LIBERAL NATURALISM WITH(OUT) REENCHANTMENT

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Abstract. There is a close conceptual relation between the notions of religious disenchantment and scientific naturalism. One way of resisting philosophical and cultural implications of the scientific image and the subsequent process of disenchantment can be found in attempts at sketching a reenchanted worldview. The main issue of accounts of reenchantment can be a rejection of scientific results in a way that flies in the face of good reason. Opposed to such reenchantment is scientific naturalism which implies an entirely disenchanted worldview. However, one of the main problems of scientific naturalism are placement problems. A reenchanted worldview does have the conceptual resources to avoid placement problems, yet seems to throw out the baby (a reasonable appeal to science as an authority) with the bathwater (placement problems). A dilemma results: the Scylla of an undesirable scientific naturalism and the Charybdis of a rampant, seemingly prescientific reenchanted worldview. In this article I argue that there is a safe middle passage between these two options, i.e. the recently proposed liberal naturalism which allows for a moderate normative reenchantment. Liberal naturalism lets us have it both ways: avoiding the placement problems while retaining a necessary and reasonable adherence to science, thereby avoiding both an all-too restrictive scientific naturalism.

I. INTRODUCTION

As common intellectual historiography goes, the development of modern science since the 17th century has led to the process Max Weber famously called "disenchantment". An enchanted worldview is one that includes sometimes so-called supernatural entities, forces, or phenomena inhabiting the world, as well as a sense of wonder and mystery accompanying the putative existence of such things. The most salient examples are magic (e.g. witchcraft, magical beings) and religious entities (e.g. God, angels, transubstantiation). The process of disenchantment results in the rejection of such entities. The notion of disenchantment is closely connected to scientific naturalism along with the scientific image of the world.[1] Debates regarding scientific naturalism also bring into focus the problem that the scientific image has difficulties to place things like normativity, rationality, or the mind in the world, resulting in what Price has called "placement problems".[2] Scientific naturalism and disenchantment are therefore two sides of the same coin, and an entirely disenchanted worldview is therefore a worldview without supernatural entities, magic, God, and the normative mind.

Besides such placement problems concerning ontological questions, scientific naturalism also features existential and ethical discontents which present reason for some to reject any kind of disenchanted worldview entailing these discontents. Despite these issues, forms of naturalism are arguably the ruling paradigm of mainstream academic philosophy. Analytic philosophers specifically have been surprisingly forward about this. Gillett and Loewer state that every "era has its *Weltanschauung* and in much contemporary philosophy the doctrine of 'physicalism' plays this role."[3] Similarly, Stoljar admits that "physicalism

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1   Wilfrid Sellars, "Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man." In *Science, Perception, and Reality* (Ridgeview Publishing, 1962), 1–40.

2   Huw Price, *Expressivism, Pragmatism, and Representationalism* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2013).

3   Carl Gillett & Barry Loewer, *Physicalism and its Discontents* (Cambridge Univ. Press), ix.

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is in many ways the Weltanschauung of modern analytic philosophy."[4] Jaegwon Kim states that if "contemporary analytic philosophy can be said to have a philosophical ideology, it is, unquestionably, naturalism."[5] Some have taken these discontents to warrant a reenchantment of the world and nature, a kind of reenchantment which avoids these discontents. I shall first introduce scientific naturalism and the corresponding notion of disenchantment in order to then explicate further the three different kinds of discontents. This is followed by the reconstruction of three different kinds of attempts to reenchant the world, two of which I shall argue against. Finally, I will introduce the notion of liberal naturalism as a middle ground between scientific naturalism and opposing untenable notions of reenchantment.

II. NATURALISM AND DISENCHANTMENT

The word "naturalism" denotes different philosophical views among both diachronic and synchronic axes, that is, the meaning of the term has changed over time and is currently being used in different ways by different people.[6] While there are a number of different conceptions of naturalism, the variety of naturalism relevant in this context is *scientific naturalism*.[7] Scientific naturalism can be characterized through the following theoretical commitments:[8]

> Ontological thesis: The only things that truly exist are the fundamental entities which are countenanced by the (methodologies and practices of the) natural sciences, most notably physics. [also called "ontological naturalism," akin to physicalism]

> Methodological thesis: Philosophy should cede authority to natural science whenever warranted. The remaining philosophical problems ought to be solved by emulating natural-scientific methodology. [also called "methodological naturalism"]

While it is contentious whether a scientific naturalist has to subscribe to both theses in order to count as a "true" naturalist, both of them are part of the larger scientific image such that those who are firmly rooted in the scientific image may find both of these theses appealing.

The basic idea of naturalism underwriting these aspects can be elaborated in the following manner: Naturalism is the view that the only things that fundamentally exist are natural objects. All other objects

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4   Daniel Stoljar, *Physicalism* (Routledge, 2010), 2.

