Like the positivists before them, Fascists and Communists assumed the mantel of science in order to legitimize their understanding of society, especially predictions about society, and their desire to control it. The Nazis and the Soviets systematically committed genocide, murdering approximately sixty million Europeans during the first half of the twentieth century.¹³⁴ Of course this figure does not include the number of people killed by Chinese, Vietnamese, Cuban, Angolan, and Peruvian Communist regimes and the number of people killed by the Italian, Spanish, and Japanese fascists.¹³⁵

This second argument is one that I have not encountered in recent philosophical books, although a similar one circulated in American thought during the time of the Second World War.¹³⁶ Because it is little discussed, I raise it here. Even *Reason in the Balance: The Case Against Naturalism in*

Science, Law, and Education does not include this argument.¹³⁷ (However, this book does contain a good argument against some Marxist assumptions concerning human nature.) Benjamin Wiker's book, *Moral Darwinism*, links naturalism to Nazi eugenics as well as the endorsement of abortion and eugenics by the founders of Planned Parenthood and the sexual hedonist movement, but it does not advance this Mass Murder Argument or link naturalism specifically to Communist genocide.¹³⁸ While not a work of philosophy per se, but rather apologetics, Dinesh D'Souza's *What's So Great About Christianity?* does contain a chapter on the mass murders carried out by atheists and their regimes.¹³⁹

Some might say that this is a cheap argument, or even one that is "below the belt." I disagree. Sidney Hook called it a "malicious expression" designed to show that a "naturalist or positivist cannot in principle accept the philosophy of democracy."¹⁴⁰ Of course during the second world war this would be the intellectual equivalent of tarring and feathering one's philosophical opponents. So it is no wonder that the naturalists were quick to remind people of their association with democracy. "Sometimes it is even charged that naturalists and positivists constitute the philosophical fifth column of Western civilization. . ." says Hook with much exasperation.¹⁴¹ While there are many things that can undermine Western civilization, naturalists and positivists are certainly two groups capable of this. While today's "war on terror" is waged, secular humanists use the same type of argument against their opponents when they charge that the religious right in America wants to establish a theocracy and that Christians must be opposed to prevent the formation of an American Taliban frame of mind.¹⁴² If this type of argument is "cheap," then it must be so for atheists such as Christopher Hitchens as well. If it is not, then the atheists have clearly lost this round, for D'Souza's historical analysis of atheistic regimes shows that the argument given above is true.

Philosophers may care very deeply about the status of non-material objects, such as numbers or concepts, the "consciousness-wars," and the role and status of science, but they are a minority of the world's population. While these are important philosophical concerns, with the exception of the status of science, these are not "bread and butter" issues for society. Most people want to live in peace and they yearn for a world free of murder and totalitarian regimes. Yes, one can say that this argument is just

part of a strategy to pin the worst events of human history on the position held by one's opponents. Some philosophers of the Enlightenment, especially Voltaire, used this strategy quite successfully against the corrupt first Christian church. Many naturalists and secular humanists nowadays use the Crusades as an argument against Christianity, attempting to show by this means that Christians are prone to violence. If the argument linking naturalism as a cause to mass-murder as an effect is true, then it is naturalism, not Christianity, that is responsible for genocide on such a massive scale that the crusades pale in comparison.¹⁴³

While American naturalists see themselves as the defenders of liberal democracy, some of them feel so strongly the desire to promote atheism, that some of their statements suggest that the end justifies any means. During the question and answer period at the end of a session at a recent conference on naturalism, the speaker wondered why Americans were still so religious compared to their European counterparts and said that where science is strong, secularism will flourish. One member of the audience said that she had a friend who lived in the former East Germany (a communist dictatorship), and that many people were indifferent to religion there, so perhaps American naturalists could learn some lessons from them about how to promote secularism.¹⁴⁴ Ironically, this comment was made at the end of a paper devoted to the promotion of a real, that is secular, liberal *democracy*. Yet no one in the audience publicly commented on the incongruity of the suggestion.

Naturalism, Arguments, and the Heavenly Doctrines

What can we learn about naturalism from the Heavenly Doctrines that we don't already know from the world or from the arguments already given? First, that despite the naturalists' efforts to promote themselves as having an objective position, this is not entirely the case. Ultimate choices, such as the one that a person makes between competing worldviews, are not purely matters of the intellect. Instead, affections from the will are involved and so the basis for naturalism is the same as the basis for theism or spiritualism. It is important to exercise one's reason by studying the arguments for and against naturalism, theism, or any other worldview. But naturalism and spiritualism both rest on "some kind of un-argued

commitment.”¹⁴⁵ However much a worldview may rest on reason, it ultimately rests on a non-rational (not necessarily irrational) foundation. “Love is the life of man [humanity]. Man knows that there is such a thing as love, but he does not know what love is.” A person might believe that life is nothing but “perceiving with the senses and acting” or “merely thinking,” but “thought is the first effect of life, and sensation and action are the second effect of life” (DLW 1–2). It is the denial of the existential and affective basis of naturalism that in the long run contributes to its being a form of anti-humanism. Once Swedenborg met an intellectual spirit that induced coldness in him. The spirit was a cold person due to the fact that he only looked at things in a natural light (AC 8629). While this coldness can be present in forms of spurious theism, it is *endemic* to naturalism.

Second, a choice between worldviews or religions not only depends upon one’s affections and one’s will, both of which are more fundamental to human nature than reason, and so are somewhat opaque to reason’s gaze, it also depends upon a person’s character. This certainly includes the quality of one’s will, but also one’s attitudes and moral behavior. The Heavenly Doctrines assert that naturalism is rooted in a self-centered will and worldly loves and it can also be brought about by immoral behavior, especially adultery. This view of naturalism is similar to the one advocated by Benjamin Wiker. However, Wiker’s analysis runs this way: naturalism is an intellectual position, a product of philosophical understanding, and it is bad because of the immoral consequences that follow from it (abortion on demand, euthanasia, and eugenics). Swedenborg’s analysis is related but different. Yes, the causality can run that way, so that a philosophical worldview is woven by the intellect and then its implications are consistently lived out, but Swedenborg asserts that it can also be the case, and frequently is, that naturalism is a justification for our desires and behaviors, the selfish and worldly desires we are committed to loving and evil actions we have already taken. So while some naturalists would like to separate the association of, say, lust and greed with the term “materialism,” the Heavenly Doctrines assert that the link between the *metaphysical* meaning of materialism and the *moral* meaning of materialism is quite strong, and indeed natural. This idea helps explain why contemporary philosophers are opposed to the traditional family and the marriage at the

center of it, and this despite the social scientific evidence showing that people are happiest and thrive in the traditional family.¹⁴⁶

This does not mean that every self-described metaphysical materialist behaves in an overtly materialistic manner. Indeed, Harvard Professor Edward O. Wilson, a naturalist's naturalist, is described as unfailingly polite and a very sincere person. Just as there exist some infamous public examples of Christian preachers living in very naturalistic and unethical ways, so people who are scientific materialists do not always consistently live out their beliefs by adopting radical life-styles. But with each passing secular humanist manifesto, the gap between genuine Christian morality and naturalistic morality widens.

