

EDITORIAL

BEYOND SCIENCE

Science has performed many wonders. One only has to mention such expressions as “genetic code” or “moon rock” to evoke a significant degree of admiration. On the other hand, the general decline in respect for science and the increasing demand on the part of the general public for alternative explanations to the general theory of evolution suggest a general dissatisfaction with purely “scientific” explanations. This dissatisfaction may lie more with purely naturalistic explanations, which exclude the supernatural, than with the scientific process itself which, at least in the past, did not necessarily exclude the supernatural. The recent increase in literature emphasizing supernatural explanations further reflects this concern. Many individuals object to being reduced to simple machines and to having their origin explained as being the result of mere accidents of naturalistic phenomena.

Although millions of dollars have been spent developing and improving textbooks that promote evolution, many evolutionists attribute the lack of support for their theory of origins to poor salesmanship. The problem is probably not poor salesmanship but the poor explanatory value of a purely naturalistic approach. Many are loath to reject a reality beyond naturalism, and many feel that the solution to the major problems of society lie beyond the simple approach of a naturalistic technocracy.

The philosopher Alfred North Whitehead touched on the issue when he pointed out that scientists whose purpose is to show that they are purposeless form an interesting subject for study. Naturalism poses some serious questions. Can we reduce all of reality to that which we can understand? Can we with confidence say that there is nothing beyond naturalistic explanations? Normal caution would preclude such conclusions.

Without question, science is the best system devised by man for obtaining truth about nature, and in this area it has been eminently successful. Science often deals with very tangible aspects of reality. Because they are tangible, we have significant confidence in what is observed; but this confidence does not negate the existence of that which can be less easily known. We cannot use the readily demonstrable as an excuse for denying the existence of the less demonstrable.

Many areas of experience point to a reality beyond the purely naturalistic. The mention of words such as love, purpose, duty, concern, loyalty, morality, beauty, or religion suggests the inadequacies of pure naturalism. Free will, which most admit they possess to some degree, has

no place in naturalistic explanations that are based on simple cause and effect instead of free choice.

Educational institutions play a significant part in establishing the pattern of thought in society. The philosophy of most citizens is molded by these institutions; hence, what is taught in the classroom has broad consequences for humanity. As we look about, few can doubt that our morally sick society needs much improvement. Educational institutions would be of greater help if they would pay much more attention to those important values that are above the mundane. Instead of concentrating so much on naturalistic explanations, immediate economic advantages, or the preparation of super technicians, we should encourage the preparation of men and women with moral qualities that will contribute to the enhancement of integrity, concern for others, religion, and those characteristics that have broader and more enduring value. Such an approach need not compromise the excellence sought in academic pursuits. There need be no conflict between excellence and morality or between intellectual integrity and concern for our fellow man. However, such an approach will demand that we elevate our sights above the purely naturalistic.

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