

Inklings Forever: Published Colloquium Proceedings 1997-2016

Volume 10 *A Collection of Essays Presented at the Tenth Frances White Ewbank Colloquium on C.S. Lewis & Friends*

Article 71

6-5-2016

Two Strategies for Defending Naturalism Against C. S. Lewis's and Victor Reppert's Argument From Reason

Louis J. Swingrover
Gonzaga University

Follow this and additional works at: https://pillars.taylor.edu/inklings_forever

 Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#), [History Commons](#), [Philosophy Commons](#), and the [Religion Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Swingrover, Louis J. (2016) "Two Strategies for Defending Naturalism Against C. S. Lewis's and Victor Reppert's Argument From Reason," *Inklings Forever: Published Colloquium Proceedings 1997-2016*: Vol. 10 , Article 71.

Available at: https://pillars.taylor.edu/inklings_forever/vol10/iss1/71

This Essay is brought to you for free and open access by the Center for the Study of C.S. Lewis & Friends at Pillars at Taylor University. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Inklings Forever: Published Colloquium Proceedings 1997-2016* by an authorized editor of Pillars at Taylor University. For more information, please contact pillars@taylor.edu.

Two Strategies for Defending Naturalism Against C. S. Lewis's and Victor Reppert's Argument From Reason

by Louis J. Swingrover

Louis J. Swingrover is currently completing his M.A. in philosophy from Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington, after which he will be pursuing doctoral work. His research interests lie in philosophy of religion and philosophy of science.

Just what positions or actions the Argument From Reason (AFR) justifies one to adopt or perform remains hotly disputed. In this paper I introduce the argument and note some concerns, using the second edition of Lewis's *Miracles* and Victor Reppert's development in *C. S. Lewis's Dangerous Idea*. I then sketch out two strategies by which naturalists might be able to defend their position. In the first strategy Naturalism is assumed for the sake of argument and a dilemma is posed, neither horn of which favors Supernaturalism. In the second strategy proponents of the AFR are accused of committing the genetic fallacy. I consider whether Lewis's argument might dodge this accusation if it is read as a *de jure* challenge to Naturalism. I draw on Plantinga's early account of warrant and put his rebuttal to Freud and Marx in *Warranted Christian Belief* to work against the AFR. After these two strategies are introduced I conclude that while the AFR does not defeat Naturalism *simpliciter*, it calls attention to the deep rift between natural and supernatural worldviews and sheds light on the supernatural assumptions that underlie much of Western thought.

1. INTRODUCTION

The earliest piece of philosophical writing ever published by Elizabeth ("G. E. M.") Anscombe was her critical response to C. S. Lewis's argument that Naturalism is self-contradictory. Lewis's argument was originally published in the third chapter of the first edition of *Miracles*, in 1947. After his scholarly interaction with Anscombe at the Oxford Socratic club on February 2nd, 1948, Lewis invested time into revising his material. He then downgraded his charge against Naturalism from "self-contradictory," indicating that he appreciated the force of Anscombe's concerns.¹ According to the

1 Although he maintains that "...a strict *materialism* refutes itself. . ." (p. 314, emphasis mine).

post-Anscombe editions of *Miracles*, rather than revealing naturalism as a self-contradiction, reason is responsible for the “cardinal difficulty” facing the naturalist.

Reppert’s discussion of the varieties of Materialism and Naturalism is quite helpful; he provides a tidy demarcation of the Naturalism in Lewis’s crosshairs: “Any genuinely naturalistic position requires that all instances of explanation in terms of reasons be further explained in terms of a nonpurposive substratum” (51). I will refer to Lewis’s and Reppert’s alternative metaphysics as “Supernaturalism” which posits the existence of fundamental (“ground floor”) explanations that are essentially purposive. The sense of “purposive” here is quite strong. Reppert, with help from Dennet, lays out a naturalistic account of “purpose” according to which the purpose of a heart is to pump blood. The heart is structured in a manner that pumps blood and it acquired that structure in order to pump blood. However such an account of purpose is ultimately grounded in terms of nonpurposive phenomena, namely blind evolutionary mechanisms. “This” explains Reppert “is the exact opposite of what we find in theism, where the apparently nonpurposive order of the physical world is explainable in terms of the intentions and purposes of God” (49).

