

# ***The "New" Atheism***



# ***Popular Atheism***



# ***What Is Popular Atheism?***



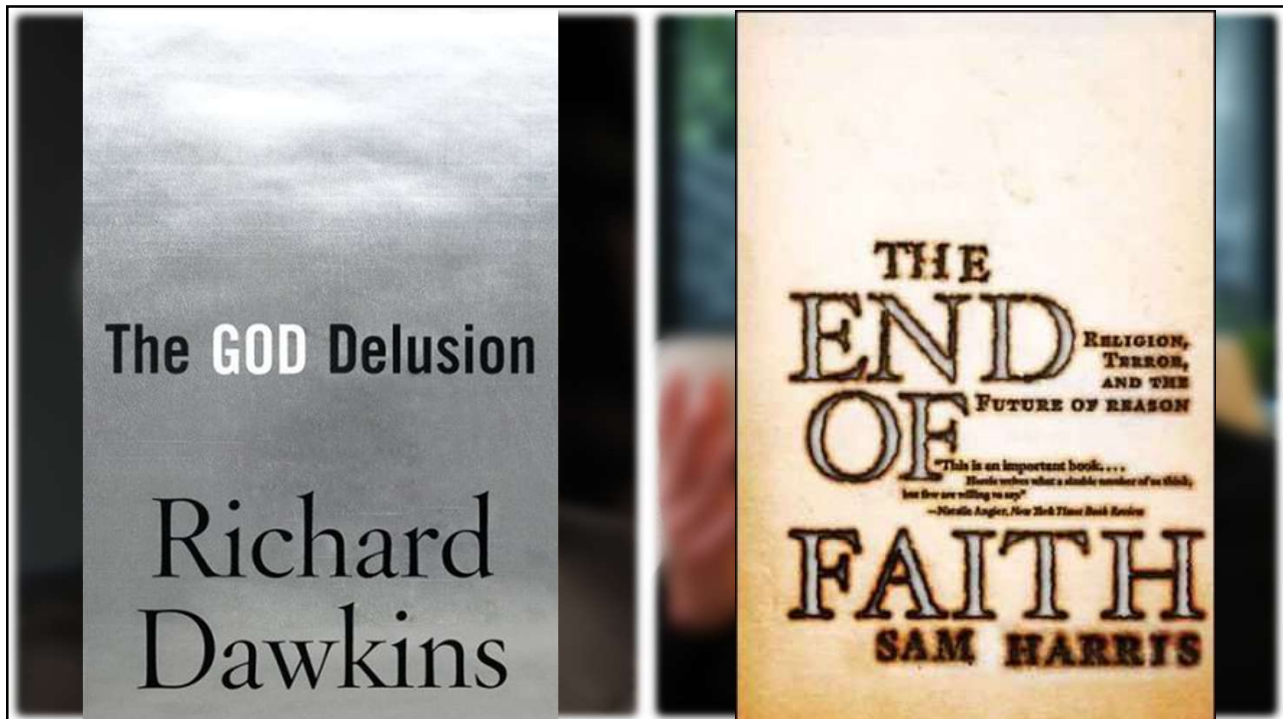
# ***Who Are the Popular Atheists?***





Richard Dawkins

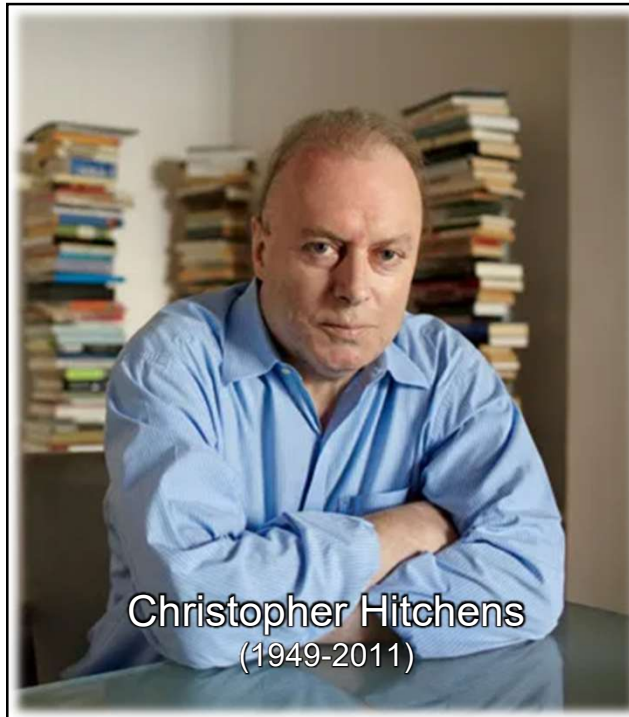
Sam Harris



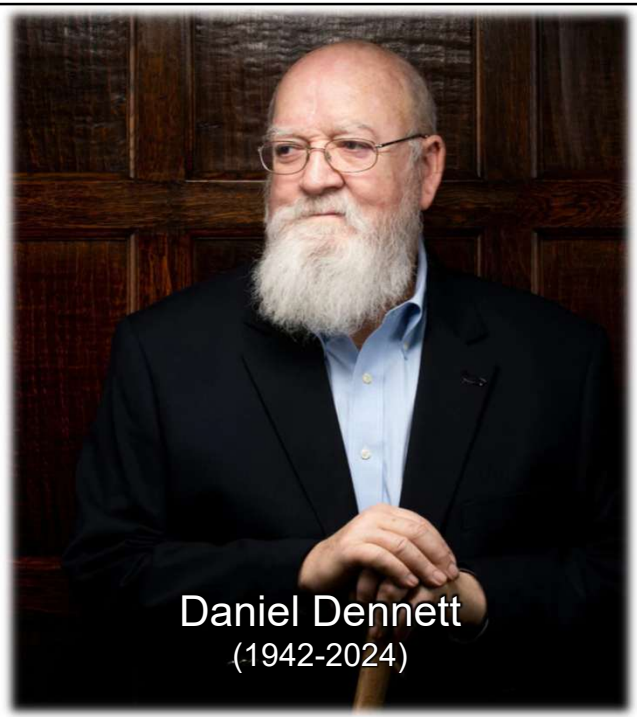
The **GOD** Delusion

Richard  
Dawkins

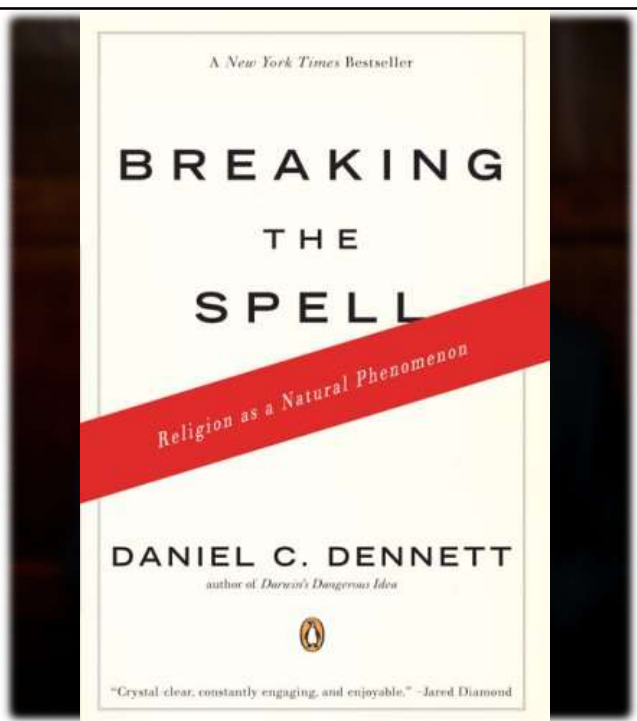
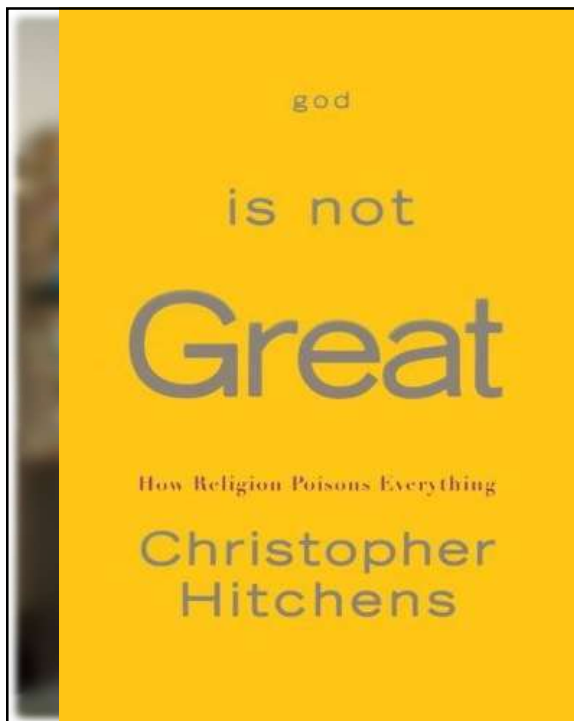
THE  
**END** RELIGION,  
OF TERROR,  
AND THE  
FUTURE OF REASON  
"This is an important book...  
Harris writes what a shabby number of us think,  
but few are willing to say."  
—Nicola Angier, *New York Times Book Review*  
**FAITH**  
SAM HARRIS

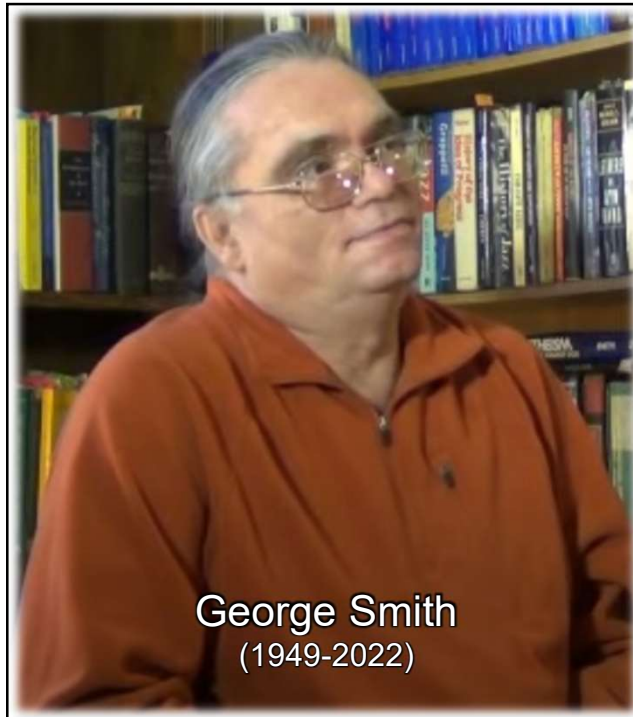


Christopher Hitchens  
(1949-2011)

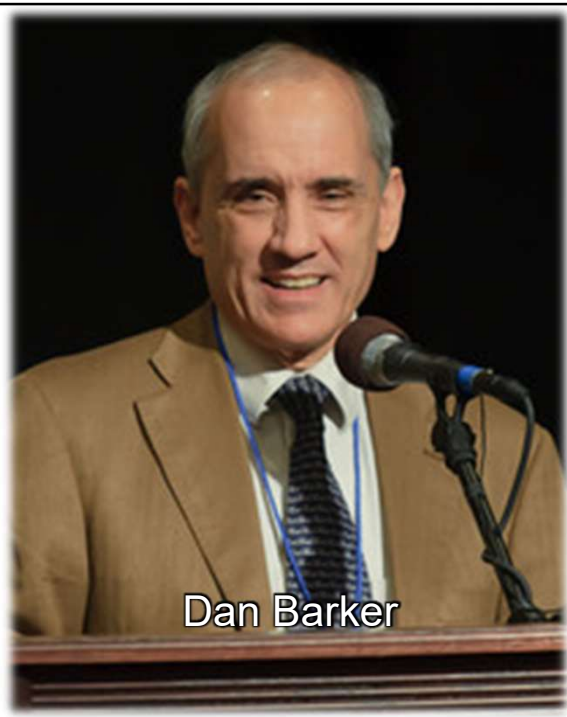


Daniel Dennett  
(1942-2024)

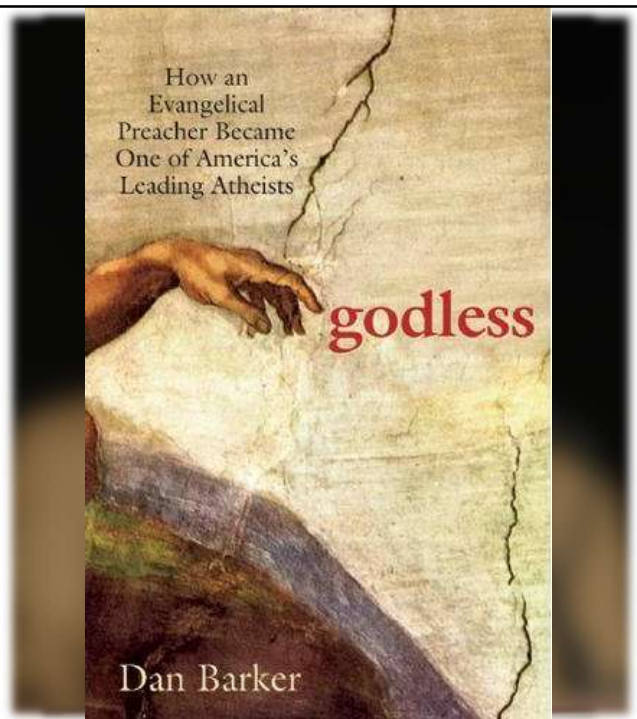
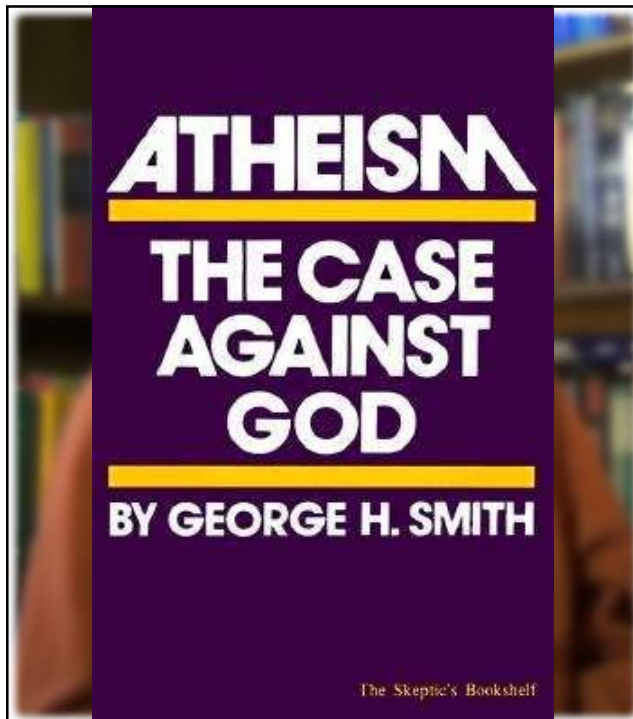




George Smith  
(1949-2022)



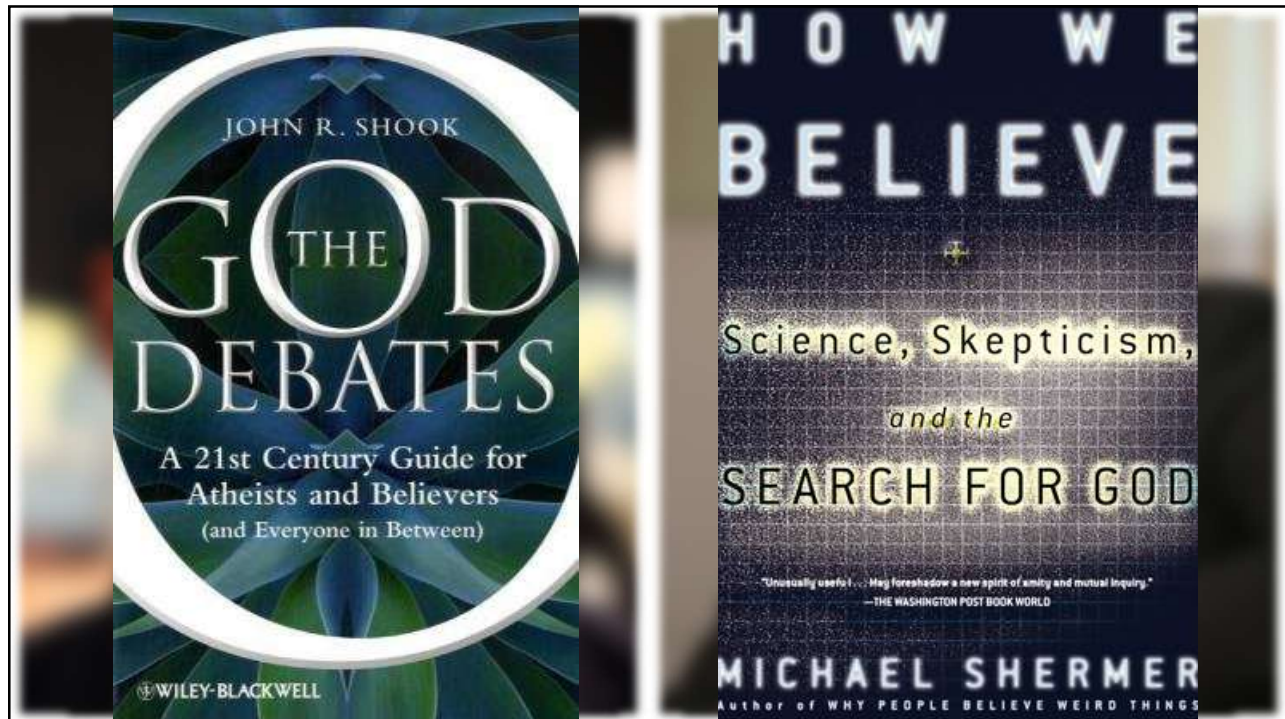
Dan Barker





John Shook

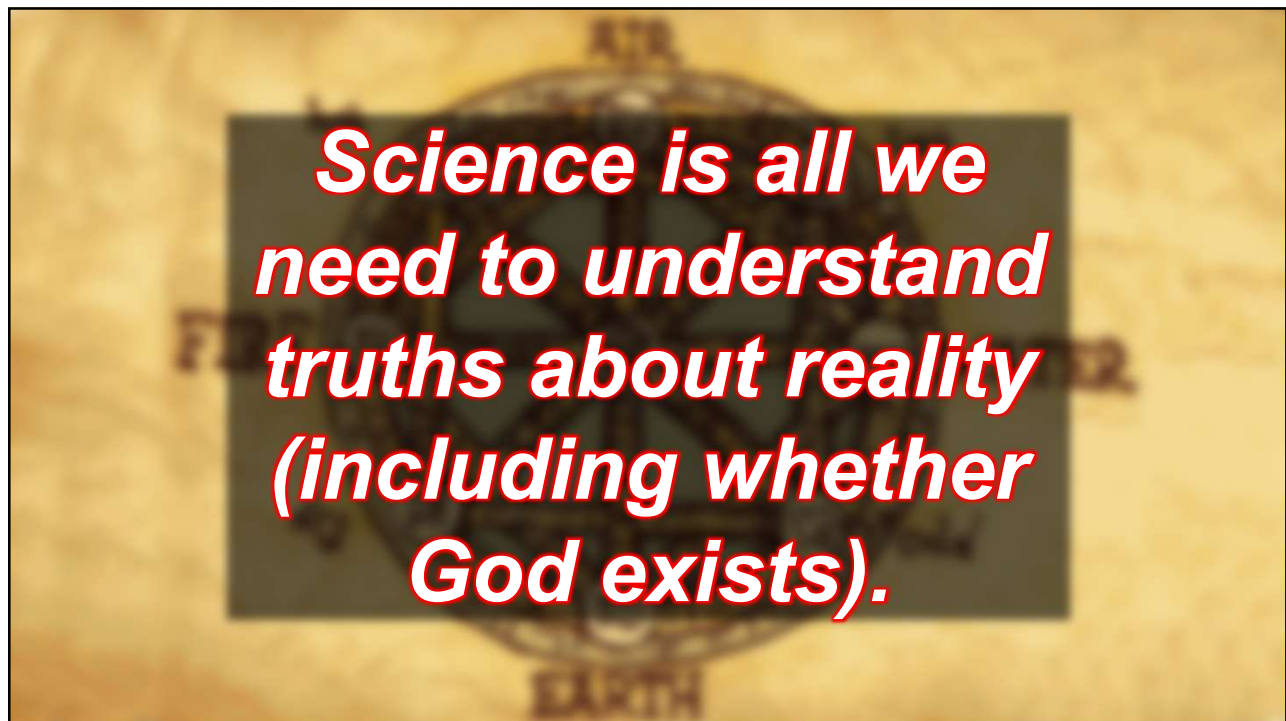
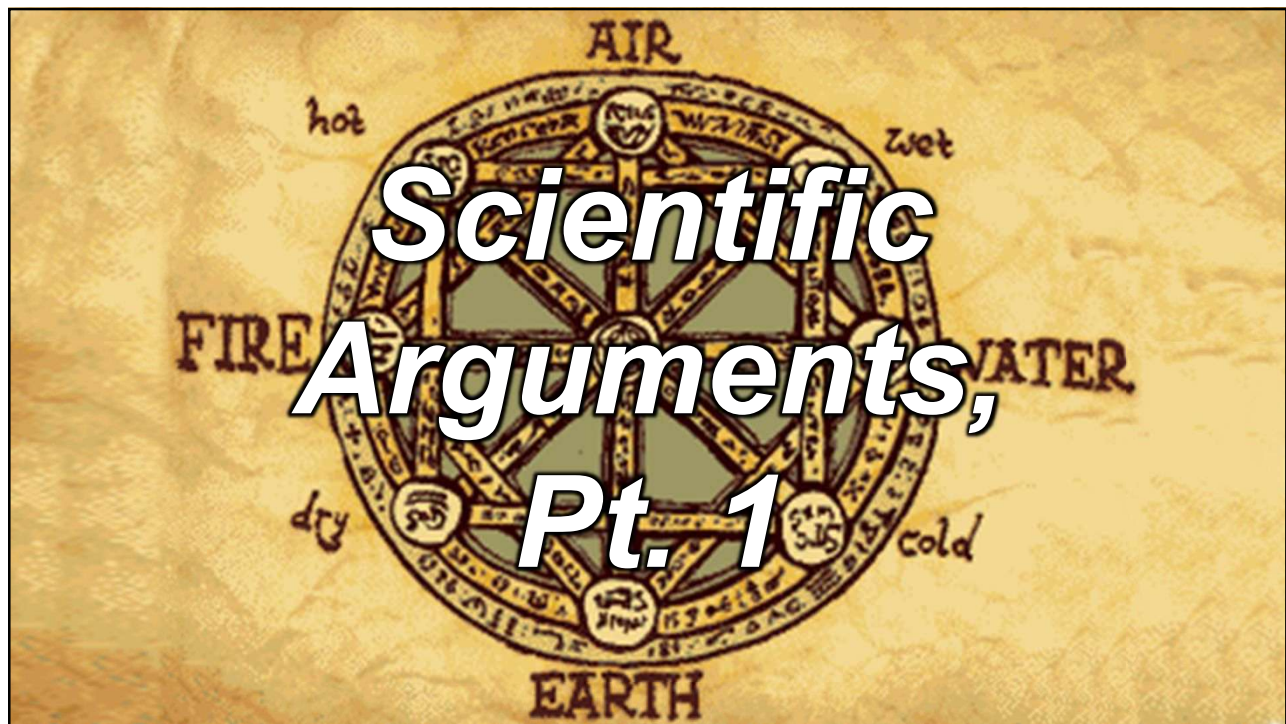
Michael Shermer