In fact, this is what one expects given the kind of morality advocated by the naturalists of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. *A Treatise on Man*, published in 1772, a work of the *philosophe* Claude-Adrien Helvétius (1715–1771), openly states that human beings are only motivated by the love of sensual pleasure, power, and self-gratification.¹⁴⁷ This inspired the work of the English jurist and philosopher Jeremy Bentham (1748–1833), whose Utilitarian ethical theory promotes a hedonistic calculus of consequences, which has been frequently adopted by governments, corporations, and groups in Western countries.

The third thing we learn from comparing the Heavenly Doctrines with naturalism relates to the alleged “warfare” between science and religion. Naturalism is not merely associated with science, but claims exclusive rights to science and that science is the main reason for supporting naturalism. So the battle between naturalism and spiritualism can be construed as one of science vs. religion. Some naturalists take science (especially the natural sciences) as an exemplar of reason. Thus we have the old faith vs. reason controversy. All this takes us back to the old “warfare of religion against science” paradigm. Since science is generally popular and most people would like to be seen as reasonable, it is advantageous for naturalists to promote this paradigm and, at the same time, the apparently contradictory nature of religion and science. This way spiritualists can be labeled as anti-science and irrational or unreasonable. Likewise, it is advantageous for spiritualists to replace the old paradigm and emphasize, where possible, the complimentary nature of science and religion, reason

and faith. This old paradigm has received sustained criticism from many sources, so I will not review them here.¹⁴⁸

The Heavenly Doctrines offer quite a different perspective on this “warfare.” While it is true that naturalism enslaves people to science, so that the tool becomes the master, instead of linking naturalism primarily with science, Swedenborg links it with a certain cast of mind which uses science, philosophy, and even theology as means to justify its attitudes and desires. What is really shocking to people who might be inclined to accept the old warfare of religion against science paradigm is that Swedenborg replaces it with the warfare of spiritual religion against natural religiosity,¹⁴⁹ and this includes the first Christian church, at least as it was constituted during the eighteenth century. Now a Protestant might accept this when it comes to Catholicism, but Swedenborg extends his critique to include Protestants, or the Reformed. The idea that naturalism is part of Reformed Christianity would, in the minds of many American evangelicals today, constitute the scandal of all scandals.¹⁵⁰ The center of the battle in the eighteenth century was, and still is in the twenty-first century, Christianity. What is the soul of Christianity? What does it stand for? These are still crucial questions.

But this struggle is not limited to the center, to the “church specific” or “special church.” Instead, it includes the “church universal” or all of the world’s religions. This is why the cultural alignments have changed. While there still are fundamentalist Christians who do not accept the theory of evolution, or even its facts, this is in my view a side show. The main battle is between people who believe in some form of spiritual worldview and really live it, against the so-called “liberal” or radical naturalists. The naturalists are not just scientists, for many scientists are religious believers. Nor are the religious believers all spiritualists, for there are quite a few in the West who advocate for a naturalized Christianity—or for a morality that is naturalistic—and this shallow morality effectively undermines an acknowledgment of God and the authority of revelation.

THE FUTURE: NATURALISM AND SPIRITUALISM

The Future of Naturalism

From the perspective of the naturalists, naturalism has a future, but one that requires an uphill battle against the spiritualistic forces of darkness. One strategy proposed by naturalist Ronald N. Giere is to promote science more thoroughly in the U.S.¹⁵¹ Improved education in science will help young people see that naturalism is the most rational choice in life. More importantly, a scientifically rigorous explanation of supernatural religion will convince people that religion is not something special but really just a natural phenomenon, and that so-called “religious” needs can be met much more sensibly through secular humanism. There are several scientific theories of religion: the genetic, the evolutionary, the cognitive, the social and economic, and the psychodynamic. According to Giere this is the problem: there is no over-arching scientific explanation that takes into account all of these approaches, and the current researchers show far too much respect toward religion by not debunking its truth claims. What naturalists must do is continue the work of Dewey and show that even though there is no cosmic purpose in life, we can still have values, meaning, and life can be very satisfying. In order to show this, values must be disconnected from idealistic spiritualism and supernaturalism. Only then, he says, will we have a sound and proper liberal democracy.

Another philosopher, Randall Dipert, agreed that the future of naturalism lay in promoting science, but criticized philosophers for not being scientific.¹⁵² Even naturalists, he observed, do not read scientific research on teaching methods and then use them in class. If they did, they would be good models for their students to follow. Moreover, philosophers don’t make important political and social decisions using science. He illustrated this charge by reviewing the way that the members of the American Philosophical Association voted to condemn the U.S.-led war in Iraq. Dipert investigated the idea of a pre-emptive war using rational choice theory and developed a computer program based on historical input to model the outcomes of pre-emptive wars. He found that such wars could lead to stability. Philosophers who specialize in ethics are still using intuitions as data points, but this is problematic in two ways. First, no

moral sense theory is credible post Darwin, and second, philosophers use their own opinions rather than conducting a careful sociological study across cultures and genders when considering people's moral intuitions. Dipert's message is that if philosophy is to have a meaningful future, it needs more science more consistently.

Not all philosophers agree with such a heavy emphasis on science and a reduction thereto. Prof. Nicholas Rescher grants that there is one sense in which naturalism is really just a euphemism for science, especially a kind of Neo-Darwinian positivism.¹⁵³ But there is another sense in which naturalism stands for the concept of nature as a developing intelligent organism in the idealistic tradition. Rescher takes it as a historical fact that the Western mind has been dualistic ever since the Pre-Socratics. Throughout the history of Western philosophy, thinking has revolved around two poles: mind and matter, or nature and grace, or matter and spirit, or phenomena and noumena, or nature and culture, or facts and values. When one pole is emphasized, science puts all else within it; when the other pole is emphasized, the humanities and social sciences place the natural sciences within them as another human endeavor. Rescher thinks that the outlook for either scientific or idealistic naturalism by itself is bleak. So he advocates a synoptic realism that adopts both views because both are needed for our cognitive health, and this explains our intellectual past. The sort of naturalism that has the best hope for the future is open-minded, inclusive of both intelligence and mind.

So we find that naturalists will continue to face the same dilemma that Barry Stroud described, namely, the choice of a naturalism that is restrictive (or exclusive) and one that is inclusive. As we saw in the section on arguments against naturalism, Stroud showed that both types of naturalism are problematic.

From a New Church perspective, naturalism has a future, since as long as there is human freedom, there will be naturalism. People will always have a choice between God and nature, between seeing themselves as animals or angels, between relying on a sensory-based epistemology to the exclusion of revelation or relying on a combination of faith and reason. In addition, the Heavenly Doctrines state that reasoning against what is good and true can never be exhausted (AC 1820:3). Thus there will always be naturalistic groups and books.

