

WAR
Of the
WORLDVIEWS

Christianity
versus
Naturalism

Nov.21, 2014

Is God Dead?

Steve Bruce. *God Is Dead : Secularization in the West* (2002)

Christopher Hitchens *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (2007)

Victor Stenger *God and the Folly of Faith: The Incompatibility of Science and Religion* (2012)

Richard Dawkins *The God Delusion* (2006)

Sam Harris *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason* (2004)

Did Science Kill God?

Physicist Victor Stenger

God: The Failed Hypothesis— How Science Shows That God Does Not Exist (2008)

No god *designed* the world. Everything whose origins have been understood so far has arisen by simple natural processes.

No god has given us immortal *souls*. Everything suggests that our minds are entirely reducible to simple material components.

No god has made any *miraculous interventions* in human history. All such accounts are source-critically spurious.

Did Biology kill God?

Richard Dawkins:

The God Delusion (2006)

“When one person suffers from a delusion, it is called insanity. When many people suffer from a delusion it is called Religion.”

“Darwin made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist.”

The Blind Watchmaker (1986), page 6

“Faith is belief in spite of the lack of evidence.”

Edinburgh Science Festival (1992)



Did Physics kill God?

Stephen Hawking *The Grand Design* (2010)

Physics can explain all. Thus God did not create the world
“Ignorance of nature’s ways led people in ancient times to
invent gods”

Richard Dawkins
(2011 interview):

“Darwin kicked
God out of biology
but physics
remained more
uncertain.
Hawking is now
administering the
coup de grace.”



Faith and Evidence

Physicist Victor Stenger *The New Atheism: taking a Stand for Science and Reason* (2009):

Faith is always foolish and leads to many evils...

Faith is belief in the absence of supportive evidence.

Two claims:

1. To be rational, a belief must be supported by sufficient evidence (evidentialism)
2. Belief in God is not supported by sufficient evidence, thus it is irrational.

So How did Science kill God?

It is claimed that:

1. Science can explain everything
 - So God is not needed to explain the world.
2. Physical laws leave no room for miracles.
 - So Biblical accounts of miracles are false
3. There is no evidence for God
 - So belief in God is irrational and delusional

Are All Beliefs Based on Evidence?

W.K. Clifford (1877):

It is always wrong to believe anything upon insufficient evidence.

Evidence: support for a belief by way of an argument.

But all explanations must eventually come to an end.

We all have various **foundational** beliefs that are accepted without evidence.

Should all Beliefs be Proven?

1. Some things are obvious.

“I feel hungry”, “the sky looks blue”

We take what we **feel** or **observe** as basic

2. Some things just have to be assumed without proof.

We can't prove our **senses** are reliable without first presuming this.

We can't prove our **minds** are rational without first assuming it.

We can't prove the laws of **logic** are valid without using logic

Belief and Evidence

Many basic beliefs are accepted without evidence. Belief in God could be such a basic belief.

Facts count as **evidence** for some belief only after interpreted in terms of a prior framework or **worldview**.

Consider the claims made against religion:

1. Everything can be explained by science, without God
2. Miracles never happened -- can never happen
3. There is no evidence for God

None of these are based on **sufficient evidence**.

Is Science Objective?