Specifically what premises the Argument From Reason (AFR) reasons from and just what it attempts to establish require some exposition. I will treat each in turn.

1.1. LEWIS’S GROUNDS

Lewis’s text touches on several aspects of reason that pose problems for Naturalism. For my part I am able to discern three: the reality of the laws of logic, intentionality, and rational agency.

1.1.1. LOGICAL LAWS

According to Lewis, Naturalism has difficulty accounting for the laws of logic, to which acts of reason make recourse. If there is a way “things outside our own minds really ‘must’ be,” that is, if the laws of logic are real, then they cannot belong to nature (313). This is because such laws govern what “must be so always and in any possible world” and not just our own (321). Logic is a part of that *deeper magic* from before the dawn of time, for “from it the orderliness of Nature, which alone enables us to know her, is derived” (320). If the laws of logic are real, according to Lewis, they must be in an important sense

prior to, outside, or above nature. At issue here are the nature and reality of logical laws, which Lewis does not address at much depth. It is also far from clear that realism about logical laws could not be at home in a fundamentally nonpurposive (but not strictly materialistic) worldview.²

1.1.2. INTENTIONALITY

Next, Naturalism faces difficulty in dealing with intentionality, according to Lewis. He says “acts of thinking . . . are ‘about’ something other than themselves” (316). Yet essentially nonpurposive organizations of material building blocks do not seem able to bear the property of being about anything at all. Natural objects can certainly bear other kinds of properties and stand in other kinds of relations, from ‘distance from’ and ‘later than’ to ‘more numerous than’ and ‘greener than.’ However intentionality, or *aboutness*, is a kind-defining property that can only be borne by the thought of a rational agent.³

1.1.3. RATIONAL AGENCY

Finally, Naturalism has difficulty making room for rational agency. When an agent reasons, according to Lewis, the agent freely adopts a conclusion on the basis of the apprehension of its logical grounding. However the naturalist must view every event in the universe, including every belief and every behavior, as the inevitable⁴ result of non-conscious cause-effect relationships, which seems to exclude any reasoning on the part of a rational agent. He asks “even if grounds do exist, what exactly have they got to do with the actual

2 It is possible that the Naturalism Lewis has in mind here does not lend itself to being quite so precisely defined as “nonpurposive.” He may have been thinking somewhat *Medievally* here, subconsciously regarding ‘Nature’ as the concrete, sublunary sphere and what belongs to it or is associated with it.

3 One might wonder about utterances and inscriptions. Are *these very sentences* not about anything? First, if any such strings were to occur as the result of non-mental forces they would not be *about* anything. Second, even if some such strings are the deliberate results of rational agents, they may not really be about anything *in themselves*. They may be regarded as non-intentional instruments by which rational agents signal their thoughts to one another. Third, if these strings are in any way about anything in themselves their intentional states must be entirely dependent on, or derivative of, the intentional states of the rational agents who generate them.

4 or, at best, random

occurrence of the belief as a psychological event?” (315). The majority of Lewis’s text is spent on the nature of rational agency and the difficulty it poses for Naturalism.

This aspect of the argument is contingent on two controversial positions that proponents would do well to develop. If cause-effect explanations preclude rational explanations, then *ipso facto* rationality is conditioned by free will. Lewis seems to acknowledge this at times, e.g. when he writes that “the human mind . . . is set free, in the measure required, from the huge nexus of non-rational causation. . .” (*Miracles* 320). However not only is this libertarianism with respect to human freedom controversial in its own right, this account of rationality amounts to a variety of epistemic voluntarism, for it requires agents to freely adopt new beliefs to be rational. The nature and degree of the freedom one has over one’s own beliefs is not at all obvious. It should also be noted here that this view creates *prima facie* tension with Reppert’s argument from mental causation (discussed in § 1.2.2).

1.2. REPERT’S GROUNDS

Lewis provides Reppert with material for an array of subtly distinct arguments, of which the closest to Lewis’s argument from rational agency is an argument from the reliability of our cognitive faculties (discussed in § 1.2.5). Reppert begins by picking up and developing the argument from intentionality (74 ff.), and then lays out five additional arguments.

