



What is Good in Naturalism?

<https://fermisocietyofphilosophy.wordpress.com/>

philosophysociety@fnal.gov

<https://www.meetup.com/Fermi-Society-of-Philosophy>

burov@fnal.gov

What is Naturalism?

1. “The term “naturalism” has no very precise meaning in contemporary philosophy.” (SEP, “Naturalism”)
2. Ontological Naturalism: “The view that there is no supernatural; nature encompasses everything and everything can be studied scientifically. Philosophy and science are studying the same things.” (Jim Hylén)
3. My definition of the (ontological) Naturalism = Materialism:

The primary substance is almost nothing: primary matter, which changes according to a mindless, reasonless, lifeless necessity and chance.

Mindless necessity somehow transforms into mindful: mathematically elegant and anthropic laws.

Life somehow emerges from matter fully because of laws and chance.

Mind (thinking, conscious, reasoning substance) somehow emerges from life fully because of laws and chance.

There is no mind and no life except emergent ones.

So, there is no supreme mind(s), no immaterial spirits, no God.

Naturalism can be described as a worldview with a sequence of **groundless, reasonless** emergence of something out of something lower and simpler, due to chance; so its cosmogenesis can be called **chaosogenesis**.

Theism is an opposition to Naturalism

Theism is the opposite of Naturalism.

Naturalistic cosmogenesis is a sequence of emergences of something out of something smaller, poorer, simpler, lower. It is a groundless emergence of more and more clever, sophisticated levels of Being.

The groundlessness means that the core of rationality, the PSR is violated.

Theistic cosmogenesis is opposite; based on a grounded descent of the richest, through emanation, birth, creation or fabrication:

The theistic primary substance, the ground of everything existent is the richest essence: the eternal totality of All Good, which is Supreme God. The world comes out as a result of Its descent, through one or many steps.

Matter, life and thinking beings are created by the Creator God, which is either an aspect of Supreme God or a Secondary God. The Creator is responsible for everything in the universe, except what relates to our free will.

The Creator relates to us (and maybe other thinking beings) as our loving father, helping us grow in more similarity to Him. Pain and suffering are necessary for our growth in this world and beyond.

The purpose of our life is to increase communion with Him. Thus, theistic Being is a loop.

Why it is unreasonable to assume the primacy of matter:

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Why Naturalism Is Unreasonable at Each Point

1. **Nature is contingent and very sophisticated, so it cannot explain itself.** To take it as self-explaining is absurd. A higher level, a reason for the very sophisticated natural world is required, which is the ultimate Ground or sufficient reason or Terminus of everything. **The Terminus can only be the totality of goodness**, or the Good per se (Being, One, Substance, Natura Naturans, Absolute, God). This classical line of thought repeats again and again, since it cannot be reasonably avoided.
2. **The laws of nature are mathematically elegant**, based on simple principles of symmetry and invariance, universal, exact, pedagogical, astonishing and anthropic, all of which is required for them to be dramatically discoverable. It is absurd to assume this as self-explanatory or an accident.
3. **Living beings are so sophisticated, diverse and beautiful**, that it is absurd to assume it happened by chance, even if the universe were infinite. “Darwinism is a triumph of ideology over common sense” (T. Nagel)
4. **The scale of human thought is truly cosmic** (45 orders of magnitude with up to 12 orders of accuracy). It is ridiculous to explain that by chance and banality of “fittest survive”.
5. A belief that ability to think is due to a chance and physical laws is incompatible with trust in reason, at least beyond basic needs of life. **Naturalism undermines itself, like Epimenides paradox of the liar.**

Why Naturalism Is Fundamentally Evil

Naturalism leads to nihilism or moral relativism, since nature never tells what is obligatory and meaningful. Science does not possess an obligatory power.

Of course, it does not mean that each Naturalist is nihilist. Some of naturalists are really noble people. However, they are such not due but contrary to their Naturalist views.

Moral life requires the ability to sacrifice natural interests of myself, my family, my friends and relatives for justice, for the sake of strangers. Moral relativism discourages that.

As a result, nihilism, if dominated, leads to Hobbesian war of all against all, war of clans, or a cruel tyranny; nothing else is possible. People of nihilistic societies do not trust each other, such societies are doomed to the Hobbesian swamp.

Naturalistic–mechanistic Marxism, Social–Darwinist Nazism, nihilistic Russia are examples. As the trend of a religious decline continues in the Western countries, more such examples are to be expected.