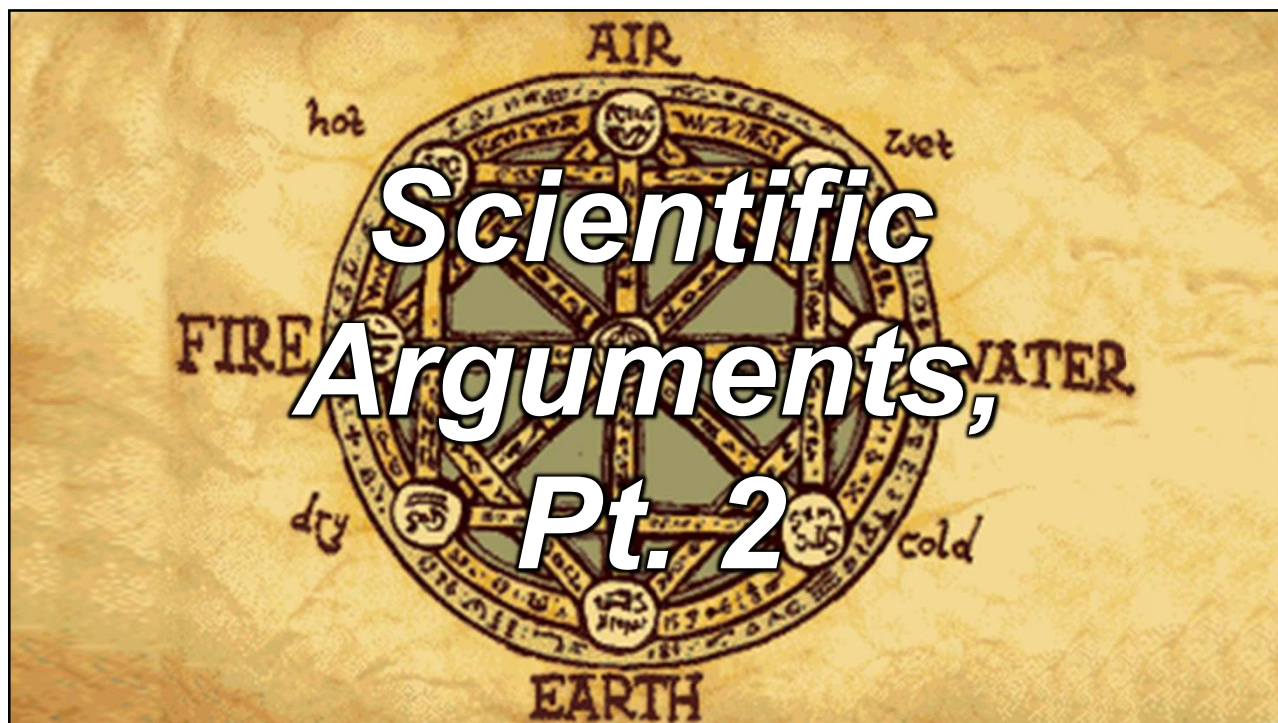
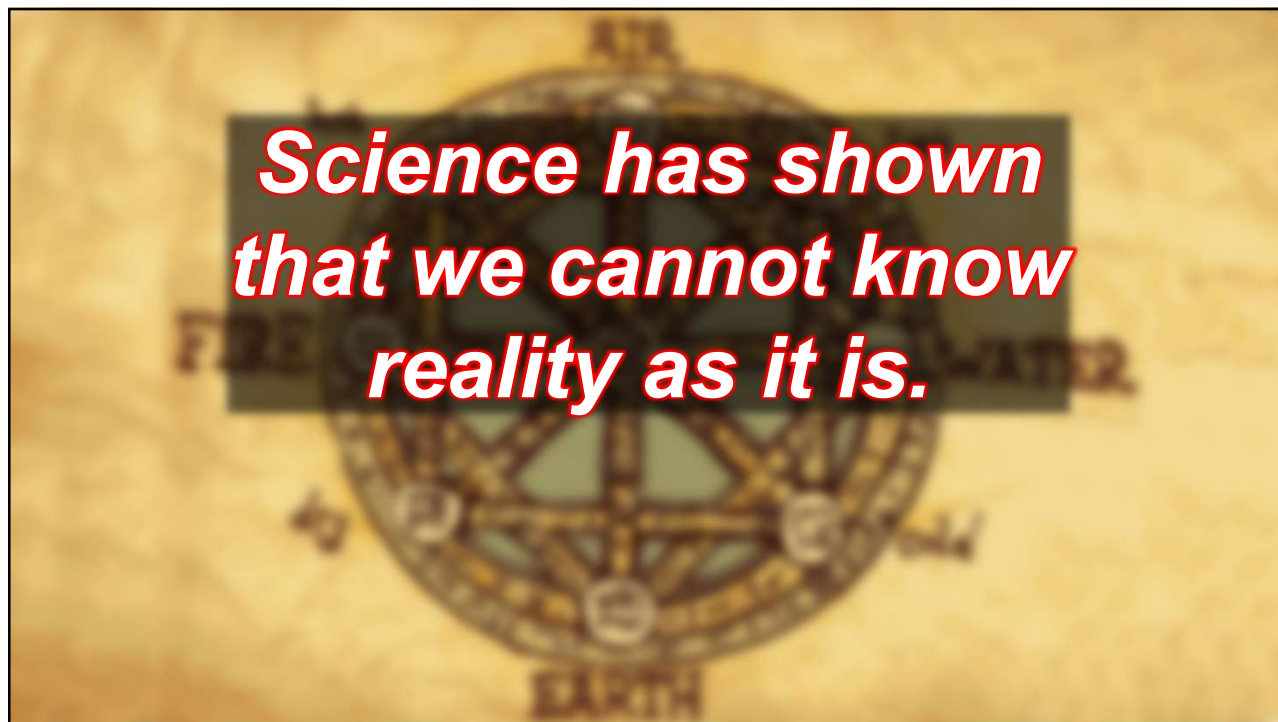


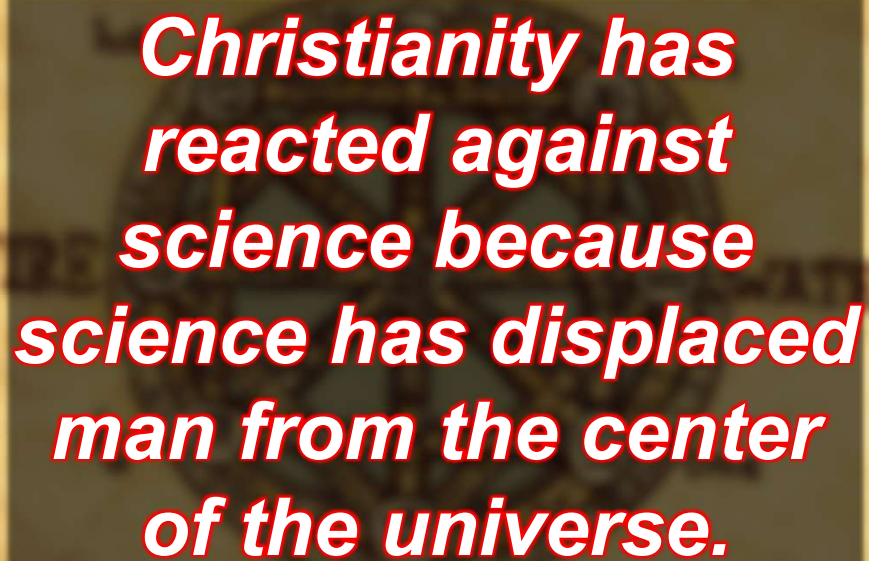
JOHN R. SHOOK  
**THE GOD DEBATES**  
A 21st Century Guide for  
Atheists and Believers  
(and Everyone in Between)  
WILEY-BLACKWELL

HOW WE BELIEVE  
Science, Skepticism,  
*and the*  
SEARCH FOR GOD  
"Unusually useful... May foreshadow a new spirit of amity and mutual inquiry."  
—THE WASHINGTON POST BOOK WORLD  
MICHAEL SHERMER  
Author of WHY PEOPLE BELIEVE WEIRD THINGS

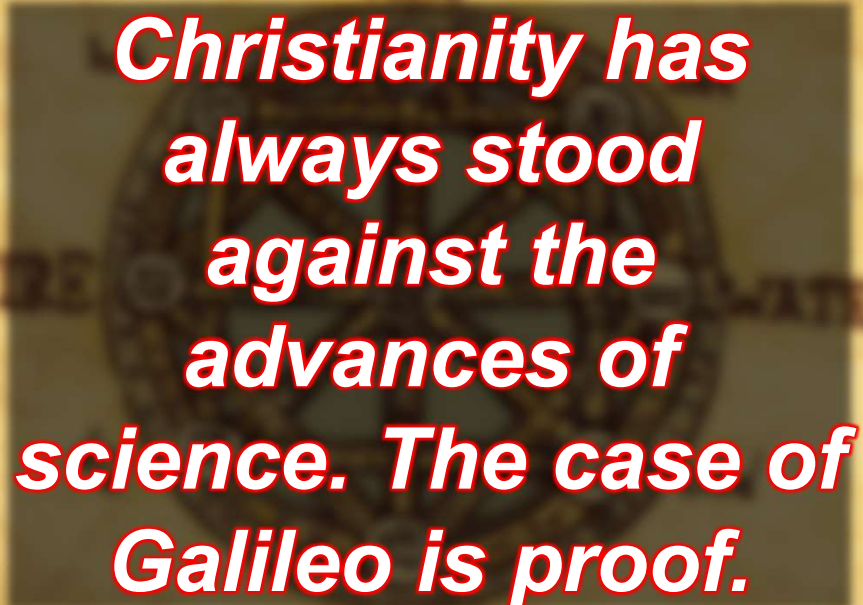




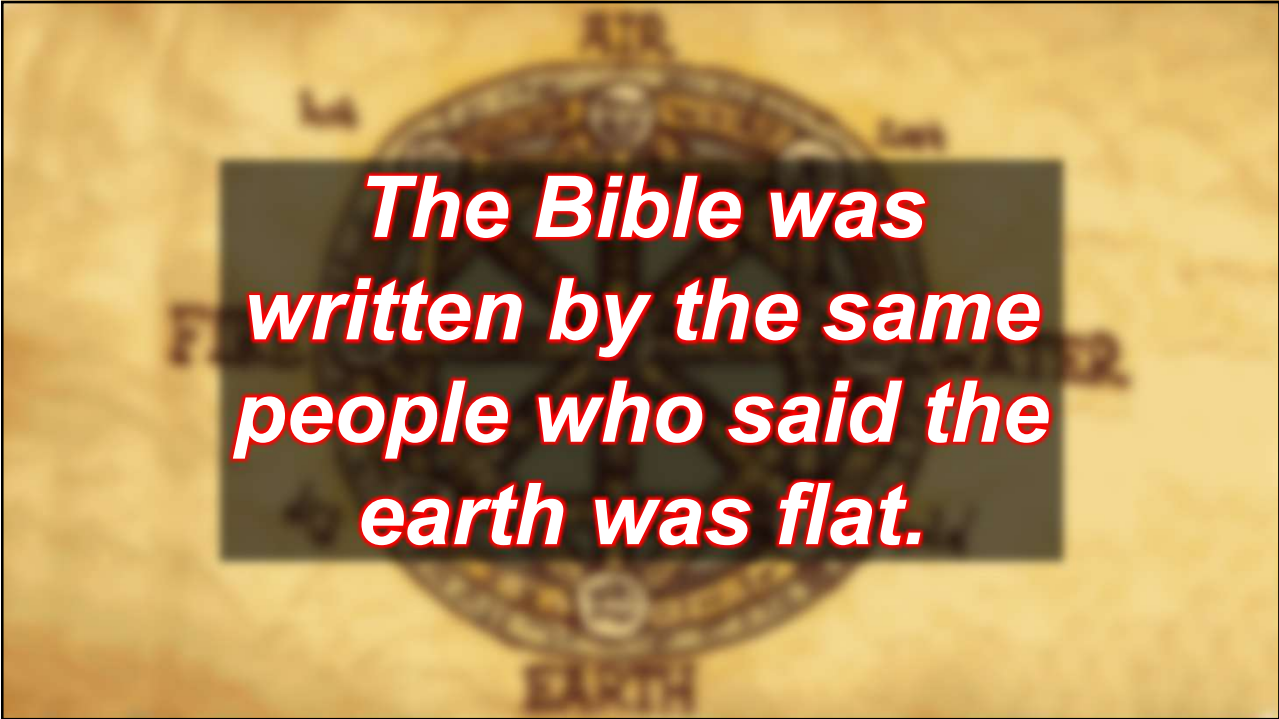




***Christianity has reacted against science because science has displaced man from the center of the universe.***



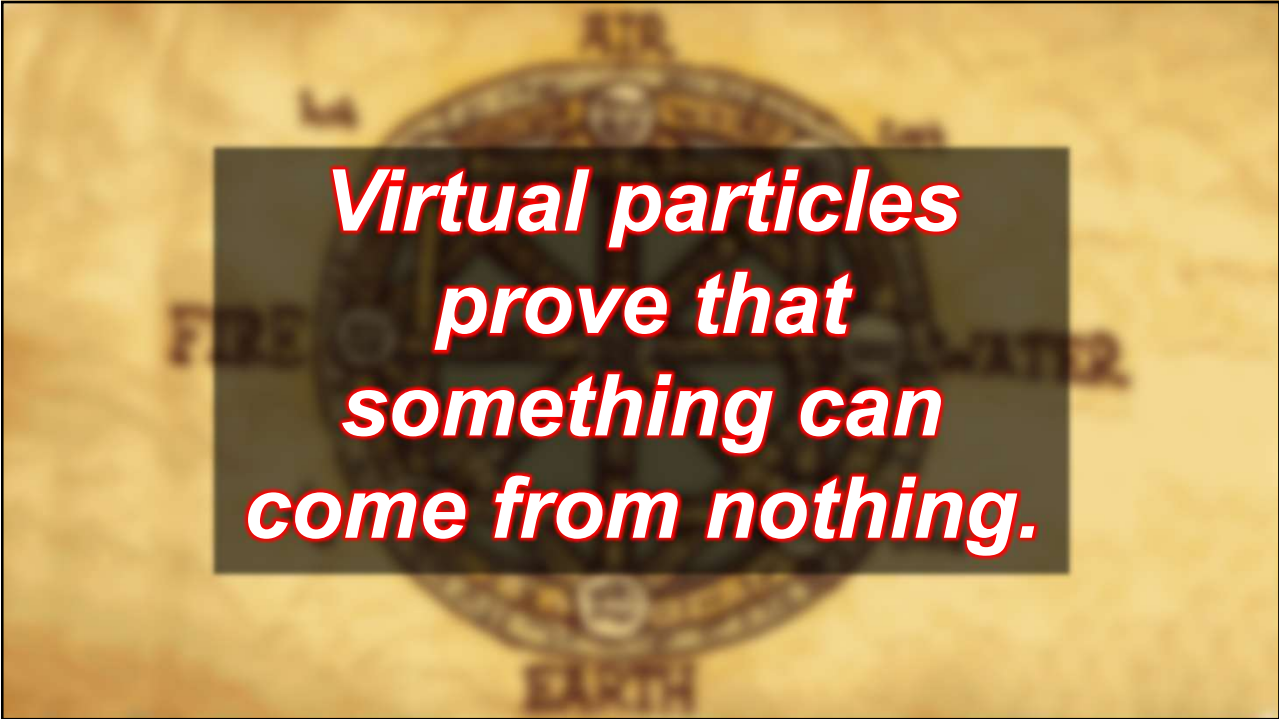
***Christianity has always stood against the advances of science. The case of Galileo is proof.***

A historical map of the world, likely a 17th-century map, showing the continents and oceans. The word "EARTH" is visible at the bottom of the map. A dark grey rectangular box is overlaid on the map, containing text in red, bold, italicized font.

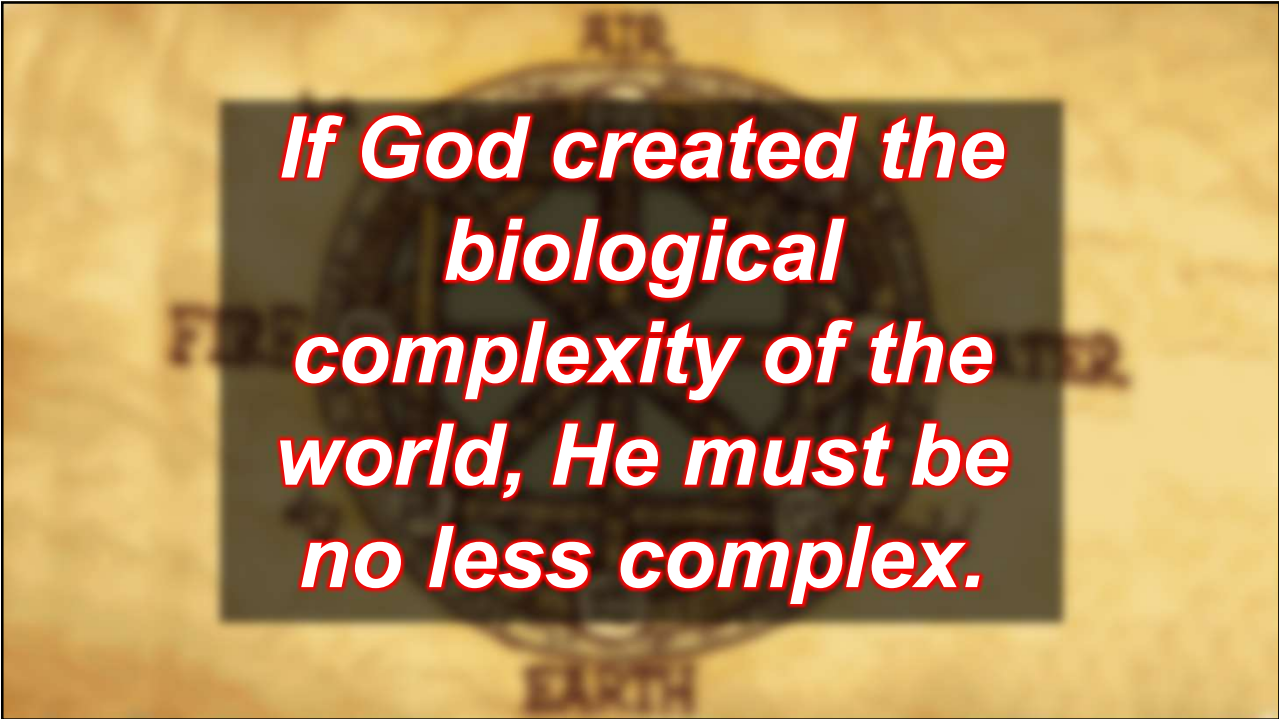
***The Bible was  
written by the same  
people who said the  
earth was flat.***

A historical map of the world, similar to the one above, showing the continents and oceans. The word "EARTH" is visible at the bottom of the map. A dark grey rectangular box is overlaid on the map, containing text in red, bold, italicized font.