5   Jaegwon Kim, "The American Origins of Philosophical Naturalism", *Journal of Philosophical Research* 28 (2003), 84. Some empirical evidence for this dominance is provided by David Chalmers and David Bourget. Their *philpapers* study asked 931 philosophers the decisive question: "naturalism or non-naturalism?"; the result: 49,8% endorsed naturalism, 25,8% denied, 24,3% specified "other" (David Chalmers and David Bourget, "The PhilPapers Surveys: Preliminary Survey results", http://philpapers.org/surveys/results.pl.). As both Richard Rorty and Brian Leiter despite their differences agree, a standoff between naturalism and (roughly Wittgensteinian) quietism is the "deepest and most intractable difference of opinion within contemporary Anglophone philosophy," with naturalism coming out as the clear winner of the dispute (Richard Rorty, "Naturalism and Quietism", in *Naturalism and Normativity*, ed. Mario De Caro and David Macarthur (Columbia Univ. Press, 2010), 57). An anonymous referee objects that the philpapers survey is not sufficient evidence to frame disenchantment as "successful" because it only demonstrates a 50% approval rate of naturalism and an according 50% approval rate of moral realism which is incompatible with naturalism. It is indeed difficult to conclusively demonstrate that a certain worldview is prevalent. The best explanation I have for this discrepancy is that moral realism is often motivated by theism which is traditionally strong in USA and Canada, not incidentally the intellectual centre of the West. It is perhaps safer to assume that the scientific image is vastly more prevalent and unchallenged in the rest of the Western world. Furthermore, the prevalence of naturalism as a worldview is not entirely dependent on self-identification. Even if belief in moral realism is still prevalent, the *wider culture* is absolutely naturalistic in a way that materializes itself in the role technology plays in our lives. I have further explored the prevalence of naturalism as a worldview in Thomas J. Spiegel, "Ist der Naturalismus eine Ideologie?", *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 68, no. 1 (2020).

6   Mario De Caro, "Two Forms of Non-Reductive Naturalism", *Phenomenology and Mind*, no. 7 (2014).

7   Also called "object naturalism" (Huw Price, *Expressivism, Pragmatism, and Representationalism* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2013)), "bald naturalism" (John McDowell, *Mind and World* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1996)), or "strict naturalism" (Barry Stroud, "The Charm of Naturalism", in *Naturalism in Question*, ed. Mario De Caro and David Macarthur (Harvard Univ. Press, 2004)).

8   In addition to these two commitments, some authors add an epistemological thesis according to which the only genuine knowledge is natural-scientific knowledge. This characterization is more or less synonymous with the idea of scientism. While not unrelated, scientism itself is not of pivotal interest for the current context.

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have to be suitably related to the fundamental, natural-scientific things. The key to understanding here is, of course, the conception of what is natural. The concept of nature in naturalism states that only those things are natural which figure in the vocabulary of the natural sciences, most fundamentally the vocabulary of contemporary physics, such that: something is natural if and only if it is countenanced by the natural sciences, most notably physics.

As stated, there is then a relation between scientific naturalism and the notion of disenchantment as the ontological thesis strongly restricts what can be thought to exist in the world. It is often not entirely clear what is meant by *disenchantment*. "Disenchantment" is indeed a "misleadingly omnibus" term.[9] What exactly are the entities that render a worldview enchanted? There are very broad notions of disenchantment which view it as "the progressive removal of mind, or spirit, from phenomenal appearances."[10] Such characterizations are at least misleading as the bulk of proponents in the philosophy of mind, while favouring a "disenchanted" worldview, would not view themselves as removing the mind, strictly speaking. Most commonly, however, disenchantment is taken to include the rejection of two different *supernatural* aspects.[11] Supernatural entities are those which are, by definition, outside of the realm of nature, whatever this may amount to.

Firstly, an enchanted world can be understood to include *magic as a supernatural phenomenon*. These supernatural entities can further be distinguished as magical (spells, witchcraft). Particularly the former sense is closely related to Weber's original term *Entzauberung*, "Zauber" meaning "magic", "spell":

> "[…] we are not ruled by mysterious, unpredictable forces, but that, on the contrary, we can in principle control everything by means of calculation. That in turn means the disenchantment of the world. Unlike the savage for whom such forces existed, we need no longer have recourse to magic in order to control the spirits or pray to them. Instead, technology and calculation achieve our ends."[12]

Weber's famous quote mainly features the idea of magic, in contrast to technology, as a feature of enchantment. The terms "Zauber" and "verzaubert" can, however, more broadly refer to a "sense of wonder", of a person being "enchanted" by something or someone. In this way an enchanted world (in the sense of "magical") begets enchanted people (with a corresponding sense of wonder about the world).

Secondly, an enchanted worldview can be understood to include transcendent religious entities (God, miracles, angels, or transubstantiation). This is perhaps most clear in Nietzsche's infamous dictum of the '*Death of God*', at least *ex negativo* (further discussed below).[13] This touches upon the process of secularization in the West which is arguably strongly connected to the rise of the scientific image, secularization thereby being coeval to the process of disenchantment.

Thirdly (and *pace* Taylor), given scientific naturalism's close relation to the idea of disenchantment we have to add another aspect: normativity, the mind, and abstract entities. What sets this third aspect aside is that it is not obviously supernatural while it does not fit the concept of nature implied by scientific naturalism. While most naturalists may not deem these phenomena outright supernatural, they may deem them "mysterious", "spooky", or "mystifying". This is because while the concept of nature operative in scientific naturalism does not directly countenance such entities because they are not countenanced by the natural sciences. Bilgrami concludes that there is therefore no place for practical agency as such in the scientific image.[14] Yet, naturalists (*pace* eliminativists like the Churchlands) will want to account for normativity and the mind somehow since norms and minds are indispensable phenomena. Hence, scientific naturalists try to reintegrate these phenomena into their conception of nature via naturalization projects. Naturalization projects aim to propose suitable metaphysical relations between such "mystify-

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9   Akeel Bilgrami, "The Political Possibilities of the Long Romantic Period", in *Secularism, Identity, and Enchantment*, ed. Akeel Bilgrami (Harvard Univ. Press, 2014), 191.