1.2.1. TRUTH STATES

Drawing additionally on Lewis, Reppert lays out an argument from truth (76 ff.). Just as it makes no sense to say of a natural organism that it is *about* something else, it makes no sense to say of any natural organism that it is *true of* something else. According to Reppert the reality of rational inference implies the existence of truth states, which he takes to be inconsistent with Naturalism.

1.2.2. MENTAL CAUSATION

Next Reppert lays out an argument from the reality of the mental causation operant in rational inference. When a rational inference is made, an agent considers and accepts one premise, and then another, and then adopts a conclusion as a result of the previous mental states. Not only that, but one “mental event must cause another mental event

in virtue of the propositional content of those events” (78 ff.). For Reppert to be consistent with Lewis, the sense of causation intended here must not be deterministic; if it were then by Lewis’s standards the move from one mental event to the next would not be rational. However if a person achieves insight that permits the deliberate movement from one mental state to the next, then inference can be both Lewis-rational and Naturalism-inconsistent.

Note however that this account of inference limits the usefulness of the AFR. As an example, it would be inconsistent with epiphenomenalism. According to the epiphenomenalist, mental states are sufficiently and exclusively determined by physical states and, more relevantly, never the other way around. This would mean that mental states would not have causal access to one another the way they would on the Lewisian/Reppertian account of inference. Convinced epiphenomenalists will therefore have to look elsewhere for arguments against Naturalism.

1.2.3. PSYCHOLOGICAL RELEVANCE OF LOGICAL LAWS

Reppert then lays out an argument from the psychological relevance of the laws of logic (81 ff.). Not only is their existence inconsistent with Naturalism, as discussed above, but the act of rational inference requires that logical laws be psychologically relevant. In order to come to a conclusion from the premises that logically imply it a rational agent must make conscious recourse to the applicable laws. This activity is inconsistent with Naturalism, according to Reppert, because on Naturalism insight into the laws of logic would require the brain to stand in physical relations to the laws of logic, which are not physical.⁵

1.2.4. UNITY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

After this Reppert lays out an argument from the unity and endurance of consciousness through rational inference (82 ff.). To make an inference one must be aware of each of the premises and their logical relations and then proceed to draw a conclusion from them. This requires that there be some one thing with continuity

5 This argument is reminiscent of the mind/body problem consistently raised in objection to Interactionist Dualism. Interactionists propounding this argument must therefore explain why relations between non-physical and physical things are a problem in one case but not the other.

of consciousness, a “metaphysical unit, not merely a functional unit deemed a ‘system’ by an arbitrary act of the mind,” for which Goetz (1999) argues neuroscientists would not seek if it were not for our first-person experience of ourselves.

1.2.5. RELIABILITY OF RATIONAL FACULTIES

Finally, Reppert lays out an argument from the surprising reliability of our rational faculties. Drawing on Plantinga and Nagel, he argues that if Naturalism were true then our rational faculties would not likely be reliable “indicators of the nonapparent character of the world” (pp. 84 ff.). He then argues that our faculties are reliable and therefore Naturalism is false by *modus tollens*.⁶ This argument could be symbolized in the following way. Let N = Naturalism and R = Our rational faculties reliably reveal the nonapparent features of the world.

1. $N \rightarrow \neg R$
2. R
3. $\neg N$

The plausibility with which one imbues the first premise should depend on how convinced one is that natural-evolutionary mechanisms do not promote the formation of true beliefs⁷. If one establishes Naturalism with a high degree of certainty and one is convinced of the sufficient reliability of our⁸ rational faculties one might *modus ponens* one’s way to the conclusion that natural mechanisms must in fact promote (or at least result in) as much. This could be accomplished by showing the survival and reproductive advantages of true beliefs; or by showing that the reliability of our cognitive faculties are “accidental” byproducts of the promotion of traits that confer survival and reproductive advantages, e.g. Gould and Lewontin’s case for biological “spandrels.” Rebutting such objections requires one to shoulder quite a heavy burden: to prove that natural mechanisms cannot or definitely do not in fact result in rational faculties that are reliable in the relevant sense.