The Myth

Science is *factual, objective, and rational*
whereas

religion is *mythical, subjective, and irrational*

The Reality

Science has objective and subjective aspects

hard data – what we actually see – is objective
whereas

theory – explaining the data – is subjective

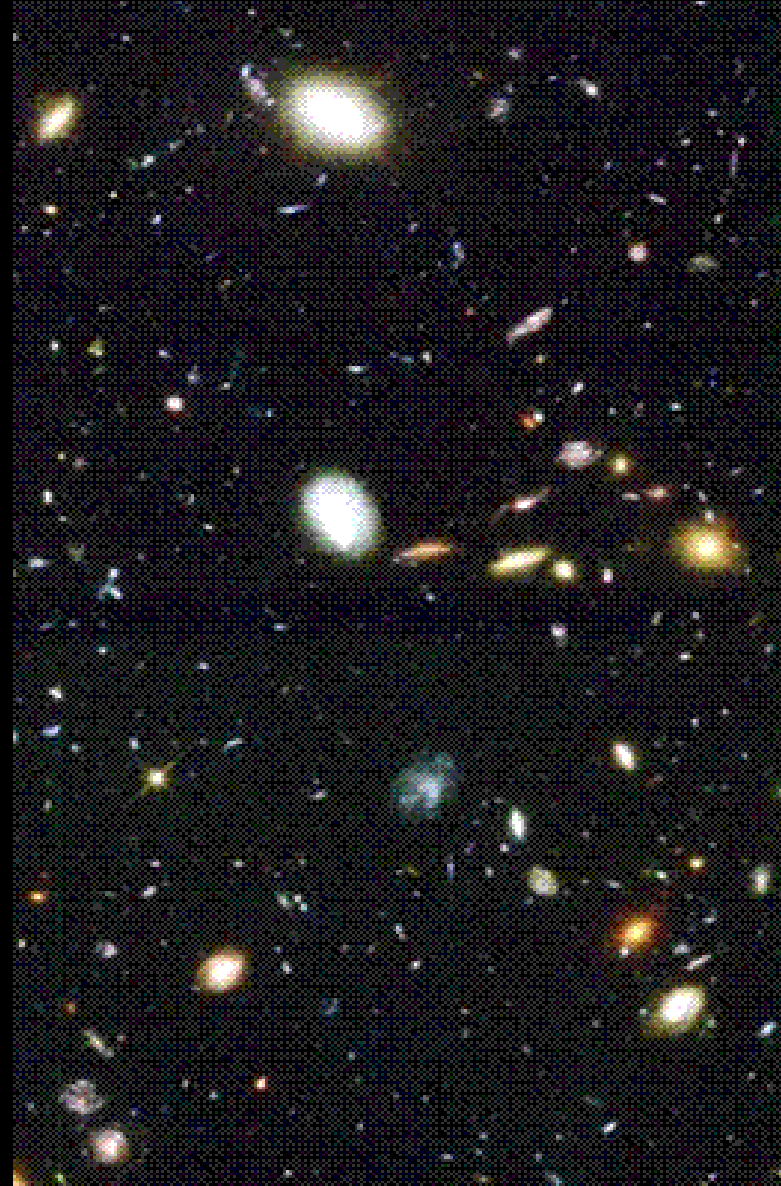
Same data - Many theories

Galactic red-shifts caused by

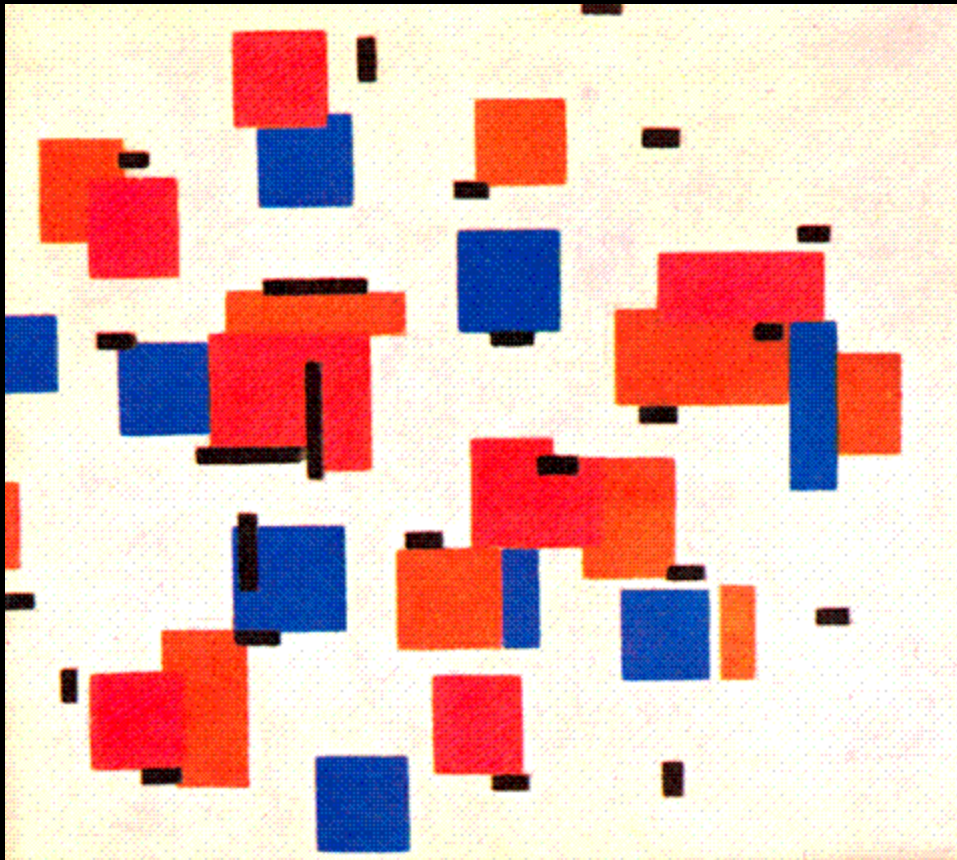
expanding space
motion through space
a large mass at end of

universe

decreasing speed of light
shrinking atoms
tired light



From data to theory



Piet Mondrian
Composition in Blue

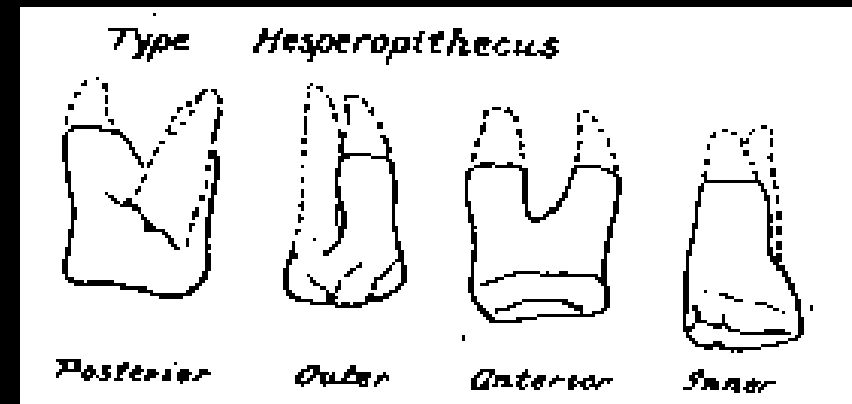
Carl Hempel,
*philosopher of
science:*

*"The transition from
data to theory
requires creative
imagination . . .
Scientific theories are
not derived from
observed facts, but
are invented in order
to account for them."*

From data to theory



Nebraska man –artistic reconstruction (1922)



The actual data-
a pig's tooth
(4 views of same tooth)

From theory to critique

Imre Lakatos, philosopher of science

"Scientific theories are not only equally unprovable, and equally improbable, but they are also equally undisprovable."

Saving the theory

Willard Van Orman Quine

Any statement can be held true come what may, if we make drastic enough adjustments elsewhere in the system.

The totality of our knowledge, from the most casual matters of history to the profoundest laws of atomic physics, is a man-made fabric which impinges on experience only along the edges.

Saving the theory

To save **big bang cosmology** from falsification (the horizon problem) *inflation* was invented.

But inflation predicted that the mass of the universe was much larger than observed.

To save **inflation**, it was postulated that 95% of the universe's mass was unobservable “**dark matter**”.

Later, “**dark energy**” was invented to explain the apparent acceleration of the expansion of the universe.

And so on...

Theory Choice and Worldview

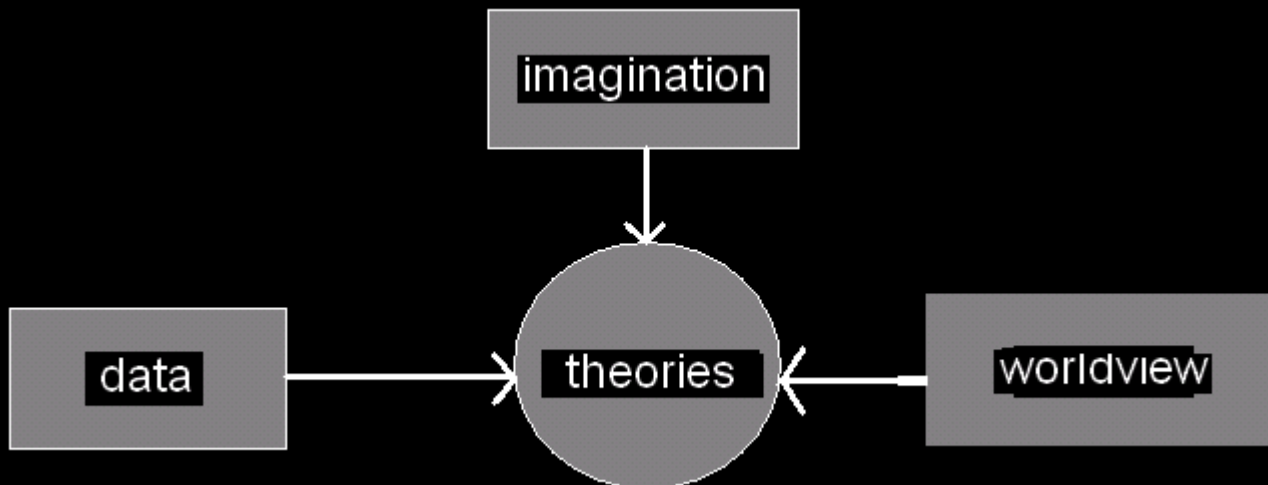
Which theories should we prefer—the **simplest**?