***Most scientists are  
atheists therefore  
the belief in God is  
not scientific.***

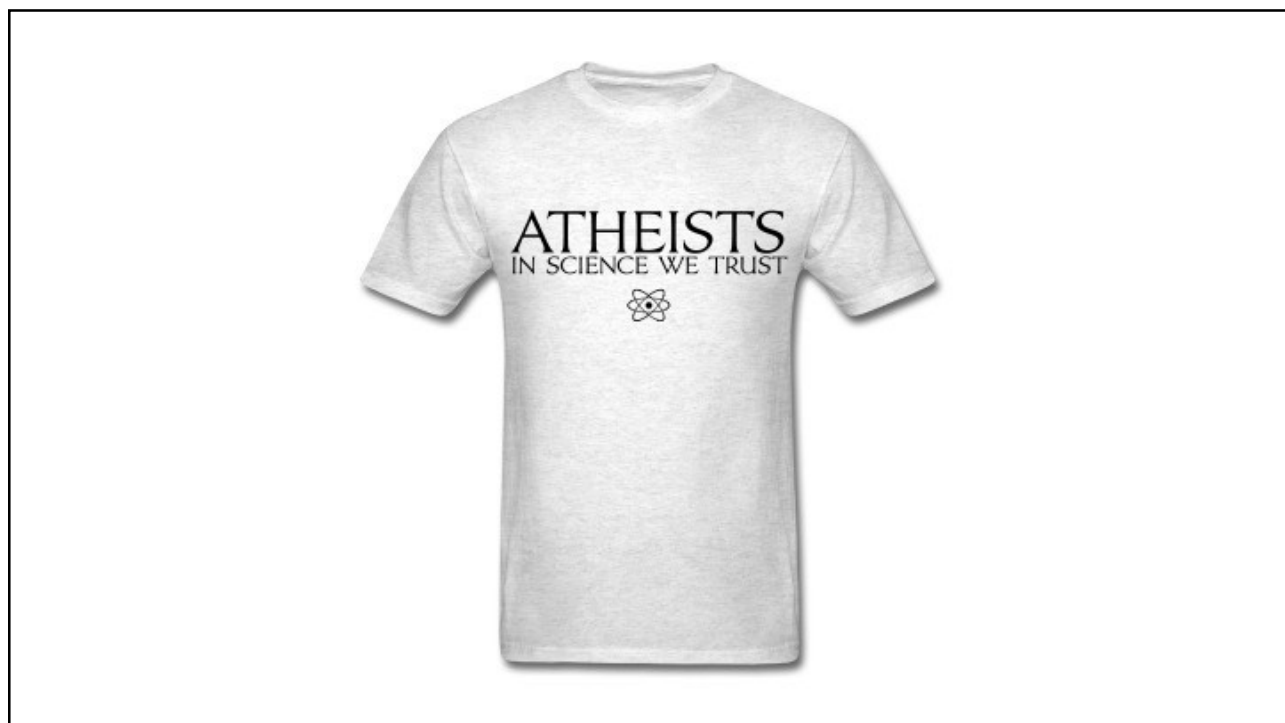
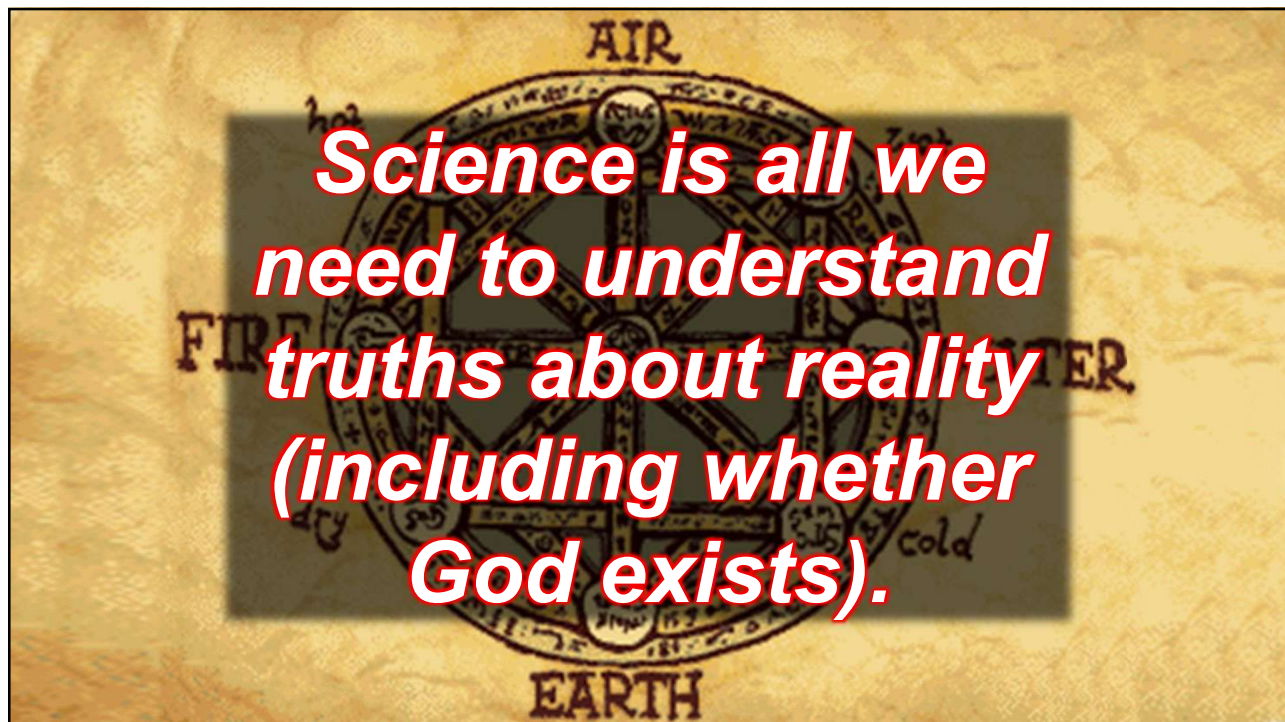


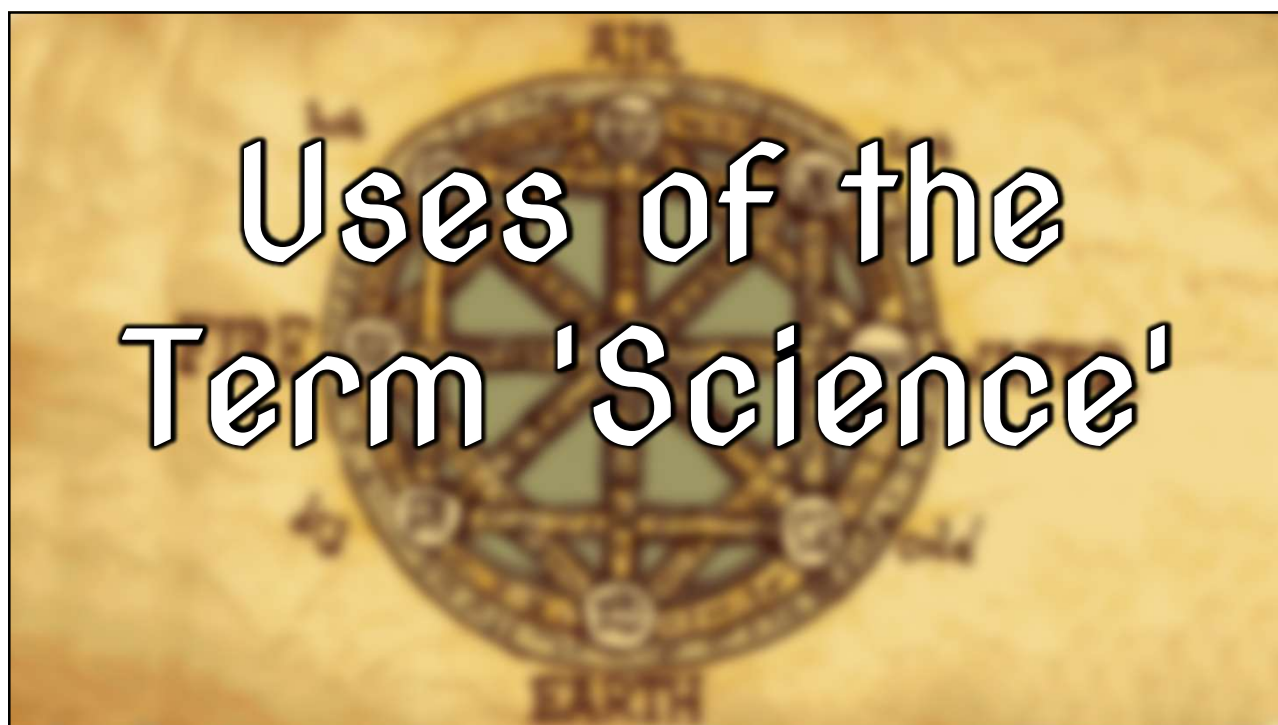
***Virtual particles  
prove that  
something can  
come from nothing.***



***If God created the  
biological  
complexity of the  
world, He must be  
no less complex.***



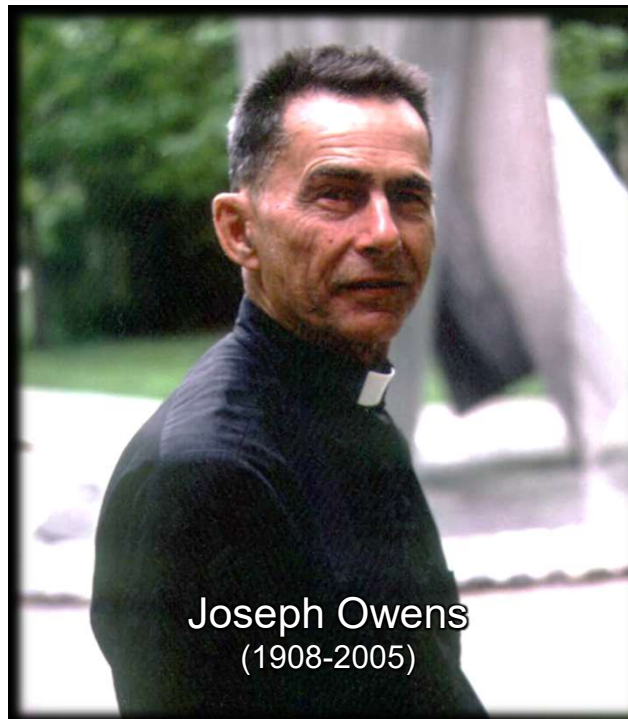




# ∞ science ∞

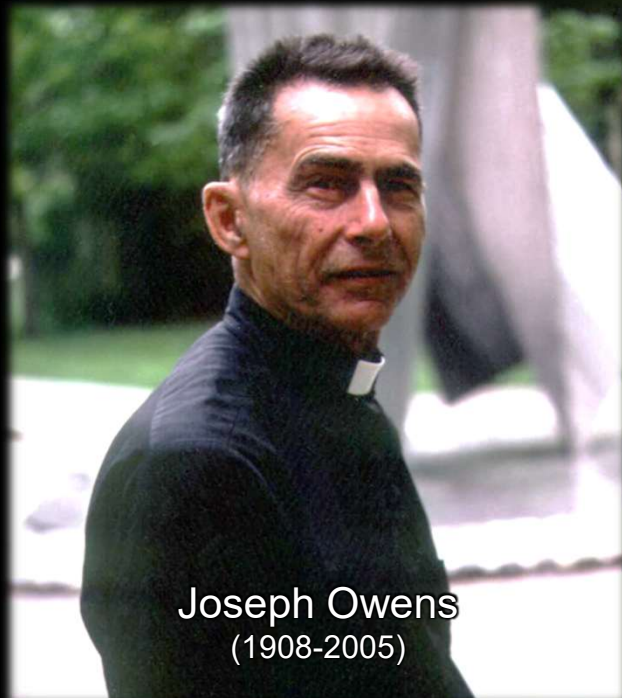
*ancient and medieval use of the term*

***Here 'science' is any area of study and body of knowledge whose truths can be reduced to the first principles of that area.***



**Joseph Owens**  
(1908-2005)

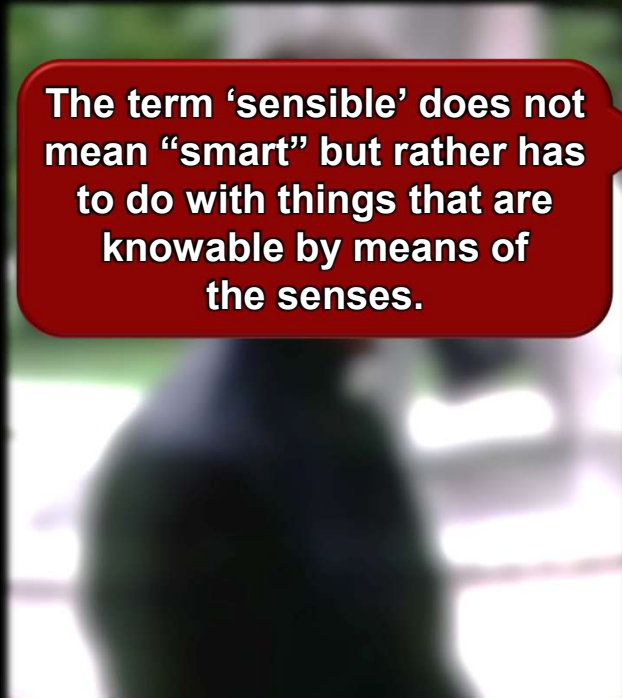
**"In this tradition [that goes back to Plato and Aristotle], 'science' has a much wider and richer meaning than it has in the popular understanding of the word today. It means knowledge of a thing in light of its causes. It extends to any kind of explanation of things through the causes that account for their nature, their origin, and their function,**



Joseph Owens  
(1908-2005)

"whether the causes are in the sensible or the supersensible realm. In this tradition 'science' or 'scientific knowledge' includes mathematics, philosophy of nature, metaphysics, logic, and ethics, as well as the experimental sciences. ..."

[Joseph Owens, "The 'Analytics' and Thomistic Metaphysical Procedure," *Mediaeval Studies* 26 (1964): 83-108 (87-88)]



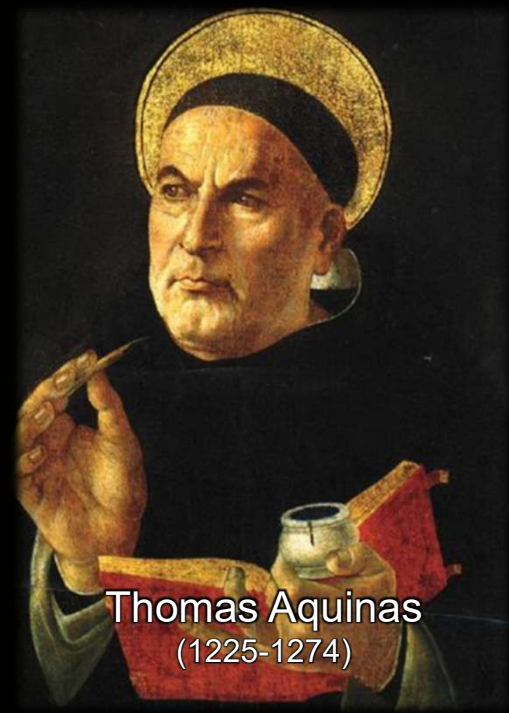
The term 'sensible' does not mean "smart" but rather has to do with things that are knowable by means of the senses.

"whether the causes are in the **sensible** or the supersensible realm. In this tradition 'science' or 'scientific knowledge' includes mathematics, philosophy of nature, metaphysics, logic, and ethics, as well as the experimental sciences. ..."

[Joseph Owens, "The 'Analytics' and Thomistic Metaphysical Procedure," *Mediaeval Studies* 26 (1964): 83-108 (87-88)]

***"Sensible things  
[are that] from  
which human  
reason takes the  
origin of its  
knowledge."***

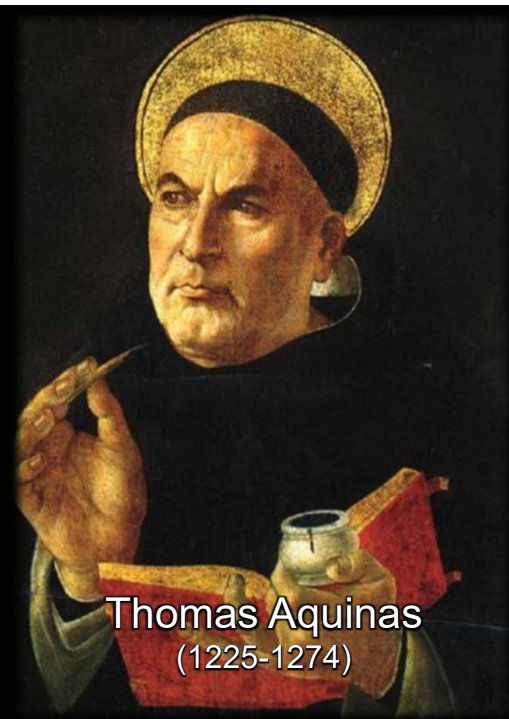
[Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, I, 9, §2. Trans. Anton C. Pegis. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975): I, 77]



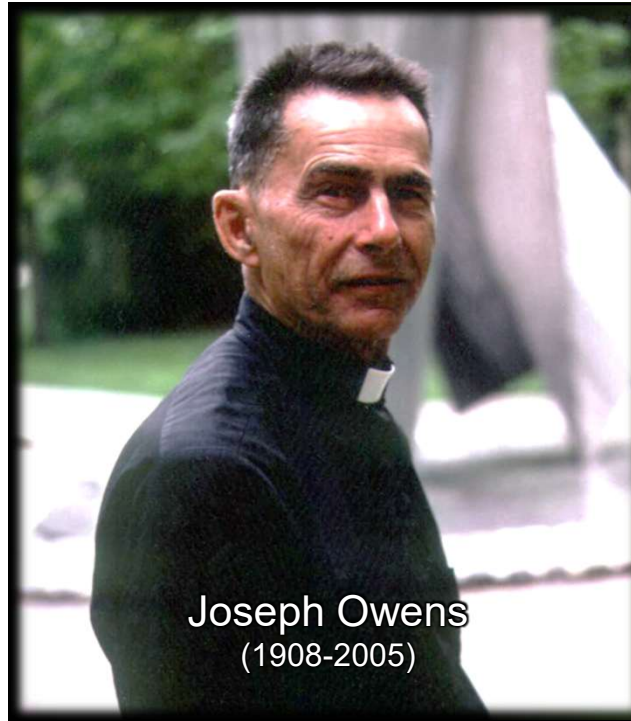
**Thomas Aquinas  
(1225-1274)**

***"Our knowledge, taking  
its start from things,  
proceeds in this order.  
First, it begins in  
sense; second, it is  
completed in the  
intellect."***

[Thomas Aquinas, *Truth*, I, 11, trans. Mulligan, 48, in *Truth* (3 vols), vol. 1 trans. Robert W. Mulligan (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1952); vol. 2 trans. James V. McGlynn (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1953); vol. 3. trans. Robert W. Schmidt (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1954). The three volumes were reprinted as *Truth* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994)]



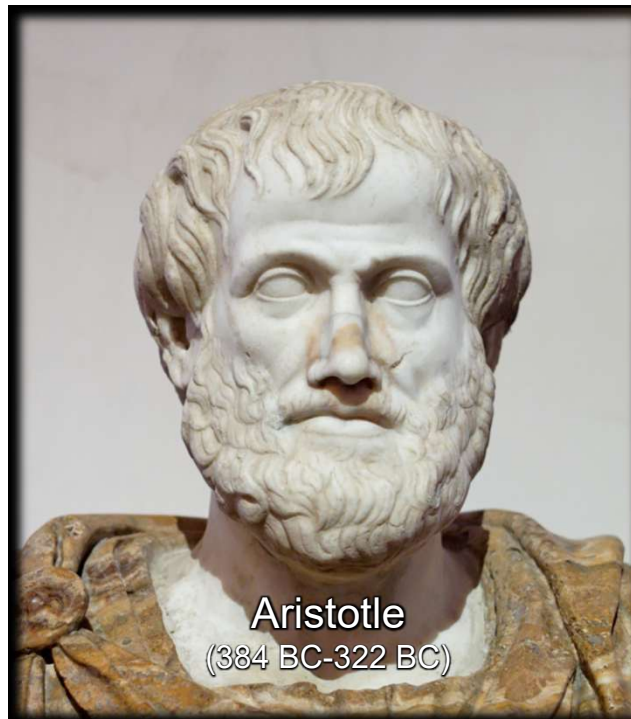
**Thomas Aquinas  
(1225-1274)**



Joseph Owens  
(1908-2005)

**"This traditional [i.e., ancient and medieval] use of the word "science" is still alive today, in spite of the way in which the term has been appropriated to the experimental sciences in popular use."**

[Joseph Owens, "The 'Analytics' and Thomistic Metaphysical Procedure," *Mediaeval Studies* 26 (1964): 83-108 (87-88)]

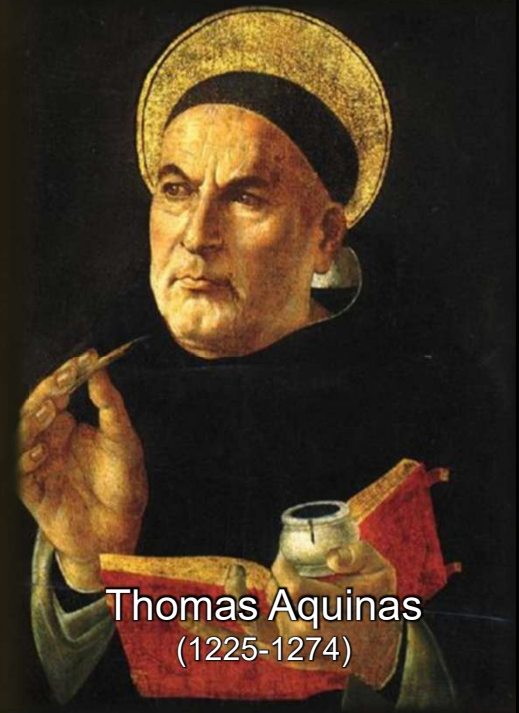


Aristotle  
(384 BC-322 BC)

***"And the most exact of the sciences [ἐπιστημῶν; epistēmōn] are those which deal most with first principles."***

[Aristotle, *The Metaphysics*, trans. W. D. Ross in Richard McKeon, ed. *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, (New York: Random House, 1941), 691]

***"Sacred doctrine is a science [scientiam]. We must bear in mind that there are two kinds of sciences. There are some which proceed from a principle known by the natural light of the intelligence, such as arithmetic ... There are some which proceed from the principles known by the light of a higher science. ..."***



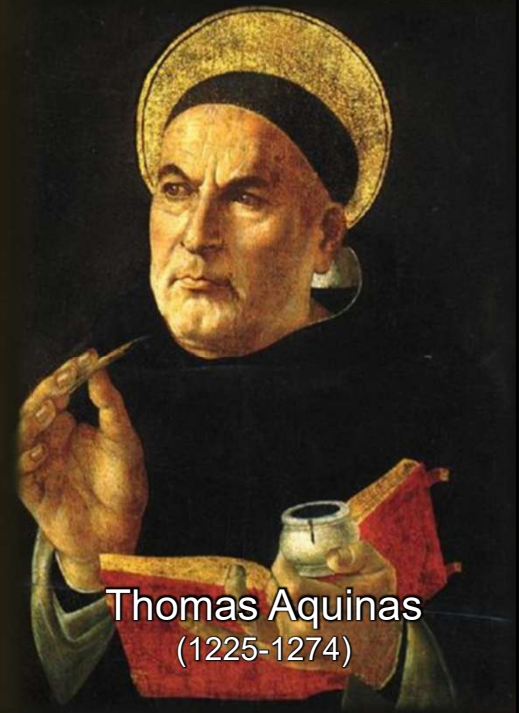
Thomas Aquinas  
(1225-1274)

***"Sacred doctrine is a science [scientiam]. We must bear in mind that there are two kinds of sciences. There are some which proceed from a principle known by the natural light of the intelligence, such as arithmetic ... There are some which proceed from the principles known by the light of a higher science. ..."***

The expression 'sacred doctrine' refers to those truths about God that can be known through divine revelation in distinction to those truths about God knowable by reason from God's revelation of Himself in creation.