A more troubling concern is that attempting to provide direct support for (2) might be futile. Would it be possible to establish that

6 In Reppert’s explanation, and even in his list of premises, he uses suitably modest terminology, while his conclusion is just that “Naturalism is false.”

7 Or true beliefs especially or specifically about the nonapparent character of the world, &c.

8 Or one’s own

our “bare metal” cognitive faculties are reliable? Any reasoning one employed would presume the reliability of such reasoning, which begs the question at hand. Reppert seems to take (2) as a presupposition of any putative inference so that any forward movement simply requires its acceptance. However even if (2) is presupposed by any act of inference, it is not obvious that this indicates its truth. What reasons can one give that real inferences are ever truly drawn? Lewis seems aware of this problem: “If . . . a proof that there are no proofs is nonsensical, so is a proof that there are proofs” (319).

(1) also provides the basis for a slightly different argument that Reppert never distinguishes from the one above, although the general idea is discussed. It is also found in passages from *Miracles* and Plantinga’s *Where the Conflict Lies*. All three argue that if our rational faculties are not reliable then we cannot assert the truth of anything we infer by them. Thus, if Naturalism is true, its truth may not be rationally asserted (by hypothetical syllogism). One might symbolize this in the following way, where A is a one-place predicate describing a proposition that can be asserted rationally:

$$4. N \rightarrow \neg R$$

$$5. \neg R \rightarrow \neg AN$$

$$6. N \rightarrow \neg AN$$

This will be treated in more detail later. For now it should be noted that the claim that if Naturalism is true then Naturalism cannot be rationally asserted ($N \rightarrow \neg AN$) is significantly weaker than the claim that Naturalism is false ($\neg N$).

1.3. THE AIM OF THE ARGUMENT

Throughout Lewis’s and Reppert’s works there are thus quite a number of grounds from which metaphysical, epistemological, and practical implications are drawn. What is it exactly that these arguments come to when all is said and done? The most ambitious conclusion a proponent of the AFR could hope to establish is that God exists, however Lewis and Reppert both seem aware that their treatment of reason is insufficient to establish theism. Only slightly less ambitious is this: Naturalism is false (a claim consistent with a range of non-theistic worldviews). Less ambitious still is the claim that Naturalism ought not be held (a kind of practical claim not tightly bound to the matter of whether Naturalism is true), followed by the claim that there are no epistemically respectable motivations for

holding Naturalism (a claim only weaker than “Naturalism ought not be held” because it is abstract rather than prescriptive and there might be wiggle room for practical reason in between the two). Just down from these are the claims that on Naturalism the truth of Naturalism cannot be rationally asserted (which leaves room for non-rational but somehow broadly epistemically respectable motivations for asserting or at least privately maintaining Naturalism) and that there cannot be rational arguments in support of Naturalism (which says nothing about whether Naturalism can be rationally held or asserted). Finally, the claims that theism can adequately ground the features of the reasoning process under consideration while Naturalism cannot (which leave open questions about the reality of these features) are among the least ambitious claims worth arguing for.

Lewis and Reppert both seem to view discourse on the various aspects of reason as a powerful contributor to a broader case for theism. Lewis, “when he was persuaded by the argument [from reason], accepted not theism (and certainly not Christianity) but rather absolute idealism,” which is why “we find Lewis making independent arguments against” non-theist worldviews once he accepts Christ (Reppert, 103). Reppert’s own development of the argument is itself aimed at providing motivations for “accepting a theistic understanding of the universe as opposed to a naturalistic one” although he grants that other “worldviews that make reason fundamental to what is real, such as idealism and pantheism” are not defeated by the argument (72). Nevertheless he notes that “for many people today, the live options are some form of traditional theism on the one hand and some form of naturalistic atheism on the other” (103).

2. DEFENSIVE STRATEGIES FOR NATURALISM

I will now turn to the task of sketching out two defensive strategies available to the naturalist.

2.1. STRATEGY #1: ASSUME NATURALISM AND POSE A DILEMMA

My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical, when he has used them—as steps—to climb up beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it.)