How do we know that **simple** theories are more likely to be true?

We have no certain means of separating true theories from false ones.

We choose theories that fit in best with our **worldview**--our most basic assumptions about the world.

Only **observational data** can be accepted as **fact**.



Worldview Questions

Does God exist?

religion

What exists?

metaphysics

Why does the world exist?

purpose

What is man?

anthropology

What can we know?

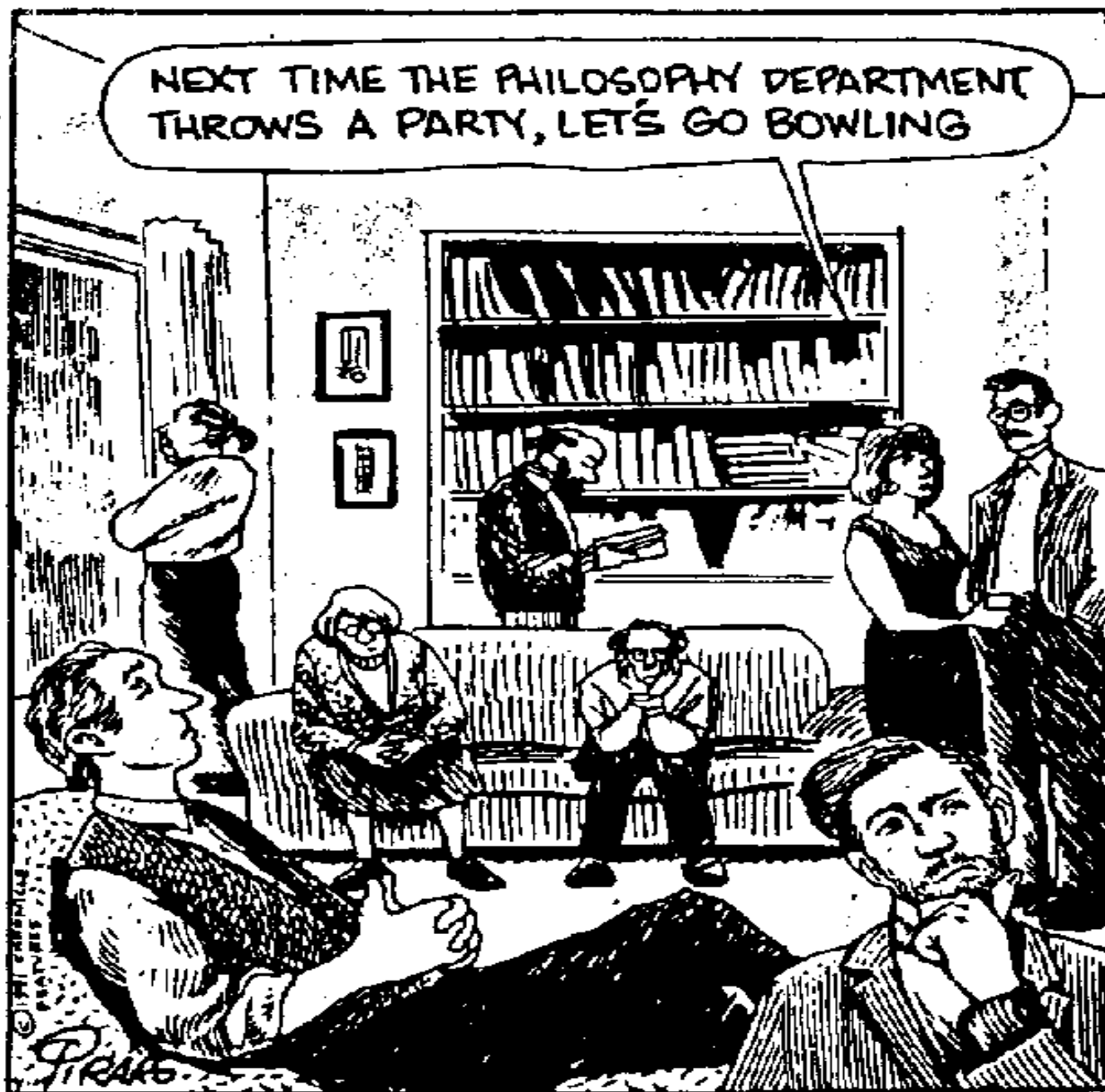
epistemology

What should we do?

ethics

What can we hope for?

eschatology



Worldviews and Philosophy

The basic worldview questions are of a deeply philosophical nature. It requires deep, concentrated thought and is hard work. Philosophy strikes most people as boring and useless.

but
Worldview Answers. . .

DO have
consequences:

Ideals and Values

Deeply held
ideals can
lead to drastic
action

*Liberty Leading
The People*
Eugene Delacroix
1830



Critique



One's worldview provides a platform to critique other worldviews, such as the shallowness of pop culture

Worldviews

A worldview consists of
presuppositions
a story – a framework

A worldview serves as
eye-glasses
a map

Assessing Worldviews

Consistency

Experience

Livability

Common sense and
science



Naturalism

William Provine, *historian of science*

"Evolutionary biology tells us there are no purposeful principles in nature, no gods and no designing forces that are rationally detectable. . . .

Second, there are no inherent moral or ethical laws. . . .

Third, human beings are marvelously complex machines.

Fourth, when we die, we die and that is the end of us, no hope of everlasting life.

Free will simply does not exist, evolution can't produce a being that is truly free to make choices

The universe cares nothing for us

There is no ultimate meaning for humans."

