

The three
metaphysics views as
discussed in chapter
one of reuben abel's
book man...

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Metaphysical Naturalism

Reuben Abel discusses three views of metaphysics in the first chapter of *Man is the Measure*, exploring the definitions, strengths, and flaws found with each position. Of the three, I find naturalism most appealing because it reflects my definition of reality better than those of absolute idealism and mechanism. I also believe naturalism is the most defensible of the three due to its basis in the methods of science.

Metaphysical naturalism defines reality as the natural world which can be explained and explored by the methods of science, meaning there is nothing super or sub natural. This does not ignore intangible things such as thoughts and morals as Abel explains, " Thus, man's thoughts... has become self-conscious" (Abel 6). This is a significant distinction Abel makes, showing that consciousness is part of a naturalist reality as it can be observed by the sciences such as psychology and the biochemistry of the brain, while the soul would not be as it is a supernatural object that cannot be investigated using science. Another factor of naturalism is that, while it focuses on the physical world similar to materialism, it does not simplify nature to the motion of matter. This leads a more holistic view of the world as naturalism does not focus in on the particles and atoms but works to explain the natural phenomenon as a whole. Together these ideals of naturalism view reality that I believe is more appealing than those of absolute idealism or mechanism.

My view of reality is focused on the physical world and I believe the methods of science can be used to explain all that exists or happens in that world. The

metaphysical position that is furthest from my view is that of absolute idealism, which views the thoughts we use to understand the world as the true reality. One of the main reasons I disagree with idealism is, as Abel said, "The world.... in this ideal world" (Abel 7). In science, knowledge is gained through finding the relations of objects and events in the natural world, but I do not believe that makes it defined by its place in the world. Mechanism also investigates how parts are connected and views everything in the world as have a designated place because mechanism compares the world to a machine. I find that using comparisons to machines can definitely aid understanding of natural phenomena, but it has limitations. The theories of electromagnetism and gravity, for example, cannot be explained through mechanism and it is often asked if reducing the world down to a machine provides accurate knowledge as the world is far more complex than any machines today. These two positions also cannot account for anything new, while naturalism can through the methods of science, allowing for growth and expansion of the world. Due to the flaws of absolute idealism and mechanism, I find naturalism to be the most defensible metaphysical position.

Naturalism is based in science, which I believe is one of the strongest sources of knowledge. Science uses both sensory perception and reason to draw conclusions about the world and always works to reduce errors created by the differences individual perception. Methods are used so experiments can be repeated and performed by people around the world, not only to increase the validity of their results, but also so the knowledge gained from it can be shared with others. Science finds how the pieces of world are

connected, it finds causes and effects, and follows logic. I know it has flaws like the other two, such as the ambiguity in the definition of matter and, for some, the lack of belief in the supernatural makes naturalism less appealing. Being not a religious person means this does not deter me from naturalism, but further enforces how I view it as more defensible as it denies the existence of super-natural beings and events that cannot be explained or observed through science.

I believe that the appeal of a metaphysical position is connected to how defensible an individual views it as because one is more likely to support the views they can best support. The view that reality is the natural world ties to my own views better than the views of absolute idealism and mechanism. In addition, naturalism's deep base in science leads me to find it as the most appealing as well as the most defensible of the three Abel discusses.