It does not mean, that religion domination necessarily leads to prosperity, of course. Any religion may degrade to hypocrisy; its absolutization may lead to tyranny and religious wars.

However, this means only that theistic religions may lead to social disasters. Certainly, not all religious traditions are equally good. Each religion needs to be improved, and some do.

On the contrary, Naturalism leads to the disasters by its very essence.

Why Naturalism Is Fundamentally Depressive: Art

There are a lot of beautiful effects and ideas in Natural sciences.

By no means they should be assigned to Naturalism, however. Among Founding Fathers of Physics, from Plato to, say, Heisenberg, there were no naturalists at all.

Great religions always were and still are sources of powerful artistic inspirations.

Impressive temples, great music, paintings, sculpture, poetry, prose, philosophy and theology are all fruits of religious inspirations.

Naturalism is not new; it was known at least from the classical Antiquity.

Where are great naturalistic architecture, music,..., philosophy,... etc? There are none; they never exist.

No surprise: the teaching itself is anti-inspirational, it is depressive. It reduces all the great, sacred, inspirational to the lowest thinkable essence: mindless, meaningless, senseless, poor and abysmal.

What could be worse and more repulsive than this alleged origin of everything, proclaimed by Naturalism?

What sort of inspiration could grow from such a root, where the Spirit itself is fundamentally humiliated?

Why Naturalism Is Fundamentally Depressive: Life


Recent studies of Naturalism' numerous depressive psychological effects can be found in

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 *MIND Guest Blog*

To Feel Meaningful Is To Feel Immortal

Imagine when our ancestors first started to look up at the stars and question their place in the universe. Why are we here? Are we alone? What happens to us when we die?

By Clay Routledge on November 3, 2014

<https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/mind-guest-blog/to-feel-meaningful-is-to-feel-immortal/>

What do Naturalists Answer

1. We do not know why the laws are what they are. Maybe, String Theory or some other theory will explain in 1000 years (S. Carroll, “poetic naturalist”) .
2. We do not know why and how life appeared and know very little why and how it evolved. Maybe, an infinite multiverse is an explanation. Come after 1000 years, and we discuss it again.
3. We believe that people are good or will be good enough, ethical enough, without God. In any case, we cannot believe in God purely on the ethical basis.
4. We cannot believe in God because of abundant meaningless suffering.
5. We do not believe in God because we believe in science. God does not explain the world either.
6. We do not believe in God because of the regression problem (who created God?).
7. I cannot believe in God, because I hate this idea. I do not want God to exist. (T. Nagel, “The Last Word”)

Specific comments to Jim's talk

1. "...Gods, dualism, etc. would all be fine if there were evidence for them, and not contradictions produced by them. But observations seem pretty consistent with a natural world."

Scientific observations per se tell nothing about Theism vs Naturalism. The problem is at the higher level of meaning and sufficient reason. At the higher level, Naturalism is fully reasonless, depressing and morally evil.

2. "...your philosophy should take into account progress in the physical understanding of the world and not be in conflict with observations."

Exactly. And here is a point where Naturalism demonstrates total failure.

3. "...Descartes declared that God would not lie... I don't have that faith... I assume the world is ordered because I see it is ordered."

This faith is a foundation of theoretical science. Without it, theoretical science is meaningless and valueless. Were the ultimate order deceitful or accidental, there would be no value in the fundamental science per se.

4. "Bible is not divine revelation, based on understanding of stars etc.:"

First, this is unrelated to the problem Theism vs Naturalism. Second, as an unrelated anti-bible statement, this is a logical fallacy, a *straw-man argument*.

Specific comments to Jim Hylén talk (2)

5. “Mind/body dualism – probably not... the limits we have on their [unknown forces] possible interaction strengths rule them out as having sufficient interaction with our brains to have anything to do with thinking.”

It's just wrong. A possibility of free will without any violation of the physical laws was opened by the quantum indeterminism. Also, the essence of life remains totally unknown. Elan vital is excluded by Naturalism, not by science.

The Choice

Neither Naturalism, nor Theism suggests an explanation of the World. It's even hard to imagine how such explanations could be possible, except in very general and symbolic terms.

Within each of them, there are many unknown, but possibly knowable issues.

However, the most fundamental issues are scientifically unknowable, in principle, in each of them.

The main difference relates to these fundamental unknowables.

For Theism, they constitute reason and mystery, intrinsic value of meaningful ethical life and cosmic cognition. For Naturalism, they constitute the absurd and Nihilism.

Mystery encourages and elevates our reason and spirit.