Naturalist presuppositions

Story: full evolution

Metaphysics: purposeless materialism
only natural causes

Knowledge: empiricism, no divine revelation

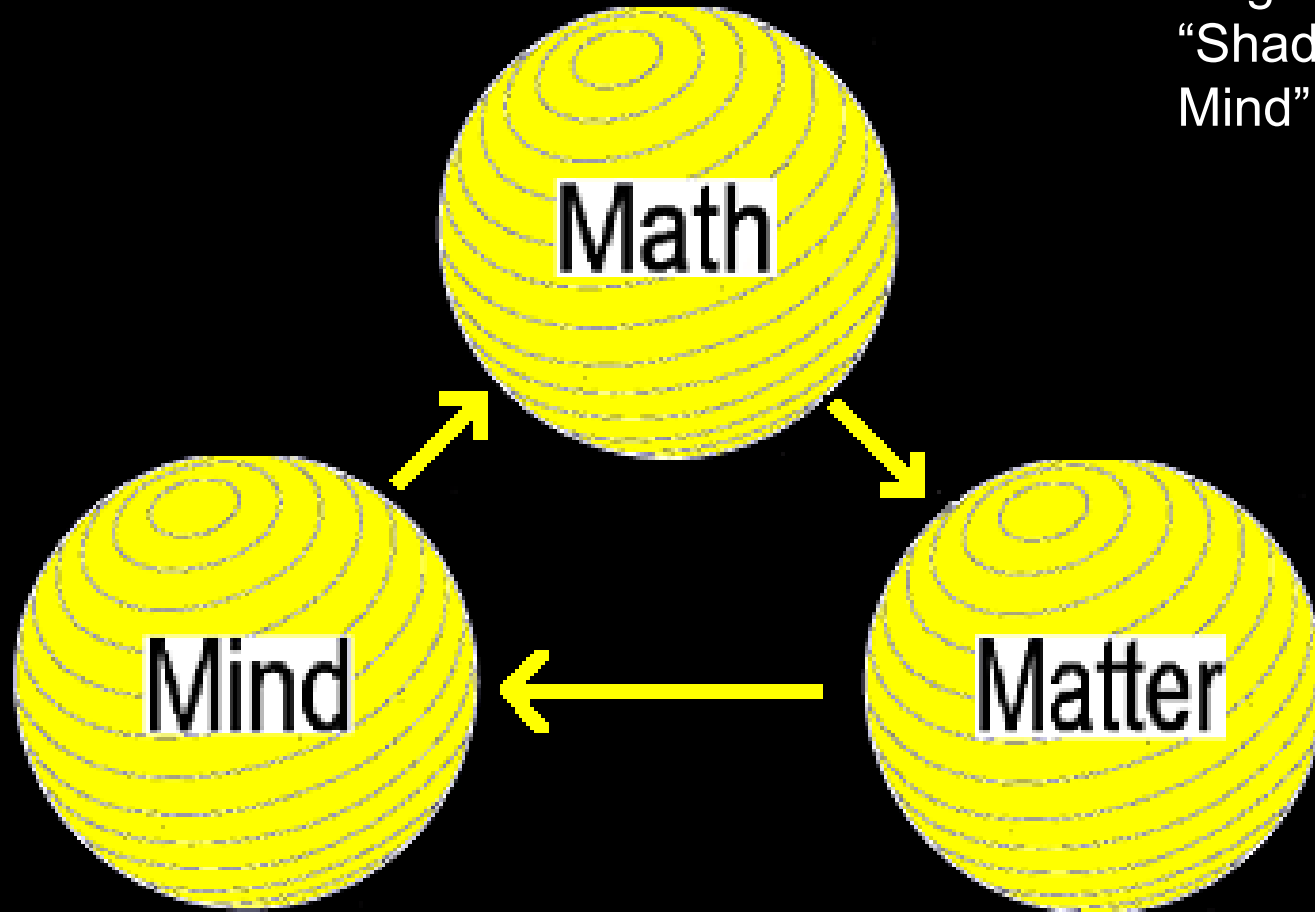
Anthropology: man is an accident
no soul, no hope after death

Ethics: no absolute norms
no mathematical entities

Religion: God is irrelevant

Three worlds—three mysteries

Roger Penrose,
“Shadows of the
Mind”



The physical world is mathematical

General relativity

Mechanics

$$R_{ik} - \frac{g_{ik}R}{2} + \Lambda g_{ik} = 8\pi \frac{G}{c^4} T_{ik}$$

Maxwell's equations

Electricity

Magnetism

$$\begin{aligned}\nabla \cdot \mathbf{E} &= \rho / \epsilon_0 \\ \nabla \times \mathbf{E} &= -\partial \mathbf{B} / \partial \tau \\ \nabla \cdot \mathbf{B} &= 0 \\ \nabla \times \mathbf{B} &= \mu_0 \mathfrak{J} + \mu_0 \epsilon_0 \partial \mathbf{E} / \partial \tau\end{aligned}$$

Schrödinger equation

Chemistry

$$\mathbf{H} |\psi(t)\rangle = i\hbar \frac{\partial}{\partial t} |\psi(t)\rangle$$

If science is true, SO is mathematics

Naturalist problems

Math to matter

Matter to mind

Mind to math

Self-refutation

*Monument to the
Third International*
Vladimir Tatlin 1919



Math to matter problems

Why does the universe exist?

Why does it have order & uniformity?

Why is it mathematically intelligible?

Why does it have a particular mathematical form?

How are mathematical forms actualized?



Matter to mind problems

How can purposeless matter produce purposeful life?

How can chance produce complexity?

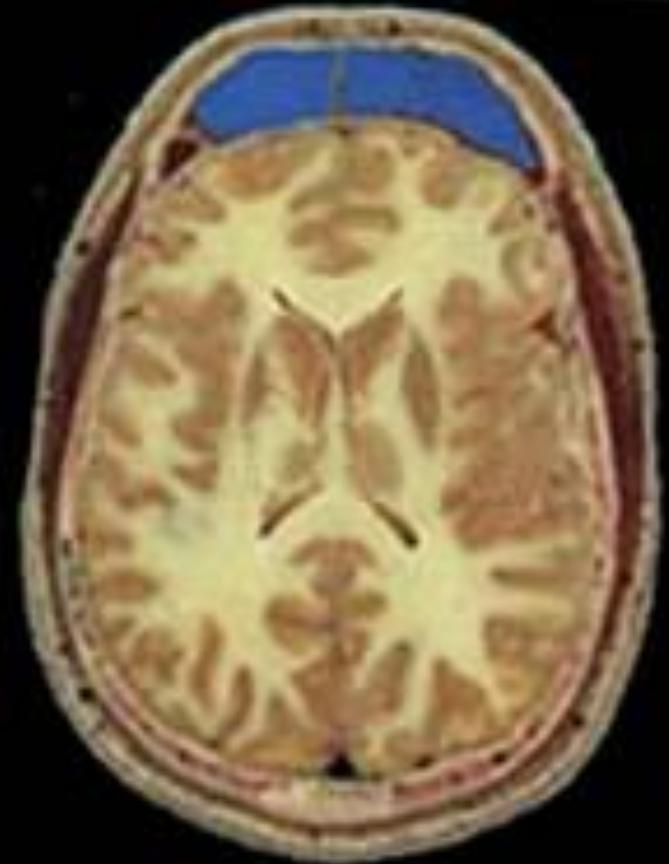
How did information arise?

How can matter become conscious?

The unity of the self

How do thoughts influence the brain?

What transforms mental choice to physical action?