***"So it is that sacred doctrine is a science, because it proceeds from the principles established by the light of a higher science, namely, the science of God and the blessed."***

[*Summa Theologiae* I, Q.1, art. 2]



Thomas Aquinas  
(1225-1274)

**∞ science ∞**

***ancient and medieval use of the term***

***In this regard, not only would areas like physics be regarded as a science but also metaphysics and theology.***

# ∞ science ∞

*contemporary use of the term*

***In contemporary usage, the term 'science' has become difficult to define to everyone's satisfaction.***

# ∞ science ∞

*contemporary use of the term*

***But one relatively uncontroversial aspect of definition of science is that it is confined to the study of the physical or material world and the forces that govern it.***

# science

*contemporary use of the term*

*In this regard, while physics would be considered a science, metaphysics and theology would not.*

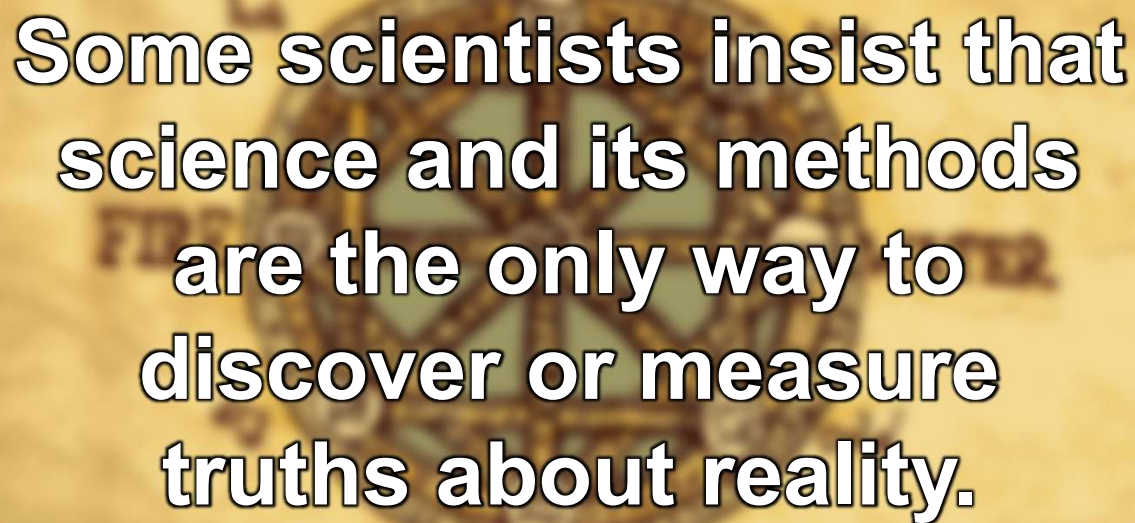
# science

*contemporary use of the term*

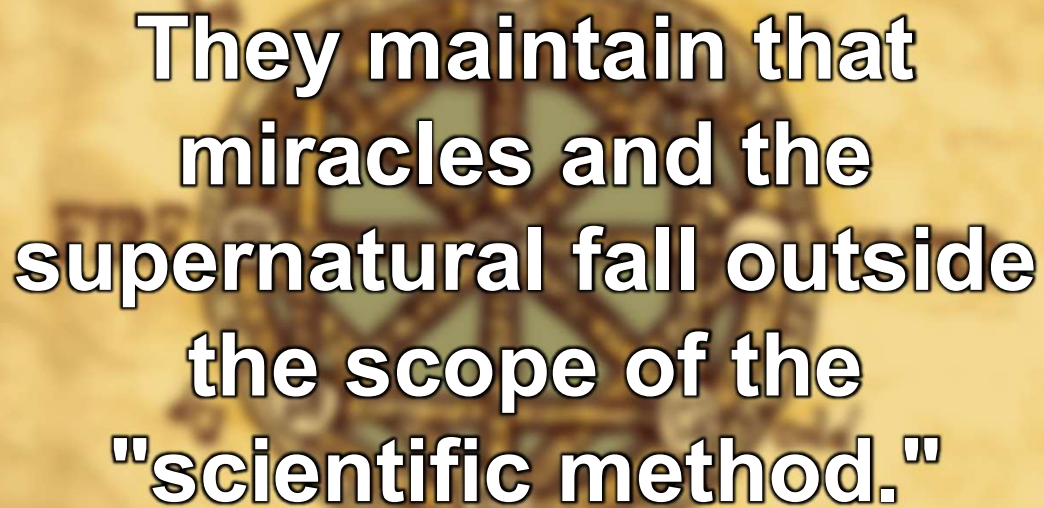
*The issue before us is whether there is any aspect of reality that is beyond the physical or material world and is thus beyond science in the contemporary sense of the term.*



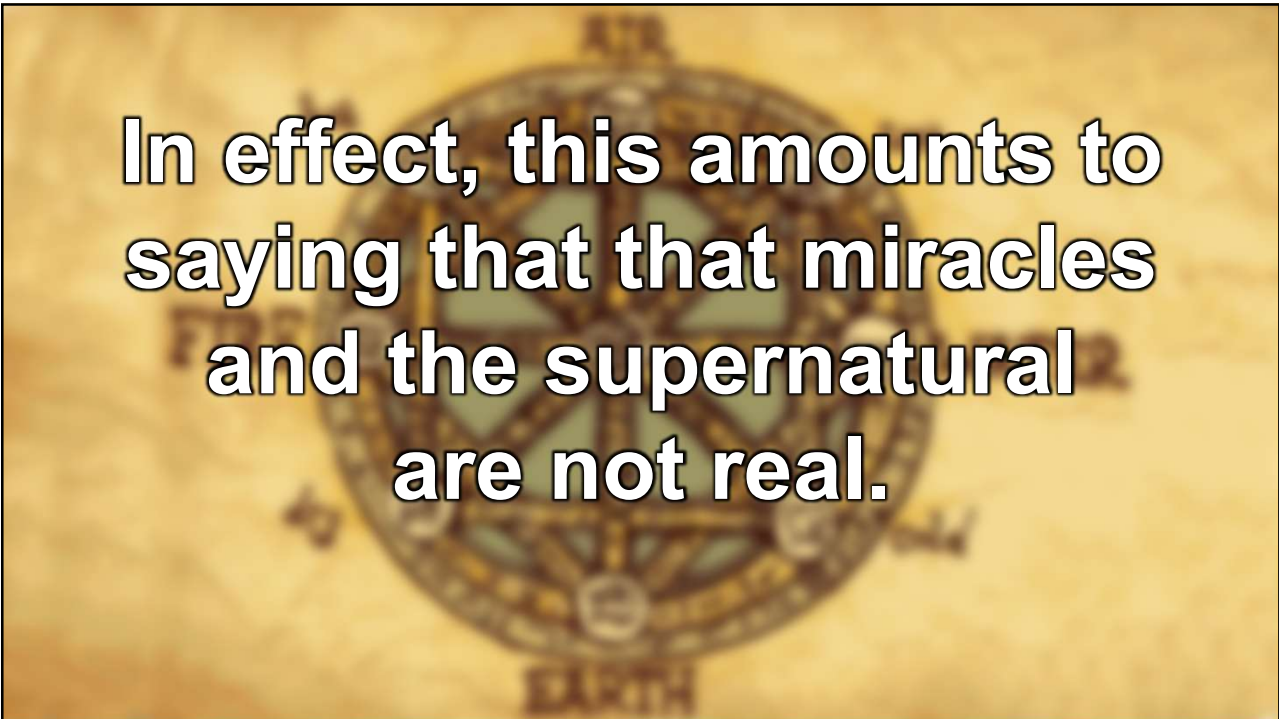
**Science by any  
other name** **'''**



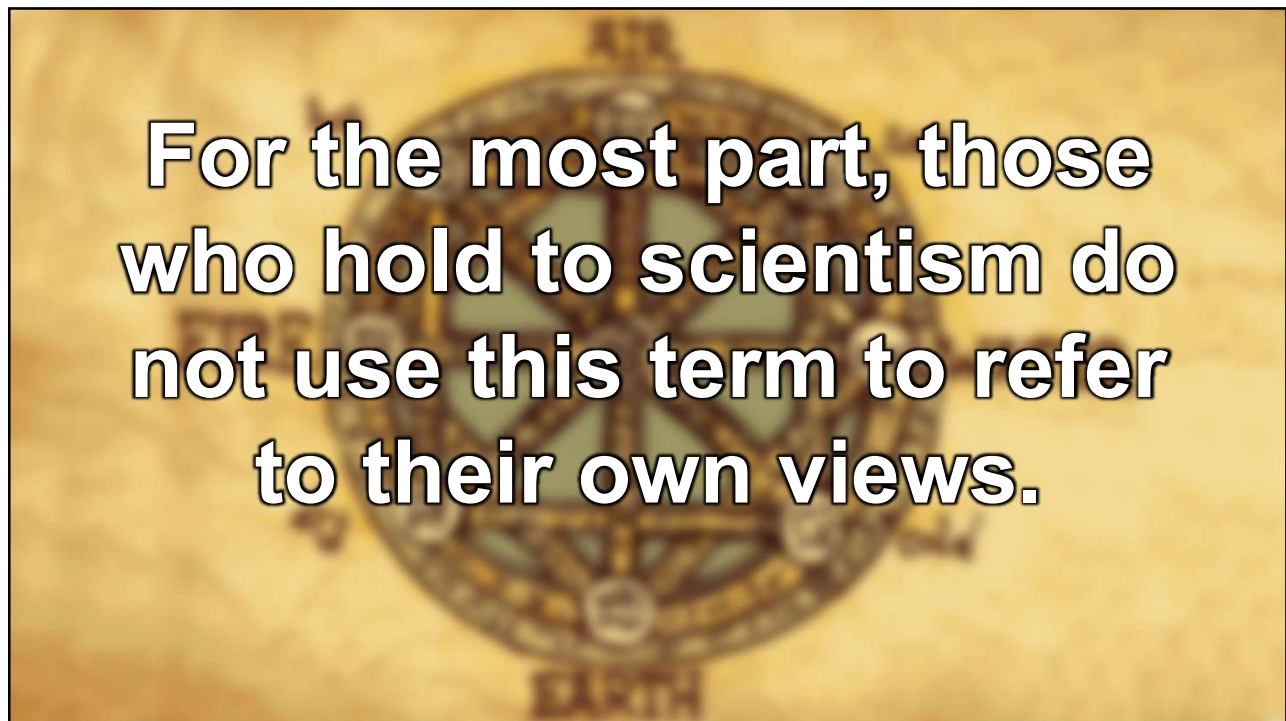
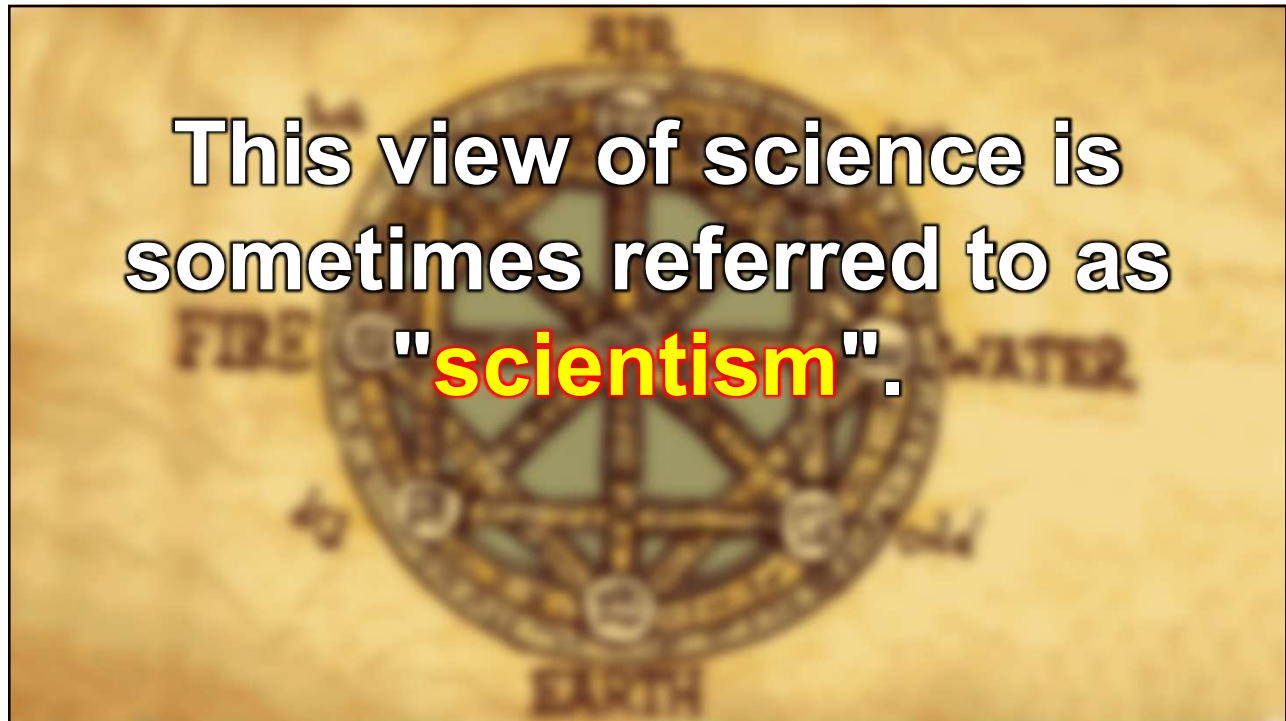
**Some scientists insist that  
science and its methods  
are the only way to  
discover or measure  
truths about reality.**



**They maintain that  
miracles and the  
supernatural fall outside  
the scope of the  
"scientific method."**

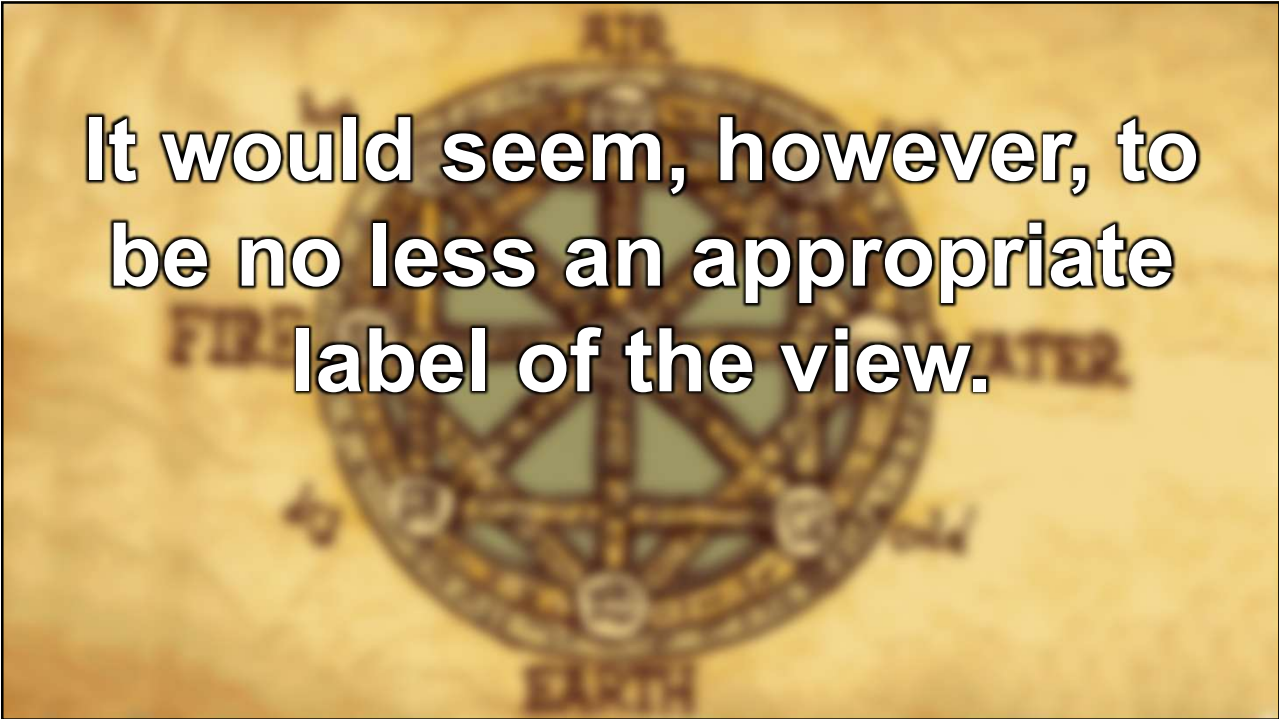


**In effect, this amounts to  
saying that that miracles  
and the supernatural  
are not real.**



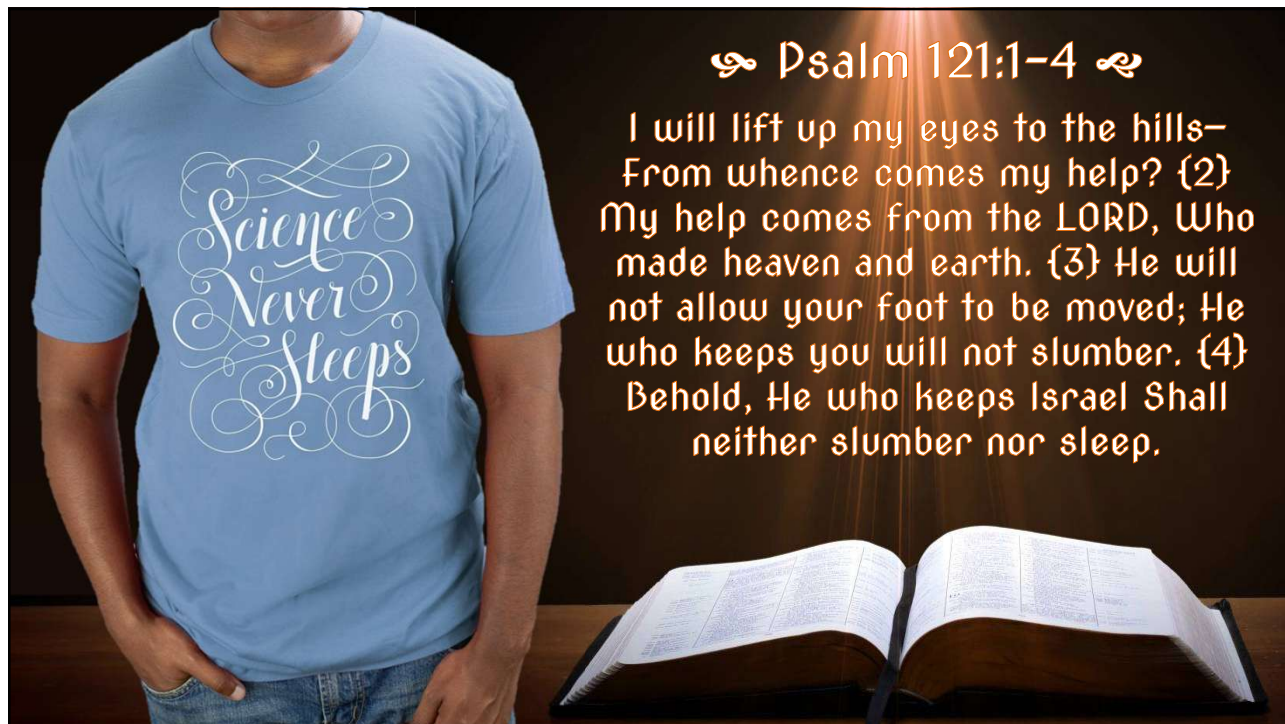


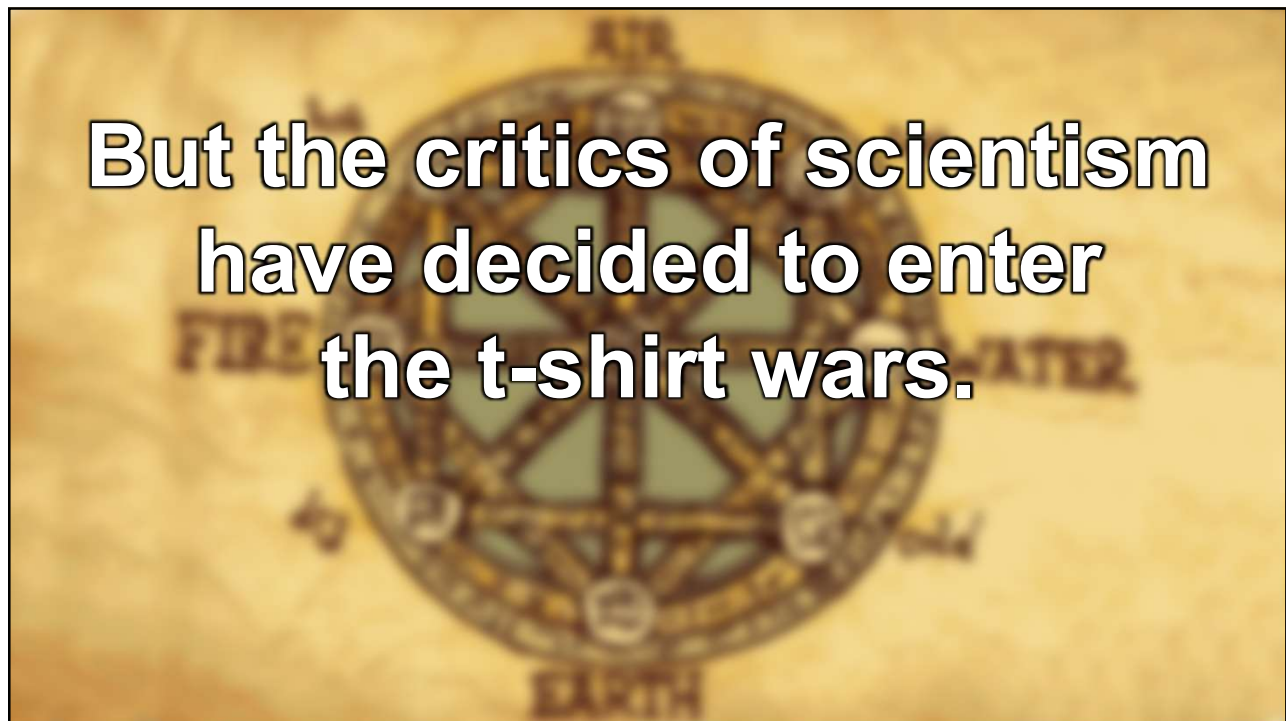
**It originated more or less  
as a pejorative term used  
by critics of the view.**