The absurd does the opposite: it discourages and devaluates them.

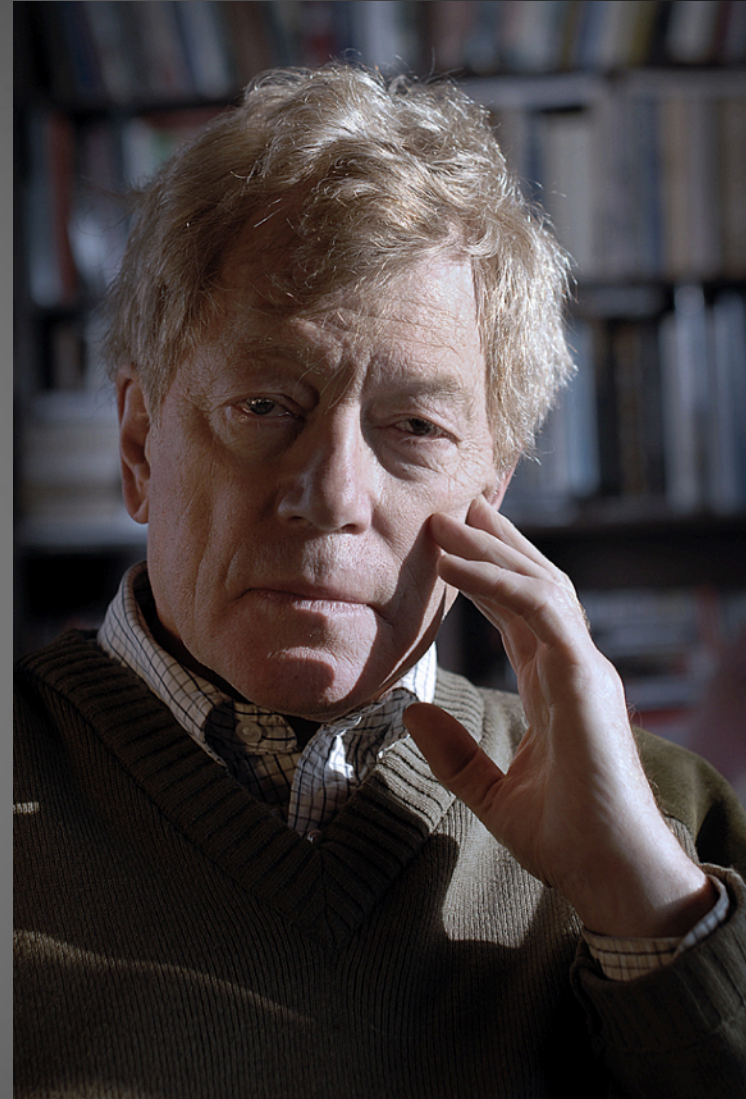
Still, some people choose the absurd, evil and depressive. Why? Thomas Nagel gave his answer, which he sees as the core and fundamental one. Other reasons could be:

an absolutization of science, a riot against degraded religion, reaction to abuse in forms of religion, a teenage impulse to freedom, possibly drawn out, a delusion or misunderstanding, or, worse, it may be driven by inner evil or shadow, typically under a mask. Nihilism opens the gates of hell; there is something in us wanting it.

Roger Scruton (1944–2020)

“In the religions that are familiar to us, the idea of grace is of fundamental importance. The term (Latin *gratia*) translates a variety of words in Hebrew, Greek, Arabic and Sanskrit, but all our sacred texts seem to point in the same direction, affirming that God’s relation to the world as a whole, and to each of us in particular, is one of giving... The idea that the world is sustained by gift is second nature to religious people, who believe that they should be givers in their turn, if they are to receive the gift on which they depend for their salvation... The Eucharist commemorates God’s supreme gift, which is the gift of himself – his own descent into the world of suffering and guilt, in order to show through his example that there is a way out of conflict and resentment – a way to restore through grace the givenness of the world.”

“We should not be surprised, therefore, if God is so rarely encountered now. The consumer culture is one without sacrifices; easy entertainment distracts us from our *metaphysical loneliness*. The rearranging of the world as an object of appetite obscures its meaning as a gift. The defacing of eros and the loss of rites of passage eliminate the old conception of human life as an adventure within the community and an offering to others. It is inevitable, therefore, that moments of sacred awe should be rare among us. And it is surely this, rather than the arguments of the atheists, that has led to the decline of religion.” (Face of God, 2012)



Many Thanks!