Mind to math problems

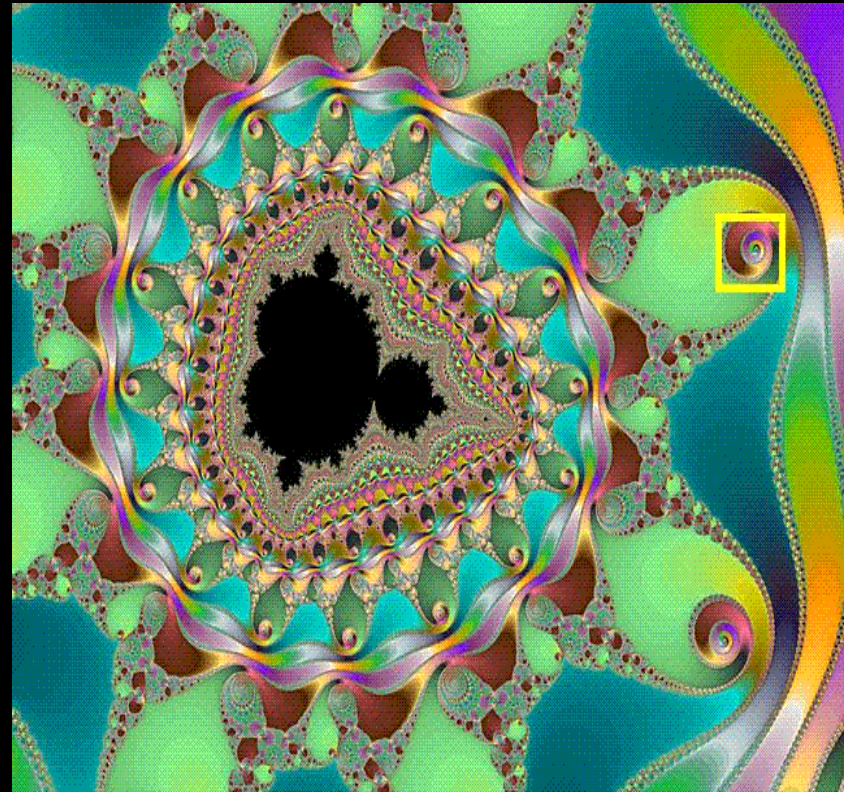
Why should we trust our minds?

How can non-physical absolutes exist?

How can “is” produce “ought”?

How do we access norms?

Why is math applicable?



Darwin's Horrid Doubt

Darwin: ... 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 convictions of a monkey's mind, if there are any convictions in such a mind?

Eugene Wigner:

“It is hard to believe that our reasoning power was brought, by Darwin's process of natural selection, to the perfection it seems to possess.”

Evolution is geared towards useful beliefs, not true ones.
If evolution is blind, why should our beliefs be true?
If our beliefs are true, why is our belief in God not true?

Self-refuting beliefs

Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow
(The Grand Design (2011), p45)

“It is hard to imagine how free will can operate if our behavior is determined by physical law.

So it seems that we are no more than biological machines and that free will is just an illusion.”

Sir Francis Crick (The Astonishing Hypothesis):

"The Astonishing Hypothesis is that "You", your joys and your sorrows, your memories and your ambitions, your sense of personal identity and free will, are in fact no more than the behavior of a vast assembly of nerve cells..."

Self-refuting beliefs

Sam Harris (neuroscientist) *Free Will* (2012)

“Free will is an illusion....Our wills are simply not of our own making. Thoughts and intentions emerge from background causes of which we are unaware and over which we exert no conscious control.”

Jerry A. Coyne (author of *Why Evolution is True*):

“Free will is an illusion so convincing that people simply refuse to believe that we don’t have it. In *Free Will*, Sam Harris combines neuroscience and psychology to lay this illusion to rest at last. Read it: you have no choice.

Moral Illusions

Michael Ruse and Edward O. Wilson, “The Evolution of Ethics” (1989):

“Morality, or more strictly our belief in morality, is merely an adaptation put in place to further our reproductive ends.

...ethics as we understand it is an illusion fobbed off on us by our genes to get us to cooperate. Ethics is produced by evolution but is not justified by it.”

Why should we punish crime?

Philosopher Derk Pereboom (*Living Without Freewill*):

Given our best scientific theories, factors beyond our control ultimately produce all our actionswe are therefore not morally responsible for them.

Thus severe punishment, such as death or confinement in the ordinary type of prison, is ruled out, but preventive detention and rehabilitation programs are justifiable.

Self-refutation

Arguing that
naturalism
is true presumes:

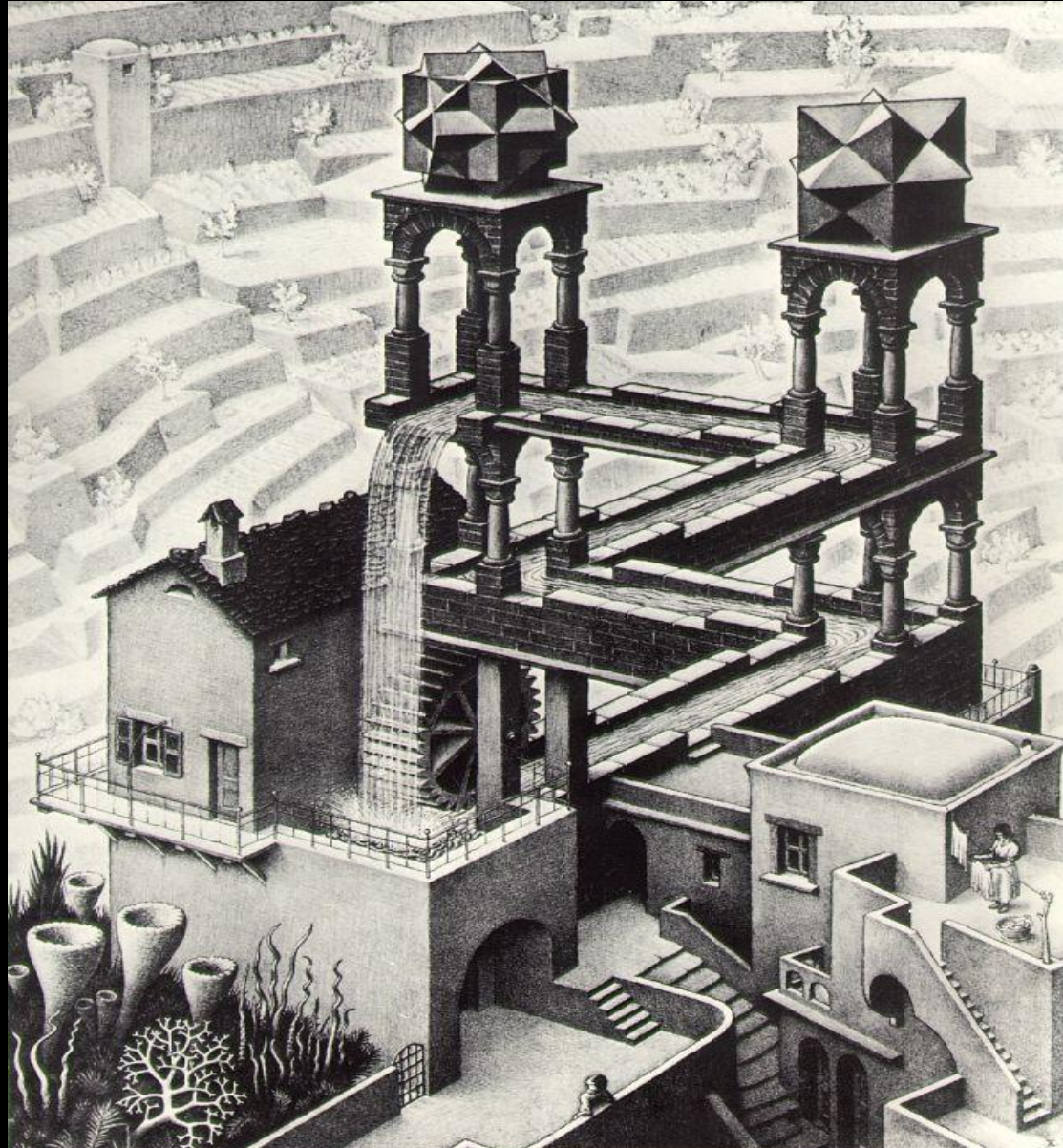
reliable minds

objective truth

purposeful selfs

rational norms

mental causation



Essential Presuppositions

Rational discourse presumes:

