

18. *The Quest for Certainty*. John Dewey. *The Later Works 1925-1953*. Vol. IV (Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1984), 199.
19. "The New Psychology." In: *John Dewey. The Early Works. 1882-1889* (Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1969), I, 54.
20. *Journal of Philosophy* XXI (1926), 253-258.
21. Quoted by Ernest Nagel in his review in *Journal of Philosophy* XXXIX (1942), 23.
22. *Experience and Nature*. In: *John Dewey. The Later Works, 1925-1953*. I (Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, Ill., 1981), 49-50; 63.
23. *Ibid.*, 179.
24. *A Pluralistic Universe*, 130. On this point cf. my article "The Reappearance of the Self in the Last Philosophy of William James," *The Philosophical Review* LXII (1953), 526-544.
25. *A. N. Whitehead, Anthology*. Selected by F. C. S. Northrop and Mason W. Gross (Mac Millan, 1961), 28.
26. "Space, Time and Relativity," in *Alfred North Whitehead. The Interpretation of Science*, ed. by A. H. Johnson (Bobbs-Merill, New York, 1961), 93.
27. H. Weyl, *Das Kontinuum und andere Monographien* (Zurich, 1917). Reprinted by Chelsea Press, New York, n.d.; see esp. Ch. II, Sec. 6 "Anschauliches und mathematisches Kontinuum." On this point cf. also my article "Two Types of Continuity," in *Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, XIII (1974), 361-375.
28. Cf. ref. in Note 26, p. 105.

The Naturalists and the Supernatural

William M. Shea

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In the current efforts to probe into the complex origins of a distinctive American philosophy, a great deal of attention has been paid to the so-called Golden Age of the Harvard Department, a period of intense metaphysical reflection in the decades between 1860-1930, and to the distinctive social and educational thought of the Chicago

School centered around Dewey and Mead. With Dewey's emigration to Columbia University in 1905 another chapter in this complex history was begun and continues to provide guidance for much contemporary reflection. The history of this third movement, perhaps best known as Columbia Naturalism, has as yet not received the detailed treatment of the two earlier movements and schools. While scholars like Andrew Reck (*The New American Philosophers*, 1968) have given a succinct account of some of the major doctrines of this still unfolding tradition, we are greatly indebted to William Shea for offering an expanded and highly detailed treatment of Columbia Naturalism particularly as it relates to problems in religion. In this important work, Shea analyzes the key texts in this tradition and regrounds them in terms of his own understanding of religious experience. His specific focus is on the thought of four major thinkers: Santayana (who antedates the Columbia School but who functions as a major stimulus), Woodbridge, Dewey, and Randall.

In defining naturalism, Shea emphasizes its rejection of traditional dualisms and its affirmation of the continuity between all phases of human experience. Comparing naturalism with his own understanding of Catholicism, Shea argues:

Dualism, although differently understood in each, is the enemy of both the Catholic and the naturalist understanding of human life. In both at their best are common refusals: religious life is not to be separated from ordinary human experience; history is not to be interpreted aside from its cosmic and natural context; there can be no barrier finally to our understanding of nature, of human experience, and of the divine. (p. xi)

The articulation of the divine natures must derive its overall direction and validation from the traits of lived experience. For Shea, naturalism remains bound to a careful delineation of the person/world transaction and thus is the perspective most open to the possibilities of grace within natural human experience.

More important to the social historian is the rise of a secular culture which does not seek or require theological grounding. Shea insists that the impulses leading to the development of Columbia Naturalism were impulses operating throughout early 20th century American culture. Both Fundamentalism and Modernism fought with naturalism for the soul of intellectual culture. The triumph of naturalism attests to its sturdy common sense realism and its sense of the devaluation of transcendence under the relentless pressures of secularity. All ultimates were relocated within the internal structures of finite human experience.

Unlike European positivism, which responded in its own way to the rise of secular culture, naturalism denied the reducibility of nature to matter. Shea states:

While they reject the positivist restriction of knowledge to the natural and human sciences, the naturalists also refuse to reduce complex phenomena to matter. They add an antireductionist motif to the antidualism. The naturalists maintain that the world is as it is met, with all its variety of beings. (p. 14)

This conceptual generosity to the sheer complexity and non-reducibility of the world enabled the naturalists to remain more faithful to non-scientific experience, especially the aesthetic. The emphasis on the ontological status of values, as themselves emergent from the person/world, transaction, saved naturalism from the impoverished emotivist theories developed by positivism. Shea argues throughout that the naturalists insisted on the intelligibility of all dimensions of nature and experience.

The genius of naturalism, according to Shea, lies in its ability to translate traditional theological categories into traits of the moral imagination. Any serious discussion of the divine natures must be converted into an analysis of the unifying drives of the imagination which refashions the material of experience into some sense of the whole. The notion of a supernatural realm, radically discontinuous

with all other complexes of nature, is rejected. Randall, writing in 1944, presents the anti-supernaturalist creed:

Thus naturalism finds itself in thoroughgoing opposition to all forms of thought which assert the existence of a supernatural or transcendent Realm of Being and make knowledge of that realm of fundamental importance to human living. There is no "realm" to which the methods for dealing with Nature cannot be extended.¹

While the naturalists developed a much broader conception of scientific method than their European counterparts, they insisted with them that no appeal to the mysterious or the "wholly other" could give us access to a reality beyond the natural orders. The historical and social persistence of such appeals could be better understood to represent refinements of moral and aesthetic imagination.

