



Naturalism (Interventions)

By Stewart Goetz, Charles Taliaferro

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This inaugural Interventions volume introduces readers to the dominant scientifically oriented worldview called naturalism. Stewart Goetz and Charles Taliaferro examine naturalism philosophically, evaluating its strengths and weaknesses. Whereas most other books on naturalism are written for professional philosophers alone, this one is aimed primarily at a college-educated audience interested in learning about this pervasive worldview.

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Naturalism (Interventions) By Stewart Goetz, Charles Taliaferro Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Goetz and Taliaferro make the most rigorous popularly accessible reply yet to the new atheists, as Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, and their lesser-known confreres have been dubbed. They critique philosophical naturalism, the bedrock of the new atheism, which holds that all phenomena can be accounted for by material physical processes, and also naturalist rejections of mind and the soul. They discriminate between strict and broad naturalisms. Strict naturalism rejects consciousness and so flies in the face of everyday notions of human decision making, motivation, and conceptualization, hence of behavioral ethics. Broad naturalism accepts consciousness, primarily out of lack of present understanding of it, assured that someday what consciousness is will be discovered. Neither naturalism admits teleological or purposive explanations, and strict naturalism tends to dispense with causality. Saving the naturalist response to theism and their counterresponse until the final chapter, Goetz and Taliaferro generally pursue rational analysis to show naturalism's failure to constitute an adequate account of human action—indeed, of action in general. Though demanding very focused reading, this is a sterling work of popular philosophy. --Ray Olson

Review

James K. A. Smith

— Calvin College

"This little gem of a book is a bold intervention in current discussions of naturalism that dominate philosophy and cognitive science. Unlike so many others, it is not just a book written to make theists comfortably smug in the face of naturalist critiques. It is unabashedly directed *to* naturalists as well and seeks to engage them on their turf and on their terms. It should be required reading not only for theologians who sense an obligation to engage the broader cultural milieu but also for naturalists willing to relinquish dogmatism and actually listen. The book well fulfills its function as a 'guide' — and more."

John F. Haught

— Georgetown University

"This compact study makes a significant contribution to the question of whether, in an age of science, reasonable people need to resign themselves to a naturalistic understanding of the world. Is the intellectually *respected* assumption that 'nature is all there is' intellectually *coherent*? In this 'intervention' Goetz and Taliaferro provide a readable, critical response to this important question."

John Milbank

— University of Nottingham

"Demonstrates with succinctness, brilliance, and precision that modern Anglo-Saxon naturalists are not rationalists but . . . are, in fact, the enemies of reason, which can only have any reality if the physical world has a spiritual, rational source."

Robert P. George

— Princeton University

"More than a few people seem to regard it as a mark of sophistication to hold that nothing exists that transcends the natural order. But, as Stewart Goetz and Charles Taliaferro show in their splendid new book, 'naturalism' is anything but a sophisticated view of reality. Under rigorous philosophical scrutiny, it isn't even a plausible one. . . . Patiently, gently, but in the end decisively, Goetz and Taliaferro demolish the dogmas of naturalism."

J. P. Moreland

— Talbot School of Theology, Biola University

"The clearest and most penetrating exposition and critique of naturalism anywhere. In accessible, nontechnical language and brevity of style, the authors have managed to identify important versions of naturalism and expose the Achilles' heel of each. In a day when theologians and Christian leaders feel bullied by scientific naturalism, this book is a must-read."

Paul Copan

— Palm Beach Atlantic University

"Taliaferro and Goetz have written a brilliant book! These veteran philosophers represent naturalism fairly, both allowing its spokespersons to speak for themselves and accurately interpreting their views. Yet the authors' criticisms of naturalism and their defense of theism are trenchant and insightful. Superbly done!"

Booklist

"A sterling work of popular philosophy . . . Goetz and Taliaferro make the most rigorous popularly accessible reply yet to the new atheists, as Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, and their lesser-known confreres have been dubbed."