10   Morris Berman, *The Reenchantman of the World* (Cornell Univ. Press, 1981), 69.

11   Charles Taylor, "Can Secularism Travel?", in *Beyond the Secular West*, ed. Akeel Bilgrami (Columbia Univ. Press, 2016), 15f.

12   Max Weber, "Science as Vocation", in *The Vocation Lectures*, ed. Max Weber (Hackett Publishing, 2004), 12f.

13   Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* (Vintage Books, 1974), §125.

14   Bilgrami, "The Political Possibilities of the Long Romantic Period", 193.

ing" phenomena to entities which are countenanced by the natural sciences, reduction being the most prominent of these naturalization methods.

Therefore, I take the notion of disenchantment as underwritten by scientific naturalism to reject wholesale the following three aspects: *magic*, religious *transcendence*, and *normativity*.

III. THE DISCONTENTS OF DISENCHANTMENT

The disenchantment of the world entailed by the strict ontological thesis of scientific naturalism bring with them a number of discontents. These discontents can be identified among three axes: existential, ethical, and theoretical. For those critical of scientific naturalism, these discontents can serve as grounds for a *reductio* or modus tollens of at least one of the tenets of scientific naturalism. For naturalists themselves, these discontents can either present a challenge providing an affordance for more theory to meet them, or these discontents may merely amount to "collateral damage" in the quest for a fully disenchanted worldview. I will briefly demonstrate that while the naturalist can perhaps eschew the existential and the ethical discontents, the theoretical discontents offer grounds for the scientific naturalists themselves to change their position. Hence, while the ethical and existential discontents are of pivotal importance, scientific naturalism is best engaged from the theoretical discontents.

The *existential discontents* touch upon the idea that the universe as a whole and *a fortiori* human existence is inherently meaningless and without purpose. While this question has certainly been asked before the process of disenchantment, it has become much more pressing and pronounced ever since what Nietzsche described as the 'Death of God', i.e. the exile of God from the lifeworld. With purpose and meaning granted by God, the question of meaning does not have to arise in the first place. This is credited by, for example, the prevalence and increasing interest in existential questions in philosophy alone over the last century. In a now famous passage, Justin Weinberg captures the existential conundrum:

> "The more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it also seems pointless. […] The effort to understand the universe is one of the very few things that lifts human life a little above the level of farce, and gives it some of the grace of tragedy."[15]

In a naturalist worldview, the universe is inherently meaningless, and human life, including all unnecessary suffering, is a mere farcical coincidence. The traditional atheist existentialism of thinkers like Camus and Sartre can be understood as attempts to reinvigorate human life with meaning *within* the scientific image. Despite our best efforts, this question seems not to have lost its bite to those who feel the disenchantment worldview has robbed them of something indispensable. Scientific naturalists, like Weinberg and others, will not view this as grounds for reenchantment, but either as a challenge to construct accounts of meaning and purpose wholly dependent on human action alone (where meaning is merely a "projection" onto existence and the world), or as simply a deplorable, yet unchangeable consequence of the scientific image. And in fact, there are some such attempts. A prime example is Levine's *Darwin loves You*, a title that is quasi-religious not by accident. Levine develops the idea that the processes of secularization and rationalization do not necessarily entail a "disenchanting aridity."[16] Levine hopes that we can find in nature a certain "energy, diversity, beauty, intelligence, and sensibility"[17] — in short: the aforementioned sense of wonder as a certain experience of meaning — which would otherwise have fallen victim to the process of disenchantment. Levine is confident that there is therefore a way of imbuing the world with a sense of "wonder" which is "entirely secular,"[18]

The *ethical discontents* of a disenchanted world are those which primarily have to do with undesirable effects on our view of ourselves and the human life-world. Some authors take the issue of disenchantment as a cue for impassioned cultural criticism. Take Berman as an example:

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15 Steven Weinberg, *The First Three Minutes* (Fontana Books, 1993), 149.

16 George Levine, *Darwin Loves You: Natural Selection and the Re-enchantment of the World* (Princeton Univ. Press, 2006), XV.

17 Ibid.

18 Levine, *Darwin*, 248.

"Translated into everyday life, what does this disenchantment mean? […]. Jobs are stupefying, relationships vapid and transient, the arena of politics absurd. In the vacuum created by the collapse of traditional values, we have hysterical evangelical revivals, mass conversions to the Church of the Reverend Moon, and a general retreat into the oblivion provided by drugs, television, and tranquilizers. […] An age in which depression is a norm is a grim one indeed."[19]

I do not find that blanket critique alone directed at everyone and no-one does the interesting and nuanced phenomenon of disenchantment justice. There are, however, in fact, more concrete and subtle examples of the way a disenchanted worldview affects ethical conduct as such. The first, perhaps most obvious example is a supposed loss of respect for nature, the tendency to view nature as a mere retainer for resources.[20] Regarding the second example, Jürgen Habermas has repeatedly called attention to practical effects of the scientific image for (post-)modern society as a whole. Habermas views the pivotal danger of naturalization of the mind in that it threatens to de-socialize our self-understanding as humans.[21] The decisive aspect of these naturalization of the mind is that humans are viewed not as intrinsically normative beings, i.e. agents and persons, but are fundamentally, as it were, a mere, if highly complex, conglomerate of small particles. This view alone can potentially erode respect for human dignity and undermine the Kantian principle to never use human beings as means, but only as ends. While some authors claim that nature is disenchanted in the scientific image, Habermas broadens this idea to include that even *human* nature itself becomes disenchanted in a certain manner.

