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## John F. Haught, IS NATURE ENOUGH? MEANING AND TRUTH IN THE AGE OF SCIENCE

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*Is Nature Enough? Meaning and Truth in the Age of Science*, by John F. Haught. Cambridge University Press, 2006. 223 pages. \$70.00 (hardback), \$19.99 (paperback).

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In this book, John Haught argues that, due to the limitations of scientific explanation, no one science, nor all sciences taken as a whole, can give ultimate explanations of the natural world. Therefore, scientific naturalism is irrational in that it actually undermines the scientific enterprise. Much in these claims needs clarification. Haught understands naturalism to be a worldview consisting in the metaphysical beliefs that the natural world is all that exists, and so, nature is self-originating and purposeless. Furthermore, life and mind are unintended evolutionary accidents, and there is "no reasonable prospect for conscious human survival beyond death" (p. 9). In addition, *scientific* naturalism includes the epistemological beliefs that all causes are natural causes open in principle to scientific investigation, and that all features of life, including human life and production, can be ultimately explained in scientific (evolutionary) terms. Haught is clear to distinguish scientific naturalism from science, the latter being "a fruitful but self-limiting way of learning some things about the world" (p. 6).

Haught sees in scientific naturalism a kind of explanatory monism, which expresses the belief that all explanations of natural phenomena must be scientifically accessible, explanations cohering to and arising out of the scientific method. He rejects this view of explanation, arguing that a multi-layered account, or explanatory pluralism, is required for even approaching an "ultimate" explanation of any natural phenomena. His argument consists in discussing certain "easily accessible" features of the natural world (e.g., religion, intelligence, life, and emergence). He describes how these features would be explained from the perspective of scientific naturalism, and then raises doubts about whether such explanations "can ever lead to the fullest possible understanding of the particular phenomena in question" (p. 20).

Haught's argument for rejecting scientific naturalism focuses on two main ideas: that mentality (subjectivity) is a product of the natural world; and that the anticipatory nature of mind is not distinct from the natural world, but only the most prominent expression to date of the fundamental makeup of the cosmos itself. The link between mind and nature is the focal point of his critique. Since mind is an emergent part of the natural world, and so understanding mind allows us to more fully understand the nature of the universe, mind must be a primary focus of any "ultimate" understanding of nature. However, according to Haught, science cannot admit the study of the subjective mind. For this reason, a scientific approach to nature cannot *fully* explain any natural phenomenon. He argues, "What naturalism overlooks, . . . is that you can understand the universe in depth only if you take into account, starting with yourself, the subjective "insideness" of nature that science usually leaves out of consideration. A full understanding of the universe is inseparable from the project of coming to terms with your own critical intelligence" (p. 29).

Critical intelligence, an emergent property in nature, is the fundamental feature of subjectivity. Following the work of Bernard Lonergan, Haught lays out what he takes to be the "cognitional structure" of mind. Describing the cognitive make-up of the mind, Haught insists, "your mind *cannot help* passing through the three distinct but complementary acts: experience, understanding and judgment. This is because there are persistent and ineradicable imperatives at the foundation of your consciousness" (p. 33). The imperatives and the cognitional acts that go with them are the outflow of what Haught refers to as "the desire to know." The desire to know produces the imperatives to be attentive, intelligent, critical, and responsible. These imperatives give rise to the cognitional acts of experience, understanding, judgment, and decision, respectively.

The desire to know, according to Haught, is fundamentally anticipatory. Critical intelligence expresses the desire to attain truth. Following the imperatives of the mind, critical intelligence anticipates and searches for truth that is independent of the mind. It is following the imperatives of the mind that has given rise to scientific inquiry. But science alone cannot explain how, or why, these imperatives to attain truth emerged. Since scientific naturalism limits explanation to science alone, the scientific naturalist cannot explain why one should engage in science.

Haught argues that science (i.e., evolutionary theory) alone cannot explain critical intelligence because, on a naturalist account, the anticipatory desire to know truth cannot be adaptive. Evolutionary theory, as with all science, seeks to explain complex phenomena via simpler, antecedent phenomena. However, the anticipation of truth that is fundamental to critical intelligence is a forward-looking aspect of mind. Here, Haught must be differentiating an instrumental use of the ability to anticipate future occurrences based on the law-like regularities in nature, which clearly seems highly adaptive, from a desire to know the world as it actually exists. According to Haught, critical intelligence is only adaptive if there is an ultimate (final or everlasting) truth to which it is drawn. Since nature, being contingent, cannot give rise to ultimate truth, an evolutionary explanation of critical intelligence requires a wider perspective than scientific naturalism allows. Furthermore, since mind is a feature of the natural world, the anticipatory nature of mind must be attributed to all of nature. If this is the case, then scientific explanation in general requires a wider perspective than scientific naturalism allows. Therefore, scientific naturalism should be rejected.

Haught goes into much more detail in trying to defend, for example, his claim that mind is fundamentally anticipatory. He discusses, following Bergson, Polanyi, Whitehead, Lonergan and Teilhard, the need for a "richer empiricism" that would bring subjectivity under the purview of science. He considers important issues concerning the interaction of science and religion such as morality, suffering, and death. There is definitely much to commend in Haught's goals and his attempts to achieve those goals.