Notre Dame Philosophical Review

"First-rate philosophical argumentation. . . . I would highly recommend the book to philosophy students at all levels. It would be an ideal text for a course in metaphysics or philosophy of mind or even philosophy of religion. For not only is it a very short book, which increases the likelihood that students would actually read it, but it is full of arguments that are rigorous, clear, and free of technical jargon. In addition to being accessible, these arguments provide excellent models for students to imitate in their own philosophical writing. I would also recommend the book to professional philosophers, especially to naturalists. For the book is an excellent reminder that, while naturalism is unquestioned by most philosophers, there remains serious and all too often unanswered opposition to it, and the problems it faces are deep and difficult."

Faith and Philosophy

"Goetz and Taliaferro have managed to explain and assess naturalism in a way that is at once concise, careful, and clear. I know of no other work engaging metaphysical naturalism that matches this one for these virtues. . . . The book is a model of careful philosophical argumentation and worldview assessment. It should appeal to a wide audience that includes professional philosophers, undergraduates and graduate students, seminarians, pastors, and interested laypersons. And it should serve as a fine text for a number of courses, including introduction to philosophy, philosophy of religion, and apologetics."

Mid-America Journal of Theology

"The best brief, yet comprehensive, treatment of naturalism to appear. . . . This book may be expected to enjoy a wide readership. For the minister, it will serve to expose the irrationality of naturalism in its attack on the supernaturalism that is foundational to our faith. For the educated layperson, particularly the scientist, it sets forth the contours of scientism . . . and serves to encourage the believing scientist to remember that what is foundational to science is not of the nature of science."

Reviews in Religion & Theology

"Stewart Goetz . . . and Charles Taliaferro [have] succeeded in presenting in [a] few pages such a complex question which involves all the details concerning our approach to knowledge. Given the contents of their issue, it is suitable for students who have already got a basic learning in this area of investigation. It would also be very good reading for those scientists who believe that nature, being all there is, has got into itself the reasons of its own existence."

Christian Research Journal

"Goetz and Taliaferro are qualified by an impressive record of relevant scholarly publications, but the book is concise and accessible to nonspecialists. . . . This book makes a strong, concise defense of theism and dualism and responds effectively to the best naturalist critics."

The Way

"Goetz and Taliaferro have achieved something quite exceptional. They have managed to establish a link between current philosophy of mind and philosophy of religion, a link made up of intricate arguments that they have made accessible and even enjoyable."

Dialog

"A short introduction to a critique of naturalism, one that is clear, concise, and sufficiently provocative to whet the appetite for further inquiry."

Religious Studies Review

"[An] excellent introductory volume to the landscape of the debate between naturalists and theists. Well-suited as an introductory text to the question of naturalism, Goetz and Taliaferro's volume is to be commended for its solid contribution to the Interventions series."

Scientific & Medical Network

"This closely argued book considers the promise and perils of contemporary naturalism, taking into account the various definitions both strict and broad. . . . A masterly analysis of the shortcomings of naturalism and indeed of materialism in general."

Perspectives on Science & Christian Faith

"Goetz and Taliaferro have produced an admirable book, one that can serve an important purpose. . . . The book is philosophically responsible, yet written in a readable and appealing style which should make it accessible to scientists, theologians, and students on a wide variety of levels."

About the Author

Stewart Goetz is professor of philosophy at Ursinus College, Collegeville, Pennsylvania. He has authored numerous scholarly articles for such publications as *Faith and Philosophy*, *American Philosophical Quarterly*, and *Mind*."

Charles Taliaferro is professor of philosophy at St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota. He is the author or editor of eight books, including *Evidence and Faith: Philosophy and Religion since the Seventeenth Century*."

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Gregory Proctor:

Here thing why this particular Naturalism (Interventions) are different and reliable to be yours. First of all studying a book is good however it depends in the content than it which is the content is as yummy as food or not. Naturalism (Interventions) giving you information deeper and in different ways, you can find any reserve out there but there is no reserve that similar with Naturalism (Interventions). It gives you thrill

reading journey, its open up your personal eyes about the thing which happened in the world which is might be can be happened around you. You can bring everywhere like in area, café, or even in your method home by train. When you are having difficulties in bringing the imprinted book maybe the form of Naturalism (Interventions) in e-book can be your choice.

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Jonathan Ouzts:

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