A second kind of ethical discontent is regarding questions about determinism and free will have seeped into public discourse of the last decades. The most influential and prominent iteration of this theme is presented in the relatively recent combination of cognitive neuroscience and judicial thought, sometimes called *neurolaw*, more specifically the parts of neurolaw that call for adjustment of the notion of culpability in legal practice based on results of neuropsychiatry and neuroscience.[22] Often inspired by the famous Libet experiments,[23] the central assertion of such proponents is that the progress of neuroscience demonstrates that no action is free, but determined through neural mechanisms.[24] The introspective experience of free will is, as it were, a mere illusion created by the nervous system. Therefore, the culturally and societally highly relevant belief in accountability as such ought to be jettisoned. For if the brain determines any action causally, then the person itself cannot be responsible for them (*pace* compatibilists). This argument has raised sceptical reactions in the context of critical neuroscience, of course.[25] Delving deeper into this debate is beyond the scope of the current project. What is important is that these bold statements of some prominent neuroscientists and philosophers who are firmly rooted in the scientific image seem to gain more widespread traction and recognition. The idea of people not being responsible for their actions to be codified in the penal system is perhaps one of the most salient effects of the disenchantment. In a disenchanted worldview, the will is not free, and agents are not responsible, as it were.

A proponent of naturalism will typically have at least two rebuttals to this perhaps undesirable consequence. Firstly, the naturalist will perhaps respond that such practical effects do not (or ought not) follow from the disenchantment of the world. This is perhaps because some form of compatibilism can

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19   Berman, *Reenchantment*, 17.

20   This is what Heidegger (Martin Heidegger, "The Question concerning Technology", in *The Question concerning Technology and other Essay*, ed. Martin Heidegger (Garland), 3–35) calls "Be-stand"; cf. also Alister McGrath, *The Reenchantment of Nature: The Denial of Religion and the Ecological Crisis* (The Crown Publishing Group, 2002) for a more streamlined version of this idea.

21   Jürgen Habermas, *Glauben und Wissen* (Suhrkamp, 2011), 17f.

22   Nicole Vincent, ed., *Neuroscience and Legal Responsibility* (Oxford Univ. Press, 2013).

23   Benjamin Libet, "Unconscious cerebral initiative and the role of conscious will in voluntary action", *The Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, no. 61 (2004).

24   Gerhard Roth, *The Long Evolution of Brains and Minds* (Springer, 2013); Gerhard Roth, "Verantwortung, Determinismus und Indeterminismus", in *Handbuch Verantwortung*, ed. Ludger Heidbrink (Springer, 2016).

25   Andrea Lavazza and Mario De Caro, "Not so Fast: On Some Bold Neuroscientific Claims Concerning Human Agency", *Neuroethics*, no. 3 (2010); Suparna Choudhury, Saskia Nagel, and Jan Slaby, "Critical Neuroscience: Linking Neuroscience and Society through Critical Practice", *BioSocieties*, no. 4 (2009); Jürgen Habermas, "Freiheit und Determinismus", *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, no. 52, 6 (2004).

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be embraced in order to retain the culpability of agents. Secondly, a scientific naturalist can, just like in the case of the existential discontent, shrug their shoulders and assure us that this is simply a bullet we have to bite.

The, third, theoretical discontents of disenchantment lie with the more technical, metaphysical question where certain seemingly indispensable phenomena fit the disenchanted worldview. While a naturalist can, on one hand, just reasonably deny the existence of magical entities, and, on the other hand, just go the atheist route and reject the existence of God, the phenomena of normativity and the mind are indispensable. Since scientific naturalism states that only those things fundamentally exist which are countenanced by the natural sciences, everything else stands in need of explanation: normativity and the mind, including subjectivity, experience, teleological notions and the like. Thus, the ontological tenet of scientific naturalism is so restrictive that it creates what has been called *placement problems* or *location problems*.[26] Naturalists typically aim to solve these placement problems through naturalization projects. Naturalization projects offer metaphysical accounts which either *reduce* normativity and the mind to entities countenanced by the natural sciences[27] or eliminate them. It is questionable, however, whether any naturalization project so far has been successful. One criterion for success in any intellectual discipline seems to be a sufficiently widespread acceptance of one's theory. As Putnam notes, however,

> "[the] trouble is that none of these ontological reductions [i.e. naturalization projects, TJS] gets *believed* by anyone except the proponent of the account and one or two of his friends and/or students."[28]

This statement is sardonic and harsh. Yet, it seems to put the finger on one of the main issue naturalization projects seem to incur. What is to be done then? Naturalists may be unmoved by the existential and ethical discontents of the disenchantment they embrace. They will most likely present these discontents just as bitter pills we have to swallow, or as problems which can somehow be overcome. Opposed to them, non-naturalists and even those without any stakes in that debate will instead argue that these discontents do warrant some form of reenchantment. To them, simply shrugging these discontents off by biting the bullet does not seem acceptable. The non-naturalists are, it seems, at least justified in a *prima facie* scepticism against scientific naturalism given these discontents. The problem can perhaps be formulated as a dilemma for naturalism: naturalism has difficulties wholeheartedly embracing the discontents of disenchantment, yet typically rejects the idea of reenchantment which could deal with such discontents.

