

THE CHRISTIAN MIND



WORLDVIEW CRITIQUE

by

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THE CHRISTIAN MIND

In The World Today

**A Worldview Critique
From a Hebraic-Biblical Perspective**



**Student Manual for Philosophy
2010/2011**

UNIT 1

INTRODUCING WORLDVIEWS



WELCOME TO UNIT 1

INTRODUCING WORLDVIEWS AND HOW TO EVALUATE THEM

READ: Chapter 1 of *The Universe Next Door* by James Sire. (The main textbook for this course.)

Extra (Required) Reading: “Some Ways to Critique a Worldview” by Sean Choi

☞ **Always be sure the reading assignments are done BEFORE class!**

TIP: Keep your in-class lecture notes for this *and all subsequent* units organized in a Worldview Notebook-Manual (which you assemble from printing out these pages.) Utilize this notebook to marshal your own questions, musings, comments, and projects. As you study, you should find many more articles to insert. You may even want to include transcripts of interviews you conduct. (*Philosophy from the Coffee House.*) Please be thoughtful and ‘get creative’ with your Manual, for the real objective is this: To truly ‘own this course’ (get the most out of it *and* be able to give it to others!)

The first task in this unit is to define (and understand the concept of) “Worldview.”

How does a WV compare with a “Philosophy” or a “Religion?”

Who possesses a WV and where did they get it...what does it do for them?

Can you *not* have one? Might you *change* worldviews? Why?

What are the fundamental conceptual components of a WV? (The elemental building blocks.)

What is an “**Assumption**” or “Pre-supposition”?

How might we expose our most basic assumptions to the light of scrutiny?

What are the most basic yet deep and vital questions we can ask about existence itself?

Can basic WV evaluation help us fathom REALITY...the “all that is”?

Discuss the **Seven Basic Questions** as questions. **Memorize these Questions!**

How will we ‘methodically’ examine, compare, and critique the bewildering blur of WV options?

Here’s how! Our method throughout the entire course will be:

Discuss the WV’s historical background, salient features, and its notable-quotable adherents.

Answer the **7BQs** according to each major WV category. You are responsible for this exercise.

You will soon notice that Sire’s description of the WV will be a list of propositions, but that those propositions/tenets do not match up numerically with the 7BQs. Therefore, you must ‘think!’

Critique the WV on its own merits. Detect systemic weaknesses. ‘Flag’ it for inconsistencies. *R*

Evaluating a Worldview with the Laws of Thought & Meaning. [See **Special Section on LOGIC.**]

We will evaluate each WV with this criteria-manifold:

Consistency Coherence Comprehensiveness Congruence Compatibility

STUDY AIDS: [Every Unit has a 2 page Blank “Answers to 7BQs” for you to fill out.]

“What is a Worldview?” – Definitions & Quotes “My Most Basic Assumptions” by JMB

“Evaluating a Worldview” and “Basic Laws of Thought and Meaning”

"ANSWERS TO SEVEN BASIC QUESTIONS"

According to the Worldview of: _____

1. What Is ULTIMATE Reality? _____

2. What Is The Nature Of External Reality? _____

3. What Is A Human Being? _____

4. What Happens To A Human At Death? _____

5. How Is It Possible To Know Anything? _____

6. How Do We Know Right From Wrong? _____

7. What Is The Purpose Of Human History? _____

WHAT IS A WORLDVIEW?

“A worldview is a set of beliefs about the most important issues in life. It is a conceptual scheme by which we consciously or unconsciously ‘fit in’ everything we believe and by which we judge reality.”

-- Ronald Nash

A worldview is an overarching explanatory model which includes, but is not limited to, scientific hypotheses and philosophical-linguistic constructs.

A worldview large enough to really view *this* world requires both physics and metaphysics!

A worldview is more than a *view of life*; it is a *vision for life*...like a roadmap for an amazing journey...like an operator's manual for life! My *way of seeing* provides my *way of being*.

Worldviews serve as interpretive conceptual grids to explain what we see and guide how we think and act. An inadequate worldview will, like broken spectacles which hinder our sight, warp our understanding of God, the cosmos, and even of our own selves. It is not easy to remove the glasses and examine what might be wrong with our vision. Worldview critique can be like going to a “cosmoptometrist”!

Do we want to see reality clearly as it is or be content with our own “apprehension deficit disorder”?!!

A worldview is made from our most basic under-girding notions about all of Existence Itself. My so small but so noisy Self, this vast but silent Cosmos, these other beings inflicting the scenery...what in the world does all this mean? I cannot NOT have a worldview, so I have some serious thinking to do!

Overheard in the cafeteria: “When choosing a dessert, pick whatever you like, but when choosing medicine, take what will make you better...likewise with worldview options!”

“When I meet a guy, the first thing I want to know is not what he plans to do for a living, but, what is his view of life!”

“There is a world...you have your view of it, and I have mine...but isn't there a ‘view of views’?”

If not, how would we know we're not in a matrix?”

What are *Basic Assumptions*?

- something we assume or pre-suppose to be (to be the case, to be true about reality)
- a ‘given’, something so obvious we might take it for granted
- one premise of an argument
- the starting conceptual components of a worldview
- a proposition that doesn't seem to break down into simpler propositions
- a principle of intellectual organization that provides the terminus of a regress of explanation
- an unproven yet seemingly self-evident fact about reality

Possible Examples of Very *Basic Assumptions*:

- Existence exists
- Consciousness is happening
- There is a world
- I am a ‘self’ (an individual consciousness apprehending a world or having sensations)
- Nothing comes from nothing
- This should all mean something...be explicable

MY MOST BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

EXISTENCE CONSCIOUSNESS IDENTITY TRUTH

SOMETHING EXISTS (SOMETHING EXISTS RATHER THAN NOTHING)

IT ISN'T JUST IN MY MIND...I DON'T CONTROL IT...I'D CONJURE SOMETHING ELSE!...

IT ISN'T IN ANOTHER MIND...HOW WOULD I KNOW?

IT MUST BE INDEPENDENT OF MINDS...ERGO

IT IS.

I AM CONSCIOUS OF IT (AWARENESS IS OCCURRING)

I EXIST TOO, OR WHO WOULD BE 'HAVING' THIS ACUTE AWARENESS?

I AM AWARE ...AND AWARE THAT I'M AWARE (I HAVE SELF-AWARENESS)

THERE IS A CONNECTION BETWEEN ME AND THE SOMETHING THAT IS...ERGO

APPREHENSION OF '**WHAT IS**' IS POSSIBLE

IT IS *WHAT IT IS* (AND, BEING IS NOT NON-BEING!!)

I CAN IDENTIFY ONE THING FROM ANOTHER

THE SOMETHING THAT EXISTS IS 'INTELLIGIBLE' ...ERGO, KNOWLEDGE IS POSSIBLE

CONTRADICTIONS CANNOT BE PERMITTED IF KNOWLEDGE IS TO BE VALID

TO STATE OF '*WHAT IS*' THAT '*IT IS NOT*' WOULD BE A FALSE STATEMENT

TRUE AND FALSE ARE OPPOSITES...CONTRADICTIONS CANNOT BOTH BE TRUE



I CAN BUILD FROM THESE AXIOMATIC PREMISES.

I WILL USE THE PRINCIPLE OF IDENTITY AS A FOUNDATION TO KNOW MORE.

I WILL AVOID CONTRADICTIONS.

I WANT MY WORLDVIEW TO ACCURATELY REFLECT WHAT EXISTS.

I WILL NOT CONFUSE '**BEING**' AND '**NON-BEING**.'

I WILL DISTINGUISH BETWEEN **TRUE** AND **FALSE**.

I WILL STRIVE TO KNOW WHATEVER IS TRUE.

EVALUATING A WORLDVIEW 🔍

Now that we know what a worldview is and what the Seven Basic Questions are, let's establish some rules by which we can critically examine worldviews and their assumptions. Worldviews can be appraised (determined if they are true or false, meaningful or meaningless) based on several objective measurements taken together.

An adequate worldview *should be*:

Consistent: A system whose propositions mutually reinforce each other. It should have no internal contradictions (see *Basic Laws of Thought and Meaning*).

Coherent: A system in which all parts function together. It should not blur concepts or be disjointed. Component parts should create a '*big picture*.'

Comprehensive: A system that is able to contain and handle all the different kinds of data, empirical and experiential. It should be able to take *everything* into account.

Congruent: A system that accurately reflects reality. It should correspond to a real world, yielding true interpretations, and offering reliable predictions. It should be able to *prescribe* as well as *describe*!

Compatible: A system that is personally satisfying, well-ordered, and sanative! It should be able to be communally shared and artistically expressed. It should be eminently *livable*!

That's what a good WV *should be*, and only a true WV *can be*.

This course is as relevant and personal as it is academic, so please be thinking...



Why is it vital for us to examine worldviews, *including* our own?!

BASIC LAWS OF THOUGHT AND MEANING

Logic is the discipline of correct thinking. The aim of logic is to make explicit the rules for valid inferences. It is the necessary basis for math, science and all rational thought. Logic doesn't tell us what to think, but how to avoid inconsistencies in our thinking. Logic deals with sound argumentation, how to draw valid conclusions from premises. Logic is an indispensable tool for all thought and language. Even those who try to deny logic use logical forms to argue for the rejection of logic!

The table below shows something of the process of rational thought.

<u>Action</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Expression</u>	<u>Value</u>
Understanding	Concept	Terms	Accurate or Inaccurate
Judging	Judgment	Propositions	True or False
Reasoning	Inference	Arguments	Valid or Invalid

A *term* should be accurate, intelligible, unambiguous, and descriptive.

A *proposition* is a statement or a declarative sentence capable of being tested for truth or falsity.

An *argument* is valid if the conclusion follows necessarily from the premises without committing fallacies.

If the terms are clear, the propositions are true, and the arguments are valid, then the conclusions are likely to be trustworthy. If terms are not accurate or an argument contains fallacies, we have a problem!

The rules of logic everyone uses (or misuses) are the basic laws of thought. Where did these rules come from? They are self-evident and inescapable. If we try to negate the rules we must use the rules in the very process of trying to negate them. We are, therefore, STUCK with them! Be thankful for that! Because if these rules are not acknowledged, we may end up spouting nonsense and no worldview would be possible, no questions ever answered. And we simply do not and can not live that way! To make any meaningful statement about reality, true/false as a category must exist and these rules must be used. How much more so in worldviews? If these rules apply to small statements, how much more do they apply to large sets of assumptions.

These laws are:

1. The Law of Identity: $A = A$ (A thing is what it is.)

"To speak the truth is to say of what is, that it is, and of what is not, that it is not." -Aristotle

If a statement is true, it is true; if false, then it is false.

2. The Law of Non-Contradiction: $A \neq \sim A$ (A thing cannot both be what it is and what it is not.)

"One cannot say of something that it is, and that it is not, in the same respect and at the same time."

-Aristotle

A statement cannot be both true and false at the same time.

3. The Law of the Excluded Middle: $A \vee \sim A$ (A thing is either what it is or what it is not.) There is no other possibility. Every statement is either true or false. Opposite statements cannot both be true.

Because worldviews are built upon statements, then worldviews are also either true or false.

We can use these laws as a test for meaning and truth. If a worldview violates a law of thought, its truthfulness and meaningfulness can be called into question.

Some Ways to Critique a Worldview

by Sean Choi

When analyzing someone's worldview (= that person's overall philosophical perspective on reality), there are a number of errors which you should look out for. These errors represent the different ways in which one's worldview can be exposed as being philosophically inadequate. They are by no means exhaustive of all the different ways in which a given worldview can be critiqued, but they represent some basic strategies which I personally find to be helpful. We will also apply the general insights gained from the analysis of such errors to particular statements which are often uttered by proponents of a non-Christian worldview.

1. Self-referential incoherence or self-refutation

Whenever you are listening to someone argue for a position, ask yourself, "Is that statement or position self-referentially incoherent or self-refuting?" A given worldview is definitely inadequate when its central tenet is self-referentially incoherent. Let me explain what this means.

Statements or propositions have a subject matter; they refer to things (either actual or not) or are about them. The proposition, "There are trees outside my window" refer to trees outside my window. This proposition does not refer to itself but to something other than itself. Call this "the referential character of propositions."

However, there are propositions which refer to themselves; they are included in their own field of reference. For example, "This is an English sentence" refers to itself and claims that it is in English. Whenever a proposition refers to itself it is said to be self-referential.