Another (highly speculative) reason that naturalism has a future is that it contributes to an equilibrium in society. Not just insofar as an individual can choose between theistic and atheistic philosophies, but as groups who exert social pressure on one another and who use political power to advance their agendas. Such opposing forces from the extremes of the spectrum may create an equilibrium that ensures social stability. Naturalism has spread beyond the academy into other areas of culture and has changed from the provincialism of a few individuals to the institutionalization of several groups. Certainly the Council for Secular Humanism continues to take on new projects and expand its publications, library, public policy initiatives, and facilities—and not just in the U.S. but around the world. As Paul Kurtz, the chairman of the Council for Secular Humanism, has recently written: “We need alternative institutions that will support us in appreciating the majestic reality of the universe, in forging our determination to enter into nature, . . . to build a better world . . .”¹⁵⁴ But must naturalism retain its dominant position among Western elites, or among intellectuals? Not necessarily.

The Future of Spiritualism

While the peoples of the West, especially Europeans, are strongly naturalistic and peoples of the East, for example the Chinese and North Koreans, live under naturalistic governments, much of the world is not naturalistic. Most of the people in south and central America, Africa, India, and southeast Asia are either theists or hold some form of spiritual worldview. In fact, the center of Christianity soon will no longer be Europe or America, but it will instead shift to the “global south.”¹⁵⁵ This coincides with a shift in population too. Most of the world’s people will not live in the northern hemisphere, but in the southern. Currently the world’s institutions are located in and run by people in the northern hemisphere. So while some of us toil away in parts of the globe that are strongly influenced in one way or another by naturalists, let us not forget that we are not alone and we are not a minority. Most of the people in the world are either theists or spiritualists—they are not naturalists.

What about the United States specifically? It is important to consider the situation in the U.S. since it is currently the world’s “superpower.”

This is true in a militaristic and economic sense, but also in a cultural sense. This will not always be the case, but presently what happens in American culture can have a tremendous effect on the rest of the world. On the one hand there is plenty of evidence to show that during the twentieth century the naturalists staged what Christian Smith has called a secular revolution.¹⁵⁶ The naturalistic elite has taken over important institutions in American public life, including public education, law, and much of the media.

On the other hand, Christians in the U.S. have woken up to the threat of naturalism and are doing something about it. Conservative Catholics, Protestants, and Jews have formed an alliance. Philosophers are producing arguments against naturalism and others are writing to appeal to general audiences. Surveys show that Americans are consistently more open to religion and spirituality than our European relatives. This is what one would expect given that the Doctrines say that a new church never, or almost never, grows among the members of the former church (AC 409, 1366, 2986). This was true of all previous churches on the earth. It took remnants of the former churches to start new ones and keep them going until they could spread to gentiles. Even though naturalists occupy some key positions in American culture, they have by no means won the day. For example, Americans are open to near death experiences today in a way that they were not sixty years ago. Evolutionism continues to be challenged in publications, on the internet, and in the courts.

People long for meaning, not just local meaning, but cosmic meaning and the naturalists are still somewhat frustrated by some people in their own camp, such as Dawkins and Dennett, who have not been subtle enough in their naturalism to make it appealing to the masses. As Philip Kitcher remarked at a conference: supernatural religion, while false, still provides genuine caring in an atomistic society through ethical community and a Grand Story that people use to make sense of their lives.¹⁵⁷ So to be successful, naturalism must find a way to fulfill these human needs and functions of religion. The Dawkins' response to the bleakness of Darwinian naturalism is to say, "Don't be depressed! We have the great scientific adventure." But the Kansas farmer says, "That's okay for you, but you are a participant in it. What about me?" There is the naturalism of Aristotle or Hobbes, but they don't really appeal to people either. So Kitcher has

encouraged his confreres to draw up plans to make naturalism appealing through the use of the arts.

This echoes the Catholic counter-reformation strategy: seduce people into adopting naturalism as their religion rather than persuading people through the use of reason. This is a rather embarrassing position for such self-proclaimed “free thinkers” and “rationalists” to adopt. However, it is really quite consistent with the general attitude that naturalists have taken toward the great unwashed masses ever since the Enlightenment, namely, as most people are too stupid or lazy (or both) to believe what is true, they must be convinced by other means.

Research on human nature shows that people have spiritual experiences. The work of Sir Alister Hardy in his *The Spiritual Nature of Man* has been continued by David Hay.¹⁵⁸ Their findings show that spiritual experience is a fact of life. In Europe there is an enormous amount of social pressure to suppress one’s spiritual experience.¹⁵⁹ European society makes people feel embarrassed about their experiences, but they continue to have them anyway. There is much anecdotal evidence too. This has been collected by Edward Hoffman in his book *Visions of Innocence: Spiritual and Inspirational Experiences of Childhood*.¹⁶⁰ This work is especially important because it is harder for the naturalistic critic to argue that these experiences are the result of education or other forms of socialization. There is also the evidence published by the Academy of Religion and Psychical Research in *The Journal of Religion and Psychical Research*. There is also the *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, a publication of the Society for Scientific Exploration. Just because these books and journals exist does not prove that spiritualism is true. Persuasion rests on the quantity and quality of the evidence. Here I simply want to make the reader aware of resources for future research in spirituality.

If one is an open-ended naturalist, it seems that one of the facts that must be accounted for is spiritual experience. There is interesting research being done in the relatively new field of positive psychology. One of the founders of the field, Prof. Martin Seligman, has concluded that one of the factors in human happiness is an experience of spirituality or transcendence.¹⁶¹ Believing in these things is an essential part of living an authentically happy life. What will the naturalists do about this? After all, they are committed to the findings of science and to helping people be happy, yet

this research pointedly states that naturalism is not the whole truth about human nature. There are a number of moves available to the naturalist regarding these experiences, for example, one might assert that they are abnormal brain states. Like Seligman, they could try to tie the concept of God into evolutionary theory, or they could try to explain such experiences and beliefs away as a kind of placebo or Hawthorn effect. In other words, there is no God or spiritual world, but the belief that there is has a positive effect anyway.

Spiritual experiences will not pound the last nail in the coffin of naturalism, but these experiences certainly constitute a large anomaly in the naturalist ontology. No one who has actually had a spiritual experience could believe that it was “really” a result of one’s brain or the large pepperoni pizza consumed the night before. Consider this illustration from a book on Non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma (NHL):

About two weeks before my mom died, she dreamed that my father, who had died the year before, was calling her. When she told me, I was terribly upset—even angry with her—for being so superstitious. Recently, after my own NHL diagnosis, I also got a “call” from my Dad. He said he wanted to “come home.” I interpreted that as meaning that somehow he knew I have NHL, and wants to help. (I hope he can.) I will no longer deny anyone’s contact with the nonliving.¹⁶²

Still, to guard our freedom, the naturalistic explanation will always be available, and we should anticipate that some of the means used to explain them away will be quite clever.

The Heavenly Doctrines assert that humans were designed by the Lord to have spiritual experiences:

The human being has been created by the Lord in such a way that while living in the body he could at the same time talk to spirits and angels, as actually happened in most ancient times; for being a spirit clothed with a body he is one among them. But because, after a period of time, people have so immersed themselves in bodily and worldly interests that they hardly care about anything different, that path has therefore been closed. But as soon as bodily interests in which a person is immersed retire into

the background, the path is opened, and he finds himself among spirits and shares his life with them. (*Arcana Coelestia* 69, Elliot trans.)