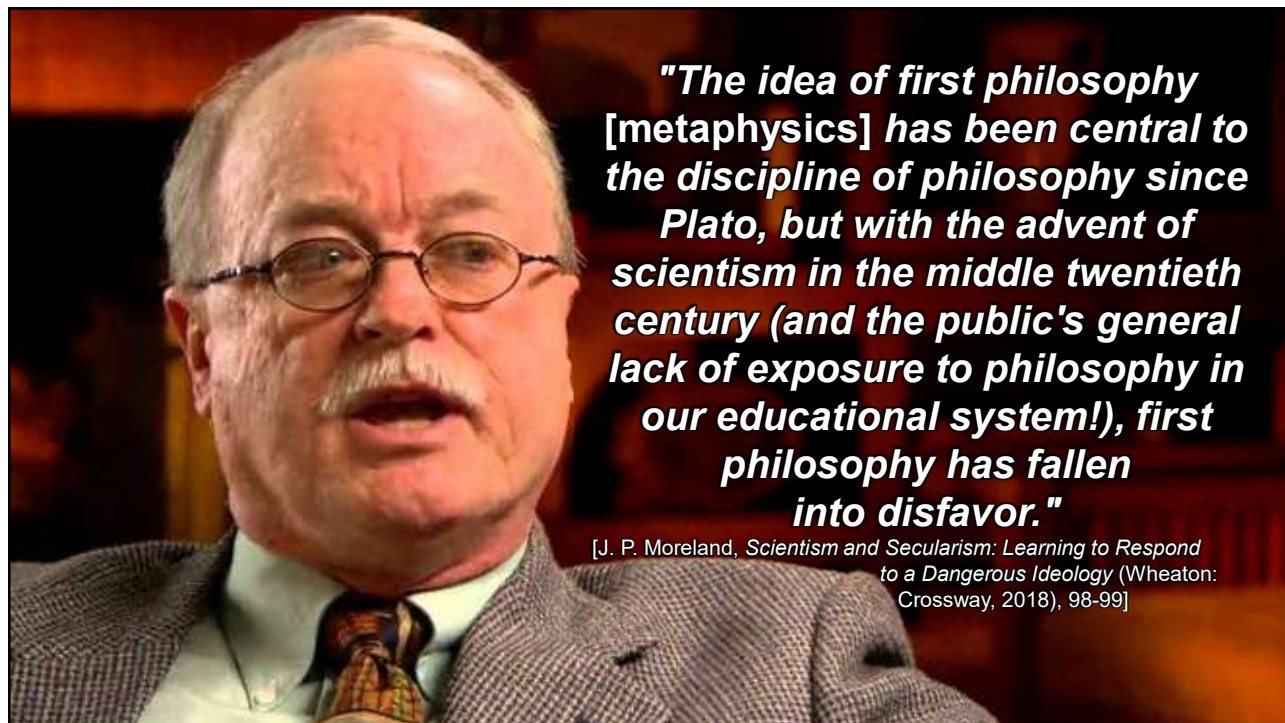
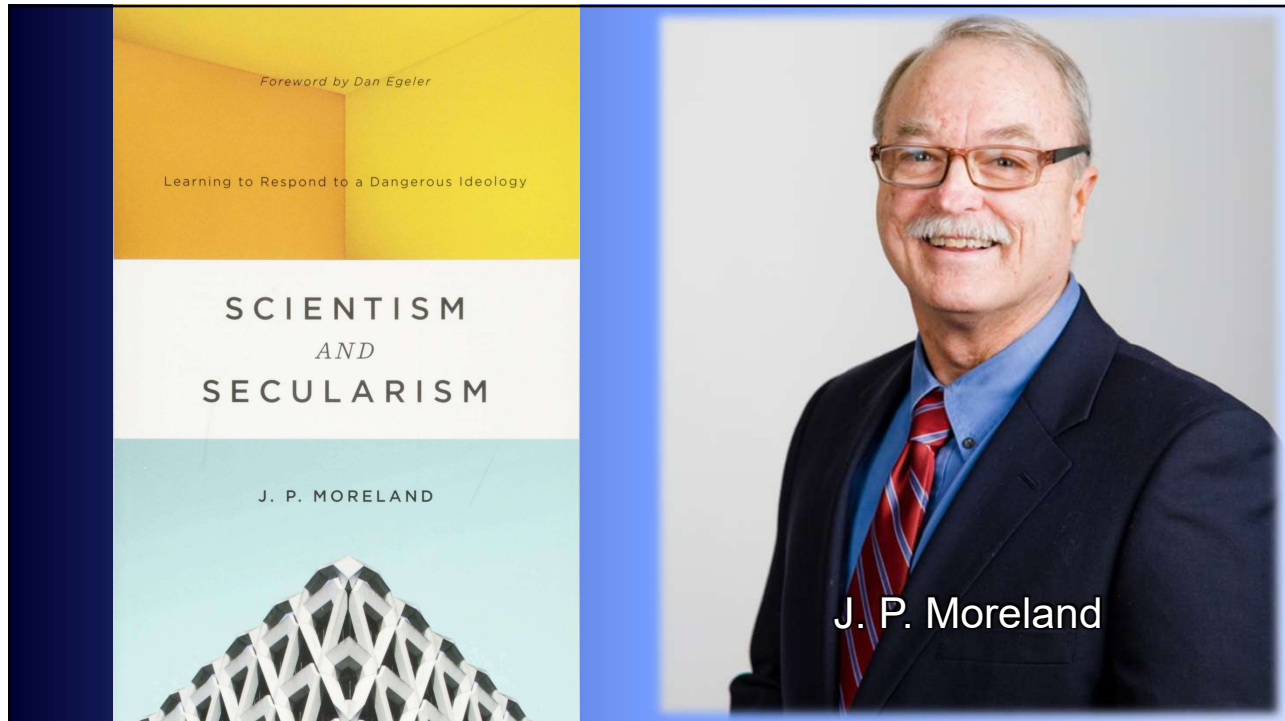
**It would seem, however, to  
be no less an appropriate  
label of the view.**





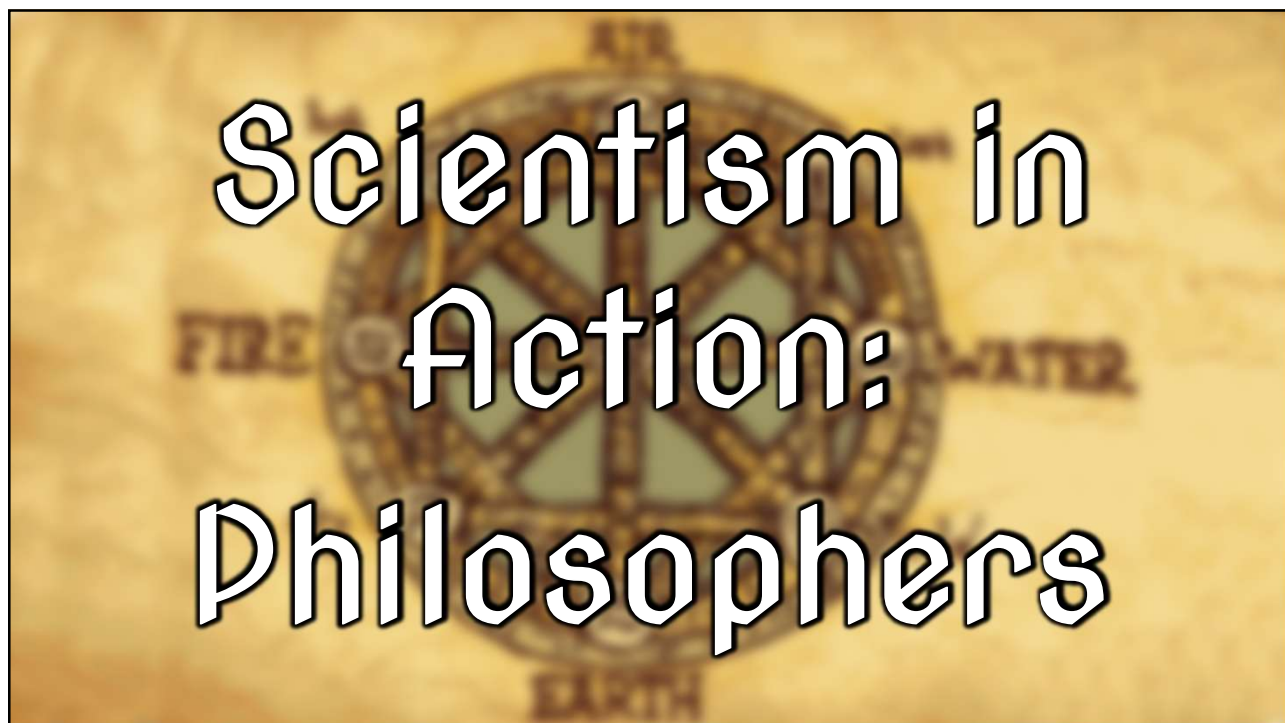
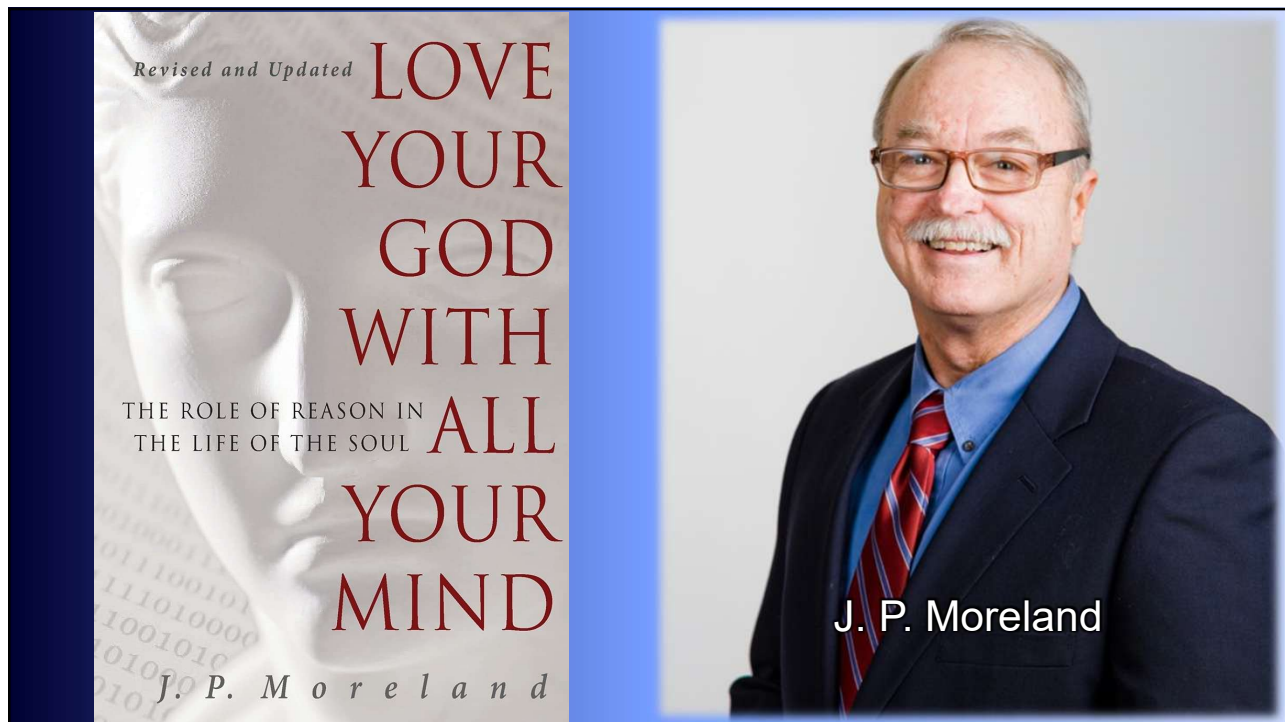


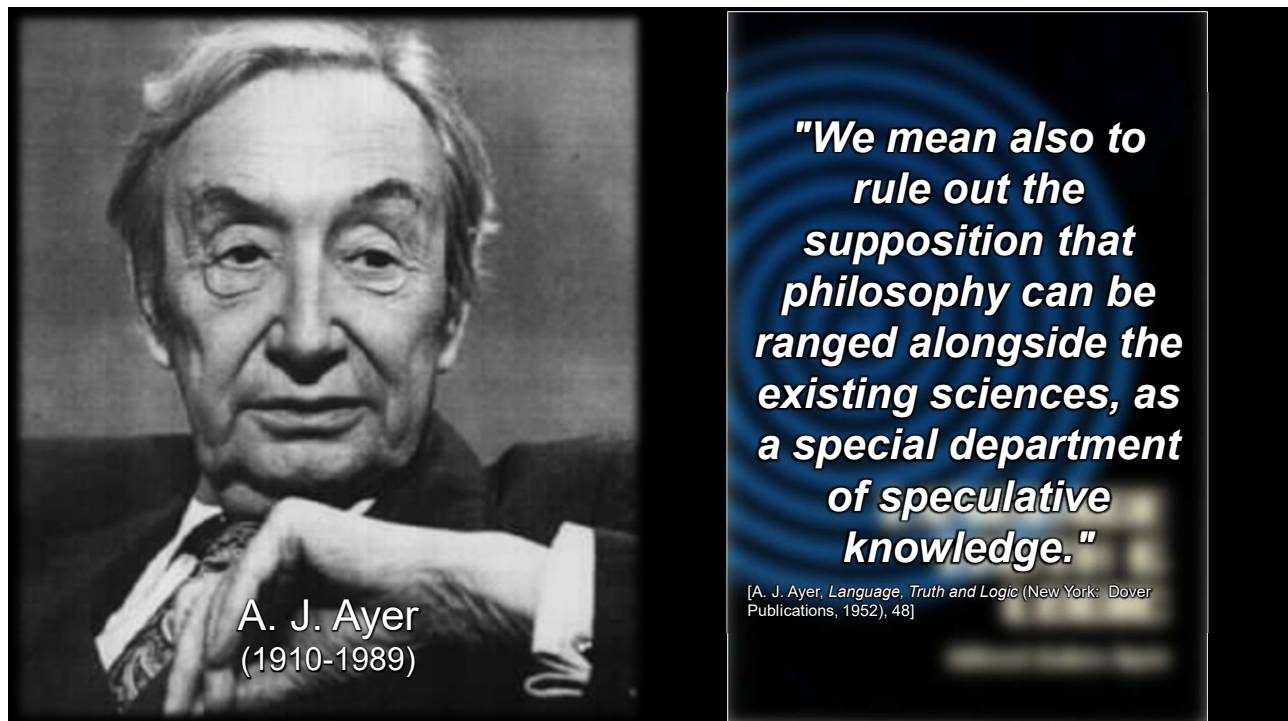
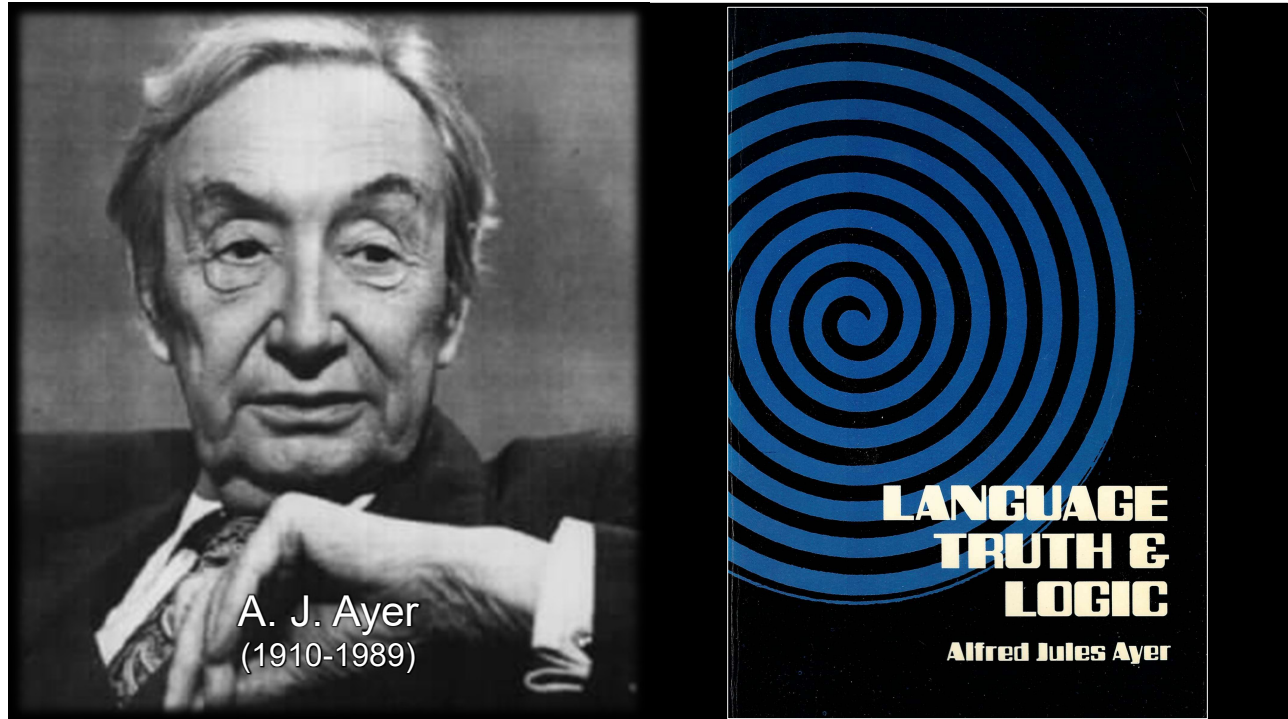


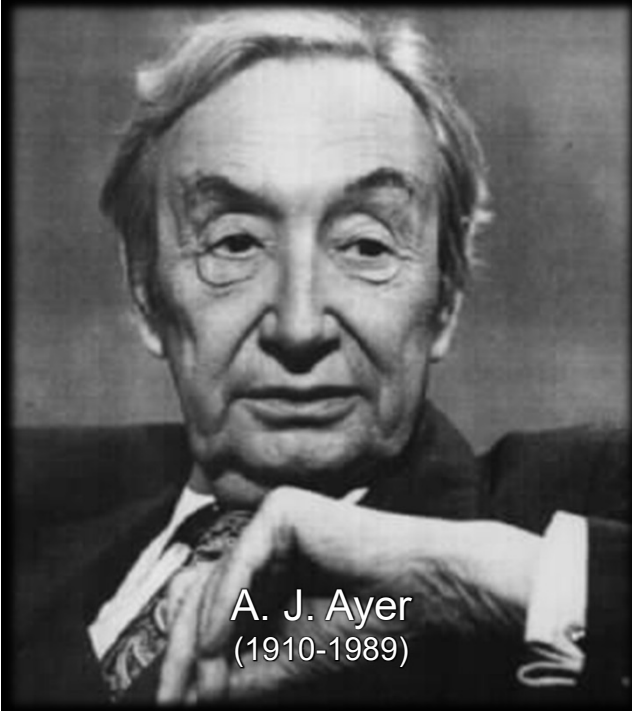


***"The idea of first philosophy [metaphysics] has been central to the discipline of philosophy since Plato, but with the advent of scientism in the middle twentieth century (and the public's general lack of exposure to philosophy in our educational system!), first philosophy has fallen into disfavor."***

[J. P. Moreland, *Scientism and Secularism: Learning to Respond to a Dangerous Ideology* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2018), 98-99]



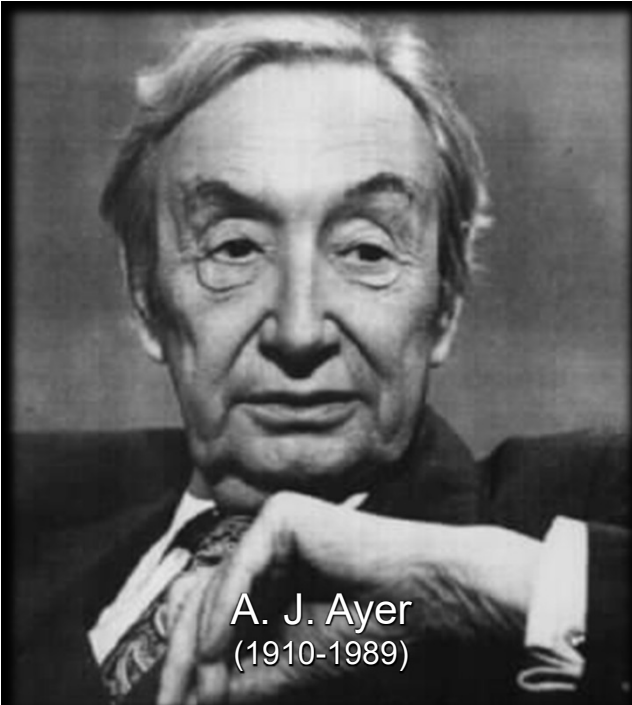




A. J. Ayer  
(1910-1989)

*"There is no field of experience which cannot, in principle, be brought under some form of scientific law, and no type of speculative knowledge about the world which it is, in principle, beyond the power of science to give."*

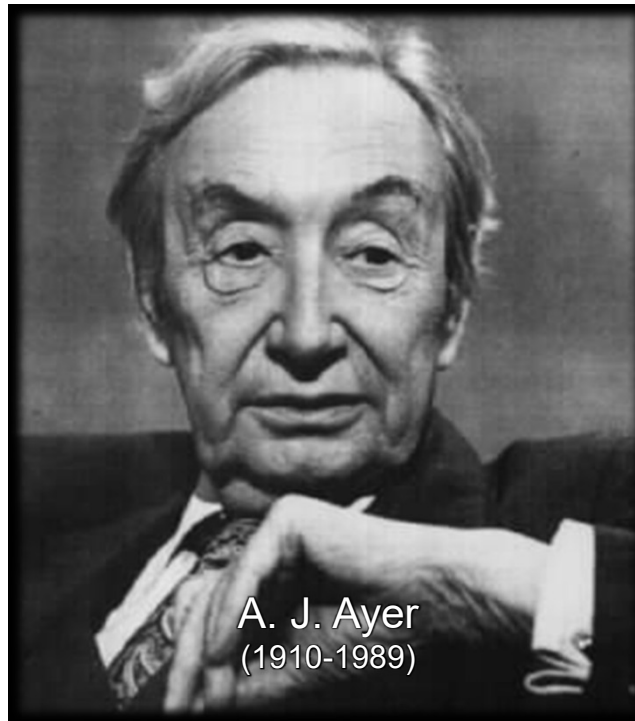
[Ayer, *Language*, 48]