A proposition is said to be incoherent when it is not logically consistent or coherent. An incoherent proposition is false and necessarily so.

Now we are in a position to understand what a self-referentially incoherent proposition is. A self-referentially incoherent proposition is a proposition which includes itself in its own field of reference, and fails to be consistent with itself. Such a proposition is said to be self-refuting. For example, the proposition "This sentence contains less than three words" is self-referentially incoherent since it contains three or more words. Likewise, the proposition, "I can't speak a word of English," if spoken in *English*, is self-refuting. Let's look at some other examples which are more relevant to apologetics:

"One ought to believe that determinism is true and that every event is determined by its antecedent causes."

Philosopher J.R. Lucas says about the determinist:

If what he says is true, he says it merely as the result of his heredity and environment, and of nothing else. He does not hold his determinist views because they are true, but because he has such-and-such stimuli; that is, not because the *structure* of the universe is such-and-such but only because the configuration of only part of the universe, together with the structure of the determinist's brain, is such as to produce that result.... Determinism, therefore, cannot be true, because if it was, we should not take the determinist's arguments as being really arguments, but as being only conditioned reflexes. Their statements should not be regarded as really claiming to be true, but only as seeking to cause us to respond in some way desired by them. (Quoted in J.P. Moreland's *Scaling the Secular City*, p.90).

Thus, physical determinism is self-refuting if it is offered as a rational theory which one *ought* to believe for *good reasons*.

"There is no such thing as absolute truth."

This is often uttered by epistemological skeptics. If they claim that this statement is absolutely and objectively true, then it is self-refuting (e.g. it is an absolute truth that there are no absolute truths). The only way the skeptic can avoid self-refutation is by making a *non-absolute* claim that there are no absolute truths. But if his claim is now non-absolute, then he can't be as dogmatic and he should be more open-minded towards the possibility that there are absolute truths!

"We ought to tolerate every point of view."

This becomes self-refuting when, as is usually the case, the principle in question, namely, tolerance, is used to accept some point of view (e.g. homosexuality, religious pluralism) while excluding others (e.g. Christianity) -- which shows that they are *intolerant* of those views which are excluded! If such people were really consistent with their principle of tolerance, then they should accept every point of view, including Christianity.

"We can never get to the meaning of a text."

Many Postmodernists and Deconstructionists make the above claim. But this claim of theirs becomes self-refuting when they themselves write books, expecting people to "get to the meaning of the text" which they authored! If no one can get to the meaning of a text (as the Deconstructionists claim), then why is Deconstructionism so well understood?!

"Only that which can be verified empirically is meaningful or true."

A claim very similar to this one was made by the "Logical Positivists" of the early 20th century. They were a group of philosophers who wanted to allow only scientific and logical statements within their worldview. By means of their "verificationist criterion of meaning" they sought to rid philosophy of metaphysical statements about God, the soul, immortality, etc. The trouble with the Logical Positivists' criterion was that their criterion *itself* could not be verified empirically. We can't verify the meaningfulness of that statement itself by means of "the scientific method." Thus, every worldview (such as the Logical Positivists') which tries to limit the domain of existence to *empirical* existence is bound to be self-refuting. Consistent empiricism is self-refuting as a philosophy. Also, strong Scientism is self-refuting since its claim that science is the only way to know things itself is not a scientific claim, but a second-order philosophical claim *about* science. Similar self-refutation occurs when one claims (e.g. Anthony Flew) that every meaningful proposition must be falsifiable, since there is no way to falsify that statement itself.

"Nothing should be believed upon mere authority."

Sometimes skeptics mistakenly believe that Christians are commanded by the Bible to believe its truth-claims on "mere" intrasystemic and self-referential, biblical authority-pronouncements alone. Setting aside this error for the moment, let's focus on the claim above. If nothing should be believed upon mere authority, then *that statement itself* should not be believed upon mere authority either. Thus, the skeptic who makes that claim in

opposition to biblical authority ought to produce some kind of evidence or argument for that claim itself. But since most of the time the skeptic makes such a claim as the one above without offering a single argument for its truth, the statement in question often turns out to be self-refuting.

2. Inconsistency between one's metaphysics (theory of reality or being), epistemology (theory of knowledge), and ethics (theory of right and wrong).

Examples:

"All that exists is matter," a metaphysical claim, in conflict with, "We are able to know universal and necessary truths," an epistemological claim. If all that exists is matter, which is always a *particular* thing, then how can we account for any *universals*?

"The universe began as a result of chance" (metaphysics) in conflict with "We should seek to discover the fundamental laws of the universe" (epistemology, or ethics concerning our scientific practices). *If* the universe really is the product of blind chance, then how can we ever justify our belief that there are genuine laws of nature? If the universe is the product of chance, then Hume was correct in his skepticism concerning induction.

As noted above, physical determinism involves the following inconsistency: "Everything is determined by the laws of physics" (metaphysics) is in conflict with "One ought to believe that God doesn't exist" (epistemology or ethics).

"Humans are simply products of evolution" (metaphysics) does not comport well with "We should fight racial injustice" (ethical claim). If humans do not bear the image of God, then why is racial injustice really wrong? Maybe such racial injustice is simply natural selection (survival of the fittest) in action!

"There are no moral absolutes" (ethics) is inconsistent with the claim that "We know that the problem of evil disproves the existence of God" (epistemology). If there are no moral absolutes, no absolute good or bad, then there is no absolute evil either. And if there is no absolute evil, then the problem of evil loses its force (N.B.: If there *is* absolute evil, then this actually boomerangs into an argument *for* God, if one grants (as even some atheists actually do) that the existence of an absolute standard of morality entails the existence of God).

"There are no moral absolutes" (ethics) is inconsistent with "What Hitler did to the Jews was really wrong" (ethics). If there is no absolute standard of morality, then how can we objectively and rationally critique moral monsters like Hitler?

3. Unargued philosophical assumptions: Presuppositions which are simply assumed, rather than argued for.

To give just one example, I often hear people say "The impossibility of miracles disproves Christianity" -- but miracles are impossible only if God doesn't exist. Therefore, to assume this from the outset is to beg the fundamental question!

UNIT 2

THEISMS



WELCOME TO UNIT 2

THEISMS

READ: Sire, Ch. 2

In this unit we admit that many different worldviews posit some “deity” as an answer to **Q1**. Thus there are many different kinds of belief in a “God” or even in a multiplicity of “gods.”

Examples: Henotheism, Polytheism, Pantheism, Panentheism, Process Theism, Open Theism, *etc.*

We will begin to focus on Monotheism, and gradually fine-focus on ‘Radical Judeo-Christian Biblical Communal-Ethical Historical-Redemptive Monotheism!’ Let’s shorten that to **JCBT** (Judeo-Christian Biblical Theism) as the revelatory worldview which under-girds classic Christianity.

How can we come to that unique worldview as distinguished from all other “Theisms”?

We will have to discuss which alleged “Revelations” are trustworthy and how we can know.

✿ We can look at the unique **CHARACTER** of the God described in the Bible.
Infinite yet Personal, Transcendent yet Intervening, Holy yet Merciful, Sovereign yet Relational

✿ We can discuss how JCBT is a **RELATIONSHIP** more than just another religious system.
Religion is “man’s search for God.” JCBT is God’s search for man. Are we willing to be found?

As believers in Christ we don’t just subscribe to a set of propositions, we respond to a proposal!

We must then LIVE our worldview. It is our way of SEEING and our way of BEING!

“SHEMA ISRAEL, ADONAI ELOHENU, ADONAI ECHAD!”

[“Hear, Oh Israel, the Lord your God is God Alone.”]

THINK ABOUT THE **7BQs**, AND HOW THE DISTINCT **CHARACTER** OF THE LIVING GOD SHAPES THE **RELATIONSHIP** WITH THE REST OF REALITY:

Q1...Covenant-Keeping God Says: **“I AM THE ONE WHO...**

Q2...Created the Cosmos *ex nihilo*, displaying my glory...

Q3...Created Human Beings in my image, for the praise of my glory...

Q4...Confers freedom upon you to choose life or death...

Q5...Communicates with you and gives you the capacity to know reality...

Q6...Commands you to follow my teachings, guidance and instruction...

Q7...Consummates all history as our story of love, redemption, and grace.”

STUDY AIDS:

“About God” (Some thought-provoking and perhaps inspiring quotes.)

“**WHAT IS ETERNAL?**” (Simple rendition of a complex Q – one that is *foundational* for this course!)

“Tri-lemma: Liar, Lunatic or Lord?”

“The God or Any god(s)?” (To Contemplate a *C. S. Lewis* Quotation!)

“ANSWERS TO SEVEN BASIC QUESTIONS”

According to the Worldview of: _____

1. What Is ULTIMATE Reality? _____

2. What Is The Nature Of External Reality? _____

3. What Is A Human Being? _____

4. What Happens To A Human At Death? _____

5. How Is It Possible To Know Anything? _____

6. How Do We Know Right From Wrong? _____

7. What Is The Purpose Of Human History? _____

ABOUT GOD: DOUBTING, THINKING, BELIEVING, and LIVING

"He who fears, Lord, to doubt, in that fear doubteth Thee." G.K. Chesterton

"Those who believe they believe in God, but without passion in the heart, without anguish of mind, without uncertainty, doubt, and even despair at times...believe only in the idea of God and not in God Himself." Miguel de Unamuno

"God may have His own reasons for denying us certainty with regard to His existence and nature. One reason apparent to us is that man's certainty with regard to anything is poison to his soul. Who knows this better than moderns who have had to cope with dogmatic Fascists, Communists, and even scientists?" Emanuel Rackman, *The Condition of Jewish Belief*

"All our scientific and philosophic ideals are altars to unknown gods." William James

"When God is denied, people do not believe in *nothing*...they believe in *anything*." A Truism!

"If God is dead, the job is open. We see no worthy applicants anywhere, and those who 'self-appoint' scare us to death, wreak havoc, promise heaven and deliver hell." JMB

"Those who make religion their god will not have God for their religion." Thomas Erskine

"All sin makes us homeless wanderers. He who loses God has lost not only heaven but earth as well."
Alexander McClaren

"The most important thought you will ever have is what you think about God, and that thought will motivate your most significant actions, so think magnificently." JMB

"The most crucial question of our time is not this *ism* versus that *ism*, or one nation against another nation. It is whether humans can live without God." Will Durant (paraphrased)

"If God is real and truly God, we should speak to Him, seek Him, commune with Him regularly – anything less can only be considered folly. And as there is no time when He is not God and the universe is free of His rule and humans released from His commandments, so there is no time when we may ignore Him with impunity."
Eugene Borowitz, *Jewish Theology in the Making*

"Isn't it amazing, the God of a billion galaxies desires to reside where? In our hearts!"

"If you really think about it, Nature itself isn't *natural*! Its very existence screams for an explanation from beyond. Belief in a Transcendent Creator is as reasonable and realistic as it is sublime." JMB

"Once we become aware of our epistemological nakedness, God Himself must help us to fashion a conceptual garment."
Shubert Spero

"The human is a creature who depends entirely on revelation. In all our intellectual endeavors we should always listen, be intent to hear and to see. We should not strive to superimpose the structures of our own minds, our own systems of thought, upon reality. At the beginning of all endeavors stands humility. Those who lose it can achieve no other heights than the heights of disillusionment." Friedrich Dessauer, Physicist

"Evil may be the cardinal difficulty for Theism, but Atheism has a far worse problem. It is left with Evil as a natural and perpetual feature of reality and has no reliable grounds for choosing Good! Those who use the 'problem of evil' to reject Theism might consider carefully: NO other worldview can honestly define and explain evil much less provide an ultimately redemptive solution. At least the Biblical God tasted of pain & suffering too." JMB

“My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But, how had I got this idea of just and unjust? What was I comparing this universe with when I called it unjust? If the whole show was bad and senseless...why did I, who was supposed to be a part of the show, find myself in such violent reaction against it? If the whole universe had no meaning, we should never have found out that it has no meaning.” C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* II:1

“Everything is in the hands of God, except the fear of (awed reverence for) God.” Berachot 32b (Talmud)

“I will give you my basic belief about existence. This may not be ‘proven’ by any one short-sighted scientific test from *within* the system of reality. Because *all other* reality comes from *this* Reality, who is sheer Existence, the One who said: **I AM THAT I AM!** He *is* existence, we *have* existence.