Proceedings from the Francis White Ewbank Colloquium

(Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*)

Can the AFR precipitate a crisis for one who maintains Naturalism? Lewis admits that Naturalism is not *impossible*. Not only did he change the title of chapter 3 and rework the text to avoid making an overbold claim, he includes clear admissions, e.g. “you can if you wish regard all human ideals as illusions . . . without running into self-contradiction and nonsense” (330). In this first strategy by which I attempt to show the theoretical defensibility of Naturalism I argue that Lewis’s “Dangerous Idea” does not deliver a motivation to the convinced naturalist to adopt a supernaturalist worldview. I do this by assuming Naturalism for the sake of argument and posing a dilemma of practical reason, neither horn of which favors Supernaturalism.

Giving Lewis and Reppert the benefit of the doubt, bracket any concerns with the AFR such as those raised in the introduction, and grant the Dangerous Idea. Let R' = ‘There is an adequate ground of the laws of logic, intentionality, truth states, mental causation, the psychological relevance of the laws of logic, and the unity and continuity of consciousness. Then let the Dangerous Idea (D) = $N \rightarrow \neg R'$ and the “Extended Idea” (E) be that if R' is false, then nothing can be rationally asserted. One could symbolize this as follows:

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 7. N | p |
| 8. $N \rightarrow \neg R'$ | D |
| 9. $\neg R' \rightarrow (\Box x)(\neg Ax)$ | E |
| 10. $N \rightarrow (\Box x)(\neg Ax)$ | 8, 9, HS |
| 11. $(\Box x)(\neg Ax)$ | 7, 10, MP |

In (7) Naturalism is adopted as a premise for the sake of argument.

Premise (8) symbolizes the Dangerous Idea, that if Naturalism is right then there cannot be any reason, that is, there are no adequate grounds for the laws of logic, intentionality, truth states, mental causation, the psychological relevance of the laws of logic, and the unity and continuity of consciousness.

Premise (9) symbolizes the Extended Idea, that if there is no reason, then for any proposition x , x cannot be asserted rationally.

(10) says that *if Naturalism is true* then for any proposition x , x cannot be asserted rationally. This follows from (8) and (9) by hypothetical syllogism.

(11) says (*without condition*) that for any proposition x , x cannot be asserted rationally. This follows from (7) and (10) by *modus ponens*.

Lewis and Reppert should agree up to this point and, as discussed earlier, want the naturalist to draw the conclusion that Naturalism cannot be rationally asserted:

12. $\neg AN$ 11, UI

This does indeed follow—from (11) by universal instantiation. However this formulation of the argument reveals its transcendental nature. One may also conclude:

13. $\neg AD$ 11, UI

This says that *Lewis's Dangerous Idea* cannot be rationally asserted. But if *D* cannot be rationally asserted, then nothing premised on it can be rationally asserted either. To proceed down steps (7) through (13) is to descend⁹ a Wittgensteinian ladder from Naturalism into Cognitive Nihilism.

This results in a condition in which reason might not have the character that one once thought. How now shall one proceed? Once one abandons the use of pure reason, one faces a dilemma of practical reason: Either one does not trust the deliverances of one's cognitive faculties or one does trust them, fully admitting that reason is an *ignis fatuus*.

If one grasps the first horn of the dilemma and does not trust the deliverances of one's cognitive faculties, then one is just as prohibited from allowing *D* or $\neg N$ to inform belief and behavior as one is *N* or any other proposition, resulting in Pyrrhonian Skepticism.

If instead one grasps the second horn of the dilemma and decides to trust the deliverances of one's cognitive faculties as a matter of practice, then one is just as free to assert *N* as one is $\neg N$ (granting that no assertions are, technically speaking, "rational"). It then becomes a matter of evaluating the evidence for and against each, and no unique motivation is delivered to the naturalist for abandoning Naturalism.

A possible way through the horns of the dilemma may be what Lewis (*Miracles*, 320) describes as a "humbler position," according to which one trusts the deliverances of one's cognitive faculties for practical purposes such as setting bones, building bridges, and launching Sputniks while distrusting them when it comes to speculative philosophy. He says that this position would keep one from affirming Naturalism, as it is "a prime specimen of that towering speculation, discovered from practice and going far beyond experience, which is now being condemned." At best, however, winning this case would mean that both Naturalism and Supernaturalism lie beyond what one

9 After all, one can hardly call this *ascending*.

could evaluate. This would result in naught but a Pyrrhic victory for the proponent of the AFR.

