

Naturalism

First Matters

Main Proposition: Nothing exists outside the material, mechanical, natural order.

Cause: Deism is the isthmus between Christian Theism and Naturalism. Once on the downhill road of Deism, Naturalism is the inevitable next stop. If Deism's god is not active in our cosmos, then who is to say that "god" exists at all?

What are the Elements of a Naturalistic Worldview?

1. Metaphysics:

- There is nothing beyond the physical world. Matter is all there *is*, and all there ever *has been* or *will be*.
- In Christian Theism and Deism, God is the most basic reality, and all else comes from Him. In Naturalism, there is nothing outside of the material world upholding matter, there is only matter existing eternally.
- Something cannot come from nothing, therefore if there is not creator of matter, then matter must exist eternally.
 - ⊗ Think of the properties of the number '0'.

2. Physics:

- Matter is the basis for the physical world, and all that is, is a modification of the most basic matter into different forms.
- Because we live in a cosmos that is wholly made of matter, and there is nothing outside of matter, we have again a Closed System of cause and effect.
 - ⊗ Therefore, the outcome of the cosmos is determined by an infinite regress of causes.
 - ⊗ Therefore, we (as parts of the cosmos - complex machines) cannot step outside the natural order to do anything apart from an immediate cause.
- For a Naturalist, the ideas of 'mind' and 'heart' cannot be separated from matter. When we think and feel, we see nothing more than the *matter* of the brain working together with the *matter* of the chemicals its secretes.
 - ⊗ Therefore, 'thought' and 'feeling' are also solely subject to cause and effect of the closed system.

3. Anthropology:

- Human beings are complex machines, simply more intricate than an animal.
- There is no God, therefore there is no sin.
- Death is the extinction of personality and individuality. We simply cease to be.

4. Epistemology:

- We can only know what we experience through our senses.

5. Ethics:

- There is nothing 'right' and 'wrong' in itself, there are only manmade values placed on actions or inactions.
- There can be no true 'values' for the Naturalist - is cannot be made into ought.

6. Teleology:

- History is linear, but there is no overarching purpose.

Effects of Naturalism

Deification of Science: Naturalism is seen as the result of scientific enquiry. Science is trusted for answers, even when those answers are absurd.

Where Do We See Naturalism?

Secular Humanism: man is the center-piece (most evolved) of the cosmos.

Marxism: "Man is the supreme being for man." Therefore, "overthrow all those conditions in which man is an abased, enslaved, abandoned, contemptible being."

Why Should We Know About Naturalism?

Naturalism is the basis for most religious and anti-religious thought in the Western world today.

Naturalism in its most basic form is rare: but it is the springboard to nihilism, existentialism, and is the annoying uncle of postmodernism.