The variety of scientific and philosophical proofs of God’s existence, although intriguing, are not as convincing to me as the absolute sum-total sturdiness of having the great I AM as an under-girding FACT upon which *an entire and coherent worldview* can be built.

This is completely trustworthy for all my human inquiry, endeavor, and longing.

The Primary, Ultimate, ETERNAL Reality, the *Alef & Tav*, is blazingly real. He is not a philosophical abstraction. He is not a projection of my highest self or of my deepest fears & needs. He is not a nebulous life-force. He is not an impersonal energy. He is not equated or entangled with even this astonishingly vast and complex cosmos. He is *Totally Other* than all else...the creation He brought out of nothing by His very word, which just happens to have left abundant evidence everywhere!

But I begin by acknowledging God for His own sake. He is unutterably Holy, Sovereign, and full of grace. And, for reasons I do not pretend to grasp, **the great I AM has also said, ‘I AM WITH YOU.’**

Yes, I do tremble. But where else would I go?

He alone has the words that turn existence into LIFE!” JMB

“The proof of my THEISTIC answer to the cosmic sum is this: when I accept Christianity I may find difficulties in harmonizing it with some particular facts imbedded in the cosmological MYTHS derived from ‘science’, but at least I can allow for science. However, if I swallow the ‘scientific’ cosmology as a whole, then not only can I not fit my Christianity in, I cannot even allow for science! If minds are but brains, and brains are but biochemistry, and biochemistry is but the meaningless flux of atoms...then how do the ‘thoughts’ of minds have any more significance than the sound of the wind in the trees? And to me this is the final test. This is how I distinguish dreaming and waking. When awake, I can account for and study my dream. (Maybe I had indigestion!) But while in the nightmare I could not have fitted in my waking experience. The waking world is more true because it can contain the dreaming experience.

I am certain that when passing from the Naturalistic worldview to the Theistic, I have passed from dreaming to waking. Christian Theism can contain God and science, and morality, and art...

The Naturalistic worldview cannot have any of these things, not even science itself!”

C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory* (paraphrased)

“Holding to Judeo-Christian Biblical Theism as a worldview is not a substitute for having a relationship with the Living God. The God of JCBT does not want us to merely give assent to propositions. He wants us to contend with Him, trust Him, and to adore Him. This love relationship is what the whole story is about. Our Theism is a vivid way of seeing *and* a full-orbed way of being.

To believe this fully is to live it fervently.” JMB ♥

WHAT IS 'ETERNAL'??

Compare these *Very* Basic Assumptions about Eternal Reality, and note that *these few* are really the *only* choices:

- 1.) **Nothing** is Eternal. [Then Everything that exists *had* a beginning...came into being at some point.]
- 2.) **Everything** is Eternal. [Absolute Monism (Material *or* Spiritual) or possibly a Matter//Spirit Dualism]
- 3.) **Something** is Eternal, and some things are **not**. [A Creator – Creation Dynamism (**not** a Dualism!)]

IF (1.) Nothing is Eternal then everything had a beginning...everything came **into** being **out of** non-being.

But, that is totally impossible! Why? Because **Non-being cannot beget Being**.

Something cannot come from Nothing.

We can most assuredly eliminate (1.)

But, Something Exists...so – perhaps it *always* existed? (That would mean ‘What Is’ is eternal.) So now 2 choices:

IF (2.) Everything is Eternal then Absolutely Everything has Always Existed.

What exists? **Matter** and/or **Spirit**.

(2:1) The **Material** Universe Itself is Eternal and there is *no such thing as ‘spirit.’*

But, the material universe simply does not bear features of eternal independent existence.

This is actually no more feasible than things ‘popping into being on their own out of nothing’! **(1)**

We can quite reasonably eliminate (2:1.)

(2:2) The Universe is all **Spirit** and ‘*matter*’ is *only an illusion*. This ‘pure unalloyed Spirit’ is What is Eternal.

But, if **Everything** is pure, eternal, perfect, independent and absolute reality...there is **NO** explanation for why temporal, imperfect, dependent things exist as they do! To say *matter is merely an ‘illusion’* is no answer!

We can safely eliminate (2:2.)

Now, some may try to combine **2:1** and **2:2** in a Matter-Spirit Dualism, but then there would be **no** viable explanation for **HOW** the two exclusive sides of reality arose, or how they relate, or how we would ever know.

(3.) Something exists rather than nothing. Not everything that exists could have existed eternally, but **something** has to have existed eternally for anything *else* to exist, for nothing comes from nothing and something is!

Ergo...It MUST be the case that something is eternal and other things are not.

The basic assumption that there is an Eternal Being who caused everything else that exists **is** an entirely reasonable assumption. It is not logically inferior to so-called ‘scientific’ claims.

In fact, it can under-gird a WV that accounts for and explains the reality that we actually do experience better than *any* of the alternatives!

This can bring us to a generic “**Theism**” – Belief in God as a Creator. But there are many different Theisms. So from a basic theistic premise, we need to examine **what kind** of an Eternal Something (or Someone!) there is.

Why *do* we believe in Yahweh rather than Plato’s “Good” or Aristotle’s “Prime Mover” or the Deist’s distant and aloof Deity, or an immanent-but-not-transcendent-divinity-of-some-indeterminate-nature?

Now we can dig into the competing claims of Special Revelation and really get somewhere!

APPLICATION OF A *BIT* OF LOGIC TO THE SO-CALLED “TRILEMMA”

Two contradictory assertions cannot both be true. A proposition is either true or false. Those are very basic Laws of thought, but can they help with such an *outrageous* idea as the Christian belief that **Jesus is truly God incarnate!!??**

Christians at the very least usually say:

“Jesus Christ claimed *unique* Deity for Himself.”

The Gospels, interpreted correctly in their Hebraic context, are very clear in reporting that Jesus made astonishing messianic claims *and* claimed to be one with God in a unique way. So, you might set up the famous **“Liar, Lunatic or Lord Trilemma”** like this:

**“Jesus Christ is reported to have claimed to be God.
Those reports must either be TRUE or FALSE.”**

1. IF the reports are false, the gospel writers **either** knew they were false – **or** they did not know they were false.

1:1. **IF** they knew they were false, that means they were lying and that they knew they were lying. Is that feasible? Why would they die for what they knew was only a lie? (Yes, some religionists martyr themselves for what is a false WV, but they don't think it is false!)

1:2. Could they have reported something and not known it was false?

Possibly, but that really doesn't seem to be what happened according to the texts...

We must explain the historic phenomenon of the rapid growth of the early witness community. Especially in the context of 1st century Judaism and the surrounding pagan world..

The most reasonable explanation for the rise of early Christianity is that the reporters reported what they fully believed to be true...a belief they were willing to die for.

(A belief that scoffers could so easily have refuted by finding the body of the crucified Jesus.)

It is at the very least 'reasonable' to say that they did indeed believe their own reports and that Jesus did indeed claim to be God.

But, now consider that 'truly reported' but still rather unbelievable claim!

2. IF the reports are true that Jesus claimed to be God, **either** Jesus was making a true claim **or** a false claim. (He was either telling the truth or He was lying or deluded.)

2:1. **If** His claims were false, **either** He knew they were **or** He did not know they were false.

2:1a. **If** He knew they were false He was a downright **LIAR**. But that doesn't square with His exemplary life, His exquisitely ethical teachings, and His selfless death.

2:1b. **If** He didn't realize He was lying and just going around in a Jewish context (where God is not believed to take human form) during volatile and tumultuous times (of cruel Roman occupation and fervent Jewish rebellion) claiming to be Yahweh Incarnate... then...He surely was a raving Lunatic. But that doesn't square with any of the facts above. Even non-Christian writers such as Josephus mention Jesus in honorable terms.

Consider that Jesus was able to: inspire a diverse group of disciples and gospel-writers, leave a sublime set of teachings unmatched in world religions, and launch a witness community that survived against so many odds...and even thrived...giving the world a religion that is still very much alive! One that **IF** IT WERE FOLLOWED FAITHFULLY (and not abused by any self-serving 'religious' leaders) would bless the world with **Shalom** and **Hesed**. (merciful loving kindness)

2:2. IF Jesus was not a LIAR and not a LOONEY, then His outrageous claims were true.

It seems reasonable enough to conclude, and a joy to proclaim: **Jesus is LORD!**

The God or Any god(s)?!

When Christian **Theists** meet opposition from Naturalist-**Atheists** it is a simple straightforward case of:

“There is a God” vs. “There is no God.”

But the dispute is far more befuddling when Theists contend with the now more ‘popular view of god.’ The questions to discuss are more like these:

“Is god personal or impersonal?” “Does god ‘intervene, command, or reveal anything to’ us?”

Or – “Is ‘god’ merely the vague term we use to denote some indeterminate **force**?”

C. S. Lewis has a gleaming discussion of all this in his book *Miracles: A Preliminary Study*.

“We who defend Christianity find ourselves hotly opposed not by the *irreligion* of others but by their *real* religion.”

Here is a paraphrase from a lovely portion of Lewis’ comments from chapter 11 of *Miracles*:

‘**S**peak about beauty and goodness, or about a god who simply is the indwelling principle...a great spiritual force pervading everything...a Common Mind of which we are all sparks, a pool of generalized divinity into which we can all flow...and you will gain a friendly hearing.

But the temperature changes when you speak of a God who has purpose and performs particular actions, who does this and not that, who is a concrete, choosing, commanding God with a determinate **character**. People become upset and angry because this offends *their* desire to define god however *they* wish.

People are quite reluctant to fine-focus away from their notion of an abstract, negative, impersonal deity to the Living God revealed in the Bible. People *prefer* the pantheistic conception of god because such a being is harmless. But, please consider this: Such a being leaves us quite alone.

There IS no genuine relationship possible in a pantheistic worldview.

Not between human and God, not even between humans.

“**T**he **Pantheist’s God** demands nothing but does nothing. It is there if you wish, like a book on a shelf. If this were the Truth, then Christianity should be stripped of its images of ‘Sovereign Creator and Sustainer of the world, and Holy Judge of Humanity.’ Such images of **Kingship** are antiquated accidents and should be purged from the religion. **But...**

It is with a shock that we find them to be indispensable. You may have had a similar shock before, in connection with smaller matters – when the line pulls at your hand, when something breathes beside you in the dark. And so here; the shock comes at the precise moment when the thrill of **LIFE** is communicated to us. How shocking to meet life when we thought we were alone.

‘Look out!’ we cry, ‘it’s alive!’ And at this point so many draw back.

An **impersonal** god? Fine! A **subjective** god of beauty & goodness, inside our own heads? Better still! A **formless life-force** pervading the world which we can ‘tap into’ if we feel like it? Best of all!

But **GOD HIMSELF**, alive, pulling at the other end of the cord, approaching at infinite speed, the king, the hunter, the lover, the redeemer? Oh dear, **that** is quite another matter.

There comes a moment when children who have been playing burglars suddenly hush. Was that a real footstep in the hall? And there comes that moment when people who have dabbled in the ‘popular religion’ (our ‘search for a sense of the divine’) suddenly recoil. Supposing we had really found Him. *Oh my!*

We never intended it would come to that! Worse still, supposing HE had found US?!”

Are we willing to be ‘found’ by the true and living God?

Are we ready for a real relationship?

UNIT 3

DEISM



WELCOME TO UNIT 3

DEISM

READ: Sire, Ch. 3

Deism is a species of Theism, but something essential about the God of classic Christian Theism has been discarded. Deism has been called a ‘way-station’ to Atheism. Could this be because Deists posit a creator but deem the creation closed to His miraculous intervention? In a WV whose God was like an absentee landlord, the Clockwork Cosmos was more commanding than the Clockmaker! The *natural* was more important than the *supernatural*, and *general* revelation more trusted than *special* revelation.



Of all the Worldviews we’ll study, Deism is the one most identified with a specific period of history, namely the 17th and 18th centuries. We can say that Deism was the perfect

“Religion of Reason for the Age of Reason.”

It is best appreciated if we see it in its historical context and for that we need some Medieval and Renaissance background.

We should also “listen” to some leading Deist spokesmen.

Those Enlightenment Era *philosophes* were erudite and eloquent!