However, there are also some problematic positions taken. I would like to focus on two in the space I have left. First, while I agree with Haught's call for explanatory pluralism, there are problems with his depiction of how different levels of explanation are related. Haught uses an example of a pot of water boiling. To the question, "Why is the water boiling?"

one can respond by explaining how heat excites the molecules of the water, "thus causing a transition from a liquid to a gaseous state." Haught continues, "A second way to answer the question is to say the water is boiling 'because I turned on the gas burner.' And still a third response is to say that the water is boiling 'because I want tea'" (pp. 70–71). Haught claims that these different levels of explanation are, and must be, logically distinct explanations in that they "cannot be reduced to or mapped onto one another." He goes on: "Each [explanation] adds something important to an understanding of why the water is boiling, and it does so without conflicting or competing with the others" (p. 71). The first and third explanations of why the water is boiling are analogous to scientific and theological explanations, respectively, of such phenomena as why there is life, or why there exists anything at all. While science can give a thoroughgoing explanation of how life arose, there is room for a theological explanation alongside the scientific.

However, a problem arises here for Haught's account. We can give various accounts of why the water is boiling because we have access to a varied set of data. First, through science, we have access to how heat affects the movement of molecules. Second, through introspection, we have access to our desires and how they affect our actions. This is clearly disanalogous with explanations as to why there is life. While we have scientific access to the phenomenon of life, Haught gives no account of how we might have theological access to the phenomenon. It seems Haught is looking to science to guide theological explanation. He warns, "Theology must avoid any attempt to make room for divine action in yet uncharted scientific territory" (p. 70). However, if these two kinds of explanation are "logically distinct" in the way Haught argues, scientific explanation will give little guidance for developing theological explanation. Access to our own subjectivity also seems of little help unless we have some reason for equating, or claiming strong similarity between, our own and a divine mind. While the notion of layered explanation is important, Haught gives no account of what might justify explanations at a theological level.

This leads to the second problematic aspect of Haught's account that I would like to discuss. Since theological explanations are closer to ultimate explanations than any scientific claim can be, Haught argues that they are necessarily more vague and metaphorical. While this may very well be true, it does not follow thereby that theological explanations need not be grounded in clear, literal truths. To say "Jesus is the rock of my salvation," is clearly to make a metaphorical claim. Yet, this claim only has meaning if it can be conceptually linked to some literal understanding. Here, the claim has meaning given the understanding that solid rock is the best foundation on which to build any substantial structure. A link to literal understanding is missing in much of Haught's discussion.

This problem is most clearly seen in Haught's notion of anticipation. Haught describes the universe as anticipatory in nature. This is clearly metaphorical. How are we to understand this metaphor? Haught links the anticipatory nature of the cosmos to the anticipatory nature of critical intelligence. But, critical intelligence is an aspect of subjective consciousness. How is the universe anticipatory though non-conscious? Haught suggests this anticipation is seen in the universe's openness to future

possibilities. This openness is shown, for example, in the emergent properties of life and mind. But, anticipation as openness to possibilities is simply contingency. It seems Haught's point is simply that the universe has a contingent future. However, Haught seems to want much more conveyed by his notion of anticipation, but what exactly is unclear. For example, much of what Haught suggests has an Aristotelian flavor in each existing thing being drawn to imitate an unmoved mover. This is not the kind of theological explanation to which Haught ascribes. Yet, there seems little in his notion of anticipation that will help him distinguish his conclusions from such an explanation.

One way of understanding Haught's account is as a Plantingian critique of evolutionary naturalism from within a process theological approach. As such this is an interesting synthesis of divergent approaches to natural theology. Whether Haught has moved that critique forward is too complex an issue for me to treat in this review. The problems I have tried to identify in Haught's account stem from difficulties basic to the natural theological enterprise—from where do we obtain our theological concepts, how does our theological language contact our everyday experience. Haught's is an interesting attempt to deal with these difficulties.

*Atheism: A Very Short Introduction*, by Julian Baggini. Oxford University Press, 2004. Pp. 119. US \$9.95 (paperback).

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It is a short but very provocative book. The aim is to provide atheists with a thought organizer and a handy, quick explanation of their ideas for non-atheists. This ambitious goal of defending a whole worldview in such a short book is pursued in six chapters and a conclusion, in addition to some references and indications for further reading.

The first and the second chapters are the most important. Chapter one is dedicated to a clarification of what atheism is about. Baggini proposes that we overcome the prejudice not only that atheism is evil and threatening, but also that it is essentially a negative position, parasitic on postulations of supernatural/transcendental realities. According to him, there is a positive stance that better characterizes the view he is defending, which he calls 'atheist physicalism' (p. 6). According to atheist physicalism, only the natural world exists, and the stuff of the natural world is essentially physical, which means that spirits, souls, and ideas detached from physical apparatuses are not part of the world. Baggini stresses, however, that this position should not be taken as a form of eliminative materialism, according to which anything that is not physical or material does not exist. Although atheist physicalism postulates that there is only physical matter in the universe, it also claims that out of that sole substance come minds, beauty, love, and 'the full gamut of phenomena that gives richness to human life' (p. 6). In summary, atheism is a form of naturalism and physicalism rather than a negative view dedicated to denying religion.