Notice the form of naturalism, namely materialism, that is mentioned in this passage. True, this is not exactly the kind of intellect-oriented naturalism that we have in academic philosophy, specifically metaphysics and epistemology. Still, if one holds that nature is the sum total of reality and that natural science constitutes our only reliable method for acquiring knowledge, then one will of course have only bodily and worldly interests, for there is nothing else to be interested in and no legitimate transcendental way to satisfy one's interests.

"Spiritist" is a label that will, at least in certain countries, continue to haunt Swedenborg and Swendenbogan organizations. Yet there are some positive trends. First, Christians who know their Bible have to admit that spirits, angels, and devils are real beings, and they are all spiritual beings, not natural. Moreover, American Christians are becoming increasingly aware of the naturalism in society and thought. This means that naturalism is a recognized enemy and that spiritualist, or supernatural theism, is an ally. The New Church, as a form of supernatural theism, can be an ally.

Second, New Church people have become more open about their spiritual experiences and using the Heavenly Doctrines to shed light on them. Vera Glenn's book about encounters with loved ones who have departed this life, *A Dove At The Window*, is a good example of this.¹⁶³ By producing this kind of work we stand up to naturalism and we witness to our faith. It is also a way of appealing to people who have had similar experiences. In addition, it helps show that human beings are not just sophisticated animals. The more spiritual experiences we can compile, the more these "anomalies" will undermine the explanatory power of naturalism and eventually people will not see them as anomalies but as normal parts of human life. Recall these challenging words by Sidney Hook:

The unusual must clear a higher hurdle of credibility than the usual. But only on its first jump. Unfortunately, for all their talk of appeal to experience, direct or indirect, religious experientialists dare not appeal to any experience of sufficiently determinate character to permit of definite tests. There is a certain wisdom in this reluctance. For if experience can

confirm a belief, it can also invalidate it. But to most supernaturalists this is an inadmissible possibility.¹⁶⁴

Theists and other people who hold to a spiritualist worldview need to face squarely the challenge regarding the understanding of, and epistemic reliability of, experience. Ever since Immanuel Kant's dismissal of Swedenborg's experiences as "non-sense," those who have had spiritual experiences have been on the defensive. It is time take a fresh look at what is meant by "experience" and how a certain understanding of it has failed to explain what happens to people everyday across the planet.

Given the centrality of spiritual experiences in the revelation for the New Church and the importance such experiences typically have in people's lives, Bryn Athyn College should consider establishing its own Spiritual Experience Research Center. Such a center could not only collect and evaluate studies and arguments produced by others in fields such as neuroscience, psychology, theology, and philosophy, but it could also conduct original research. It could also give people a new understanding of, and appreciation for, the experiences that Swedenborg himself underwent. Studying experience in general or other people's particular experience, or even having certain experiences, such as those that accompany near-death, will not convert many naturalists into theists or spiritualists. In other words, I don't think we can use science to prove that a New Church or supernatural worldview is correct. However, such study can help people understand themselves, make sense of their lives, and supplies an alternative view to naturalism that provides people with the freedom to choose between two robust interpretations of life. If approached with the right attitude, scientific and philosophical investigation can confirm and illustrate spiritual truth and give us a broader and deeper understanding of them (AC 2568:4-5). Factual knowledge can make a person either wise or foolish, and this depends not on the facts themselves, but on the quality and quantity of good with a person (AC 4156).

While some people are organizing themselves to abolish marriage and the traditional family, others are organizing themselves to strengthen it. Books are being written, conferences are being held, some churches are developing outreach programs, and governments are interested in this movement. In my opinion, marriage is *the* issue of Western, particularly

American culture and its outcome will determine the future of society. For as marriage goes, so goes the family, and as the family goes, so goes society. There is some agreement from the opposite point of view. At a recent conference, Prof. Laura Purdy, a naturalist, said that sexual ethics are at the core of the culture war in the U.S.¹⁶⁵ Also, the intention of the Lord and His hope expressed in the book *Married Love* is that true marriage love will not be a rare occurrence on this planet but will increase in quantity and quality to the point at which it rivals the experience of the ancients. But this hope of Providence can only be realized with the cooperation of mortals.

As we have seen, naturalists have for centuries clung tightly to science. The old paradigm in which science was locked in warfare against religion has been exploded by research in the history and philosophy of science.¹⁶⁶ The Postmodernists have deconstructed science, especially its authoritarianism, and have shown that it is a very human endeavor built through social networks and institutions. In other words, science is not an un-stoppable, monolithic, completely objective, machine of unquestionable progress. Instead, it is a very diverse set of processes organized by fallible human beings, prone to economic, governmental, and other social pressures, who establish facts through inter-subjective agreement. Apart from what is considered the dangerous and destructive work of the postmodernists is the work of the John Templeton Foundation. The purpose of this foundation is to promote dialogue between science and religion. From a naturalist's point of view this project is bad because it gives far too much credence to religion. There is an important caveat to this otherwise positive institution: recent developments at Templeton signal a shift in the organization's engagement away from religion and theology and toward science and philosophy. This is good news for the naturalists and the National Office of the American Philosophical Association is now happy to propose that the APA pursue large grants from Templeton.¹⁶⁷

Despite the fact that naturalism is the dominant worldview among professional philosophers, not all philosophers are naturalists. It is important to realize that there are many people in the world and the U.S. who care about living a spiritual life and promoting a spiritual worldview. They are monotheists, polytheists, or deists and while some have not adopted a particular church, they know that naturalism does not tell the

whole story about life. There are philosophers such as Jacob Needleman and Pierre Hadot who critique the naturalist view of life and philosophy and who offer a positive spiritually-inclined alternative. The well-known philosopher Huston Smith has provided a very interesting analysis and critique of both modernism and postmodernism in his book *Beyond the Postmodern Mind*. Regarding the former mind-set, Smith asserts that it is motivated by the desire to control and dominate, which has led to the adoption of an empiricist epistemology. In turn, these led to the acceptance of naturalism as a worldview. The result has been alienation, alienation of people from nature, of people from one another, and even people from their inner selves. The logical alternative, Smith states, stems from a desire to participate, cooperate, and spiritually engage in self-transformation. This leads to an epistemology of intuitive discernment and a transcendental worldview. The result will be a deep fulfillment, not just external comforts.¹⁶⁸

CONCLUSION

We began this paper with what is known logically as a dilemma: “It must be thought that either God or nature governs all things” (*DP* 182.3). Both naturalists and theists agree that this is the choice that human beings individually and collectively face. As we have seen, those who think that nature governs all things have developed arguments to support their position, while those who disagree with them have developed arguments to show that their position is either very problematic or false. We have also seen that, according to the Heavenly Doctrines, naturalism is false and serves the purposes of evil.

But what of our attitude toward naturalists? The Heavenly Doctrines say that there are two kinds of naturalists whom we should excuse. The first kind is someone who continues to believe in angels, the devil, souls, and the life after death but thinks of these in terms of space and time (*DLW* 350). For example, such a person tries to fix the location of the soul after death. The other kind of naturalist believes that God produces all things on the earth, but observes that this includes not only good things, but also evil things. So to avoid attributing evil things to God, this person conflates

God and nature into one (*DLW* 350). These two kinds of naturalists are ignorant about the way the spiritual world works and how it interacts with the natural world and the way that God governs both. Both types of naturalists can be excused because, evidently, both have their hearts in the right place, both continue to believe in spiritual entities, such as God, angels, souls and so on. Their naturalism stems from ignorance and a lack of understanding. I think our attitude toward these kinds of naturalists should be one of understanding, patience, and a willingness to alleviate their ignorance.