A. J. Ayer  
(1910-1989)

**"The philosopher, as an analyst, is not directly concerned with the physical properties of things. He is concerned only with the way in which we speak about them. In other words, the propositions of philosophy are not factual, but linguistic in character."**

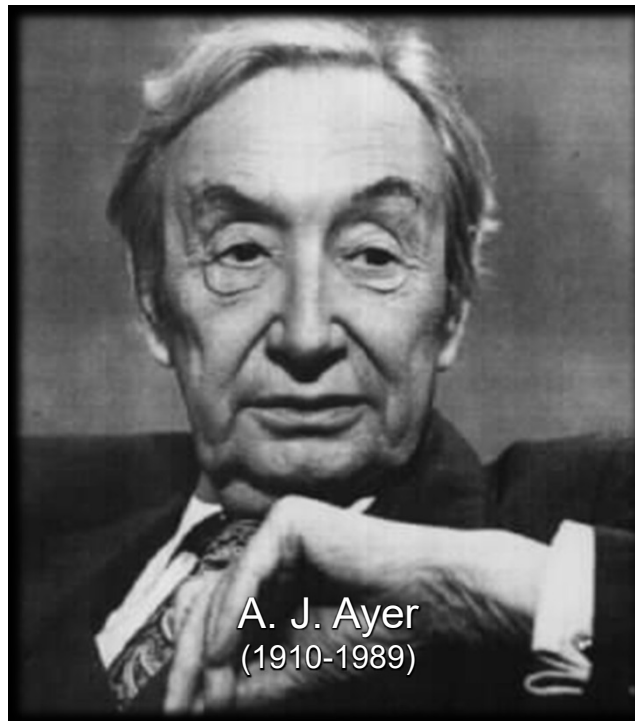
[Ayer, *Language*, 57]



A. J. Ayer  
(1910-1989)

*"To say that 'God exists' is to make a metaphysical utterance which cannot be either true or false. And by the same criterion, no sentence which purports to describe the nature of a transcendent god can possess any literal significance."*

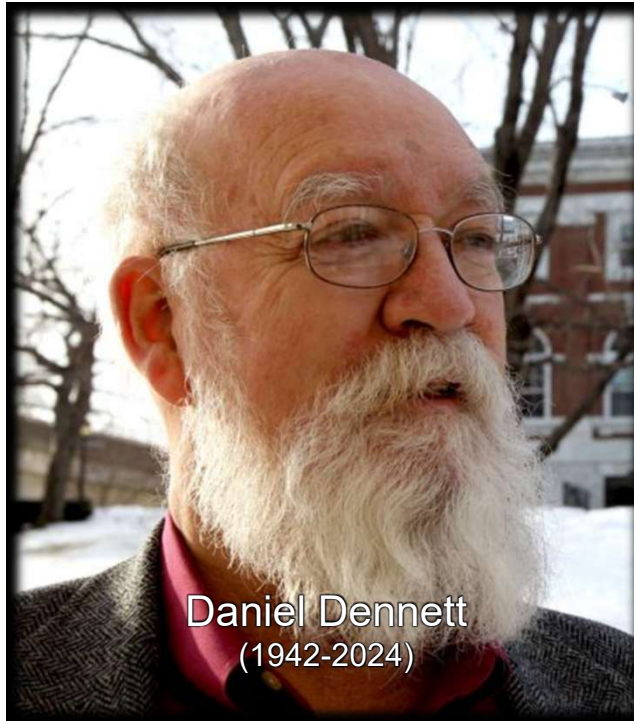
[Ayer, *Language*, 115]



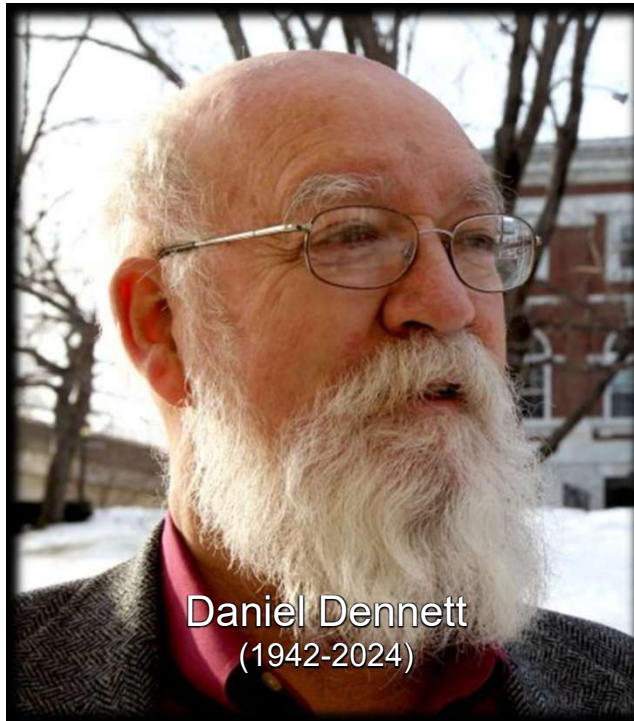
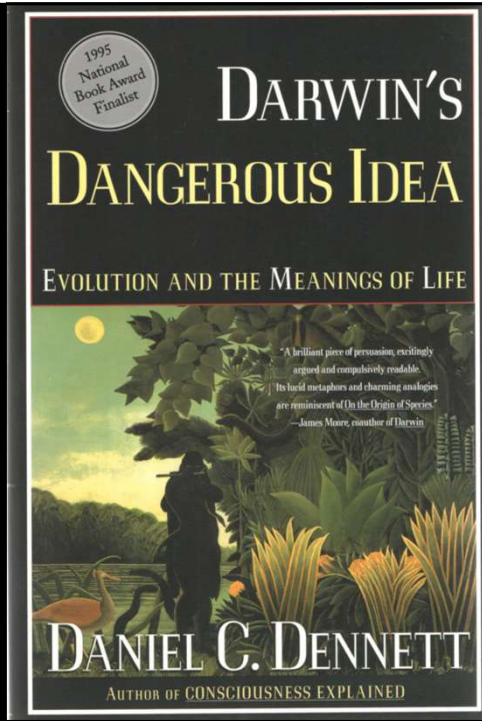
A. J. Ayer  
(1910-1989)

"But, actually, the validity of the analytic method is not dependent on any empirical, much less any metaphysical, presupposition about the nature of things. For the philosopher, as an analyst, is not directly concerned with the physical properties of things. **He is concerned only with the way in which we speak about them.** In other words, the propositions of philosophy are not factual, but linguistic in character."

[Ayer, *Language*, p. 57]



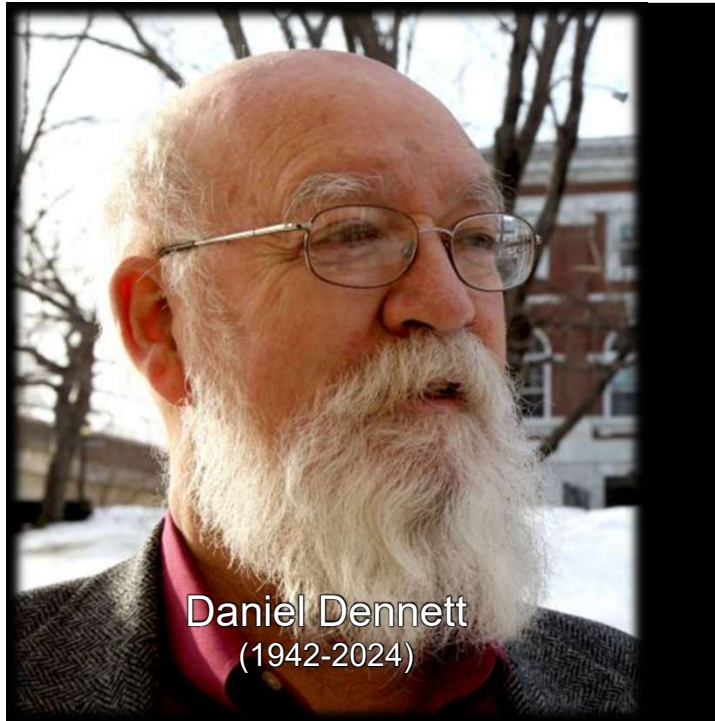
Daniel Dennett  
(1942-2024)



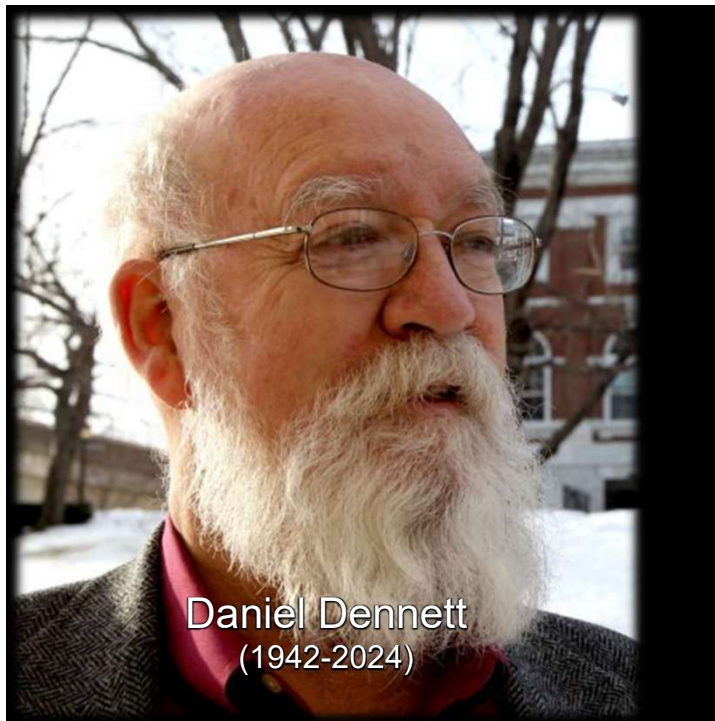
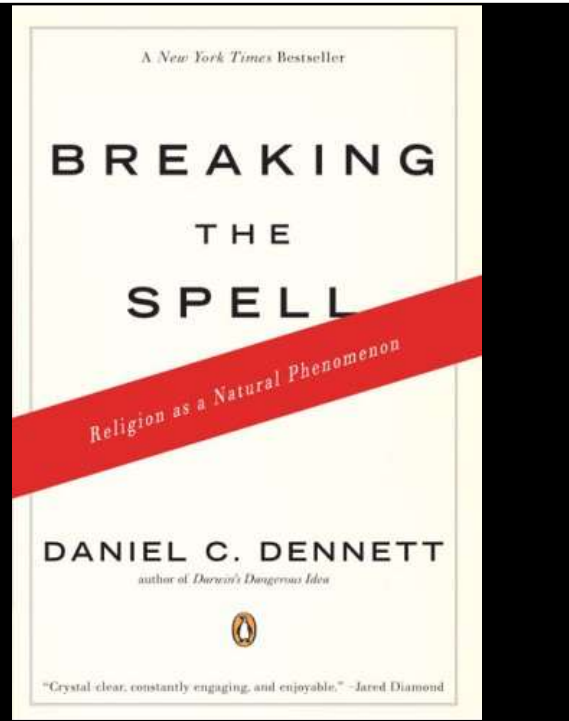
Daniel Dennett  
(1942-2024)

**"It is not 'scientism' to concede the objectivity and precision of good science, any more than it is history worship to concede that Napoleon did once rule in France and the Holocaust actually happened. Those who fear the facts will forever try to discredit the fact-finders."**

*[Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meaning of Life (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 495]*



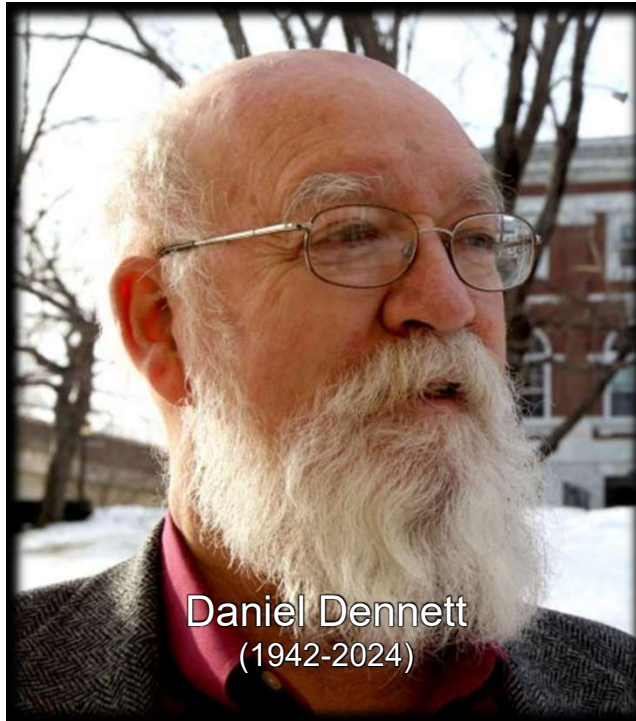
Daniel Dennett  
(1942-2024)



Daniel Dennett  
(1942-2024)

**"Science, and the technology it spawns, has been explosively practical ... —but that doesn't mean it can answer all questions or serve all needs. Science does not have the monopoly on truth."**

[*Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon* (New York: Penguin, 2006), 370]



Daniel Dennett  
(1942-2024)

"Perhaps some cancer cures *are* miracles. If so, **the only hope of ever demonstrating this** to a doubting world would be by **adopting the scientific method, with its assumption of no miracles**, and showing that science was utterly unable to account for the phenomena."

[*Breaking the Spell*, 26]

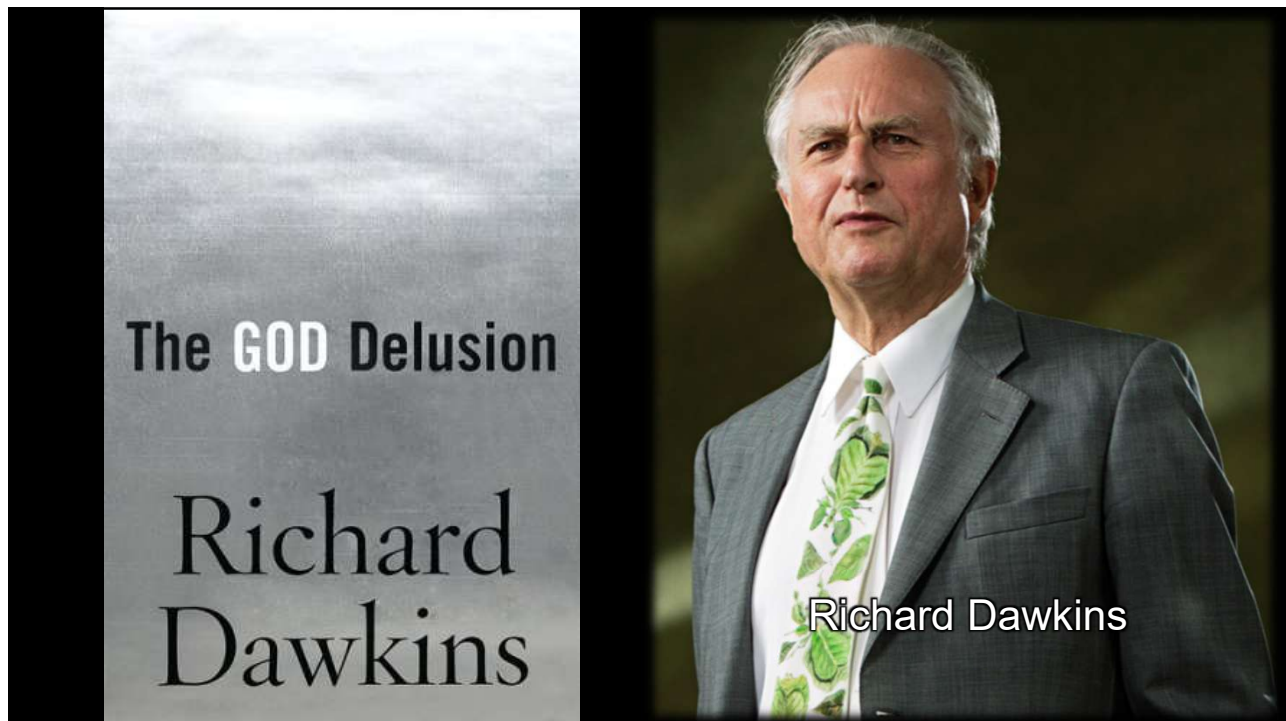
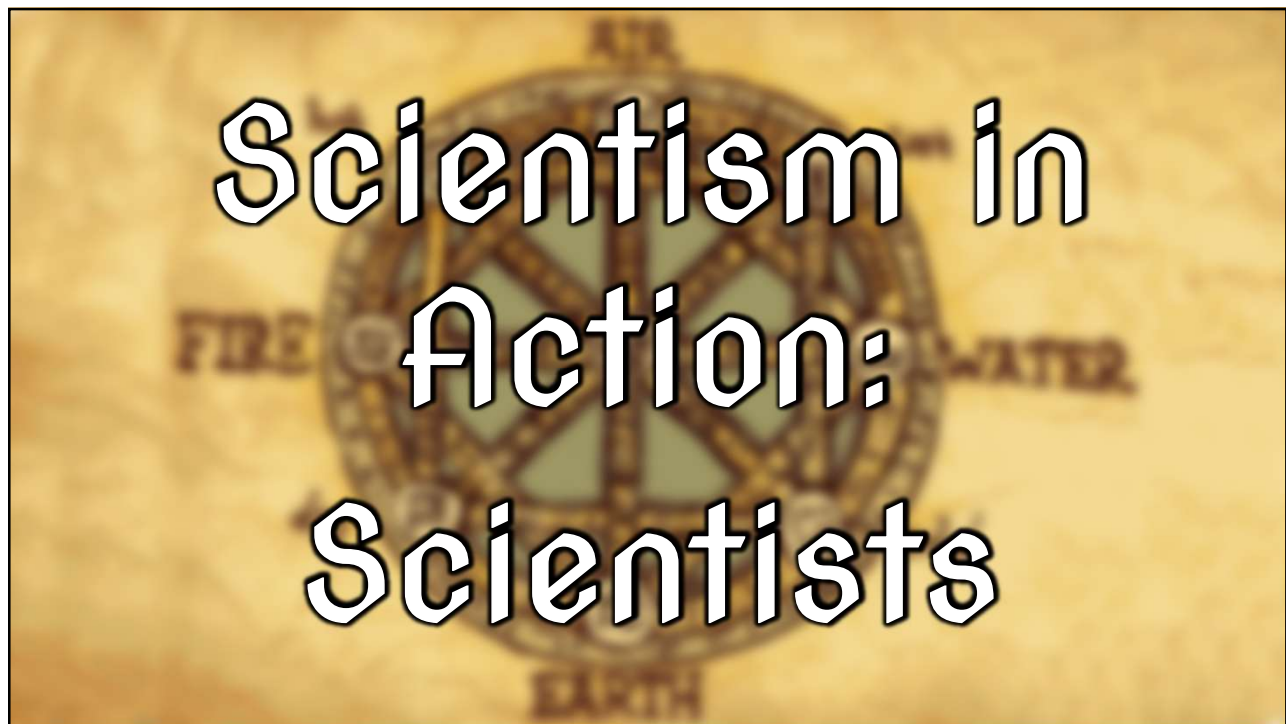


John Shook

*"Philosophical naturalism undertakes the responsibility for elaborating a comprehensive and coherent worldview based on experience, reason, and science, and for defending **science's exclusive right to explore and theorize about all of reality.**"*

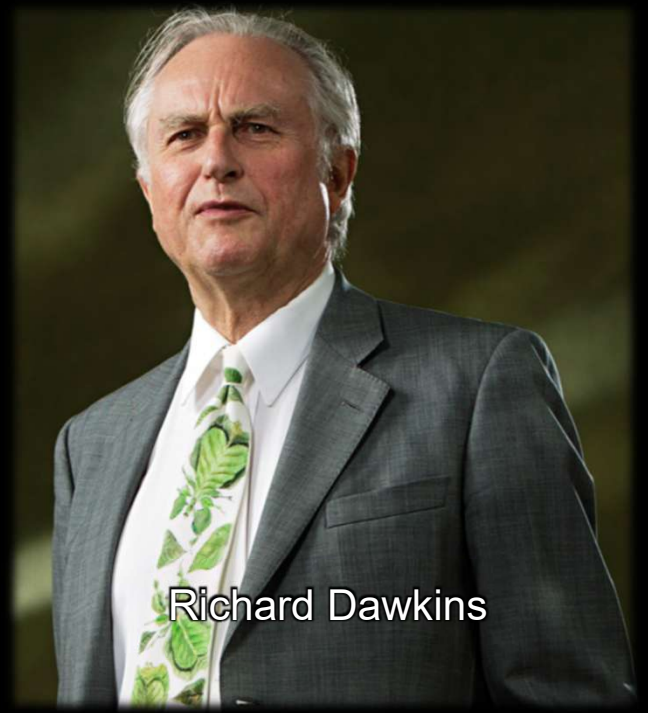
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# Scientism in Action: Scientists