We will carefully critique Deism as a worldview. It was an understandable reaction to the upheavals of the 16th century, and a seemingly sane, intelligent, tolerant, even pious religious option. However, it died out as a major movement by the 19th century. Most people don’t believe in a “clockwork” universe anymore, therefore, could Deism be a viable option today? Do we hear deistic-sounding sentiments about God today?

STUDY AIDS:

 Be sure to **print out** the Study Guide to use during the lectures.

“ANSWERS TO SEVEN BASIC QUESTIONS”

According to the Worldview of: _____

1. What Is ULTIMATE Reality? _____

2. What Is The Nature Of External Reality? _____

3. What Is A Human Being? _____

4. What Happens To A Human At Death? _____

5. How Is It Possible To Know Anything? _____

6. How Do We Know Right From Wrong? _____

7. What Is The Purpose Of Human History? _____

STUDY GUIDE – LECTURE OUTLINE FOR DEISM

Deism is a bridge from Biblical Theism to Naturalism (Atheism)

Ask: Did Deists *intend* to banish the Biblical God?!

I. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Of all the WV's we'll study, Deism is the one most linked to a certain era.

Which one? The _____ & _____ centuries. This fascinating era is aptly called:

The "Age of _____" / "The _____"

Broad overview to give BACKGROUND for DEISM:

1st c. – Xty is born _____

2nd & 3rd c. - _____

4th c. - _____

5th through 13th c. – THE MEDIEVAL ERA & ITS WV = **The "Medieval Christian Synthesis"**
LIST some FEATURES OF THIS GENERAL WV

14th -16th c. – A Tumultuous Transition Period/ The "DISSOLUTION OF THE MCS"
LIST some FACTORS IN THE DISSOLUTION of the M.C.S.:

Sum-up THIS AMAZING TRANSITION by discussing THE "THREE R's!!!"

R1. The Humanist-_____...Extols Human Qua Human!!!

R2. The Protestant-_____ (Begins in 1517 with _____)

CAUSES-

RESULTS-

R3. The Scientific-_____ mostly in _____ & _____

N. Copernicus -1543 *"On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres"*

J. Kepler (1571-1630)- Galileo (1564-1642)- A *shift* from the Geo-Centric Model to the Heliocentric Model

Isaac Newton – 1687 – *"Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy"*

A UNIVERSAL Law of _____

Describe the *NEW* WORLDVIEW MODEL given to the Age of Reason –

SUM-UP the WV SHIFT- The 'OLD' World is gone... We're now in the 'Age of Reason...'

What happens to "FAITH?"

II. GOD? (He doesn't 'disappear,' but ... _____)

Accept only _____ Revelation, not _____ Revelation!

SUM UP: "The more Creation was seen as a _____, the more the Creator was seen as merely a _____."

"DEISM was the perfect Religion of REASON for the Age of Reason!"

III. FAMOUS DEISTS

1. Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1583 – 1648)

List his "five articles" that all religions should hold in common.

Note that these notions are supposed to be derived from _____ via _____ !



2. John Locke – In 1695 he published *“The Reasonableness of Christianity”*
Christianity is the most ‘reasonable religion’ but only **IF** it is reduced...
3. John Toland – In 1696 he published *“Christianity Not Mysterious”*
4. Thomas Woolston – In 1729 – *“Discourse on Miracles”*
He called the central miracle of Christianity a _____ !
5. Voltaire (1694 – 1778)

IV. CRITIQUE OF DEISM

😊 List several **strengths** of this WV: 🇺🇸

😞 Discuss its **weaknesses**: 🇷🇺

1. Dependency on a “Perfect Systematic Rationality of Creator, Creation, and Creature” wherein:
The Creator does NO miracles, the Creation is mechanistic, and the Creature employs perfect Reason!
Now, demolish that contrived contraption! David Hume can help here!
2. An unstable (perhaps even unreasonable!) mixture of Natural and Supernatural.
3. Worst of all ...Deism wants Christian Morality, but without the real Christ!

Closing Quotes:

“It isn’t that Christianity has been tried and found deficient...it has been found difficult and left untried!”

C.S. Lewis

“We don’t need a religion that is right where we are right...we need a religion that is right where we are _____”

G.K. Chesterton

UNIT 4

NATURALISMS



WELCOME TO UNIT 4

NATURALISMS

READ: Sire, Ch. 4

Article: *Science and the Claims of Naturalism: Breaking the Chains of Scientism*

Co-authored by James Edward Klemaszewski (Astronomy, Chemistry and Geology Professor at ASU)

The easiest way to define ‘**generic**’ Naturalism is...Any worldview that has as its prime proposition:

“NATURE IS ALL THAT EXISTS.”

Nature consists of the entire physical universe. The universe exists due to random impersonal events and/or processes, not as the result of a personal or divine agent. There is really nothing *Supernatural*. Only the *Natural* exists, and Nature can be observed, measured, and *it is hoped*, eventually mastered! Naturalists usually define the fundamental fabric of Nature in terms of matter, forces, and energy. But however Nature is defined, the point is that it is ALL there is, and it is operating as a closed, cause-and-effect, eternally self-generated system.

There are many ‘**brand-name**’ Naturalisms:

Positive Atheism
Secular Humanism
Darwinism
Evolutionism
Materialism
Hedonism
Behaviorism
Marxism
Logical Positivism



All of these philosophies have their own focal points and flavors, but they all have the fundamental proposition that **NATURE IS ALL THERE IS**. As you answer the **7BQs** according to generic Naturalism, note that **everything** must be accounted for (or else *discounted*) from within the **closed** system of Nature. *Every* conceivable question must be answered (or ‘*answered away*’) as if nothing but Nature exists...
...and exists completely **on its own!**

Be sure you know, and can articulate, the difference between **Science** and **Scientism!**

STUDY AIDS:

Chart comparing the Naturalistic view of science (*Scientism*) and the Theistic view.
Bertrand Russell Quote

“ANSWERS TO SEVEN BASIC QUESTIONS”

According to the Worldview of: _____

1. What Is ULTIMATE Reality? _____

2. What Is The Nature Of External Reality? _____

3. What Is A Human Being? _____

4. What Happens To A Human At Death? _____

5. How Is It Possible To Know Anything? _____

6. How Do We Know Right From Wrong? _____

7. What Is The Purpose Of Human History? _____

Naturalistic Worldview

An Atheistic View of Science and Nature:

The naturalistic view of science may be called ***Scientism***.

It is *not* a methodology... it is an **ideology**.

Does *not* admit limits – **believes** that ‘science’ is the *only* objective way to “know” all of reality.

Says it only deals with facts, not “speculations about the supernatural.” Yet cannot account for reason itself!

Makes totally unscientific claims about science *and* about the cosmos (that it is eternal, that it is self-existent and uncreated, that it is all there is.)

None of the above is truly scientific. Naturalists may *use* science but they cannot account for *why* it works, nor do they allow the evidence to speak for itself. This is unwarranted and unreasonable faith!

Scientism is not scientific! It is a presupposed ‘**faith**’ *about* Science and Nature, which ends up losing both!

Real Science

The Methodology of all true Scientific Endeavor:

Uses **method** of observation, hypothesis, experimentation.

Provisional, ***admits*** limits.

Can discover true facts about the cosmos, but facts that must be ***interpreted*** through the lenses of a worldview.

Uses the senses *and* reason. Needs basic assumptions to even *begin* its inquiries.

Assumes a world there to be grasped (an assumption that is ‘borrowed’ from **theism**, even though this is usually forgotten!)

Reveals evidence of complexity and order. Can effectively demonstrate that matter is *not* eternal. (It is most reasonable to then ponder what *is* eternal.)

Science is scientific, but... it still needs a WV context. Theism is a far better interpretive model for it!

Theistic Worldview

A Theistic View of Science and Nature:

Modern science was born in a theistic framework (that the rational mind should be able to discover creation’s order.)

Believes that science points *beyond* itself and its limits.

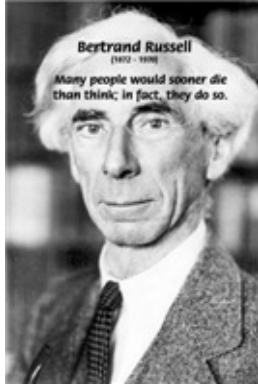
Believes in the responsibility of knowing (seek not just knowledge but also wisdom.) Can interpret coherently.

Can account both for the existence of the world *and* for our capacity to grasp it.

The universe *is* objectively there *and* is intelligible to the mind and senses. (Not to mention it has purpose and grandeur & meaningfulness!)

Believes that the evidence points to a Personal Creator. Faith has a basis in Reason. Science and Reason fully support a Theistic paradigm!

Theism uses reason and faith to hold a worldview that can genuinely account for both nature and the supernatural!



Bertrand Russell – 20th c. Philosopher-Scientist, Mathematician-Logician
Co-Author of *Principia Mathematica*.

Russell was a famous 'scoffer' who wrote "*Why I am not a Christian.*"

Read this quote carefully and discuss:

Was Bertrand Russell simply a Naturalist (a Secular Humanist)...
Or, was he a nihilist, or... perhaps an Atheistic Existentialist?!



"That man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his development, his hopes and fears, his love and beliefs, are only the outcomes of accidental collocations of atoms, that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and emotion, can preserve individual life beyond the grave ...

...That all the labors of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the entire temple of Man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins ...



...All these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand.

Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built."

Discussion Points: _____

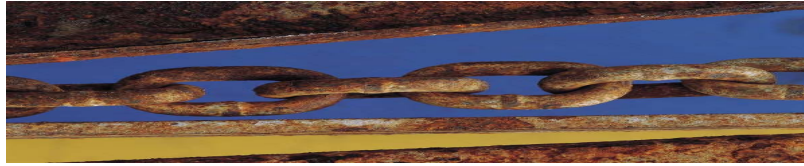
Science Tests Naturalism's Claims and Finds them Unconvincing!



By

Professor James Klemaszewski *and* Jan Boville

BREAKING THE CHAINS OF SCIENTISM



Naturalism uses science (the scientific method) as a way of gaining knowledge about the world. That *is* appropriate. However, Naturalism *also* insists that science and its methods are the *only* way to 'know reality.' That adamant insistence comes from a pre-supposed non-scientific (you might even say 'faith-based!') **assumption**. That assumption, of course, is:

That Nature Is All There Is. [That the material Cosmos constitutes the whole of reality.]

And since it is valid *by definition* to assert that 'science cannot possibly study or gain knowledge about anything beyond Nature,' it is then proclaimed (albeit incorrectly) that 'nothing Supernatural exists!'

In this way, Naturalists misuse and turn science into Scientism.

And they stay **chained** to it in a self-validating, and continually self-ratifying 'vicious circle.'

Naturally, Naturalistic scientists and philosophers feel quite safe and sure that *they* deal with: real-world, hard-core, substantial verifiable scientific **facts**...whereas *people of 'Faith'* deal in: 'other-worldly' unproven assumptions, fantasies and **fictions!**

Can this **scientistic** reasoning be challenged? Moreover, can SCIENCE itself actually lend any credence to '*belief in the Supernatural*'? Can the findings of several fields of science offer any support at all for an assumption *other than* one insisting that: 'Nature is All There Is'?!

It is easy enough to challenge the faulty logic of scientism:

To 'pre-decide' upon a patently non-scientific belief (e.g., "Nature is all there is,") and hold it as your prime assumption about Science & Nature is plain old hackneyed circular reasoning!

The Naturalist scientist is then simply 'finding what he set out to find.' (And nothing else!)

But, if we are courageous in our search for knowledge about Reality...what **else** might we find?!

Let's take that Naturalistic/Scientistic prime assumption. As any thinker will agree, such an important tenet should itself be 'tested' using scientific methodology. (Otherwise, why put any confidence in its veracity?)

It might be helpful first off, to remind ourselves what science is and does:

"This is what science does: to show the pattern of connections between different things. These connections are sometimes literal physical connections, such as how our bodies are put together, and sometimes they are causal connections, such as how the wind causes a sailboat to move.

Either way, science inevitably unifies the constituents of the world into a single whole, in which everything is either closely or remotely connected to everything else.

It does not and can not show that there is a separate supernatural realm, or some sort of supernatural stuff that is categorically different from what's in the physical, natural world.

So, **science is the basis for naturalism.**

If you take science as your preferred way of knowing about the world, you'll be led to naturalism."