2.2. STRATEGY #2: ACCUSE PROPONENTS OF THE GENETIC FALLACY

Ceteris paribus any argument for $\neg N$ from the premise that if N then N is believed as a result of cause-effect relationships, is guilty of the genetic fallacy (albeit a subtle one). Anscombe (227) is onto this:

Whether [one's] conclusions are rational or irrational is settled by considering the chain of reasoning that [one] gives and whether [one's] conclusions follow from it. When we are giving a causal account of this thought, e.g. an account of the physiological processes which issue in the utterance of his reasoning, we are not considering his utterances from the point of view of evidence, reasoning, valid argument, truth, at all; we are considering them merely as events. Just because that is how we are considering them, our description has in itself no bearing on the question of 'valid', 'invalid', 'rational', 'irrational', and so on."

Lewis's and Reppert's work does not engage with any argument in favor of Naturalism: they neither reject a premise nor identify a fallacy. Do they commit the genetic fallacy? Perhaps, as suggested in § 1.3, rather than arguing for $\neg N$, the proponent of the AFR can argue that N ought not be believed. Plantinga (2000) calls this kind of objection a *de jure* challenge, as opposed to a *de facto* challenge. A *de jure* challenge claims that a belief is "is irrational or unreasonable or unjustified or in some other way properly subject to invidious epistemic criticism; it contrasts with the *de facto* challenge, according to which the belief in question is false" (p. 167). A *de jure* challenge goes beyond merely accusing a belief of not being rationally assertable. As discussed above, a belief admitted not to be rationally assertable might nevertheless be held on the basis of some other broadly epistemically or practically permissible grounds, or one might take an agnostic stance toward the proposition if one judges it to be a member a special class that lacks rational assertability. A *de jure* challenge to a position goes so far as to characterize it as having a special quality that commends the withholding or withdrawal of belief.

One can give a plausible reading of Lewis that takes him to be advancing a *de jure* challenge to Naturalism. This is perhaps easiest to do while reading chapter 5 of *Miracles*, where Lewis argues that there

is a broad consensus an “individual’s views are worthless if they can be fully accounted for by some non-moral and non-rational cause” (p. 331). He takes Freud, Marx, and basically everyone in the world to be at least implicitly committed to this principle, that a naturalistic account of a belief undermines its epistemic and practical credibility.

However Plantinga, while he does not name Lewis as his opponent, opposes this principle. He argues that “giving a naturalistic account of a kind of belief isn’t automatically a criticism of that kind of belief” (p. 145). He then provides more nuanced interpretations of Freud and Marx by which Freud (anticipated by Hume) accounts for religious belief by attributing it to a psychological coping mechanism present in human beings called “wish-fulfillment” whose proper function promotes human flourishing but not true belief; in fact it produces delusions. Marx’s account (anticipated by Rousseau) attributes it to a perverted social order that causes cognitive dysfunction.

Plantinga characterizes the “F&M” complaint as being concerned with what he calls “warrant,” which refers to that which differentiates true belief from knowledge, so that knowledge is warranted true belief. In this text Plantinga develops an account of warrant according to which one is warranted in believing something if it is the result of properly functioning faculties that are designed to produce true beliefs in the relevant context.

Freud characterizes religious belief as lacking warrant on the grounds that it is the result of properly functioning faculties that are not designed to promote true belief while Marx characterizes it as lacking warrant on the grounds that it is the result of improperly functioning faculties. Both criticisms take aim at specific conditions for warrant, and neither criticism springs from a naturalistic account of the beliefs they attack.

Lewis and Reppert, however, fail to show that belief in Naturalism lacks warrant. They do not even attempt to argue that belief in Naturalism is the result of improper function, faculties whose proper operation does not promote true belief, or faculties operating outside the domain within which they were designed to function. Any of those targets would have been fair game for a *de jure* challenge.