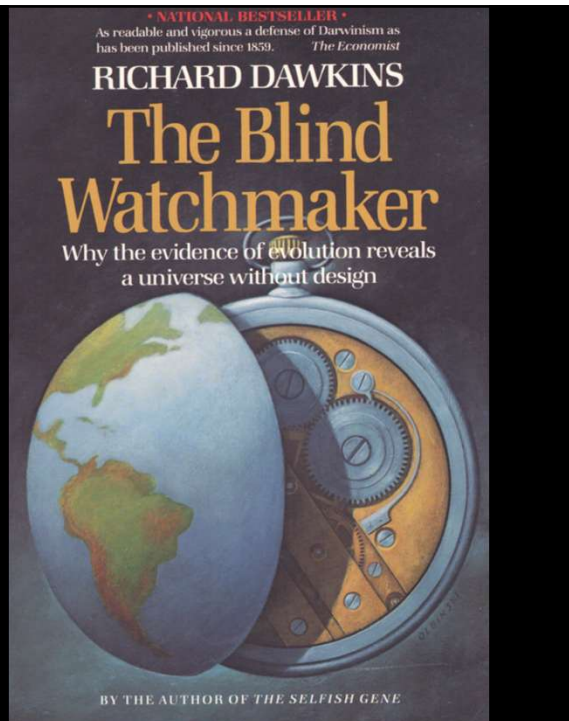
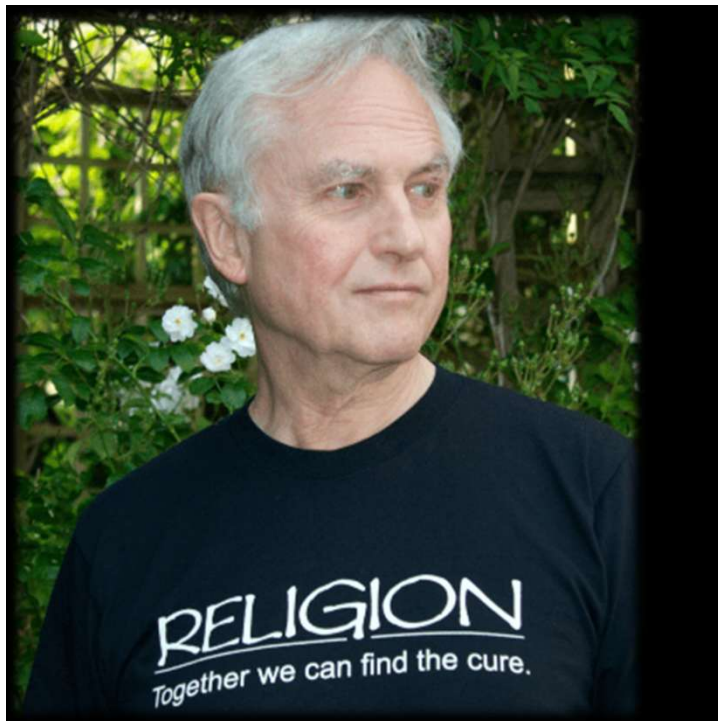


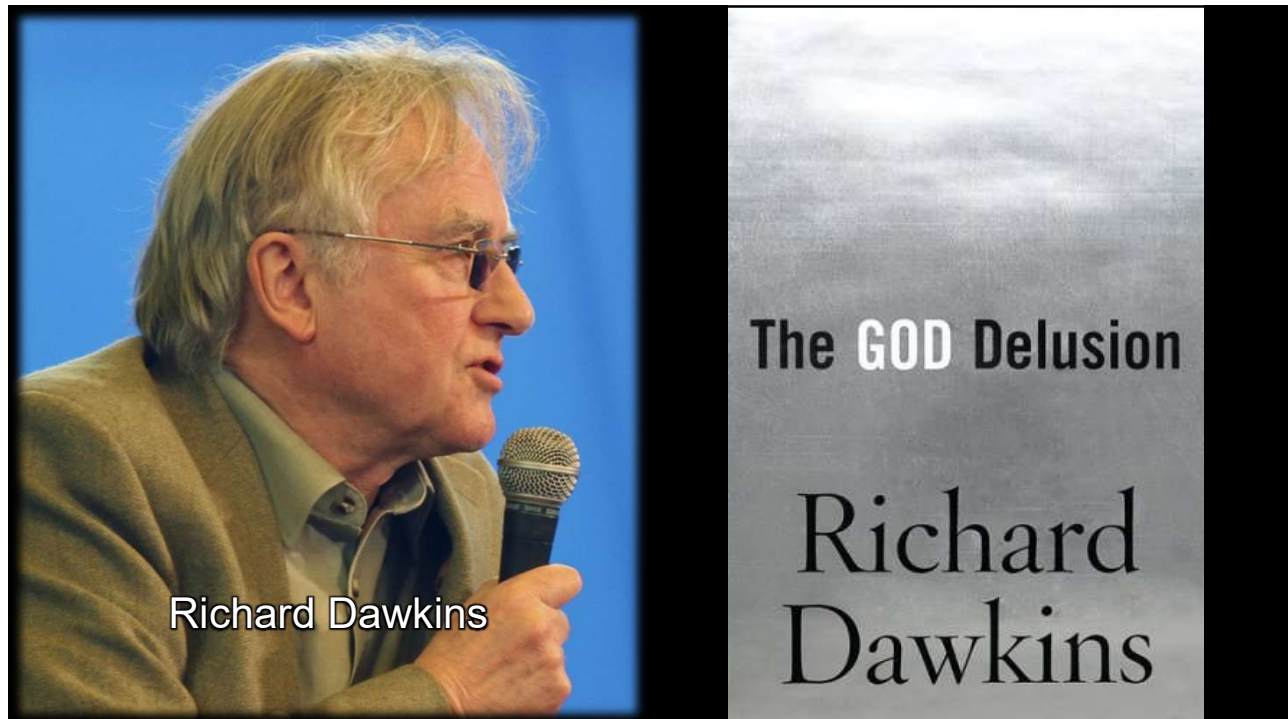
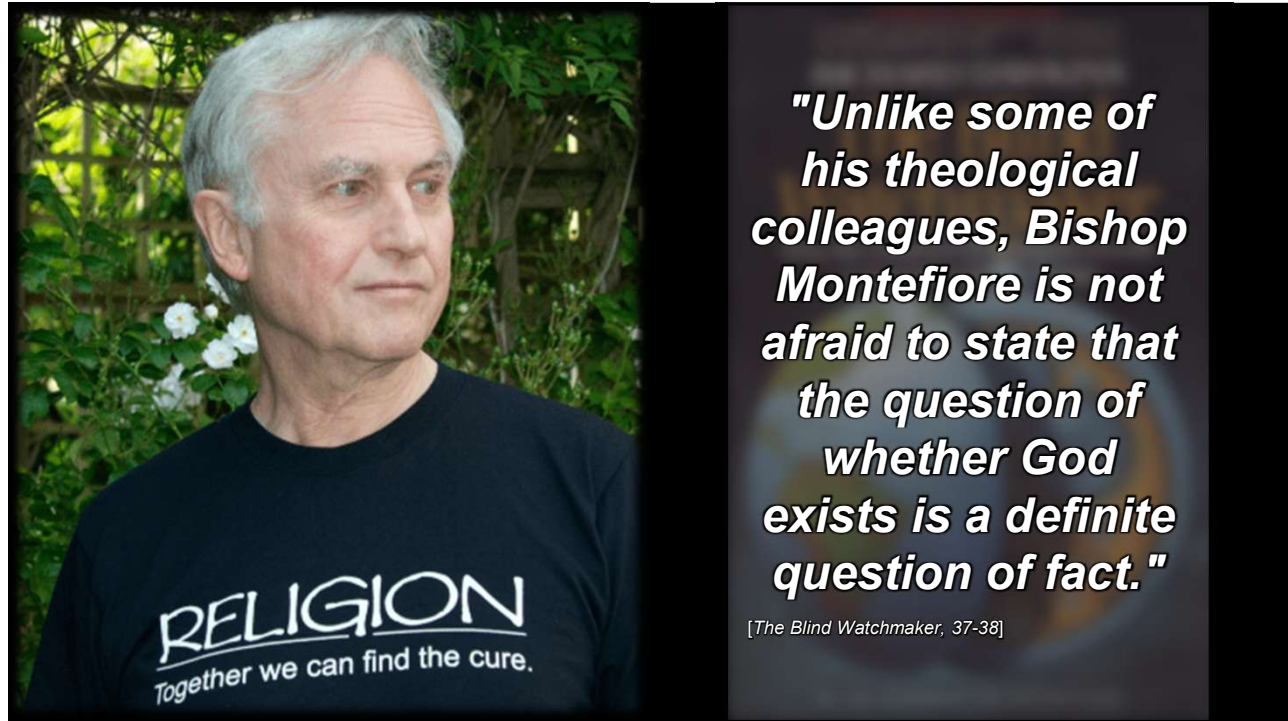
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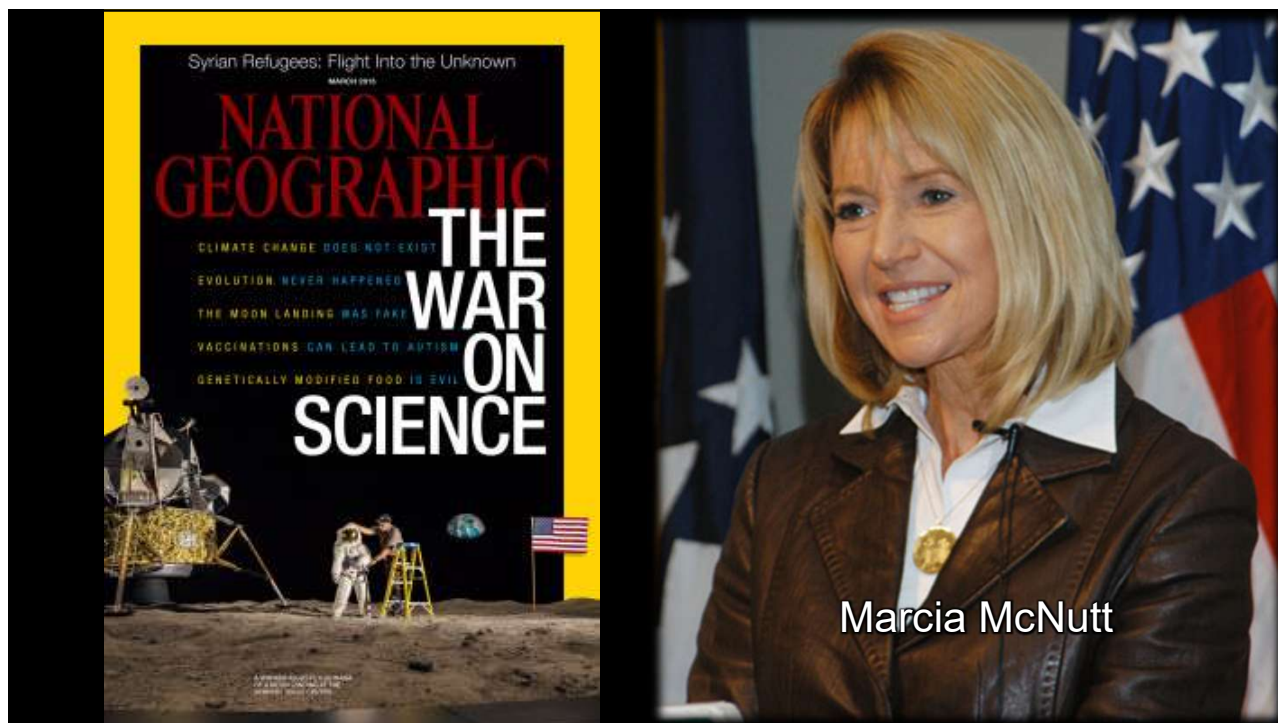
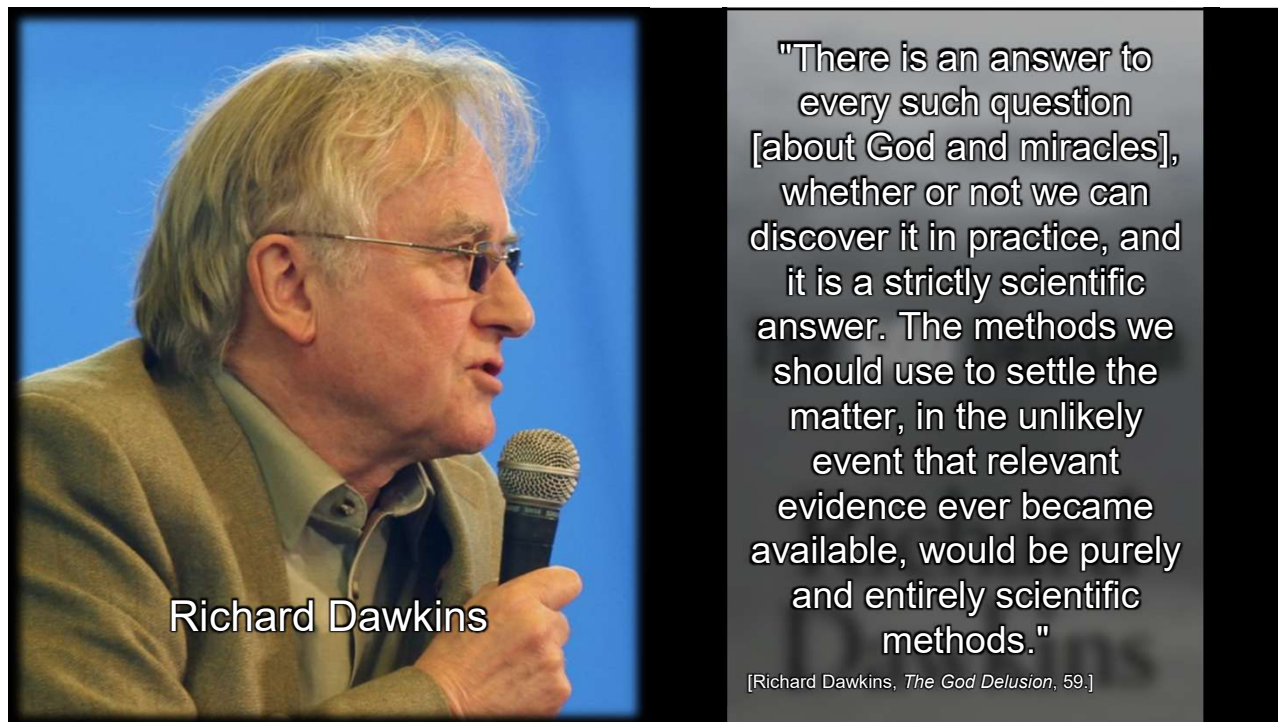
[*The God Delusion* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006), 58-59]



Richard Dawkins







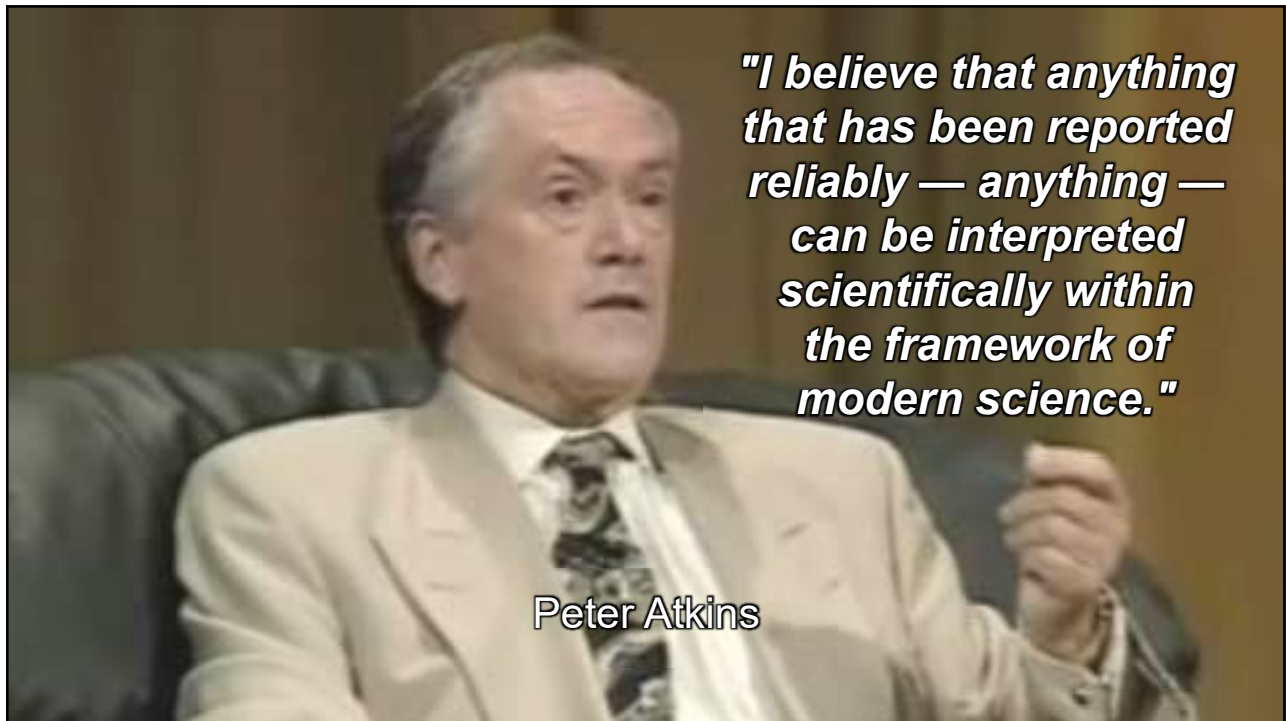
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[In Joel Achenbach, "The Age of Disbelief," *National Geographic* (March 2015): 40]

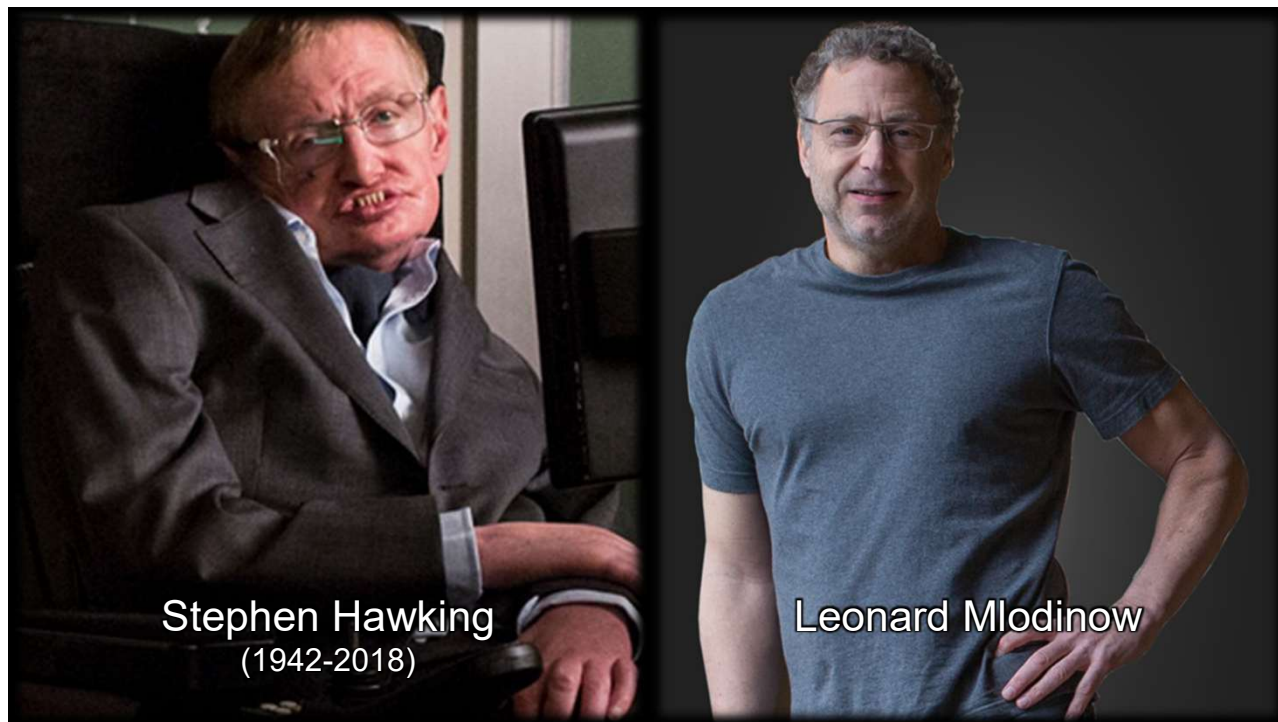


Marcia McNutt

*"I believe that anything that has been reported reliably — anything — can be interpreted scientifically within the framework of modern science."*

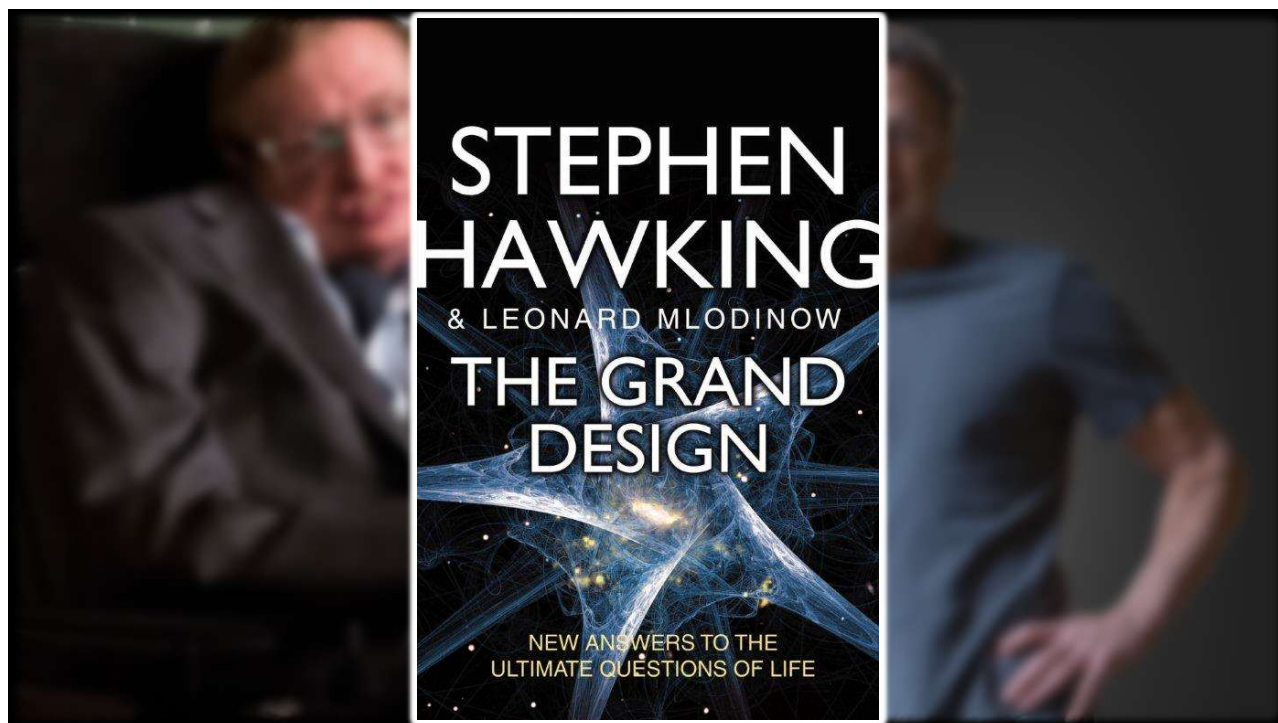


Peter Atkins



Stephen Hawking  
(1942-2018)