[naturalism.org]

Although the above text may state why the authors believe science is a useful foundation for naturalism, it does not adequately represent what science is and what it does.

And it does not demonstrate why it is the only, or even the best, approach for knowing.

It is not science that shows the pattern of connections, rather it is scientists who do this. Science is the body of systematized knowledge derived from observation, study, and experimentation carried on in order to determine the nature of what is being observed.

A scientific hypothesis must be testable, falsifiable, and the results of experimentation must be repeatable. Science, by definition, pertains to our physical universe. The non-conscious material Cosmos is the legitimate realm of science.

...but the consciousness doing the observing and reasoning and perceiving and unifying...from whence did such **non-material** intelligent entities arise? science cannot answer that question.

in fact there is a lot science cannot do
it cannot 'start itself!

Science has no way to determine **why** anything exists, or account for man's ability to **reason**.

The Scientific Method, the universally accepted approach to doing science, is not founded on or rooted in Science. No one was walking along and observed the Scientific Method, providing hypotheses as to what it is or how it formed, which are then used to formulate predictions that are the basis for experimentation. Rather, Science and the Scientific Method are rooted in reasoning and logic. Science is a philosophical approach to studying the physical, quantifiable universe, and as such, it is based on a set of non-scientific assumptions which limit the scope and applicability of Science.

Let's take the hypothesis that science is the best way of knowing about the world. Although it may be tempting to point to the success of the scientific method in the realm of science as proof of its reliability, this would go against the very nature of the scientific method- trying to disprove a hypothesis in order to establish one's confidence in it. It is already well established that 'the scientific method works for science.' It works for finding out about the world of Nature.

The question is: Is science the best approach for everything, including the non-scientific? You need only look at non-scientific disciplines to see that the scientific method is not used there, or at best in a limited or modified sense: Art, Music, Politics, Logic, Religion, Economics, Spirituality, Mathematics, Philosophy, History, and so on.

In fact, the more you study science, the more you become aware of its **limitations**, its own as well as those stemming from mathematics (a foundational expression of science). Science has demonstrated that there are things we cannot know, observers and random events play a role in the outcome of events, and that there is a limit to what science can know.

Science tells us that there is reality that exists beyond the reach of science, and that existence on some levels is indeterminate until observed. Mathematicians and Cosmologists cannot tell us the correct geometry that we should use to describe the universe. And the data collected are subject to our current knowledge, subjective interpretations, political and financial influences, philosophy, ability to measure and observe, and so on. Science, while it has moved forward, is not always right. In fact, more scientific hypotheses are incorrect than correct – over time the incorrect ones get weeded out and/or refined.

Science is, as it were, an imperfect science.

While it is true that if you are a naturalist that you hold science as the default way of knowing; it is also true that you're reducing your ability to know about the world to only that which is physical.

Science does not disprove the existence of the non-physical, metaphysical or spiritual – it is not within the mandate of science to do so. Science, because it is limited in its scope, is also limited in its application. You would have a better approach to knowing when you use the scientific method in conjunction with, for example, experience, logic, and intuition. *(And of course one should ask the naturalist how one determines when a scientific approach is preferred and when it is not!)*

Science alone, therefore, is clearly not the best way of knowing across all domains of life and existence.

A naturalist would claim that the universe exists, not as a result of a personal agent (God) but rather as the result of some random impersonal event and/or process(es). One should immediately see that this statement is based on assumption(s) and NOT based on scientific data. Scientific data *describe the universe – space, time, matter, energy – but do not account for why it exists or, at present, how it came into being.* Any statements regarding the origin of the universe – why it exists – are therefore not scientific.

Furthermore, if the universe has a beginning, then it is not eternal. Science has formalized (in the First Law of Thermodynamics) that something cannot come from nothing. If the physical universe is not eternal (and it is not as far as science can determine), then it had to be caused.

It could not have been caused by Nothing (random or otherwise), so it had to be caused by Something that is not physical in nature. However the non-physical is not open to investigation by the scientific method. Therefore the cause of the origin of the universe cannot be determined scientifically. However, the question of origins can be approached logically and perhaps...theologically.

Another naturalistic claim is that there is nothing supernatural. *“Only the natural exists and can be observed, measured and studied.* Naturalists define the fundamental fabric of nature as consisting primarily of matter and energy. However Nature is defined, the point is that it is ALL there is and it is on its own as a closed, cause-and-effect system.”

This claim is also primarily a non-scientific assumption. Science limits itself to the observable and measurable, so it therefore cannot be used to make “scientific” claims about the “non-scientific.” Furthermore, it is circular reasoning. By a naturalist’s definition, the “natural” is that which can be observed, measured and studied. **Consequently, if one is only measuring and observing that which can be measured and observed, and ignoring or discounting anything that is not, one will see only that for which they look!** In addition, Foundational mathematical theorems also indicate these claims are incorrect. These theorems point to the existence of reality that transcends the physical, accessible universe. Reality exists beyond that which we can now know or ever will be able to access. Science and Mathematics cannot say anything about the nature of the Transcendent, other than it is non-physical and it exists. It is therefore beyond the natural; it is, by definition, ‘supernatural.’

As we have seen, it's simple enough to show that Scientism is not the same thing as Science. Furthermore, Scientism (Naturalism's undue *faith in* Science) isn't genuinely scientific. Science is admittedly limited in its scope and application, and it does not adequately address the full scope of reality.

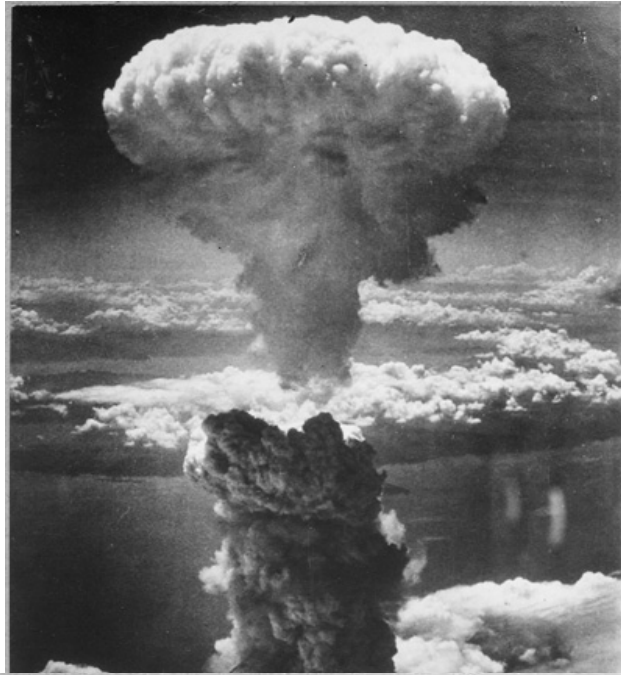
Science does not imply that there is no personal-purposeful creative agent or 'intelligent' designer. Scientific data certainly do not disprove the existence of God.

So if we take the claims of science seriously, we will seriously question the WV of Naturalism! Indeed, we are on high ground (scientifically *and* philosophically) when we realize that science actually *requires* a non-temporal starter, and '*points to*' the existence of reality beyond nature. *Ergo*, if science itself doesn't support and, *if we are honest*, even disproves the prime claims of naturalism, why constrain yourself with its scientism? **Break those chains and breathe free!**



UNIT 5

NIHILISM

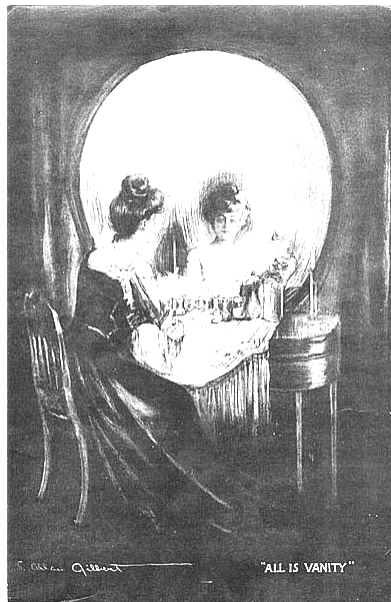


WELCOME TO UNIT 5

nihilism

READ: Sire, Ch. 5

Nihilism (from the Latin for **nothing**) is not a Worldview but a negation of all attempts at one! All human endeavors, especially the quest for meaning, come to nothing. Nihilism denies the value of everything we are trying to accomplish in this course... so why do we include a unit on it? Because it is tragically symptomatic of our cultural malaise. And it provides us with a devastatingly honest critique of Naturalism. And, it effectively introduces Atheistic Existentialism!



Know how to describe the “Three Bridges to Nihilism.”

Discuss the ‘artistic’ ways in which nihilists attempt to express their nihilism.

As for answers to the 7 Basic Questions? *Just say NO.*

There are **NO** answers.

STUDY AIDS:

Quick Review of Naturalism’s 7 Basic Questions
the nihilistic mood taking expression (Quotes)

“ANSWERS TO SEVEN BASIC QUESTIONS”

According to the Worldview of: _____

1. What Is ULTIMATE Reality? _____

2. What Is The Nature Of External Reality? _____

3. What Is A Human Being? _____

4. What Happens To A Human At Death? _____

5. How Is It Possible To Know Anything? _____

6. How Do We Know Right From Wrong? _____

7. What Is The Purpose Of Human History? _____

“Quick Review of Naturalism’s 7BQs”

- Q1.** The Cosmos is All that Is. Never mind that we can’t prove that by our own scientific rules, but let’s just say it is. There is no reason *WHY* it is, why anything *should* exist...it just does. We need not try to derive any “meaning” from that...it’s just a raw fact and *has* no inherent meaning. Ergo: ***THERE IS NO COSMIC MEANING.***
- Q2.** It is a **closed** cosmos, a self-operating, self-perpetuating system of cause & effect, running on natural ‘forces.’ These forces themselves are obviously *not* personal, conscious or purposeful. Ergo: ***NOTHING WITHIN THIS IMPERSONAL CLOSED COSMOS CAN TRULY BE UNIQUE, FREE, OR SIGNIFICANT.***
- Q3.** Human beings are a random, accidental product of these brute ‘non-conscious’ natural forces and materials. Yet we have some inexplicable capacity called ‘consciousness.’ We ask questions! But given our first two premises, it must be that: ***THERE ARE NO ULTIMATE ANSWERS, AND THE HUMAN BEING CANNOT BE FREE OR SIGNIFICANT.***
- Q4. *NOR DO WE SURVIVE OUR PHYSICAL DEATH.***
- Q5. NOR CAN WE ACCOUNT FOR OUR OWN CAPACITY TO: *KNOW ANYTHING.***
- Q6. NOR DO WE HAVE ANY TRUE BASIS FOR KNOWING RIGHT FROM WRONG. BESIDES, BEING DETERMINED BY INEXORABLE NATURAL FORCES: *WE’VE NO WAY TO ACT SIGNIFICANTLY & BE HELD RESPONSIBLE MORALLY!***
- Q7. WE CAN TRY TO SURVIVE AS A SPECIES, BUT REALLY, WHY *SHOULD* WE? AND IF WE DON’T SURVIVE, THE VAST COSMOS WILL BE UTTERLY INDIFFERENT TO THE LOSS: *WE WERE A NOISY PROBLEMATIC BLIP ON THE SCREEN.***

“the modern mind is in complete disarray. knowledge has stretched itself to the point where neither the world nor our intelligence can find any foothold. it is a fact: *we are suffering from nihilism.*” ~ albert camus

“there is no other world, nor even *this* one. *what, then, is there?*
the inner smile provoked in us by the patent *nonexistence* of both.”

“everything is **nothing**... even the consciousness of **nothing.**” ~ e. m. cioran *drawn and quartered*

“better to be an animal than a man, an insect than an animal, a plant than an insect... an so on.
salvation? whatever diminishes the kingdom of consciousness...”

“paradise was unendurable, otherwise the first people would have taken to it. this world is no less so, for here we regret paradise lost and we anticipate another one! what to do? where to go? easy. do nothing. go nowhere.”
~ e. m. cioran *the trouble with being born*

“why rebel any more against the symmetry of this world when Chaos itself can only be a system of disorders?
our fate is to rot, along with the continents and the stars. we drag on like resigned sick men, to the end of time,
the curiosity of a *denouement* (anti-climax) that is foreseen, frightful and vain.”