IV. THREE KINDS OF REENCHANTMENT

The last few decades have seen a rise in proposals to "reenchant" the world in some sense in light of the discontents of the scientific image. We can distinguish three different kinds of reenchantment mirroring the three senses in which disenchantment has been construed: optimistic reenchantment as the notion of reintroducing spirits, ghost and magic, theological reenchantment as the reintroduction of genuine faith after the 'Death of God', and normative reenchantment as the reintroduction of values as genuine part of the inventory of the world. Common to all three kinds of reenchantment is that they are making ontological claims, each of them defying the ontological view of the scientific image as determined by scientific naturalism. In what follows, I shall briefly survey these notions of reenchantment and argue against optimistic and theological reenchantment as viable options, leaving normative reenchantment as a notion which can be palatable to the naturalistically minded philosopher and the proponent of reenchantment respectively. I shall first present optimistic and theological reenchantment, then present reasons against them, and finally construe the idea of normative reenchantment.

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26 Price, *Expressivism, Pragmatism, and Representationalism*; Frank Jackson, *From Metaphysics to Ethics* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1998).

27 Most notably, the so-called Canberra plan, cf. David Braddon-Mitchel and Robert Nola, eds., *Conceptual Analysis and Philosophical Naturalism* (MIT Press, 2008).

28 Hilary Putnam, "The Content and Appeal of 'Naturalism'", in *Naturalism in Question*, ed. Mario De Caro and David Macarthur (Harvard Univ. Press, 2004), 62.

Firstly, I use "optimistic reenchantment" as a label to group statements or attempts to the effect that our worldview can be reenchanted to include entities and phenomena which seem to be in direct and indubitable conflict with the natural sciences, i.e. the idea of magic, including ghosts, witchcraft and the like. This idea is rarely proposed under the term "Reenchantment," but usually in the guise of certain forms of cultural relativism which are more commonly found in certain strands of cultural studies and anthropology, associated with thinkers like Clifford Geertz. The doctrine itself is aptly expressed by Franz Boas, stating that the "data of ethnology prove that […] our knowledge [is] the result of the form of our social life and the history of the people to whom we belong."[29] Relativists of this kind will then typically assert that magical items (e.g. spirits) or practices (e.g. soothsaying) do actually exist and work just in case certain groups, tribes, or societies take those magical items to exist or practices to be genuinely efficacious, and that the spectating anthropologist does not have authority in rejecting these existence statements as invalid because the belief system of the anthropologist themselves is constituted relative to their cultural background.

Secondly, I use the term "theological reenchantment" to denote the idea that our worldview can be reenchanted to include certain transcendent notions, most notably the existence of God. What sets this kind of reenchantment apart from optimistic reenchantment is that the kind of evidence, if any, required is rather different. Whereas the idea of magic seems to be in direct contradiction to the findings of the natural sciences (and simple observation), the existence of God is certainly consistent with any and all theories of the natural because God as an object of inquiry is by definition beyond their purview. Natural sciences simply assume a methodological atheism, yet cannot make negative existential claims about the existence of God. In other words: While explanations in the natural sciences simply ought not to include reference to God or gods as an explanans, the sciences nevertheless by design do neither affirm nor reject the existence of God—the existence of God simply does not play a role in the sciences). Theological reenchantment can take the achievements and results of the natural sciences at face value and still assert, on top of that, the existence of God (and other transcendent entities) based on evidence which is non-scientific. Proponents of this view are represented in certain strands of theology, namely those who hold a conception of God as God-in-the-world.

Both optimistic and theological reenchantment have problems and may be unsuited to convince the scientific naturalist, or more broadly: they will leave those unimpressed who already favour a disenchanted worldview. The main reason is that the *a priori* existence constraint of scientific naturalism disallows the existence of both non-scientific entities (like magical practices) and the existence of transcendent beings (like God and angels). So the naturalist will just maintain this *a priori* existence constraint as a firm conviction while the proponent of reenchantment who takes the discontents of disenchantment seriously will just deny the *a priori* existence constraint of the ontological tenet. This leaves the naturalist and the proponent of reenchantment at a stand-off again, no yardage gained. In order to solve this stand-off I shall provide an argument here that does not directly rely on the ontological thesis of scientific naturalism. The argument first states with the help of a lesson from doxastic voluntarism that neither the naturalist nor the educated non-naturalist could reasonably believe in some form of optimistic reenchantment. Secondly, the argument sides with the naturalist in that theological reenchantment will be simply unconvincing to the scientific naturalist, come what may. Hence, if one wishes to convince the scientific naturalist—as a representative of the scientific image, if you will—that the discontents of disenchantment are worth engaging with, a third kind of reenchantment is needed.