Yet there is a kind of naturalist that is not excused, namely, the confirmed atheist.

But those who have made themselves atheists by confirmations in favor of nature are not excusable, because they might have confirmed themselves in favor of the Divine. Ignorance indeed excuses, but does not remove falsity which has been confirmed, for such falsity coheres with evil, thus with hell. (*DLW* 350)

This kind of naturalist “separates the Divine from nature” and so regards “nothing as sin, because all sin is against the Divine” (*DLW* 350). Swedenborg met such people in the spiritual world. They “regarded the Lord as worthless and despised all Divine worship.” “Such spirits . . . attribute everything to themselves and their own prudence, and boast that they stand in fear of none.” “[T]heir intention [was] to meet those with whom they could join forces and bring others under their control”¹⁶⁹ (*AC* 950). The former kinds of naturalists seem to retain some innocence of ignorance, but the latter kind of naturalist has done away with this and has consequently shut off an interior plane of the mind into which the Lord can flow and so lead the person to Himself. This kind of naturalist rejects Divine leadership and spiritual authority. The plane of the mind receptive of the Lord is known as conscience, and people caught up in external things alone, motivated only by selfish and worldly loves, are without a conscience (*HD* 13–140; *AC* 4459). Unless “conscience” refers to wealth, worldly honors, and bodily pleasures, the merely natural person does not believe in conscience at all (*AC* 7217). This kind of naturalist cannot be trusted and is completely dependent upon good laws and social rules to

live even an outwardly decent life. Toward such a person and toward the naturalistic tendencies in ourselves we must be as “wise as a serpents, and as innocent as doves” (Matt. 10:16). □

ENDNOTES

1. Emanuel Swedenborg, *Angelic Wisdom concerning the Divine Providence*. Translated by W.C. Dick and E.J. Pulsford (London: Swedenborg Society, [1764] 1949), § 182:3. All future references to this work will use the abbreviation *DP* followed by the paragraph number.

2. *Voltaire Selections*. Edited by Paul Edwards. (New York: Macmillan, 1989), 7.

3. Emanuel Swedenborg, *The Last Judgment* [1758] and *Continuation concerning The Last Judgment* [1763]. Translated by John Whitehead in *Miscellaneous Theological Works*. (New York: Swedenborg Foundation, 1951). All future references to these works will use the abbreviations *LJ* and *CLJ* (respectively) followed by the paragraph number.

4. In metaphysics, the words “spiritual” and “natural” are often used to designate two different realms or two very different qualities of something. Throughout the paper I will be using the term “spiritualism” as a term whose construction parallels “naturalism.” Other terms, such as “supernaturalism,” are sometimes used in this paper to designate the worldview which is the opposite of naturalism. “Supernaturalism” and “non-natural” are terms frequently used in philosophical discourse. “Supernaturalism” is used in the Heavenly Doctrines, at least twice (in *Arcana Coelestia* § 4063 and *Divine Providence* § 34:3). Because “supernaturalism” literally means an intensification of naturalism, Rev. Doug Taylor suggested that I use “supra-naturalism” (that which is beyond the natural). While this is an accurate term, I think “spiritualism” better expresses the whole thrust of the Heavenly Doctrines and Swedenborg’s experience. The Heavenly Doctrines are *heavenly* and full of spiritual experiences; *Arcana Coelestia* and *Apocalypse Revealed* explain the meaning of Genesis, Exodus, and Revelation by means of the spiritual sense; *Heaven and Hell* is a book about the spiritual world and what happens to one’s spirit after the death of the body, and so on. True, the term “spiritualism” does run the risk of being confused with “spiritism” and spiritualism was a movement in the nineteenth century that included communication with spirits. Indeed, today’s spiritualism is organized into a Spiritualist National Union, publishes the *Two Worlds* magazine, and runs a small college (Arthur Findlay College for spirituality, healing, and psychic and mediumistic studies) in the UK. The seven principles of spiritualism as a movement are the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the communion of spirits and the ministry of angels, the continuous existence of the human soul, personal responsibility, compensation and retribution hereafter for all good and evil deeds, and eternal progress is open to every human soul. (See the website of the Spiritualist National Union: <<http://www.snu.org.uk>>) As *The Catholic Encyclopedia* states, the term “spiritism” captures the meaning of communication with spirits, whereas “spiritualism” is a doctrine which “suitably stands opposed to materialism.” (“Spiritualism,” by Michael Maher and Joseph Bolland, Vol. XIV. (New York: Robert Appleton Co., 1912). Available at <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14229a.htm>>)

5. Ernest Campbell Mossner, “Deism” in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Edited by Paul Edwards. (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 2:326–7. This statement is not meant to imply that Deism is not addressed in the Heavenly Doctrines, for it most certainly is; it is not addressed by name.

NATURALISM AND THE LAST JUDGMENT

6. Emanuel Swedenborg, *Apocalypse Explained*. 6 Vols. Translated by John Whitehead. (New York: Swedenborg Foundation, 1976), §981:2. All future references to this work will use the abbreviation *AE* followed by the paragraph number.
7. Benjamin Wiker, *Moral Darwinism: How We Became Hedonists* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002).
8. *Naturalism in Question*. Edited by Mario de Caro and David Macarthur. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 1–2.
9. Barry Stroud “The Charm of Naturalism” in *Naturalism in Question*, 22.
10. David Papineau, “Naturalism.” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. 22 Feb. 2007. <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/naturalism>>
11. Charles Taliafero, “Naturalism and the Mind” in *Naturalism: A Critical Analysis*. Edited by William Lane Craig and J.P. Moreland (New York: Routledge, 2000), 134.
12. “Naturalism and Material Objects” by Michael Rea in *Naturalism: A Critical Analysis*, 110.
13. De Caro and Macarthur, 3.
14. John Dupre, “The Miracle of Monism” in *Naturalism in Question*, 39; Craig and Moreland, xi; Stroud, 22–24.
15. John Herman Randall, “The Nature of Naturalism” in *Naturalism and the Human Spirit*. Edited by Yervant H. Krikorian (New York: Columbia Press, 1944), 357.
16. Randall, 357.
17. *Ibid.*, 358.
18. Alan Lacey, “Naturalism” in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*. Edited by Ted Honderich (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 604.
19. de Caro and Macarthur, 3.
20. Roy Bhaskar, *The Possibility of Naturalism*, third ed. (New York: Routledge, 1998), 3.
21. *Naturalism: A Critical Appraisal*. Edited by Steven J. Wagner and Richard Warner (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), 12.
22. For some fascinating untangling of the threads involved in objectivity, subjectivity, science and religion, see Mary Midgley’s *Evolution as a Religion: Strange Hopes and Stranger Fears* (London: Methuen, 1985), especially chapter 12: “Mixed Antitheses.”
23. Craig and Moreland, xi.
24. Michael Rea, 110.
25. Sellars’s statement is based on an Ancient Greek saying attributed to the Sophist Protagoras: “A human being is the measure of all things—of things that are, that they are, and of things that are not, that they are not.” See *A Presocratics Reader: Selected Fragments and Testimonia*. Edited by Patricia Curd. Translated by Richard D. McKirahan, Jr. (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1995), 98.
26. De Caro and Macarthur, 4.
27. Linda Wiener and Ramsey Eric Ramsey, *Leaving Us to Wonder: An Essay on the Questions Science Can’t Ask* (Buffalo, NY: SUNY Press, 2005), 15. The other authors to whom they refer are John Dupre, Neil Postman, and Simon Critchley, 142.
28. Tom Sorell, *Scientism: Philosophy and the Infatuation with Science* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 1.