“when we have glimpsed, by an overwhelming intuition, our own and anyone else’s uselessness, it is incomprehensible that everyone has not done the same thing: *to do away with oneself* seems such a clear and simple action. *why* is it so rare? *why* avoid it?

because, if reason disavows the appetite for life, then the irrational nothingness that extends our lives is a power superior to all absolutes. [Reason tells us there *is* no reason to live, while the deathly nothingness forces its will upon us and *gives* us an irrational will-to-live! This is very ‘Schopenhauerian!]

this explains the tacit coalition of mortal resistance to death; it is not only the symbol of existence but existence itself; it is everything. it is nothing. and this nothing, which is everything, cannot give life meaning, but it nevertheless makes life persevere in what it is: ‘a **non-state**’ – *a state of not committing suicide.*”

~ e. m. cioran *a short history of decay*

“like any other life-form, we humans exist only to replicate ourselves.” ~ george monbiot

“meaning generates other meanings – the process has backed us into a dark cave and there is no sunlight.”
~ tarthang tulku

“the nihilist says: ‘i want to see things as they really are, not as we wish them to be.’
but a nihilist does not ‘believe’ in nihilism because nihilism is no belief. a nihilist **just is.** no more.”

“seeing is believing?” believing is seeing? no, no, no. seeing and believing are *both* wrong. There is only ‘no.’

“nihilism is the *only* sensible meaningful response to this senseless meaningless world.
absurdity, then, is not ‘meaning-less’ – absurdity is its own medium and the *only* message.” ~ absurdist

“the universal language is violence.” ~ anarchist

“in a society that has abolished all adventures, the only adventure remaining is to abolish society.”
~ graffiti, french student movement, 1968

“**Smash everything.**” ~ anarchist



“when you see a bumper-sticker that says, **God Bless America**, just erase the **B.**” [We must live ‘in spite of **GODLESS**ness.]

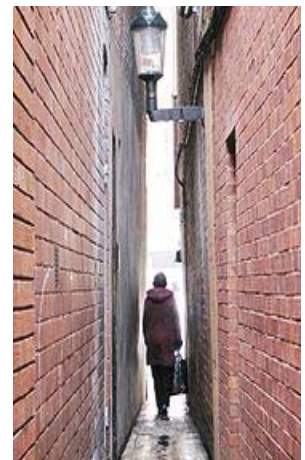
“religious concepts are parasites on moral intuitions.” ~ pascal boyer

“we are all atheists! we all deny *most of the gods* humans have ever believed in. some of us have simply gone *one god further.*” ~ richard dawkins

“if god actually existed, we would have to kill him.” ~ mikhail bakunin
[This is very Sartrean. If God exists, the existentialist human can not! Godless is good!]

“to endure this diseased life by the vain hope of an afterlife in heaven is the most nihilistic idea i can imagine.” [This is very Nietzschean]

“the universe we observe has the properties we should expect if, at bottom, there is **no** design, **no** purpose, **no** ‘good and evil.’
nothing but blind pitiless indifference.” ~ richard dawkins



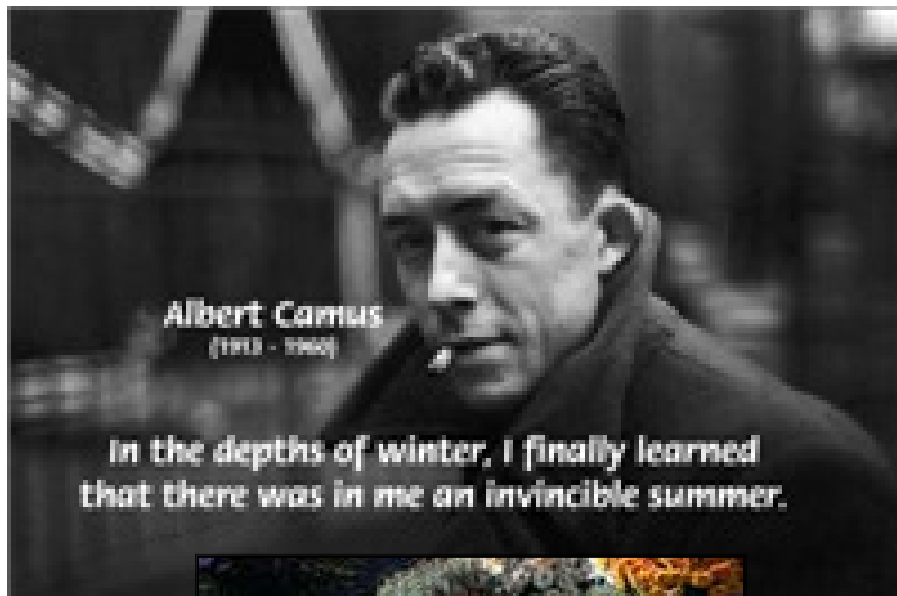
WHO ARE WE? WHAT ARE WE?? WHY ARE WE??? NO ANSWERS. SO, WHERE ARE WE GOING?



UNIT 6

EXISTENTIALISM

Atheistic *and* Theistic



WELCOME TO UNIT 6a

ATHEISTIC EXISTENTIALISM

READ: Sire, Ch. 6 – (first half.)

Atheistic *Existentialism*, though not a full-fledged WV, is one of the most influential “philosophical approaches” of recent times, and takes the plight of modern humanity very seriously. With disdain for traditional philosophical systems, existentialists “begin” with a hauntingly personal question:

How can I have meaningful individual existence in the face of the gratuitousness and absurdity of Existence itself?!



Picture the brilliant Albert Camus responding to our **7BQs** by exclaiming:

There is only ONE truly serious philosophical question – whether or not to **commit suicide**. ‘By the mere act of consciousness’ I will transform into a ‘rule of life’ what *was* an ‘invitation to death’ and **I refuse** to commit suicide.

The Myth of Sisyphus

Thus, Atheistic Existentialism begins in deliberate **defiance** against the brute fact that Naturalism leads to Nihilism. The indifference of Nature leaves an individual consciousness alone and in despair. An Atheistic Existentialist **refuses** to give in to the despair. Their entire philosophical approach is: “an attempt to transcend Nihilism.” We must discuss whether they can succeed.

Know what is meant by “Existence Precedes Essence” and
“We are Condemned to be Free.”

“My freedom is anguished at **being the foundation** of values while my freedom itself is **without foundation**.” Jean Paul Sartre in *Being and Nothingness*

When answering the **7BQs** according to Atheistic Existentialism, you may begin with the same answers as Naturalism but do not stay there! And do not “jump” into Nihilism...keep the unique task of Existentialism in mind as you answer...this is a **precarious balancing act!**



STUDY AIDS:

Chart comparing the WVs we’ve studied so far by virtue of key issues. (✍ hand-drawn)
Create similar charts of your own to compare Worldviews for your notebook.

"ANSWERS TO SEVEN BASIC QUESTIONS"

According to the Worldview of: _____

1. What Is ULTIMATE Reality? _____

2. What Is The Nature Of External Reality? _____

3. What Is A Human Being? _____

4. What Happens To A Human At Death? _____

5. How Is It Possible To Know Anything? _____

6. How Do We Know Right From Wrong? _____

7. What Is The Purpose Of Human History? _____

UNIT 6A "ATHEISTIC EXISTENTIALISM - CAUGHT BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH!"					
WORLDVIEW: ↓ ISSUE?	JUDEO-CHRISTIAN BIBLICAL THEISM	DEISM	NATURALISM (ATHEISM)	NIHILISM	ATHEISTIC EXISTENTIALISM
TRUTH? KNOWLEDGE?	REVEALED (FAITH AND REASON)	REASONED (FAITH IN REASON)	RELATIVISTIC (REASON ALONE)	RENOUNCED (NO FAITH, NO REASON)	REFLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS: HUMAN SUBJECTIVE AWARENESS. (HAS NO REASON TO EXIST AT ALL!)
PRIMARY REALITY?	THE LIVING GOD with a distinct character	AN ALLOOF GOD Imprinted in Nature	NO GOD NATURE IS THE ALL IN ALL. "CLOSED" COSMOS	NO US! NO MEANING AT ALL IN THE CRUEL COSMOS	ONLY US! Human Subjectivity becomes Primary, ... Objective Reality is against us, absurd...
THE 'HUMAN'?	Created in God's image for RELATIONSHIP Fallen, but Redeemed!!	A perfectly rational, moral being.	A highly evolved being, a chance product of Nature, yet still 'precious'!	NOTHING SIGNIFICANT	"EXISTENCE" precedes any 'given' "ESSENCE" so we alone are FREE to create it! We create VALUE out of NOTHING!
DISCUSSION	GOD IS ALIVE AND SO ARE WE, - ETERNALLY!	A religion of reason for the 'Age of Reason'	SEULAR HUMANISM BEHAVIORISM EVOLUTIONISM DETERMINISM SCIENTISM ATHEISM	Nihilism is the honest conclusion of strict NATURALISM. ...BUT YOU CAN'T "LIVE" nihilism.	"LIFE BEGINS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF DESPAIR" ATHEISTIC EXISTENTIALISM IS THE REFUSAL TO GIVE IN TO SUICIDE.
	"I shall not die, but live, and declare what the LORD has done..." (PS. 118:17)	"A deist is someone who hasn't lived long enough to become an atheist."	"The 3 Bridges to Nihilism": 1. NO human freedom, no human significance... 2. NO basis for KNOWLEDGE. (If Naturalism is true we cannot 'KNOW' Naturalism is true.) 3. NO way to derive OUGHT from IS. (No basis for values or moral distinctions)	DESPAIR The cold lifeless ABYSS of meaninglessness and despair... NIHILISM IS AN INVITATION TO SUICIDE	[A. Existism is the attempt to 'transcend' nihilism!] DOES IT SUCCEED? ? Is a self-created essence going to bear the weight of being the foundation for ALL value + meaning?! ? Is our FREEDOM really 'free'? "We are _____ to be free." (We affirm _____, but in the end, _____ wins anyway.)
A HOPELESS END...					
AN ENDLESS HOPE!					

WELCOME TO UNIT 6b

THEISTIC EXISTENTIALISM

READ: Sire, Ch. 6 – (second half)

ATHEISM (*NO God!*) and **THEISM** (*YES, God!*) give opposite answers to **Q1**. So, what can their Existentialist *spin-offs* possibly have in common? A lot!

Both Atheistic and Theistic Existentialism...

- ...have Human **Subjectivity** as a starting place.
- ...downplay or denigrate the **Objective** side of reality
- ...focus on the problem of human existence.
- ...speak of “**anxiety, alienation, dread, loneliness...**”
- ...aim at honesty, **authenticity**, individualism and non-conformity.
- ...issue a bold call to **FREEDOM and DECISION**
- ...see the “**absurdities**” of existence.
- ...stress **passion**, personal involvement, and commitment.

Soren Kierkegaard (1813–1855) is the “patron saint” of Theistic Existentialism. We may appreciate this “edgy” religious approach more if we take time to understand this genius...although...Soren seems to have known he would never be understood! Thus we begin with a bit of a **paradox** – which is quite appropriate for this unit.



There are many questions we can discuss:

- Why did the ideas of the melancholy, solitary Kierkegaard ignite and inspire a new generation of religionists so long after he died?
- Does it take a leap of faith to believe in God? Is faith risky? Irrational?
- Do Christians need the “spice” of Kierkegaardian existentialism to remind them to be personal and passionate?
- Where can a balance between the objective and subjective aspects of faith be found?
- What can we **take** from Theistic Existentialism? What should we **leave** behind?

In answering the **7BQs** according to Theistic Existentialism, you may find that you can use *some* of the same answers as historic Christian Theism, but do remember to keep the subjective “twist” in each answer.

STUDY AIDS:

- Chart:** “Personal” vs. “De-Personal” and the Biblical (Hebraic) Balance
- What Does the Resurrection Mean?
- Limerick: “To Be...or Not?”