The question whether either of those two forms of reenchantment is possible hinges on whether we can collectively—either as a group of individuals or as a whole—acquire the belief that certain forms of supernatural phenomena like magic or theological entities like God exist. This question is then closely related to the question of doxastic voluntarism. Doxastic voluntarism is the thesis that a thinker can acquire a certain belief just through the force of his or her will alone. If doxastic voluntarism is true, a thinker can just will to have a certain belief. Somewhat unfortunately, the debate about doxastic vol-

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29   Franz Boas, *Race, Language, and Culture* (Chicago Univ. Press, 1940), 636.

untarism paradigmatically features singular, somewhat pedestrian empirical belief, e.g. the beliefs like "Harvey Oswald killed John F. Kennedy". The question regarding forms of reenchantment is much more fundamental in that insofar as it pertains to metaphysical beliefs. A metaphysical position is about the (structure of the) world as a whole, not merely about a singular fact or proposition "within" the world. Changing a metaphysical belief can therefore have a much more grandiose effect on one's web of belief in contrast to changing a singular, empirical belief.

Two different kinds of doxastic voluntarism have to be distinguished: *direct doxastic voluntarism* (DDV) and *indirect doxastic voluntarism* (IDV). DDV states that thinkers have direct voluntary control at least over some of their beliefs, just like one can voluntarily imagine the smell of caramel or visualize the faces of one's parents. For example, being unsure whether I have turned off the stove, I can recall step by step how my morning went, reassuring myself that I did turn it off (as I do every morning), and thereby form the belief or conviction that my stove is turned off. IDV, on the other hand, states that thinkers have indirect control over their beliefs just in case they take an appropriate course of action. For example, according to IDV, I can will to form the belief that Tokyo is more beautiful than San Francisco by choosing to watch a host of relevant documentaries about those cities and evaluating the evidence presented to me.

First, regarding optimistic reenchantment one has to consider that there are in fact people in the Western world who believe in some forms of magic. Think, for example, of obscurantist anthroposophist or the sizable minority of people who believe in ghosts and haunted places. These special cases are not, however, the concern here. It is rather the question whether the average Western person who is not overly opposed to science can voluntaristically make themselves believe in magic and ghosts or the like.

This being clarified, can DDV underwrite optimistic reenchantment? It seems unlikely. Belief in magic is outside our voluntary control, we can entertain the idea of an enchanted world in that sense, but we cannot truly believe in it. Even if I want to believe with all my might, I simply cannot will myself to believe that, analogously, the sun revolves around the earth or that the world was created yesterday, just because I know the opposite to be true. Beliefs of this kind of fundamentality seem to be more or less impervious to my will because they qualify as hinge propositions of the kind described in Wittgenstein's *On Certainty*.[30] A further question is then whether IDV could underwrite optimistic reenchantment. Is it possible to undertake a course of action for a sceptic to convince himself or herself of the existence of magic or ghosts? There may, in fact, be measures to acquire this belief, most notably forms of brain washing and high doses of hallucinogenic drugs which permanently alter one's perception. If one really wants to (for whatever reasons) believe in ghosts, these are ways to actually make oneself *see* ghosts. However, these are irrational means of belief formation. While it is thereby possible to acquire this belief, one has acquired a belief that is false and irrational through measures that tend to form beliefs which are false and irrational. I have difficulties imagining innocuous ways of belief formation able to make a thinker acquire the belief in magic or ghosts. Hence, IDV, too, seems unable to underwrite a sense of optimistic reenchantment. Therefore, it seems unlikely that either DDV or IDV can account for optimistic reenchantment.

Second, the question regarding theological reenchantment in terms of doxastic voluntarism is much more difficult. The debates regarding religious beliefs, more specifically belief in God, are difficult, longstanding, and varied. The status of religion in the Western world the 21th century specifically is a difficult and contentious matter. Obviously, despite the tangible effects of disenchantment, belief in God, most notably the God of Christianity, is still wildly important to Western self-understanding. Yet, it is simultaneously not contentious to assert that belief in God does not have the same importance, force, and prevalence in the Western world it had, say, in the thirteenth century. The relevant question in the context of post-naturalist reenchantment is then whether we on, a societal level, could (re-)acquire belief in God (as *pars pro toto* for other theological entities). For the sake of simplicity, one can and should

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30 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Über Gewissheit* (Suhrkamp, 1984).

entertain this question on an individual level: is it possible for an atheist or agnostic individual to acquire belief in God through the force of will alone, either in terms of DDV or IDV?

The debate regarding direct doxastic voluntarism is crucial for religious matters. This question has long pedigree in the philosophy of religion, rooted in such works as James's *The Will to Believe* and Pascal's *Pensees*. What makes this question more difficult than the one about optimistic reenchantment is that it is *prima facie* not irrational to believe in God without empirical or *a priori* evidence, i.e. believing in God justified through faith alone (commonly called *fideism*). The major problem in this current context is that the question whether belief in God is underwritten by either DDV and IDV is too intricate, too controversial, and beyond the scope of this article. It would be at best intellectually dishonest to claim to be able to give an answer to this question that is either decisive or illuminating over and above what the historically grown dialectic on this point has to offer. Therefore, it is preferable to withhold judgement on this matter for now. This does, of course, not mean that theological enchantment is an untenable notion; it is just to say that this notion seems too controversial at this point. Therefore, neither optimistic nor theological reenchantment seem to present a palatable alternative to the scientific naturalist.