The 'realm' of the supernatural thus becomes the realm of the ideal. All ideals emerge out of the moral imagination as it struggles against the fragmented quality of empirical existence. The transactions constitutive of finite experience are not sufficiently unified to render the human process fully intelligible and meaningful. The function of a religious ideal is to provide some sense of social and personal wholeness at the fringes of experience. Shea argues that the naturalists came closest to an adequate understanding of religious ideals when they analyzed the traits of aesthetic experience. Santayana's understanding of the poetic imagination and its transformation of the material conditions of life is paralleled in Dewey's account of the qualitative configurations of consummated aesthetic experience. Shea places a great deal of emphasis on the power of qualities to control and unify indeterminate situations. He states:

Dewey writes as if quality were an actor: quality controls, dominates, integrates, and pervades a situation. A quality gives meaning to and binds together all the details of a situation; it is the clue to the meaning of what we

think about, and is the background to everything in the focus of consciousness. It allows us to attend to objects, enables us to think intelligently, and is the test of all propositions. A quality holds the work of art in an identifiable unity and controls the thinking of the artist. (p. 129)

The qualities which pervade an aesthetic experience or art work are powers which fulfill human experience. Such qualities are the internal goals of all experiences. In Dewey's account of the unique traits of aesthetic experience, he provides naturalism with some key conceptual tools needed for a judicious account of religious experience. The sense of the whole found in qualitative consummations is analogous to the wholeness experienced in religion.

Referring to the hermeneutic theories of Paul Ricoeur, Shea uses the distinction between a "hermeneutics of suspicion", which he sees operating in Dewey's psychological and moralistic devaluation of transcendence, and a "hermeneutics of restoration", which he sees operating in Santayana's naturalistic phenomenology of religious experience. The danger of a hermeneutics of suspicion is that it denudes transcendence of any power within lived experience and the complexes of the world. Dewey's frequent polemical broadsides against the positive value of natural and historical religions evidences a deeper insensitivity to some of the grace-filled traits of actual experience. On the other hand, the hermeneutics of restoration, also operating in a muted form in Woodbridge and Randall, provides us with a sensitive account of those originative and consummative experiences which punctuate and enliven the human process. Shea wishes to use Dewey's positive analyses of aesthetic experience, which are part of a hermeneutics of restoration, to correct and modify the hermeneutics of suspicion operating in a work like his *A Common Faith*.

For the naturalists, religious experience is intelligible, whether through translation into something else or in its own right, but may or may not be part of the realm of genuine knowledge. Shea gives a succinct statement of these distinctions:

In the course of the discussion, the naturalist argues that religious beliefs are noncognitive yet functionally valuable (Santayana, Woodbridge, Randall) or cognitive and mistaken and functionally objectionable (Dewey), and that Naturalism — the secular philosophical explication of our faith — is cognitively valid. Naturalism in its own view, is a correct secular conceptual restatement of the meaning of human experience and existence, and a cognitive representation of the images of religious practice. (p. 197)

While the naturalists disagree among themselves on the need for either a restoration or deconstruction of religious experience, they all struggle to account for those impulses within the human process which give some sense of the whole and of a meaning beyond the sum total of all finite transactions. They are consistent in rendering religious accounts in terms of aesthetic consummations.

Shea does not wish to leave us with a bare historical account of the naturalist understanding, or perhaps, misunderstanding, of the supernatural. In attempting to correct the naturalist bias toward aesthetic as opposed to intrinsic religious experience, he makes several recommendations for a reconstructed naturalism which would be of more value to the philosophical theologian.

Taking seriously what the naturalists have said about the experience of a "whole" within the human process, Shea argues:

The whole is immediately present to the human subject in anticipation, as its final cause, its lure, experienced but unknown, conscious but perhaps not attended to or articulated, felt but not yet thought. The whole is in this sense present in every part, the transcendent immanent in every object. . . . The self, world, and God are felt; they are immediately present to human intentional operations, but *heuristically* in the sense that all three are anticipated but unknown. (p. 221)

For Shea, feeling, not reducible to passing emotions, underlies those glimpses of the whole which lie just beyond the reach of our epistemic structures. Fundamental feeling (a *Grundgefühl*) opens up to us the dialectic of immanence and transcendence which operates within the heart of the finite objects of nature. This deeper sense of transcendence does not entail that a separate realm of Being has been posited by the moral imagination as its alleged ground or justification, but that a qualitative intensity and unity has been sensed within the orders of nature. The lure of this whole quickens and governs our fragmented and fitful experiences and gives them that depth which brings comfort and empowers action.

Shea's articulation of Columbia Naturalism, as a response to the growing secularization of culture, places its chief emphasis on its understanding of lived experience and its relation to a scientifically understood nature. His attempts to redeem the realm of the religious from both scientism and an aestheticising bias are to be commended. The future of naturalism depends to a large extent upon its ability to overcome its hostility to the intrinsic validity of religious experience. Shea correctly insists that grace is as much a fact of experience as are aesthetic consummations. Put in other terms, naturalism needs to deepen its phenomenological account of the traits of the human process so as to be fair to those experiences which lie outside of scientific forms of validation. Second generation naturalists such as Justus Buchler have made important strides in this direction. Shea's book must be read by anyone who wishes to understand those elements of naturalism which can help it to transcend some of its inherent limitations.

While Shea has added to our historical awareness of an important philosophic movement and has in addition made some crucial emendations to the naturalist account of experience, more needs to be done on the categorial level. It is one thing to broaden our understanding of the feeling for the whole within finite human experience, it is another to do the foundational metaphysical work which will enable us to provide an adequate doctrine of the divine natures. If naturalism is to carry the future it must find room in its frame-

work for that complex which is both in and beyond nature. The correlation between the natural and the supernatural is not only found within human experience but deep within the working of a nature which frequently shows traces of the divine. A more conceptually adequate naturalism will give these traces their proper categorial location.

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NOTE

1. Yervant H. Krikorian, ed., *Naturalism and the Human Spirit*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944), p. 358.