29. Hilary Kornblith, "Introduction: What is Naturalistic Epistemology?" in *Naturalizing Epistemology*. Edited by Hilary Kornblith (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 1.

30. *Ibid.*, 3.

31. *Ibid.*, quoting from Quine's *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 69–90, but also found in the Kornblith anthology on page 24.

32. George D. Hadzsits, *Lucretius and His Influence* (New York: Longmans Green, 1935).

33. Author's notes from Flanagan's lecture at "Reasons to Believe: An Interdisciplinary Conference on Naturalistic and Non-naturalistic Perspectives" held at Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, July 17, 1997, 1.

34. de Caro and Macarthur, 5.

35. Wagner and Warner, 1.

36. de Maro and Macarthur, 3.

37. Arthur Danto, "Naturalism" in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Edited by Paul Edwards. (New York: Macmillan and Free Press, 1967), 5: 448–9; all emphasis is in the original article.

38. See Emanuel Swedenborg, *Angelic Wisdom concerning the Divine Love and Wisdom*, [1763] Translated by John C. Ager. (New York: Swedenborg Foundation, 1976), part three. All future references to this work will use the abbreviation *DLW* followed by the paragraph number.

39. "Naturalism" published Feb. 22, 2007, in the online *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

40. *Ibid.*

41. Randall, 374.

42. *Ibid.*, 375.

43. *Ibid.*, 382; emphasis added.

44. John Dewey, *A Common Faith*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1934), 87.

45. The modifier "secular" is important because not all humanisms are secular. In fact, if one were to count the ancient Greeks, such as Plato, as the first humanists, then humanism is certainly not naturalistic, but is more spiritual and religious. There have been, and continue to be, Christian humanists. Indeed, properly understood, Christianity is *the* humanist philosophy and secular humanism is an oxymoron. The reason is that Christianity presupposes a Divine Human from which mortals are descended and to which they can ascend whereas secular humanism presupposes nothing of the kind.

46. Paul Kurtz, "The Culture War Continues in Spite of the Recent Election" on the Council for Secular Humanism website: <http://www.secularhumanism.org/index.php?section=library&page=pkurtz_election>

47. Different kinds of materialists are, for example, central-state, dialectical, eliminative, and historical.

48. Leszek Kolakowski, *The Alienation of Reason*. Translated by Norbert Guterman (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1968), 2–3.

49. *Ibid.*, 3.

50. *Ibid.*, 5.

51. *Ibid.*, 7–8.

52. *Ibid.*, 8.

53. *Ibid.*

54. Craig and Moreland, xiv. Alan Lacey, author of the article on logical positivism in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* agrees: "By the late 1960s it became obvious that the movement had pretty much run its course." Edited by Ted Honderich. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 508.

55. Emanuel Swedenborg, *The Infinite and the Final Cause of Creation*. Translated by James John Garth Wilkinson (London: The Swedenborg Society, [1734] 1908). All future references to this work will use the abbreviation Inf. followed by the page number to this edition.

56. Emanuel Swedenborg, *A Philosopher's Notebook*. Translated by Alfred Acton (Philadelphia, PA: Swedenborg Scientific Association, [1741] 1931).

57. See *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650–1750* by Jonathan I. Israel, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

58. Aram Vartanian, *Diderot and Descartes: A Study of Scientific Naturalism in the Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), quoting Cudworth, 67.

59. Vartanian, 68.

60. *Ibid.*, 70.

61. *Ibid.*, 72.

62. *Ibid.*, 203–4.

63. *Ibid.*, 49–50.

64. *Ibid.*, 32–3.

65. Emanuel Swedenborg, *True Christian Religion*. Translated by John Chadwick (London: Swedenborg Society [1771] 1988), § 178. All future references to this work will use the abbreviation TCR followed by the paragraph number.

66. In order to belong to a genuine religion (*religio*), and not just a mere religiosity (*religiosum*), the following three conditions (based on HH 318–19; DP 322:4; AC 8944) must be met: 1. acknowledgement of the Divine; 2. living a life of mutual charity (living a good life) and some conscience (obeying rules that ought not to be broken); and 3. the second condition, the living of a good life, must be the goal, or aim of the individual and community (*Apocalypse Explained* § 847:3). There are two basic ways that religiosity is used in Swedenborg's Writings. First, from the perspective of the New Church as the one true Christian religion, all other faiths, or systems of life, are religiosities. This includes other forms of Christian faith. It is in this sense that both forms of Christianity (such as Catholicism) and forms of other religions (such as Judaism and Islam) are called "religiosities." If we take chapter XVI of *True Christian Religion* as our guide in defining religion (apart from God, charity, and faith there is no religion), then we must conclude that Roman Catholicism and faith alone Protestantism are not religions (TCR 450–53). Second, religiosity is also used from the perspective of the universal church, or universal genuine religion. Religiosity thus employed refers to systems of life and belief that function like a genuine religion, but are not. Religiosity in this sense refers to a pseudo-religion, or an inauthentic form of religion. This use of religiosity denotes principles hatched from one's own self-intelligence, or fashioned from the human proprium (i.e., what is one's own) (AC 8941–44). From this perspective such belief systems as Marxism, secular humanism, blind forms of nationalism and capitalism, and even evolutionism are religiosities (AC 10,640–10,642). They are forms of idolatry. *True Christian Religion* §450 states that apart from God, charity, and faith "there is no religion." Also "religion consists in the acknowledgement of One God, and in the worship of Him from faith of charity" (*Brief Exposition*. Translated by John Whitehead in *Miscellaneous Theological Works* (New York: Swedenborg Foundation, [1769], 1951), § 45).

67. John E. Smith, *Quasi-Religions: Humanism, Marxism, and Nationalism* (New York: St. Martin's, 1994).

68. Emanuel Swedenborg, *Angelic Wisdom concerning the Divine Love and Wisdom*. Translated by John C. Ager (New York: Swedenborg Foundation, 1976). All future references to this work will use the abbreviation *DLW* followed by the paragraph number.

69. Emanuel Swedenborg, *Arcana Coelestia*, Translated by J.F. Potts. Revised by Acton and Buss. (London: Swedenborg Society, [1749–1756] 1978).

70. Emanuel Swedenborg, *Heaven and Its Wonders and Hell*. Translated by Doris Harley (London: Swedenborg Society, [1758] 1966). All future references to this work will use the abbreviation *HH* followed by the paragraph number.