Having discounted optimistic and theological disenchantment, normative reenchantment seems to be a more plausible candidate. Normative reenchantment is the idea that normativity and the mind are irreducible phenomena which are not in need of further naturalist explanation or elimination. Calling this idea "normative reenchantment" is not unreasonable, yet perhaps somewhat misleading. Normative reenchantment as the idea that values are a part of the world (and not, say, our projections) is simply a form of normative or moral realism. This kind of realism holds that normative properties are a fundamental, genuine part of the world which are ontologically independent of non-normative, non-mental items; they are "out there" for us to discover. Accepting this kind of normative reenchantment is not truly to "enchant" the world again with some kind of pre-scientific spirituality or "wonder" as the other, less sober ideas of reenchantment would have us believe. It is instead simply to reject the ontological restrictions of scientific naturalism, yet not simultaneously rejecting (or "disrespecting") the advances of the natural sciences: one can hold that there are norms and values — facts about what is right or wrong — independent of us while still accepting the results of the natural sciences at face value. That is simply to say that natural sciences, however great their achievements are, do not determine the correct metaphysical picture of the world which, again, is simply a way of rejecting scientific naturalism.

V. NATURALISM WITH OR WITHOUT REENCHANTMENT? LIBERAL NATURALISM AS A MIDDLE GROUND

On the one hand, there is the scientific image and the corresponding thesis of scientific naturalism. On the other hand, we have the notions of reenchantment motivated by the existential, ethical, and theoretical discontents. At this point, it seems like we are at an impasse: having to choose either a kind of scientific naturalism or roll back scientific advancement in favour imbuing the world with some form of wonder, neither options being truly tenable. Most would be uneasy, or more likely: *unable*, to give up reasonable amount disenchantment altogether, yet still suffer these discontents. In this last section I propose that there is a sweet spot which allows us to have it all: a sufficient, minimal naturalism with a plausible form of reenchantment: *liberal naturalism*.[31]

Liberal naturalism is a recent reaction to the ontological and methodological 'strictness' of scientific naturalism. In a nutshell, liberal naturalists aim to make plausible the idea that phenomena like normativity or the mental, which are considered problematic by scientific naturalist standards, qualify as natural and hence unproblematic. As a means to this end, liberal naturalism aims to broaden the notion

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31   Furthermore, the recent trend of so-called Aristotelian naturalism (Martin Hähnel, ed., *Aristotelian Naturalism* (Springer)) is adjacent and congenial to what has been called liberal naturalism. It would be a genuine research desideratum to connect the recent trends of Aristotelian naturalism and liberal naturalism in a manner that demonstrates how much these different authors overlap, which is better left for a follow-up paper.

of what is natural to accommodate such seemingly problematic phenomena. The main idea of liberal naturalism is to simply broaden the extension of the concept of nature (or the property "natural") in order to include normativity and the human mind as genuine entities which are not in further need of naturalistic explanation.[32]

This idea, i.e. the concept of liberal naturalism, appears in different denotations throughout the last few decades: Peter Strawson's *soft naturalism*, Jennifer Hornsby's *naïve naturalism*, John McDowell's concept of *second nature*, Mario De Caro's *liberal naturalism*, Sebastian Gardner's *rich, non-reductive naturalism*, Stroud's *soft naturalism* (so called independently from Strawson), and David Macarthur's *humanized naturalism*.[33] I take these different phrasings to share (*cum grano salis*) the same content of liberal naturalism as I shall describe it here. Liberal naturalism is characterized by liberalized aspects in analogy to the strict aspects of scientific naturalism:[34]

> Liberalized ontological aspect: There are non-supernatural entities which are irreducible to and ontologically independent of entities which are solely explainable by natural science.

> Liberalized methodological aspect: There are issues of inquiry about which philosophy is not continuous with science.

These aspects are phrased very openly in order to allow for normativity and the human mind to figure as unproblematic, natural parts of the world not in need of further explanation by way of quasi-scientific theory. Liberal naturalism is thus the view that everything which is not supernatural is part of nature. Thus, the concept of nature includes but transcends the entities apt for causal explanation of the sciences. Liberal naturalism thereby includes into the concept of nature also norms, the mind, numbers, people, action, art, reasons, human history, and ordinary objects (the so-called middle-sized dry goods) which caused placement problems for scientific naturalism.[35]

Two things should be fairly obvious. First, liberal naturalism implies the idea of normative reenchantment; they are two sides of the same coin. Second, liberal naturalism does not suffer from the same theoretical discontents as scientific naturalism, i.e. placement problems. For if normative properties are viewed as part of nature, they do not have to be placed back "into" nature by means of some reductive effort.

Can this proposal please the two opposing parties, i.e. the scientific naturalist on the one hand and those who bemoan the disenchantment of the world? Perhaps it can. First of all, liberal naturalism allows a naturalistically minded philosopher to avoid the placement problems which is a serious advantage in its own right. More importantly however, liberal naturalism can appease the scientific naturalist because

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32 An anonymous referee has correctly pointed out that proponents of scientific naturalism will dig their heels in and simply reassert that the mind and normativity, if not naturalized, remain supernatural. It is, fortunately, not possible to provide a conclusive argument here for either side, but to motivate that liberal naturalism can be utilized as a 'tool' for sensible reenchantment. This points, however, to the deeper problem that the dispute between scientific naturalism and liberal naturalism can fruitfully be rephrased as a deep metaphysical disagreement about the concept of nature (cf. Chris Ranalli, "What is Deep Disagreement?", *Topoi* 40, no. 5 (2021)).

