“the horrid doubt always arises whether the convictions of man’s mind, which has been developed from the mind of the lower animals, are of any value or at all trustworthy. Would any one trust in the vicitions of a monkey’s mind…”

Darwin, *Life and Letters*

Lewis quoted Haldane:

“If my mental processes are determined wholly by the motions of atoms in my brain, I have no reason to suppose that my beliefs are true…"
Plato

- Sensation of changing things does not yield genuine knowledge
- To be meaningful we need rational intuition of essences, Ideas or Forms: redness, beauty, justice
- World is rational; human mind is (partly) rational
- If we use our Reason, we can know the unchanging essence of the world

Descartes and Modern Philosophy

- We can doubt everything. What if an evil demon rather than God created us?
- What we think we know would be delusion
- Only what is “clear and distinct” to our minds—what resists all doubt—can be accepted as truth
- Proves God’s existence; now we can trust our minds
- “Even the rule I started with [about clarity and distinctness] can only be trusted after knowing God” (paraphrase) Cartesian circle
Kant: Priority of Epistemology over Metaphysics

- Mind is fine for math and science but inevitably tries to go further; e.g., what is the cause of everything
- Human mind cannot answer metaphysical questions
- Categories (e.g., space, time, cause) are necessary conditions of human experience
- About world in itself we can say nothing
- No objective knowledge of world in itself but intersubjective knowledge

Dewey on Darwin

- Up to Darwin: philosophy searched for unchanging essences: species, unchanging nature, end, goal
- Classic idea of species included PURPOSE
- Design argument shows intelligibility of nature and possibility of science
- "...absolute or cosmic character of this purposefulness" gave human moral and religious endeavors value
- Before Darwin final causes (purposes) expelled from physical sciences, but study of plant and animal life could still strengthen the design argument
- Darwin undercut all this; Angels and Insects

C.S. Lewis

- Can everything be explained by naturalism: materialistic determinism?
- Specifically is human knowing part of the natural world to be explained naturalistically?
- Thesis: naturalism undercuts the validity of human reasoning
Distinguish CAUSE of belief and JUSTIFICATION of belief

• Imagine I have belief “God exists”
• We can ask
  – What caused that belief
  – What are the grounds (justification) for the belief?
• Might the two come together?
  – Seeing “design” in mountain landscape → (causes) idea of God’s existence
  – The design in mountain landscape is the ground or justification for the belief in God’s existence

Causes of Belief Undercut Metaphysical Truth

• But this is unusual and unlikely
• Causes are events in the world, not grounds
• If the “designed landscape” is the justification of belief in God, it ALWAYS is, but causes are constantly changing
• More important, lots of things that are not “grounds” cause belief
  – Sociological, historical forces
  – Evolution and natural selection caused REASON itself to take a particular form
  – This form based on survival advantage, not metaphysical truth (p. 5)

Reason from God, not Nature

• So naturalism defeats itself: the very claim of “naturalism” is based on “reasoning” that cannot be trusted to yield truth
• Doesn’t same apply to theism? (p. 7)
• Lewis: no because theist doesn’t accept that reason is result of evolution.
• “Reason—the reason of God—is older than Nature, and from it the orderliness of Nature, which alone enables us to know her, is derived...the human mind in the act of knowing is illuminated by the Divine reason.”
Maleuvre, “Can We Believe Darwin?”

- Does Darwinism undercut its own authority?
- Darwin expressed the doubt himself: “the horrid doubt always arises whether the convictions of man’s mind, which has been developed from the mind of the lower animals, are of any value or at all trustworthy. Would any one trust in the fictions of a money’s mind…”

To Anti-Darwinists Darwinism Defeats Itself

- Cognition would have to free itself from natural causes to validate truth of Darwinism
- But this is true only if mind must be a mirror of the world as it would exist independent of us
- For Darwin, not a defeat: we must end “the vain search for the undiscovered and undiscoverable essence of things” (p. 4)
- CERTAINTY was a religion-inspired dream about the centrality of mind in the created world
- Should we settle for a “good story” rather than insight into essence of the universe?