Nor would it be any easier of a case to make if they were to argue that belief in Naturalism lacks warrant on the grounds that *if* Naturalism were true then belief in it *would be* unwarranted. The proponent of such a case would be saddled with a similar burden: to establish that if Naturalism were true, then belief in Naturalism would be the result of improper function, faculties whose proper operation

does not promote true belief, or faculties operating outside the domain within which they were designed to function.

3. CONCLUSION

The two defensive strategies sketched above interrelate. For example if a proponent of the AFR were to counter the second strategy by showing that if Naturalism were true then belief in Naturalism would be unwarranted, this would not on its own commend one to withhold or withdraw belief in Naturalism. The first strategy would kick in: So long as Naturalism remains possible (as Lewis himself grants, post-Anscombe), no motivation is delivered to the Naturalist for abandoning Naturalism in favor of Supernaturalism; the Naturalist is simply left with Cognitive Nihilism at the level of pure reason, and a dichotomy of practical reason according to which cognitive faculties are simply either trusted or mistrusted.

Naturalism, however, is revealed by the AFR to come with a very high philosophical price tag. While the proponent of the AFR only needs one variant of the argument to succeed, the naturalist must eliminate or propose dim naturalistic shadows of every aspect of reason discussed by Lewis and Reppert. Furthermore these alternatives must each be held with a very high degree of credence to prevent the probability of Naturalism from dwindling.¹⁰ Perhaps Lewis is right to name reason as the “cardinal difficulty” facing the naturalist. To be sure, many of these individual projects have been undertaken, as Reppert acknowledges, with varying degrees of sophistication and success, in movements including atheistic Existentialism, Naturalized Epistemology, Perdurantism, Neurophilosophy, etc. However while some rare naturalists, such as Rosenberg, are well aware of the full scope of the impact of Naturalism on one’s worldview, most, including Dawkins, do not seem to realize it. Dawkins only comes to terms with the bleak implications of Naturalism in specific dialectical contexts where he finally admits, for example, there is “at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference” (p. 85). He otherwise writes and even quite vigorously argues as if reason is real,

10 Even if a naturalist is 90% certain that each of the eight arguments laid out in the introduction fail, the otherwise-unadjusted probability of Naturalism for that person dwindles to 43% (.9⁸). For the unadjusted probability of Naturalism to exceed that of Supernaturalism, an agent must be, on average, >91.70% certain that each of the variants of the AFR introduced fail (8 $\sqrt{.5}$).

INKLINGS FOREVER X

life has meaning, and objective moral values and duties really exist. Meanwhile the vast majority of Westerners seem to be (reflective or unreflective) realists at heart when it comes to logic and reason and morality and truth and souls and free will. Western legislation, customs, and languages all carry connotations only intuitively supportable by a supernaturalist foundation. The Argument From Reason is good for bringing this to light.

WORKS CITED

- Anscombe, G.E.M. *The Collected Philosophical Papers of G. E. M. Anscombe, Volume II: Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Mind*. Oxford, 1981.
- Dawkins, Richard. "God's Utility Function." *Scientific American*, November 1995.
- Dennet, Daniel. "Why the Law of Effect Will Not Go Away." *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior*, (2), 1976.
- Goetz, Stewart. "Review of Whatever Happened to the Soul, by Nancy Murphy et al.." *Philosophia Christi*, 1(2):127, 1999.
- Gould, Stephen J. and Richard C. Lewontin. "The Spandrels of San Marco and the Panglossian Paradigm: A Critique of the Adaptationist Programme." *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London, Series B*, 205(1161): 581–598, 1979.
- Lewis, C.S. *Christian Reflections*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1967.
- . *Miracles: A Preliminary Study*. London: HarperCollins, 2000. First published in 1978.
- Nagel, Thomas. *The Last Word*. Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Plantinga, Alvin. *Warrant and Proper Function*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- . *Warranted Christian Belief*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- . *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion, and Naturalism*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Reppert, Victor. *C. S. Lewis's Dangerous Idea: In Defense of the Argument from Reason*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2003.
- Rosenberg, Alex. *The Atheist's Guide to Reality*. New York: Norton, 2011.