a purposeful knower

reliable senses

reliable mind

logic, objective truth, absolute rational values

mental causation – putting thoughts into spoken words

objective language – to convey meaningful thoughts

Science presumes further:

an orderly and comprehensive objective universe

uniformity of nature

applicability of mathematics; mathematical truth

objective values needed to do science

Why are we here?

William Provine: "There is no ultimate meaning for humans."

Richard Dawkins: "We are machines built by DNA whose purpose is to make more copies of the same DNA
...That is *exactly* what we are for...
It is every living object's sole reason for living".

Recall: Dawkins said Darwin made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist.
But the price is that his intellect becomes a meaningless illusion.

Basics of the Christian worldview

Story: Creation, Fall, redemption

Metaphysics: God is the ultimate reality

Knowledge: Divine revelation, innate, senses

Anthropology: Man created in God's image to serve Him. Body & soul.

Absolutes: God sets all norms

Two Paradigms for Science

Hawking – *The Grand Design* (2010):

Model-dependent realism - it is pointless to ask whether a model is **real**, only whether it agrees with observation.

If there are two models that both agree with observation ... then one cannot say that one is more real than another. One can use whichever model is more convenient in the situation under consideration.“

Hawking claims God is unnecessary. Yet his philosophy of science leaves room for an alternative Christian model. Since Hawking's model has no room for free-will, any alternative seems preferable.

Two Paradigms for Science

Naturalism versus Christianity

Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920)

“Not faith and science, but *two scientific systems...*

Two scientific elaborations opposed to each other, *each having its own faith.*”

C.S. Lewis (1898 - 1963) –

“There is no neutral ground in the universe; every square inch, every split second, is claimed by God and counter-claimed by Satan”

Alvin Plantinga urges Christians to develop their own science, based on their own presuppositions.

The Anti-thesis

The global conflict between faith and unbelief, between Christian and non-Christian worldviews.

Science and culture are God-glorifying or God-defying.

Main issue: does the Bible reveals absolute truths?

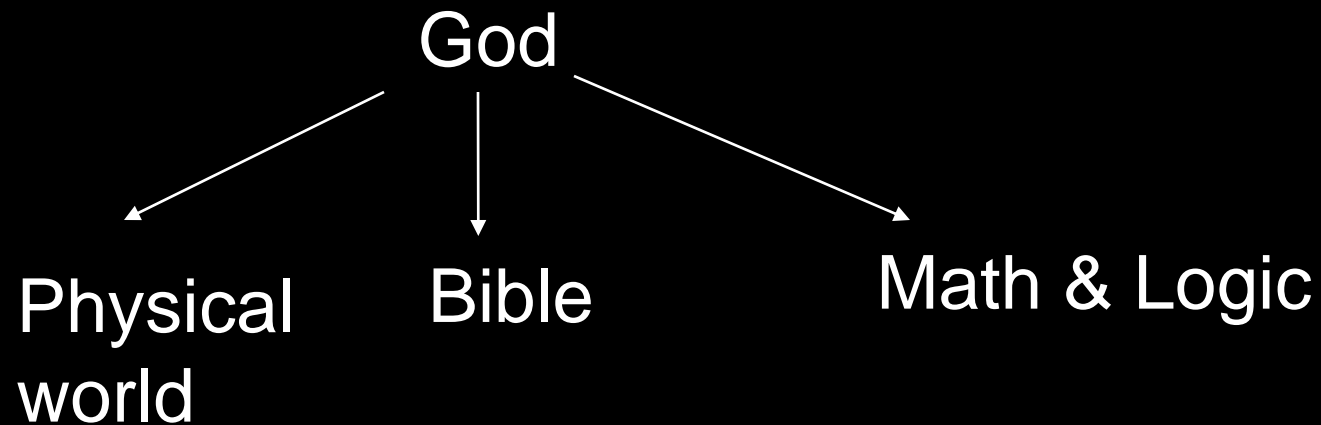
God's Word **versus** Satan's deception
"Thus says the Lord" "Did God Say?"

Genesis 3:15: "I will put enmity between your (Satan's) seed and her seed, he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel"

Christianity Informs Science

1. Metaphysics – matter and spirit – earth and heaven
2. Causation – natural and supernatural causes
3. Epistemology – senses, reason and Divine revelation
4. Different view on history – unfolding of God's plan
5. Different view on future – life after death,
second coming of Jesus Christ, Day of Judgment
6. Different view on purpose, ethics and values

A Christian view of knowledge



Scientific theories are fallible human inventions that should agree with observation, logic and Bible.

Christianity Enabled Science

“And God said, “let us make man in our image...
And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” (Gen.1:26-28)