71. Emanuel Swedenborg, *Intercourse Between the Soul and the Body* in *Miscellaneous Theological Works*. Translated by John Whitehead (New York: Swedenborg Foundation, [1769] 1951). All future references to this work will use the abbreviation *ISB* followed by the paragraph number.

72. See the introduction by Justin Leiber to Julien Offray de La Mettrie's *Man A Machine* and *Man A Plant*. Translated by Richard A. Watson and Maya Rybalka (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1994), 5.

73. Richard Dawkins has said that evolution makes atheism intellectually respectable, but I suspect that this phrase was coined by someone else.

74. Norman L. Torrey, "Diderot, Denis" in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Edited by Paul Edwards. (New York, Macmillan and Free Press, 1967), 2: 400.

75. William Barrett *Death of the Soul: From Descartes to the Computer* (New York: Doubleday, 1986).

76. Thanks to my colleague Scott Frazier for clarifying the Latin phrase in an email to the author dated August 13, 2007.

77. Introduction to La Mettrie's *Man A Plant* and *Man A Machine*, 2–3.

78. *Ibid.*, 4.

79. Emanuel Swedenborg, *Invitation to the New Church* in *Posthumous Theological Works*, vol.1. Translated by John Whitehead (New York: Swedenborg Foundation, 1954), § 9. All future references to this work will use the abbreviation *Inv.* followed by the paragraph number.

80. AC 3483, 6316, 8627–28; *HH* 353–54; *Inv.* § 27; *TCR* § 639; *Married Love* (Translated by N. Brue Rogers. Bryn Athyn, PA: General Church of the New Jerusalem, [1768] 1995) § 500:2. Future references to this work will use the abbreviation *ML* followed by the paragraph number.

81. *Republic*, book VII.

8.2 *Spiritual Diary* §§ 768, 2299–2301.

83. Vartanian, 21.

84. An illustration of this link can be found on the naturalist Richard Dawkins' website. In the store he sells shirts with the scarlet letter A on them. For him, the scarlet letter stand for Atheist, but in literary minds this is linked to Nathaniel Hawthorn's famous story in which a woman must wear the scarlet letter A because she has committed adultery. Dawkins encourages his fellow atheists to come out of the closet and not be ashamed of their atheism. See www.richarddawkins.net/store.

85. *Selections from Bayle's Dictionary*. Edited by E.A. Beller and M. duP. Lee, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, [1734–38] 1952), viii.

86. Beller and Lee, xix, xxxiii.

87. *Ibid.*, xx.

88. Ibid. 153–6. The brackets [] are in the quotation from this edition of Bayle’s *Dictionary* and do not indicate material inserted by me.

89. Mary Wortley Montagu, *Works*, Vol. II (London: Richard Phillips, 1803), 57–59 in *Western Civilization: Images and Interpretations*, second edition. Edited by Dennis Sherman (New York: Knopf, 1987), 2:50–51.

90. Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500–1800*, abridged ed. (New York: Harper, 1979), 317.

91. Helvétius, Claude-Adrien, *A Treatise on Man: His Intellectual Faculties, and His Education*. Translated by W. Hooper (New York: Burt Franklin, [1777] 1969), 2: 220–21. See also James F. Traer, *Marriage and the Family in Eighteenth-Century France*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), 56.

92. Helvétius, 274.

93. Not all was madness regarding marriage during the Enlightenment. There is some evidence that the idea that people should marry primarily for love, and not for money or status, took root at this time. See James F. Traer, 71–75.

94. David Blankenhorn, *The Future of Marriage* (New York: Encounter Books, 2007), 127.

95. Blankenhorn, 128; their website is www.unmarried.org.

96. Blankenhorn, chapter 6.

97. Bloodhound Gang, “The Bad Touch” on *Hooray For Boobies* (Geffen Records, 2000).

98. Emanuel Swedenborg, *The Last Judgment Posthumous*. Translated by John Whitehead in *Posthumous Theological Works*, vol.1. (New York: Swedenborg Foundation, 1954), § 340. Future references to this work will use the abbreviation LJpost followed by the paragraph number.

99. But why is adultery so wrong? Also, it seems harsh to say that adultery closes heaven for a person. However, when we understand the laws of life, and the way reality works, we realize that this statement is not harsh. It is not the Lord who is shutting the door to heaven on a person. Instead, it is the adulterer, especially a purposeful one, who closes his or her mind to the influx from heaven. This is a spiritual consequence of a person’s choice within the order of reality that the Lord has created for the sake of human well-being and happiness. A person cannot be heavenly unless he or she is reformed, and a person cannot be reformed when the understanding is blind. The understanding is blind when the lust of adultery is in the will (DP 144; ML 497:2). This is why heaven is closed to an adulterer. It also explains why an adulterer finds naturalism so appealing. The mind of the adulterer is sensuous and the will treats the understanding like a prostitute, that is, it uses the understanding to satisfy its desire. The naturalistic worldview is a convenient rationalization for the lust of adultery. No wonder then, that Donatien Alphonse Francois, comte (or marquis) de Sade (1740–1814) reasoned that since sexual deviation and criminal acts exist in nature, they are natural, so the infliction of pain to attain sexual pleasure is morally acceptable.

There are several additional reasons why adultery is wrong and is harmful to human beings but they will not be pursued here.

100. See <<http://www.greatapeproject.org/news.php>>

101. Peter Singer’s review, entitled “Heavy Petting,” of Midas Dekkers’ *Dearest Pet: On Bestiality* (London: Verso Routledge, 2000) can be found at <<http://www.nerve.com/opinions/singer/heavypetting>>

102. Paul Kurtz, “Naturalism and the Future,” *Free Inquiry* 28:1 (Dec./Jan. 2008): 4.

103. See “Recovering the Spiritual Sense of the Scriptures” an interview with Fr. Paul Quay, S.J. in *Touchstone* (1991). This can be found in the Touchstone Archives at: <<http://touchstonemag.com/archives/print.php>>

104. Dean Hamer, *The God Gene: How Faith is Hardwired into Our Genes* (New York: Doubleday, 2004).

105. Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2006); Daniel C. Dennett, *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon* (New York: Penguin, 2007); Christopher Hitchens, *God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (New York: Twelve Books Hachette, 2007); Sam Harris, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror and the Future of Reason*, (New York: Norton, 2005); Victor J. Stenger, *God: The Failed Hypothesis, How Science Shows that God Does Not Exist* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2007). For the Brights, see their website: <<http://www.the-brights.net>>

106. Phillip E. Johnson, “Prime Removers,” *Touchstone* 20:2 (March 2007):12.

107. Peter Kreeft and Ronald K. Tacelli, *Handbook of Christian Apologetics* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994).

108. Sidney Hook, “Naturalism and Democracy” in *Naturalism and the Human Spirit* 40–41.

109. *Ibid.*, 42–3

110. *Ibid.*, 46

111. See *Science and Ethics* by Bernard E. Rollin (New York: Cambridge University Press 2006), especially chapters 1, 2, 9, and 10.

112. Arthur Danto, “Naturalism” in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Edited by Paul Edwards (New York: Macmillan and Free Press, 1967), 5 & 6: 448–9.