“ANSWERS TO SEVEN BASIC QUESTIONS”

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Discussion: Does JCBT need Existentialism to remind it to be Personal? Expanding on Chart in Sire

<u>DEAD ORTHODOXY</u> DOCTRINAIRE CHRISTIANITY DE-PERSONALIZED ☹️ ➡️		<u>NEO-ORTHODOXY</u> EXISTENTIALIST CHRISTIANITY ➡️ PERSONALIZED 😊
Breaking a Rule <u>Balance:</u> Sin is walking your own way, missing the mark, separation from God...	➡️ <u>SIN IS:</u> ➡️	Betraying a Relationship
Confessing Guilt <u>Balance:</u> Repentance is Teshuva – Turning , changing, more than confessing and feeling remorse...	➡️ <u>REPENTANCE IS:</u> ➡️	Sorrowing over the Betrayal
Cancellation of Penalty <u>Balance:</u> Forgiveness is being covered by Christ’s righteousness, restoration, receiving grace...	➡️ <u>FORGIVENESS IS:</u> ➡️	Renewing Fellowship
Belief in Doctrines <u>Balance:</u> Faith is Emunah —Faithfulness, faith in action, ‘deed more than creed’...	➡️ <u>FAITH IS:</u> ➡️	Personal Faith Commitment
Following Rules <u>Balance:</u> Life is following Yeshua! Celebrating the redeemed life! <i>In true discipleship, obedience brings freedom, joy, maturity and abundant life.</i>	➡️ <u>CHRISTIAN LIFE IS:</u> ➡️	Pleasing God

Problems of Dead Orthodoxy:

Too Institutionalized, rationalistic
Too Objective, rigid
“True without Life!!”

Problems of Neo-Orthodoxy:

Too Individualistic, irrational
Too Subjective, experiential
“Must be lived to be true!!”

Solution? The Bible, *read Hebraically*, provides a perfect balance of the **Objective** grounds (God’s decisive acts in history) for faith, and the call to **Subjective** response (Our decidedly **personal** commitment.)

‘The Biblical Balance between Institution and Individual is Community.’

True relationships do have rules. We could not even define any of the terms above if there were no objective reality! Would you base your subjective experience on anything less than sound teaching? And shouldn’t such teachings derive from the **most radically authentic ROOTS of God’s revelation?**

Conclusion: Christianity is passionate, vibrant and ever-relevant. It was never meant to be anything less. Never reduce it to a set of doctrines, a “salvation ticket”, or to mere feelings.

It is a summons to serve the King of the Universe.

Judeo-Christian Biblical Theism does **NOT** need Existentialism to remind disciples to be personal!

It is all about a Person: Our Jewish Lord. Love Him with all you are, and your neighbor as yourself.

Hallow His name in every sphere of life, imitate Him in everything you do ... and **you will never grow cold.**

WHAT DOES THE RESURRECTION MEAN TO US?



Consider this quote from New Testament professor Gerd Ludemann, author of:
The Resurrection of Jesus: A Historical Inquiry

“For me, resurrection has to do with this present life, which is like a small raft on a vast dark ocean. An icy wind blows. People on the raft are united only by the bond of death. They can expect no compassion from an impersonal universe. But by coming to terms with the reality of such terrors, facing them in humility, wisdom and love, I discover the threshold of a new life!

From now on I am no longer cowed by the notion that death is a punishment for my sin. Nor do I need to hope for an afterlife.

Instead, I accept my mortality, and that gives rise to a **New Easter Vision**.

Now impervious to the undertow of panic, I join with all humanity in the daily task of living in the light of love.

Together **we** can make *life* stronger than *death*.”