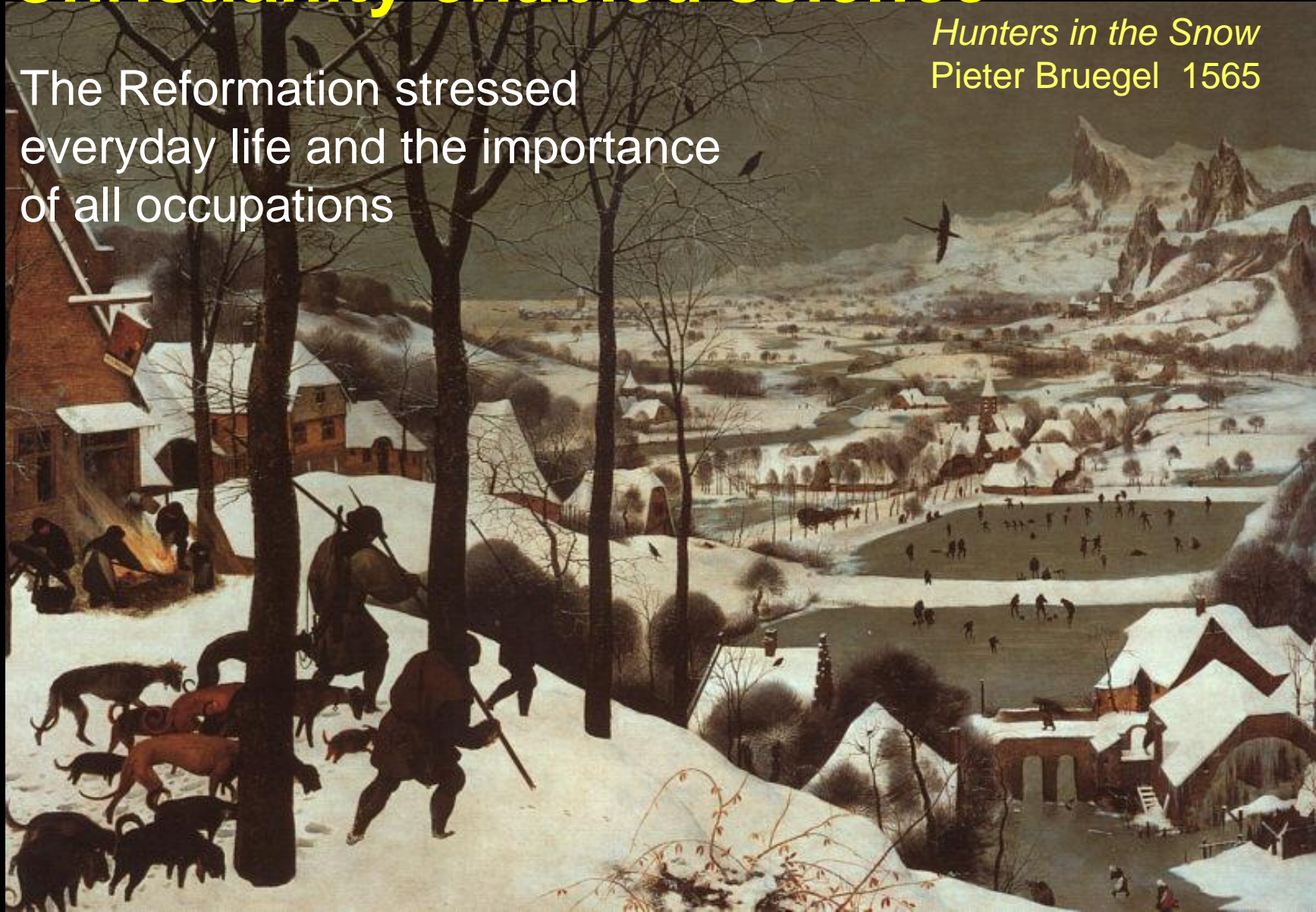
The cultural mandate provided motivation to study God's creation.

Belief in a rational God, Whom man imaged, made science feasible

Christianity enabled science

The Reformation stressed everyday life and the importance of all occupations

Hunters in the Snow
Pieter Bruegel 1565



Founders of Science Praise the Creator

Francis Bacon (1561-1626):

“For as all works do show forth the power and skill of the workman...so it is of the works of God, which do show forth the omnipotency and wisdom of the maker...”

Johannes Kepler (1571-1630):

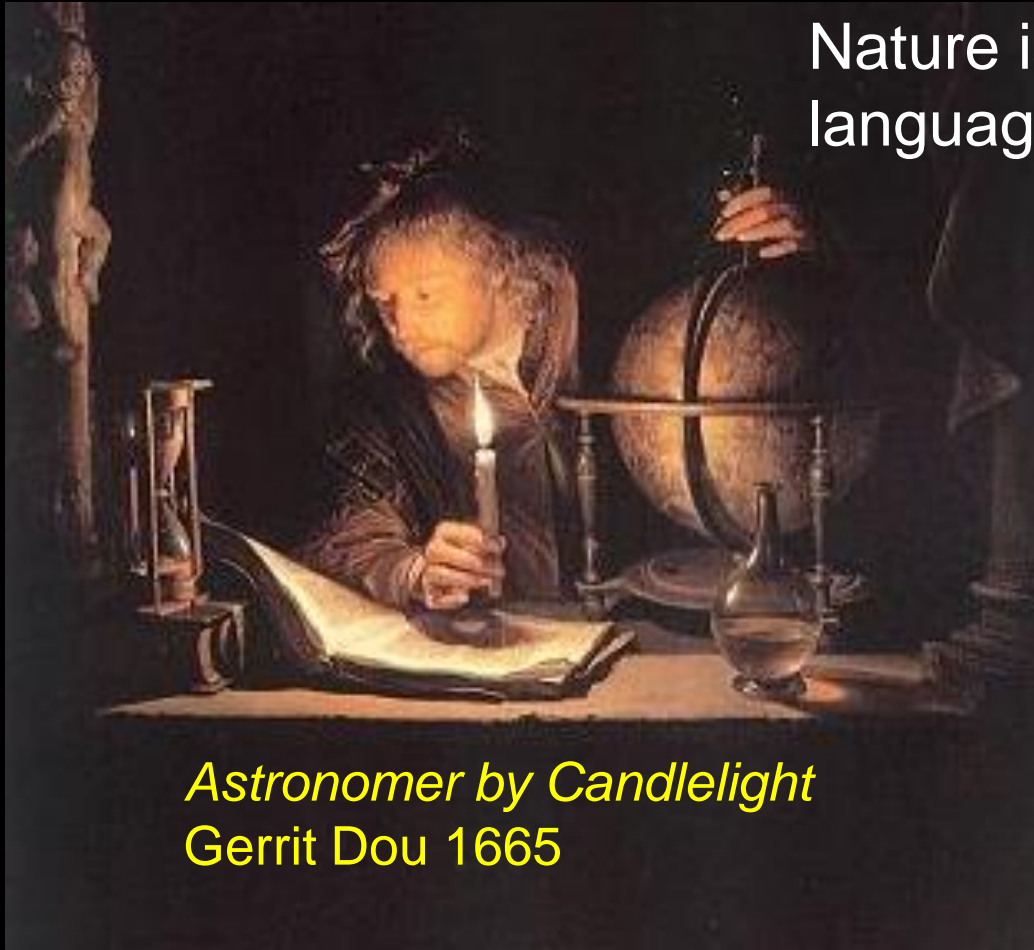
“I give thanks to Thee, O Lord Creator, Who hast delighted me with Thy makings and in the works of Thy hands have I exalted.”

Founders of Science Praise the Creator

Galileo Galilei (1564-1642):

“The laws of nature give clear testimony of a lawgiver...

Nature is written in the language of mathematics”



Astronomer by Candlelight
Gerrit Dou 1665

Isaac Newton
(1642-1727)

“This most beautiful system of sun, planets, and comets could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being.”

Science needs God

Physicist Paul Davies:

For 300 years, science has based itself on materialism, leading inevitably to atheism and the meaninglessness of physical existence.