113. *Ibid.*

114. David Papineau, “Naturalism” published Feb. 22, 2007, in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy online.

115. *Ibid.*

116. Robert C. Koons, “The Incompatibility of Naturalism and Scientific Realism” in *Naturalism: A Critical Analysis*, 49–62. Henceforth all extracts will be referenced with page numbers in parentheses for Koons and subsequent authors.

117. *Naturalism Defeated? Essays on Plantinga’s Evolutionary Argument Against Naturalism*. Edited by James Beilby. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), vii.

118. *Ibid.*, viii.

119. *Taking Darwin Seriously* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 1998), 296.

120. *Ibid.*, 297.

121. *Ibid.*

122. Barry Stroud, “The Charm of Naturalism” in *Naturalism in Question*.

123. As reported in the article “Atheists attempting a show of strength” by Jacqueline L. Salmon. *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (Sunday Sept.23, 2007): A9.

124. John E. Hare, “Naturalism and Morality” in *Naturalism: A Critical Analysis*, Craig and Moreland eds., 189–211.

125. Richard Foley, “What Am I to Believe?” in *Naturalism: A Critical Appraisal*, Wagner and Warner eds., 147–162.

126. From the introduction by Wagner and Warner summarizing Foley’s argument, 16.

NATURALISM AND THE LAST JUDGMENT

127. John Dupre, "The Miracle of Monism" in *Naturalism in Question*.
128. Jack Raso, "Mystical Medical Alternativism," *Skeptical Inquirer* 15:5 (Sept.–Oct. 1995): 33.
129. Thomas Nagel, *The Last Word* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 130.
130. Ibid.
131. See "Naturalism and Morality" by John E. Hare in *Naturalism: A Critical Analysis*, especially page 199 and the endnote on Campbell.
132. Clifford's "The Ethics of Belief" and James' "The Will to Believe" have been reproduced many times. Both can be found in *Philosophy of Religion: Selected Readings*, third edition. Edited by Michael Peterson, William Hasker, Bruce Reichenbach, and David Basinger (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 104–117.
133. *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, edited by David McLellan (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 69.
134. Norman Davies, *Europe: A History* (New York: Harper, 1996), Appendix III, 1329.
135. See Stephane Courtois et al *The Black Book of Communism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).
136. See Sidney Hook's essay "Naturalism and Democracy" in *Naturalism and the Human Spirit*, 40–64.
137. *Reason in the Balance: The Case Against Naturalism in Science, Law, and Education* by Phillip E. Johnson (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995).
138. Benjamin Wiker, *Moral Darwinism*, 256, 261–65.
139. Dinesh D'Souza, *What's So Great About Christianity?* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 2007), chapter nineteen, 213–224.
140. Sidney Hook, "Naturalism and Democracy" in *Naturalism and the Human Spirit*, 44.
141. Ibid.
142. See for example *God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* by Christopher Hitchens, 32–34.
143. Again, see D'Souza, *What's So Great about Christianity?*, chapter eighteen.
144. The speaker was Ronald N. Giere, and the person who suggested that the east Germans could teach us a few lessons was Prof. Laura Purdy of Wells College (Friday, Sept. 21, 2007, 9:00 A.M. session).
145. See David Papineau's claim to the contrary regarding naturalism; here I take "un-argued" to mean beyond the scope of reason, not a commitment that has not been at all reflected upon
146. Christina Hoff Summers "Philosophers Against the Family" in *Virtue and Vice in Everyday Life*. Edited by Christina Hoff Summers and Fred Sommers (New York: Harcourt, 1985), 804–829.
147. Claude-Adrien Helvétius *A Treatise on Man*, 1772,
148. See, for example, Mary Midgley's *Evolution as a Religion* (New York: Methuen, 1985), and her *Science as Salvation: A Modern Myth and its Meaning* (New York: Routledge, 1992).
149. Or the idolization of nature and the merely natural self.
150. See James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, fourthed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 59–86.

151. Ronald N. Giere, "Naturalism and Secularism." Paper presented at *The Future of Naturalism* conference, Friday, Sept. 21, 2007.

152. Randall Dipert, "Naturalism's Unfinished Project: Making Philosophy and Philosophers More Than Superficially Scientific." Paper presented at *The Future of Naturalism* conference, Friday, Sept. 21, 2007.

153. Nicholas Rescher, "The Future of Naturalism." Paper presented at *The Future of Naturalism* conference, Friday, Sept. 21, 2007.

154. Paul Kurtz, "'Yes', to Naturalism, Secularism, and Humanism," *Free Inquiry*, 27, no.3 (April/May 2007): 7.

155. See the work done by Philip Jenkins and the book *The Desecularization of the World*, Peter L. Berger ed., (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans and Ethics and Public Policy Center), 1999.

156. See *The Secular Revolution: Power, Interests, and Conflict in the Secularization of American Public Life* Christian Smith ed., (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003).

157. Author's notes from the first Prometheus Prize lecture given by Philip Kitcher, entitled "Darwin and Democracy" Friday, December 29, 2006, American Philosophical Association meetings in Washington, DC.

158. Sir Alister Hardy, *The Spiritual Nature of Man* (Oxford: The Religious Experience Research Centre, 1979) and David Hay, *Something There* (Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 2006).

159. See David Hay, *Something There*, 76–89, 113–4.

160. Edward Hoffman, *Visions of Innocence: Spiritual and Inspirational Experiences of Childhood* (Boston: Shambhala, 1992).

161. Martin E.P. Seligman, *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment* (New York: Free Press, 2002); see especially chapters 8 and 9.

162. Lorraine Johnston, *Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma: Making Sense of Diagnosis, Treatment and Options*, (Sebastopol: CA, O'Reilly, 1999), 423–4.

163. Vera P. Glenn, *A Dove At The Window* (Rochester, MI: Fountain Publishing, 1999).

164. Sidney Hook, "Naturalism and Democracy" in *Naturalism and the Human Spirit*, 46.

165. Prof. Laura Purdy, "What Religious Ethics Can Tell Us about Sex." Paper presented at *The Future of Naturalism* conference, Thursday, Sept. 20, 2007.

166. See *God and Nature: Historical Essays on the Encounter between Christianity and Science*. Edited by David C. Lindberg and Ronald L. Numbers (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986). *Putting It All Together: Seven Patterns for Relating Science and the Christian Faith* by Richard H. Bube (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1995), is also useful.

167. "Proposal to Authorize Pursuit of Grant Money from Templeton" in *Proceedings and Addresses of The American Philosophical Association*, No. 5, Vol. 81, May 2008, 61–2. The proposal contains the following quotations from a letter written by Professor Phillip Clayton: "The agenda of religious studies or theology no longer dominates the Templeton Foundation. . . . Senior Vice President, Charles Harper, a planetary scientist from Harvard, . . . saw the dead end that JTF was heading into and has dramatically switched directions."

168. Huston Smith, *Beyond the Postmodern Mind*, revised third ed. (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 2003), 189.

169. For an example of what appears to be this kind of naturalist, view the websites for the British biologist Richard Dawkins: www.richarddawkins.net and www.evolvefish.com.

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