Q. What is the *real* Worldview of this Biblical scholar? _____

(Dr. Ludemann does not believe the resurrection to be an historical event, nor does he believe in a ‘second coming of Christ.’ For him, “Easter” is not related to the Bible or to Christian Creeds. Easter is of human manufacture.)

~~~~~  
Complete this G. K. Chesterton quote:

“Christianity has *died* many times over the centuries, but it will always be *revived*, because...\_\_\_\_\_ .



## To Be or *Not to Be*?

I do cogitate quite a lot, you see  
Oh yeah, I'm onto **ontology**  
In conundrinal ruts  
One can make oneself nuts  
Like a plant whose sole interest is botany.

Some lives are a frivolous odyssey  
But mine is a **Course in Philosophy**  
I whine and complain  
And that may explain  
Why I'm forcing this foolish verbosity.

**One Ponderosity vexes me**  
**When pondering myself existentially**  
**It is hard to rejoice**  
***For did I have a choice***  
**In the question of: 'whether or not to be'?**

The "Gift of Life"? What a paucity!  
Reality seems like such *rot* to me  
But I **ache** for a way  
**Existence** yet may  
Somehow become what it ought to be.

Quietus is too often sought by me  
A Battle for Being is fought in me  
I'd have already died  
From the torment inside  
Except for the Life that was bought for me.

If we don't look *Beyond* we'll be tragically  
Caught in our ought-less autonomy  
God is Loving *and* Just  
So our lives we *can* trust  
To His Sovereign Gracious Theonomy.

Thus, whether or not I would ask To Be  
Here I am... I accept it resolvedly  
I make a real choice  
To offer my voice, and  
Say "**Yes**" answering *To Be or Not to Be*.

(And I'll have *Shalom* for Eternity!) **AMEN** JMB

*You have reached the end of the first half of*  
**THE CHRISTIAN MIND - WV CRITIQUE STUDENT MANUAL**

Check List. **DID YOU:**

- Carefully read all of the **Supplemental Readings?** (They were **REQUIRED!**)
- Utilize the **Study Aids** and mark them with your own questions / comments?  
Please let the instructor know if you created charts or outlines of your own.  
With your permission, we could copy & share things that might be helpful to the class.  
Likewise, feel free to submit any pertinent articles or resources you have found. **Thanks!**
- Fill-in the blank **7BQ** pages with well-worded answers from each 'ism'?
- Complete all **Study Guides?**



**If so, you are ready to take the MIDTERM EXAM and should have no trouble with it.**

The Exam also covers all the material from the **History of Philosophy** portion of our course.

## PHILOSOPHY AND WORLDVIEW MIDTERM EXAM

### WORLDVIEW IDENTIFICATION: USE THESE **EXACT** ABBREVIATIONS: (Each WV is used **3** times.)

**T** = Theism   **D** = Deism   **N** = Naturalism   **ni** = nihilism   **AX** = Atheistic Existentialism   **TX** = Theistic Existentialism

1. Everything, even love, consciousness, and moral value, **MUST** be accounted for *from within* the closed cosmos, or else it must be *explained away*.
2. We must 'create' and re-create our selfhood in a constant present tense. To wit: "The meaning of a man's life consists in proving to himself *every minute* that he is a man and not a piano key."
3. Religion should be ethical, practical and rational, *deduced from nature by our God-given reason*, and thus it will be universal, non-partisan, and free from the oppression of irrational zealotry and "priest-craft."
4. In "JCB\_\_" the Lord God has a distinctive, historically revealed *Character* and He initiates a *Relationship*, which provides a balance of the Objective grounds for and the Subjective response of faith.
5. In their *Manifesto*, secular humanists proudly affirm human uniqueness, dignity and self-determination. But, to do so is actually *inconsistent with their own underlying WV assumptions*...their WV being \_\_\_\_.
6. Several philosophers, such as Descartes, Locke and Kant, thought of themselves as \_\_\_\_, but were more like Deists due to their downplay of *miracles* and their emphasis on the *sufficiency of reason*.
7. This WV revels in the *paradoxical* and puts a subjective twist on the basic beliefs of biblical Christianity.
8. This *anti-philosophy* might cry: 'That an impersonal cosmos randomly produced self-conscious mud-balls, who ask questions and get *no answers*, is a monstrously cruel joke.'
9. Although a mechanistic ("clockwork") model of the cosmos is no longer held, someone who affirms "*Intelligent Design*" but who *doesn't* see that 'designer' as a Redeemer may be considered a \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Neo-orthodox theologians may have understandably wanted to revive the Church with a *personalized* focus, but they surrendered vital ground by interpreting Scripture along the lines of this WV approach.
11. Not a WV, but a *negation*...a denial that any meaning can be derived from existence...a feeling of despair.
12. "I am *condemned* to be *free*." (But, I courageously embrace this baseless 'freedom' as an opportunity to create my own meaning and to 'transcend' the condemnation of being in this world!)
13. These religionists downplay history and biblical reliability. But, *unlike* the Deists, they stress an intense *personal experience* of faith...even "Easter Faith" without the Resurrection!
14. "My sheer *existence precedes* any 'pre-fabricated' *essence* and so I must define myself by myself."
15. Accepting only *General Revelation*, \_\_ says: "The Voice of God is *Reason* and the Holy Book is *Nature*."
16. Someone who labors under the assumptions of this WV does not have 'science' as much as '*scientism*,' which is a pre-supposed ideology about (and faith in!) science that is unwarranted by science itself.
17. Jesus Christ is God Incarnate, miraculous Redeemer and Lord. He is the ultimate *Special Revelation*!
18. The brilliant number of ways these people *try* to express that there's nothing worth expressing, and the poignancy with which they lament "There is No Meaning" might actually be a cry *for* meaning!

## MATCHING:

Use the statements (A to N) on the next page and carefully “connect the thoughts.”

19. ...So ‘thought’ Rene Descartes, who said: *“I think, therefore I am.”*
20. ...So might have said the sagacious truth-seeker Socrates, whose famous dictum: *“The unexamined life is not worth living”* is used by James Sire about examining worldviews!
21. Immanuel Kant gave a revolutionary resolution to the Rationalism vs. Empiricism debate, when in his *Critique of Pure Reason* he based knowledge of reality in *the mind’s own structured faculties*.
22. “Realism” (a la Anselm) vs. “Nominalism” (a la Ockham.) Their debate would sound like: \_\_\_\_
23. This ‘scholastic’ argument, with a pointed Aristotelian *teleological* sound to it, is found in the *Summa Theologica* (some of the mere ‘straw’ written by Saint Thomas Aquinas.)
24. Thales & his funny-named students. And Heraclitus, Parmenides, Empedocles, Democritus...*et al.*
25. A dramatist like Seneca, an ex-slave turned teacher like Epictetus, and even a Roman Emperor like Marcus Aurelius could all ‘stoically’ accept this.
26. Aristotle & his famous mentor named Aristocles (‘**PLATO**’ as you may know, was only a *nickname!*)
27. *“Esse est percipi”* (to be is to be perceived) said Bishop George Berkeley, who believed that God guarantees existence because He is *always* perceiving...even when we leave the forest! 🌲
28. ‘**Such a gospel**’ was preached in a Greek Garden by Epicurus. And later the Roman poet Lucretius would agree on this *Nature of Things*.
29. ...Protagoras, Gorgias, Thrasymachus, and Callicles. (*What a Law Firm that would be!*)
30. Brilliant clergymen such as Ambrose, Augustine, Anselm, Abelard, and of course, Aquinas. 🕯
31. Not so much ‘philosophers’ as explorers, humanists, Bible translators, poets, painters, sculptors, scientists and inventors!
32. ‘**Such a gospel**’ was preached during the Greco-Roman Era, in the Athenian agora, by a Jewish believer in Jesus, who nevertheless quoted freely from a Pre-Socratic pagan poet. (*huh?*)



**PHILOSOPHY GIVES ME A HEADACHE**


## STATEMENTS TO CONNECT WITH QUESTIONS 19 - 32

- A.** Awakened from drowsy dogmatism by David Hume, he caused this *turnabout* in metaphysics and epistemology:
- B.** A host of discoveries & movements caused the End of the Christian Synthesis and the Beginning of Modern Times. Yet some philosophy textbooks don't even have a chapter on this amazing **Transition Period**, perhaps because its world-changing **heroes** were: \_\_\_\_\_
- C.** This radical epistemological idea is: That '**the representation IS the reality**' and *unperceivable* material substance IS NOT the reality! That means...only ideas/perceptions exist...and...material "substance" does not!!:
- D.** They seized upon the opportunities afforded by the changing socio-political situation and made lucrative careers out of teaching '**Rhetoric**'— the art of persuasion and winning cases:
- E.** To combat the rising skepticism of the times, "I shall beat skeptics at their own game... '**Doubt Everything!**' ...  
...*except one* indubitable fact! Then, I shall build a new edifice of knowledge on this 'firm' cognitive foundation.":
- F.** *Some* may say that it is better to obey Christ than to explain Christological doctrine, and better to love God than to prove His existence. *Others* spent **luminous** careers expounding the 'mystery of Faith *via* the mastery of Reason':
- G.** They were the Pillars of Western Philosophy, founders of educational institutions that lasted for many centuries... as well as being builders of 'metaphysical institutions' that *still* stand!:
- H.** "Universals are actually *more real* than particulars!" "No, no, no...Universals are merely *names* we give to the particulars, and *only* the particulars are real!" "No no! Universals must be really real...!" *And so on...*:
- I.** 'Let's not be cynical about truth. And why assert '*man is the measure*' if we don't know what 'man' is?! Let's *admit* what we don't know, *question* those who think they know, *examine* things deeply, and *seek* true wisdom!':
- J.** These early thinkers launched the entire western intellectual-philosophical tradition when they tried to explain reality by observation of nature and rational speculation. Never mind that they weren't all 'free' from mythos & gods!:
- K.** 'The Logos-ordained and infused Cosmic Order (call it Providence, Fate, Zeus or *whatever*) has a wonderful (or not so wonderful) plan for your life, so you must dispassionately resign to it...live in harmony with it. Since this cosmic 'whatever-you-call-it' is **rational and impersonal**, as part of it, **we** should be also!':
- L.** "... '*and he is not served by human hands as if he needed anything...he gives all men life and breath and everything...he is not far from each of us...For in him we live and move and have our being*' ...  
'*We are his offspring*' ...":
- M.** "*Vain is the word of a philosopher if it does not heal...there is no profit in it if it does not expel the suffering of the mind.*" 'Let us seek the *natural good*, be at rest and rid ourselves of fear – especially the fear of death. If we live like this...one life is enough!':
- N.** "Whatever lacks knowledge cannot move towards an end, unless it be directed by some being endowed with knowledge and intelligence; *as the arrow is directed by the archer*. Therefore some intelligent being exists by whom all natural things are directed to their end; and this being we call **God**.":

**MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS:** Choose the very **BEST** answer!

33. Which one is **NOT** a definition of a “**Basic Assumption**”?
- A. a foundational conceptual building block ... a “given.”
  - B. the sure conclusion of an extended succession of arguments and empirical proofs.
  - C. a proposition or premise that doesn’t seem to break down into simpler statements.
  - D. an unproven yet seemingly self-evident fact...a starting place that needs no prior explanation.
34. Which one is **NOT** a **Criterion** of a satisfactory worldview?
- A. **Compatible**: Is compatible with human yearnings ... eminently **livable** and expressible.
  - B. **Consistent**: Has **mutually reinforcing** propositions that do not logically contradict each other.
  - C. **Confection**: **Able to blend disparate ideas** into a palatable and tasty confection.
  - D. **Coherent**: Able to provide an **intelligible** and well-integrated “**big picture**.”
35. One can see that the **Laws of Thought** are ‘properly basic’ and **indispensable** because:
- A. They are *ancient*, and in proper philosophy, ‘old is good!’
  - B. One can grasp them so easily and ‘dispense’ them so readily!
  - C. The professor said so, and such authority *must not* be dispensed with or denied!
  - D. One must utilize them *even* while trying to refute them!
36. Thales’ idea that: “**Water** comprises the ‘underlying stuff’ of reality” (**All things are reducible to water**) is still valued and honored in academia today because:
- A. The form of his inquiry and the supposition behind it are part of how science functions.  
*In other words, he had the ‘wrong answer but the right question.’*
  - B. He was wrong, but we appreciate the picturesque quaintness of his beliefs for antiquarian reasons.
  - C. He was so wrong (‘all wet’ you might say) that he caused his students to work harder at refuting him.  
*And anyone who can motivate students is to be praised.*
  - D. We *now* know that our planet *is* mostly covered by, and humans *are* composed mostly of, **H<sub>2</sub>O**!
37. The “**Socratic Method**” may best be described as:
- A. “Dialectical” — Ask a question, cross-examine the answer, and continue the pursuit of truth...
  - B. “Scientific” — Make observations, devise theories, offer explanations...
  - C. “Sophistical” — Gain expertise, profess wisdom, and persuade others...
  - D. “Didactic” — Beseech, Teach, and Preach...
38. The famous “**Myth of the Cave**” is Plato’s *allegorical* way of depicting:
- A. An autobiographical account of his own arduous Education and eventual Enlightenment.
  - B. His secret membership in the Apollo ‘Sun Worship’ Cult that flourished in Athens.
  - C. His “Metaphysical” System — Ontology *and* Epistemology (What IS *and* how we apprehend it.)
  - D. His Athleticism and love for ‘spelunking’ in & out of the dark caves around the Academy.
39. For **Plato**, the “**FORMS**” are:
- A. Unifying concepts we **form**-ulate by observing essential similarities between many particular things.
  - B. Eternal transcendent truths that come from the Good (“Superform”) as the source of all reality.
  - C. Known *only* by Pure Reason, or as ‘beheld’ before our birth, *not* by ‘sensing’ or seeing them.
  - D. Both **B and C**, but certainly *not* **A**, because that’s what an **Aristotelian** would say.
40. Which idea is **NOT** part of **Aristotle’s ETHICS**?
- A. The notion of the human’s ‘*telos*’ — purpose or end-goal — which is ‘Happiness.’ 😊
  - B. The definition of ‘Happiness’ as taking simple pleasure in manual labor.
  - C. The definition of ‘Happiness’ as fulfilling our function: intellectual and moral virtue.
  - D. Develop habits and character that result in actions in accord with the ‘golden mean of moderation.’

41. Greek metaphysical **Dualism** (Spirit is good, matter is bad) has influenced Christianity in negative ways, such as clerical hierarchies, forced clerical celibacy, mystical other-worldliness, monasticism, *etc.* This unhealthy and 'un-Hebraic' worldview that infected the Church can be traced way back to:
- A. Anaximander's Theory of the Apeiron
  - B. Protagoras' Theory of Human Relativity.
  - C. Plato's Theory of Forms.
  - D. Aristotle's Theory of Change.
42. One Hellenistic era school-of-thought, **Academic Skepticism**, said the purpose of philosophy was:
- A. To argue for the suspension of judgment about reality & to learn to be content with appearances.
  - B. To hone and sharpen the senses so as to gain an ever-more accurate account of reality.
  - C. To question all authority, both political and academic, so as to instigate societal upheavals.
  - D. To carefully critique all former philosophies and find one that is finally certain beyond skepticism.
43. There are superficial similarities between **Stoicism** and **Christian Belief**, and there are many differences, but the most crucial WORLDVIEW distinction (the categorical basic difference) between them is:
- A. Stoics denounce passion and praise rationality; Christians balance the emotions and the intellect.
  - B. Stoicism is pantheistic; Christianity is theistic.
  - C. Stoicism appealed to slaves and aristocrats alike; Christianity was more popular among the poor.
  - D. Stoicism is prideful; Christianity is (supposed to be) humble.
44. How **Augustine** explained how we can have 'free will' despite God's foreknowledge of our actions:
- A. God has created us with the illusion of freedom so He can hold us accountable.
  - B. God is not completely omniscient, but He is "all-wise" (the wisest being in the world.)
  - C. God's vast knowledge does not necessarily entail the concept of "necessity."
  - D. God is eternal. He stands outside time.
45. **Anselm's** famous "**Proof**" of God's Existence is called "**Ontological**" because:
- A. It was brilliantly conceived to take the reader "Onto" a "Logical" path.
  - B. It was derived not from observation but from contemplating the very idea of 'Being.'
  - C. It has the gist of Being Logically irrefutable.
  - D. It was composed meditatively to bring one's Inner-Being closer to God.

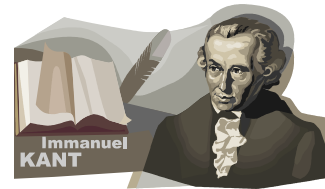
46. Which statement is **NOT** true about the transition period which took us from Medieval to Modern? 



- A. Creative minds of this era harkened *back* to the classical age and heralded a 'rebirth' of humanity's ideals.
- B. Intellectual, social & ecclesiastical movements, discoveries & inventions 'dissolved' the Medieval Synthesis.
- C. The schemes of Plato & Aristotle were *finally* discarded as brand new philosophical systems were devised.
- D. It is a period of history that gave us some of the most impressive **ART** the world has ever seen.



47. The major (**unsolved!**) **problem** with **Descartes'** worldview was the **radical disjunction** between:
- Mind (non-spatial, mental 'substance') *and* Body (extended, physical 'substance')
  - 'God *and* Galileo' (Faith *and* Science)
  - Pure Rationalism *and* Strict Empiricism
  - Simple Mathematics *and* Analytical Geometry
  - All of the above
48. In his *Monadology* and *Theodicy*, Gottfried **Leibniz** set forth brilliantly reasoned principles and established the rather hard to believe view that this is a world...:
- of 'maximal existence'!
  - in which all 'synthetic sentences' are really 'analytic sentences' ...at least from *God's* point of view.
  - made of simple units of psychic force which can be combined into materiality *and* consciousness.
  - which really is the '*best of all possible worlds.*'
  - All of the above.
49. "*Act* only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time *will* that it should become a universal *law.*" **Kant** called this moral commandment (which he deduced from reason) the:
- "New Enlightened Golden Rule"
  - "Kantian Ethical Directive"
  - "Categorical Imperative"
  - "Transcendental-Maxim for Duty-Bound Creatures"



50. In **Hegel's** "**Absolute Idealism**", between "**Being**" [thesis (+)] ...and "**Non-Being**" [antithesis (-)] ...there is... "**Becoming**" [synthesis (+/-)]  
This grandiose Dynamic Structure of ALL Thought and Reality...he derived *via* his "\_\_\_\_\_":
- "DIAGRAMMATIC"
  - "DIADEM"
  - "DIATHESIS"
  - "DIALECTIC"
  - All of the above
51. Because he justified belief in God and morality on *practical* grounds, and tried to mediate between Rationalists and Empiricists, this 20<sup>th</sup> century philosopher has been compared to Immanuel Kant:
- John Dewey
  - William James
  - Charles Sanders Peirce
  - Edmund Husserl
  - Moritz Schlick
52. By the 20<sup>th</sup> century, philosophies such as Utilitarianism and Pragmatic Instrumentalism had become widely influential. It was said that \_\_\_\_\_ should play the same role in society that the Church did in Medieval times.
- Science
  - Psychology
  - Politics
  - Aesthetics
  - Music
  - Fine Arts

**SHORT ANSWER - FILLIN THE BLANKS:** ✍️ Inscribe your answers *legibly* on an Answer Sheet

53. The idea that the Cosmos has something ‘*rational*’ under-girding it...such as a *natural law* that ‘governs’ its processes...is an idea found far back in Greek philosophy, even in the gloomy *Heraclitus*.

The term used was: \_\_\_\_\_. It can mean \_\_\_\_\_

54. The type of argumentation used by *Zeno of Elea* is called “ \_\_\_\_\_ ”

We call it that because it works by \_\_\_\_\_

55. Where would you look to read an engaging (and perhaps the *earliest ever recorded*) **exchange** between the new **Christian** message and some popular **Hellenistic** Philosophies?!

\_\_\_\_\_

56. Give an example of an ‘**Analytic Statement.**’ (Its negation must be a self-contradiction, so **don’t** try to be creative!)

\_\_\_\_\_

57. Write a terse sentence that would qualify as a ‘**Synthetic Statement.**’

\_\_\_\_\_

58. Give the two funny-sounding philosophical **terms** used for a belief or proposition that is:

- 1) Known by pure reason independently of observation. And, 2) Established through senses / observation.  
Liked by Rationalists.... Liked by Empiricists...

1) \_\_\_\_\_ 2) \_\_\_\_\_

59. The gentle, sublime 17<sup>th</sup> c. Rationalist *Baruch Spinoza* was excommunicated from the Church *and* from the Synagogue because of his ‘view’ of “**Infinite Substance.**” His philosophy bordered on:

\_\_\_\_\_

60. How would the bizarre philosopher *Arthur Schopenhauer* have answered **Q1 & Q2** of the **7BQs?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Hint: **NO credit** will be given if you don’t describe how *far beyond Kant* Schopenhauer peered!

61. With what “maxim” would *Jeremy Bentham* have answered **Q6** of the **7BQs?** (Give the full quotation.)

\_\_\_\_\_

62. **Unlike** rationalists such as Descartes and Leibniz who believed in the concept of “**Necessary Being,**”.... the 20<sup>th</sup> century **Existentialists** like *Jean-Paul Sartre* said that “**Being**” is:

\_\_\_\_\_!



# YAMAS! YOU FINISHED WITH THE PHILOSOPHY & WORLDVIEW MIDTERM