Even the most atheistic scientist accepts as an act of faith that the universe is not absurd, that there is a rational basis to physical existence.

So science can proceed only if the scientist adopts an essentially theological worldview.

The Untenability of Materialism

Thomas Nagel: *Mind and Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature Is Almost Certainly False* (2012)

Materialist naturalism is untenable.

If materialism cannot accommodate consciousness, then we must abandon a purely materialist understanding of nature.

Since minds are features of biological systems, the standard materialist version of evolutionary biology is fundamentally incomplete.

And the cosmological history that led to the origin of life cannot be a merely materialist history.

Materialism is a belief

Richard Lewontin, biologist:

We take the side of materialism - in spite of the patent absurdity of some of its constructs, because we have a prior commitment to materialism...

We are forced by our a priori adherence to material causes to create a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counter-intuitive,

Moreover, that materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door...



Why believe in materialism?

John Searle, *philosopher*:

How can so many philosophers and scientists say so many things that seem obviously false?

Acceptance of the current views is motivated not so much by an independent conviction of their truth as by a terror of what are apparently the only alternatives.

The choice is between a "scientific" approach (materialism) and an "anti-scientific" approach--some traditional religious conception of the mind.



The fear of God

Thomas Nagel (The Last Word):

I am talking about the fear of religion itself. I speak from experience, being strongly subject to this fear myself:

I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers.



The fear of God

Thomas Nagel:

It isn't just that I don't believe in God. It's that I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God; I don't want the universe to be like that. . . .

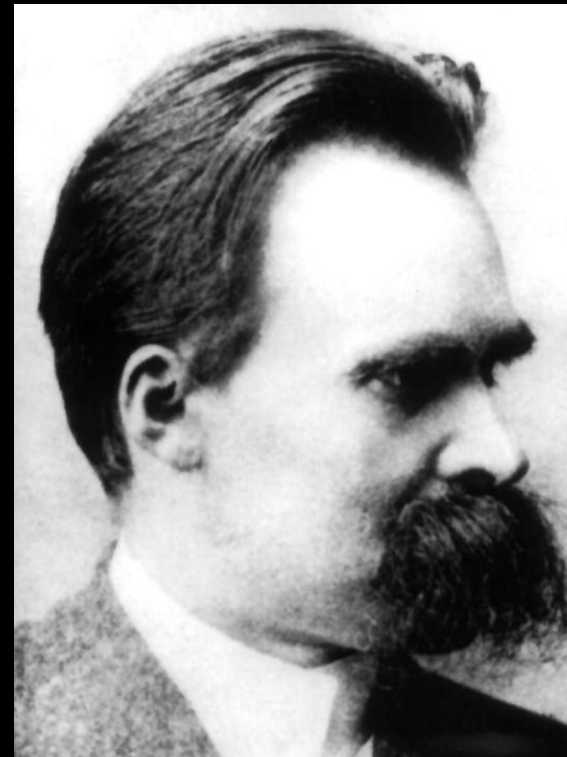
My guess is that this cosmic authority problem is responsible for much of the scientism of our time...

it supports the ludicrous overuse of evolutionary biology to explain everything about life, including everything about the human mind.”

Is Truth Dead?

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)

"God is dead, we have killed
him... science has killed him
... *science has killed Truth.*"



The Demise of Reason

Critical human reason, once uncorked, is an insatiable acid that dissolves *all* absolutes, eventually eroding its own foundation.

*The Dream of Reason
Produces Monsters*
Francesco Goya 1799



The Futility of Atheism

Bertrand Russell (1872-1970)

The centre of me is always and eternally a terrible pain--a curious wild pain--a searching for something beyond what the world contains, something transfigured and infinite

The soul finds no rest until it finds its rest in God **Augustine**

Man has a God-shaped void that only God can fill **Blaise Pascal**



Summing up

No proof that science can explain all or that belief in God is irrational

Science is subjective – it needs a viable worldview

Worldviews are based on presuppositions

The defense of naturalism is self-refuting

No human freewill, no thought, no truth, no rationality, no morality...no scientists and no science

Christianity gives coherence, meaning, purpose and hope

Christianity provides a solid basis for science

The Challenge

To articulate your worldview

What are your most basic beliefs, values, and priorities?

To work it out consistently

Worldviews come in package deals, as all encompassing systems. Mixing Christianity with another worldview introduces an inconsistency that will eventually undermine your Christian commitment.

“You shall love the Lord your all your heart, soul, mind, and strength” (Mark 12:30).

Is Everything Made of Numbers?

Jan Westerhoff **Reality: Is Matter Real?**

New Scientist (Oct.2, 2012)

The scientific reductionist reduces the human mind to the activity of the brain, the brain to an assembly of interacting cells, the cells to molecules, the molecules to atoms, the atoms to subatomic particles, the subatomic particles to collections of space-time points, the collections of space-time points to sets of numbers, and the sets of numbers to pure sets.

He concludes:

(1) The fundamental reality is a Platonic realm of numbers
or **(2) Sets exist only in our minds.**

But if mind is reduced to brain and eventually to sets, this puts us into a closed explanatory loop

Naturalism and Mathematics

Willard van Orman Quine

1. Naturalism entails that scientific theories are generally true, particularly in physics.
2. But theories in physics refer to mathematical objects – numbers, vectors, functions...
3. Hence, if these theories are true, mathematical objects must exist.

Einstein:

How can it be that mathematics, a product of human thought independent of experience, is so admirably appropriate to the objects of reality?

Life Without God

Physicist Steven Weinberg (“Without God” Lecture at Harvard 2008):

The worldview of science is rather chilling. Not only do we not find any point to life laid out for us in nature, no objective basis for our moral principles...

As religious belief weakens, more and more of us know that after death there is nothing....

Living without God isn't easy. But its very difficulty offers one other consolation—that there is a certain honor...in facing up to our condition without despair and without wishful thinking—with good humor, but without God.

Science – operation and historical

Operation science – Common ground?

Basic science – laboratory, repeatable events, laws, applications

Most of science – physics, chemistry, biology

All the science needed for technology

Justified under the cultural mandate of Gen.1:28

Historical Science – Highly Worldview Dependent

Speculative extrapolation into distant past

Geology, astronomy, paleontology, archaeology

Data collection versus interpretation

Worldview plays a large role

Origins debate is mostly not about facts but interpretation

Not science versus religion **but** naturalist science versus Christian science.

Rationality is Not the Issue

Richard Rorty, *postmodern philosopher*:

I do not think that Christian theism is irrational.

I entirely agree that it is no more irrational than atheism.

Irrationality is not the question, but rather, desirability.



Richard Rorty, 1997

Post-modern Blues

Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980)

Atheistic existentialism...states that if God does not exist then man is only what he makes of himself.

It is very distressing that God does not exist, because all possibility of finding values disappears along with Him.

Hence, man is forlorn, because neither within him nor without does he find anything to cling to.

