

A DEFENSE OF ALVIN PLANTINGA'S  
EVOLUTIONARY ARGUMENT AGAINST NATURALISM

Troy M. Nunley

Dr. Jonathan Kvanvig, Dissertation Supervisor

ABSTRACT

Alvin Plantinga argues that naturalism it is irrational for a reflective person to hold to the doctrine of naturalism. If naturalism is true, some evolutionary doctrine must also be true and our evolutionary history must be accounted for in terms of only random mutation and natural selection. The probability of our being reliable cognitive agents given these origins is low or, at best, inscrutable. But it cannot reasonably be thought to be high. Consequently, the naturalist cannot reasonably hold to the belief that they are reliable cognitive agents. And since the reliability of their cognitive apparatus has been called into such grave question, naturalists are rationally bound to dismiss any belief accepted on the basis of trust in that apparatus. Specifically, to the extent that the naturalist is rational, they will give up their belief in naturalism.

In this dissertation, I explicate and defend Plantinga's attack on philosophical naturalism. My thesis is that it has survived all the current attacks available in the literature.