33 Peter Strawson, *Skepticism and Naturalism. Some Varieties* (Columbia Univ. Press, 1985); Jennifer Hornsby, *Simple-Mindedness: In Defense of Naïve Naturalism in the Philosophy of Mind* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1997); McDowell, *Mind and World*; Mario De Caro, "Varieties of Naturalism", in *The Waning of Materialism: New Essays on the Mind-body Problem*, ed. Robert C. Koons and George Bealer (Oxford Univ. Press, 2009); Mario De Caro, "Beyond Scientism", in *New Perspectives on Pragmatism and Analytic Philosophy*, ed. Rosa Calcaterra (Brill-Rodopi, 2011); Caro, "Two Forms of Non-Reductive Naturalism"; Sebastian Gardner, "The Limits of Naturalism and the Metaphysics of German Idealism", in *German Idealism: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Espen Hammer (Routledge, 2007); Stroud, "The Charm of Naturalism"; David Macarthur, "Naturalizing the Human or Humanizing Nature: Science, Nature and the Supernatural", *Erkenntnis*, no. 61 (2004); David Macarthur, "Liberal Naturalism and the Scientific Image of the World", *Inquiry*, no. 62 (5) (2018).

34 De Caro, "Two Forms", 23f.

35 The idea of liberal naturalism has been challenged by Ram Neta, "Review of M. De Caro and D. Macarthur, eds., Naturalism in Question", *Philosophical Review*, no. 116 (2007). A defense against Neta's charges is found in Mario De Caro and Alberto Voltolini, "Is Liberal Naturalism possible?", in *Naturalism and Normativity*, ed. Mario De Caro and David Macarthur (Columbia Univ. Press, 2010).

it allows him or her two retain a "science first" attitude because adopting liberal naturalism is still compatible with a minimal, yet very plausible methodological naturalism according to which wherever science and ordinary opinion overlap, science should be given the upper hand as the arbiter of what is true. While there may be some problematic cases, the advantages of such a minimal methodological kind of naturalism become clear when considering a paradigmatic example. Think, for example, of the trending anti-vaccination movement. Regarding the question whether vaccinations are efficacious and safe, it just seems that medical science has been the best available, while not infallible, way to answer this question. Some may ask why scientific inquiry trumps here the "intuition" or conviction of anti-vaccination advocates. One can perhaps only reply something mundane along the lines that medical science has proven to be the best way to find out about issues like these and trumps merely "personal" experience. It seems that hardly any more justification can or has to be given. In treating the relation of ordinary practice and science pragmatically like this, the minimal naturalist is "on board" with the sciences, yet does not need to commit to any strong views on the nature on reality, the nature of knowledge or the nature of philosophy which might incur difficult challenges like the placement problems. To be on board with the sciences, on does not have to commit to any *a priori* existence constraints.

Proponents of reenchantment are most likely harder to appease, unfortunately. To those who hope for optimistic reenchantment, a "merely" normative reenchantment of the world with values may not seem enough. It seems to be, however, the only kind of reenchantment one can reasonably hope for without avoiding a putative relapse into a pre-enlightenment worldview or pagan polytheism. For those advocating theological reenchantment, normative reenchantment may present a welcome, if already accepted idea. Note, however, that liberal naturalism is at least compatible with theological reenchantment (unlike scientific naturalism). Yet, liberal naturalism may not be strong enough for the theological reenchanter either. Both proponents of optimistic and theological reenchantment will find that the case for normative reenchantment positively relates to the ethical discontents, however. Consider again Habermas' worry that the disenchantment of the scientific image brings with it the problem of agents potentially not viewing themselves and others as inherently normative beings anymore but rather of complex conglomerates of small particles. Consider also the potential threat of neurolaw regarding the change of our ordinary idea of accountability as such. Both of these worries are attenuated when the normative reenchantment of liberal naturalism is adopted. This is because, in the first case, normative reenchantment would reinforce an understanding of human beings as genuinely, inherently normative persons. And in the second case, it seems that the notion of normative reenchantment makes space for and is an excellent fit with a libertarian conception of free will. I shall not argue further in-depth for these points, but shall leave it at these suggestions here.

I have suggested that normative reenchantment is the only kind of reenchantment we can reasonably hope for. Whether normative reenchantment is enchantment proper may be relative to one's further commitments. The scientific image alienates us from at least some aspects of the world, as the ethical and existential discontents stress. Ghosts, goblins, and magic (unfortunately?) do not exist, yet normativity and values are very real phenomena whose existence as something over and above our supposed mere "projections" we should at least entertain. Normative reenchantment thereby helps us at least to cope with the placement problems, allowing norms and values to be a genuine part of the world. In this sense, values come from with*out*, not from with*in*.

This leaves, however, the supposed lost sense of wonder, the loss of which some bemoan. The good news is that a normative reenchantment paints a picture of the universe which is less bleak than the one of the scientific image, thereby making room to at least develop an answer to the existential discontents. For if values are a genuine part of the world, then *meaning* in the normative sense (as, say, meaning of life) becomes a live option again even after the 'Death of God'. In other words, normative reenchantment makes space in which to develop systematic thought about life having meaning which is not merely subjective or otherwise simply "projected" onto existence. Perhaps this is sense of wonder enough.

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