Leonard Mlodinow



*"How can we understand the world in which we find ourselves? How does the universe behave? What is the nature of reality? Where did all this come from? Did the universe need a creator? ... Traditionally these are questions for philosophy, but philosophy is dead. Philosophy has not kept up with modern developments in science, particularly physics."*

[Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow, *The Grand Design* (New York: Bantam Books, 2010), 5]

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[Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow, *The Grand Design* (New York: Bantam Books, 2010), 5]



# General Revelation and Special Revelation

**General Revelation**

***God making known to mankind through His creation His existence, attributes, and goodness.***

**Special Revelation**

***God making known to mankind through His prophets, apostles, and His Son His nature and will that could not necessarily be known through General Revelation***

***The Bible teaches that God has revealed himself through His creation.***

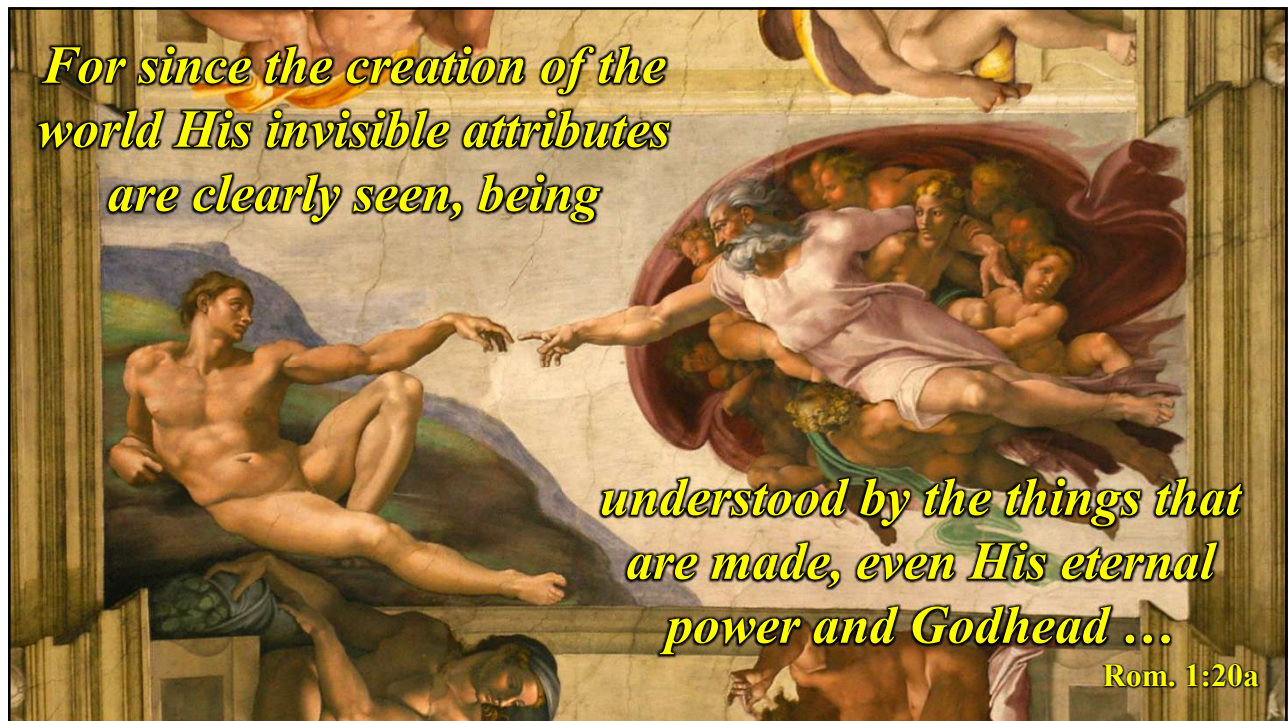
***This being so, many people have been able to believe that God is real merely by observing the wonders of creation.***

***The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.***

Psalm 19:1

***The heavens declare  
His righteousness,  
and all the peoples  
see His glory.***

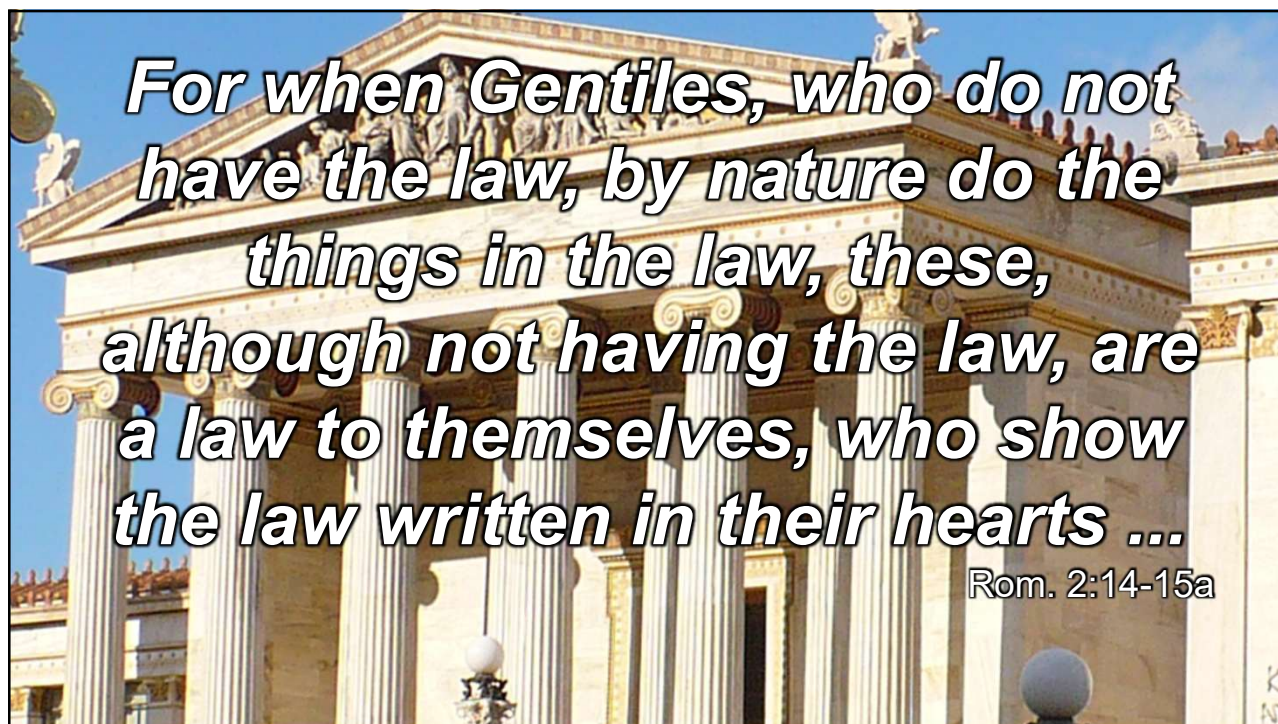
Psalm 97:6



***For since the creation of the  
world His invisible attributes  
are clearly seen, being***

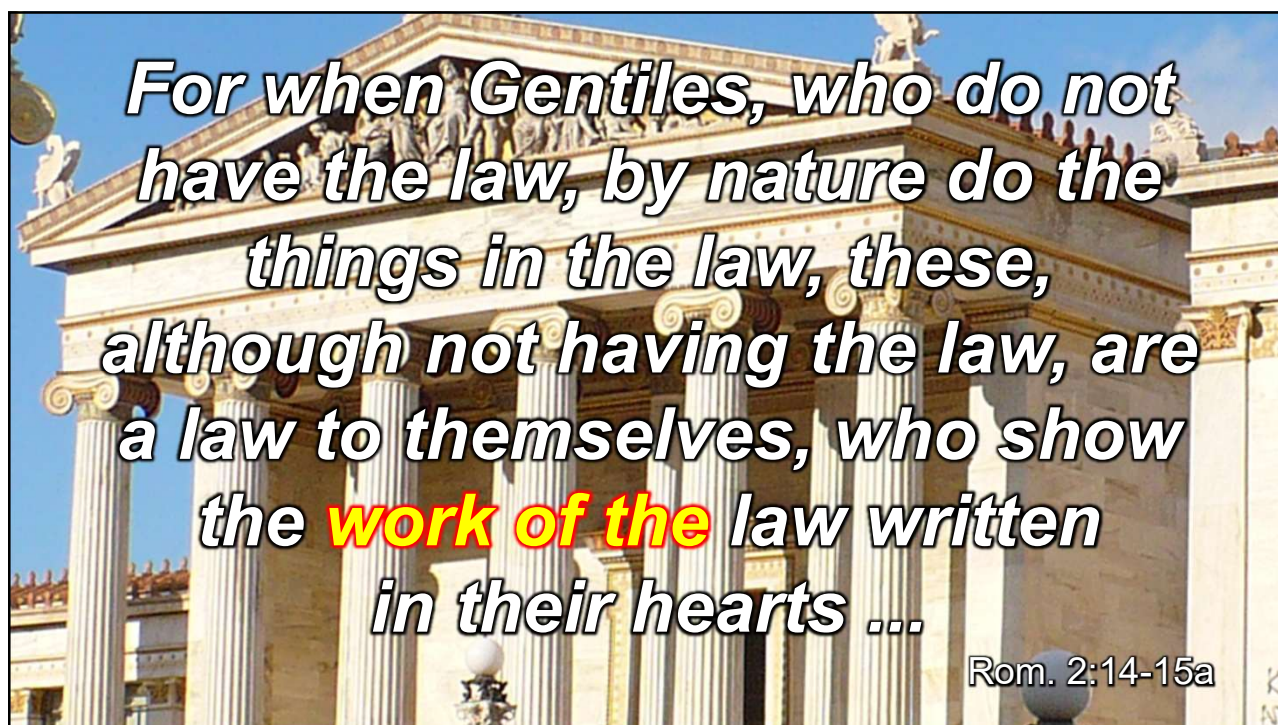
***understood by the things that  
are made, even His eternal  
power and Godhead ...***

Rom. 1:20a



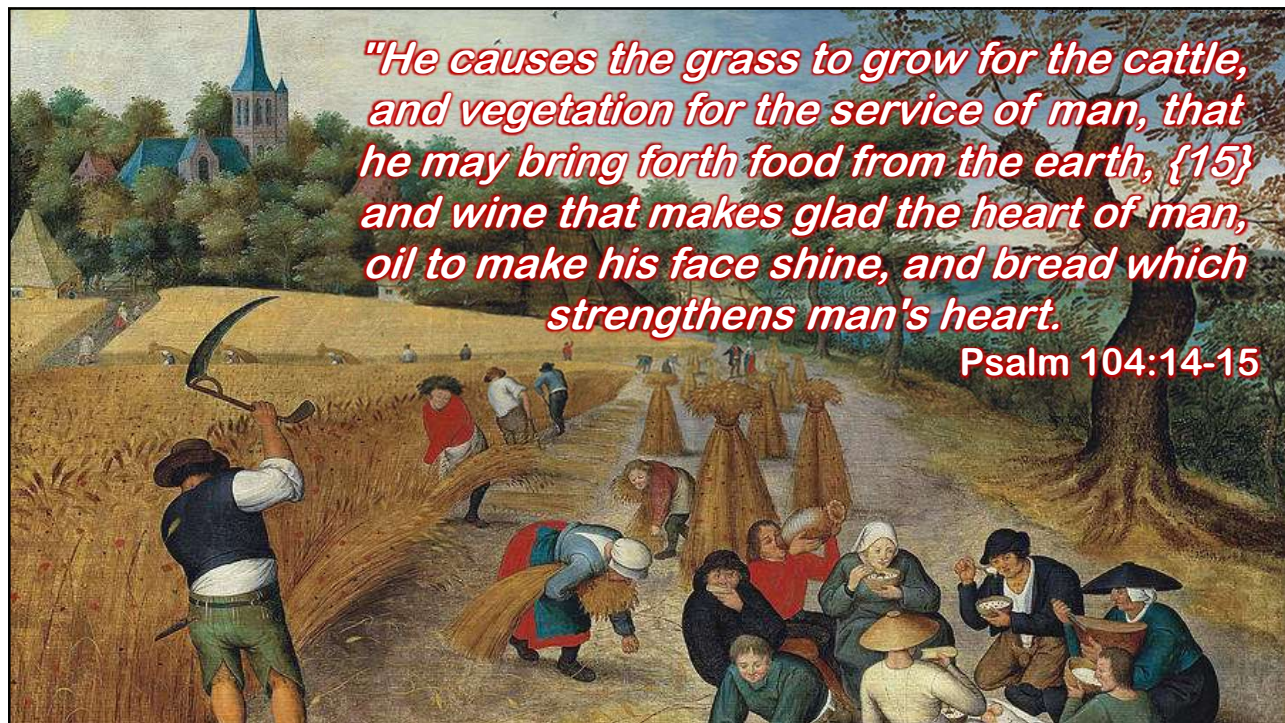
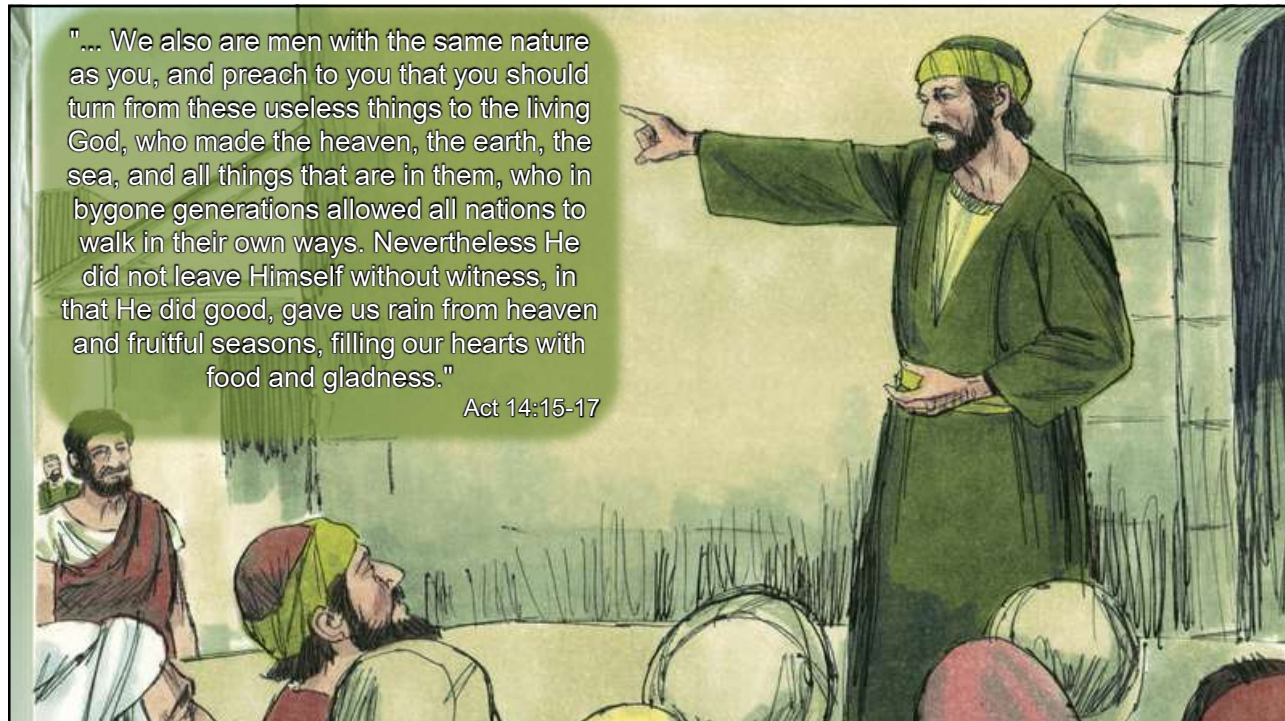
*For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the law written in their hearts ...*

Rom. 2:14-15a



*For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the **work of the** law written in their hearts ...*

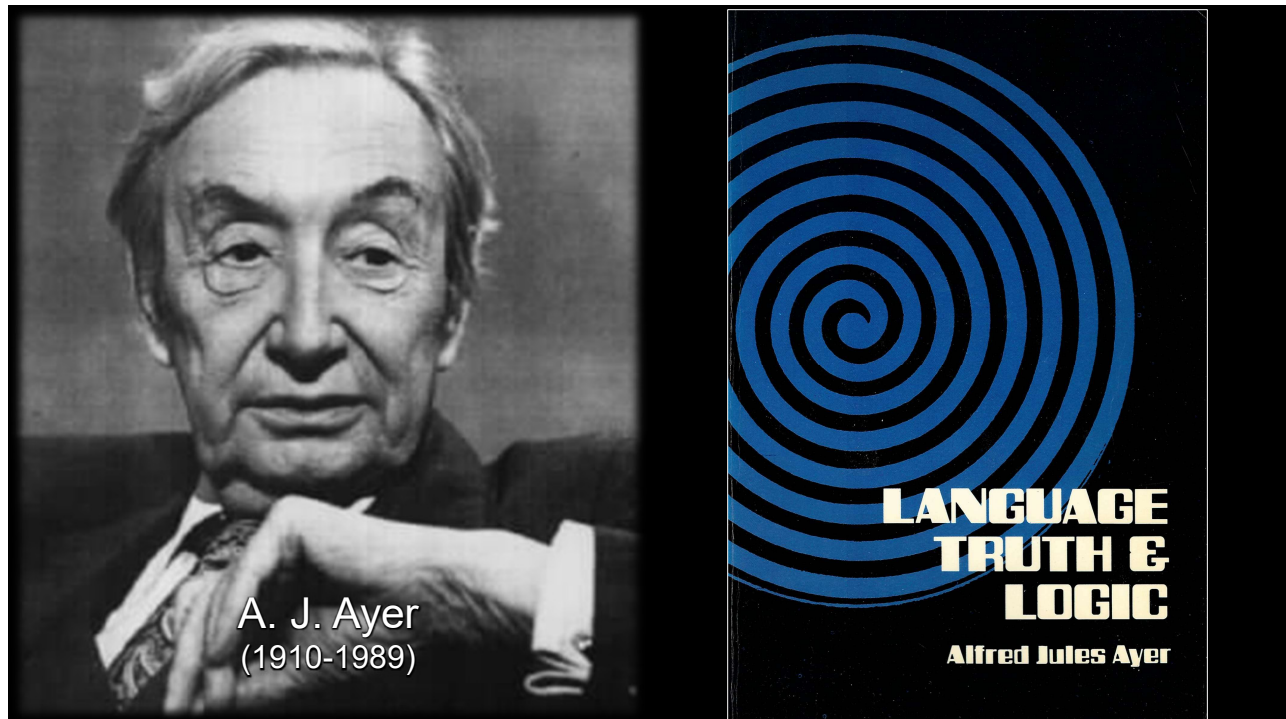
Rom. 2:14-15a



*But as more toxic philosophical voices have fogged the conversation throughout history, the need arises to appeal to deeper issues in philosophy.*



# Answering the Philosophers: A. J. Ayer

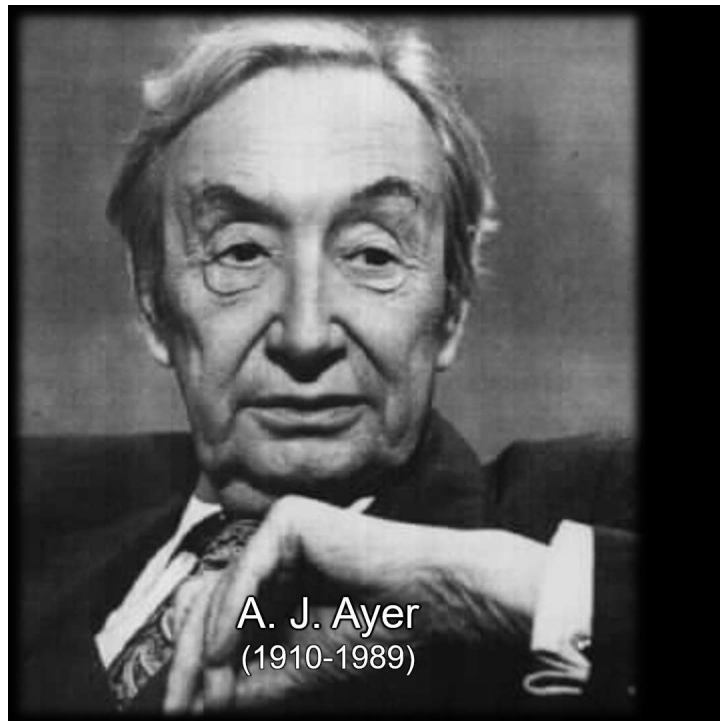




A. J. Ayer  
(1910-1989)

***"We mean also to rule out the supposition that philosophy can be ranged alongside the existing sciences, as a special department of speculative knowledge."***

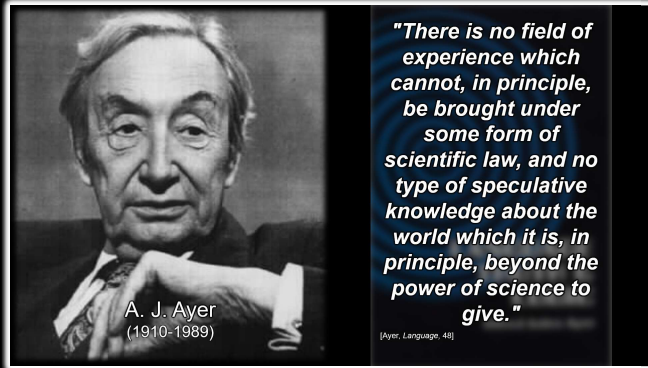
[A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic* (New York: Dover Publications, 1952), 48]



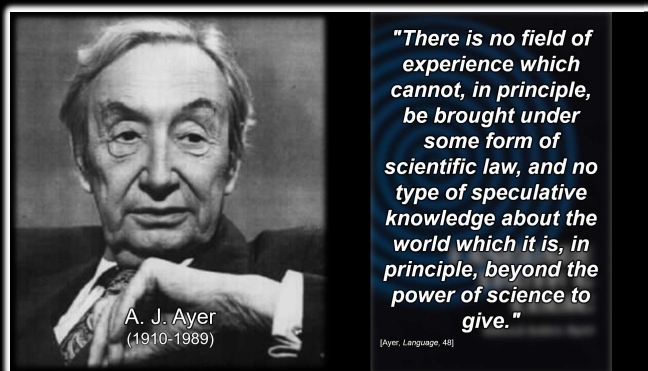
A. J. Ayer  
(1910-1989)

***"There is no field of experience which cannot, in principle, be brought under some form of scientific law, and no type of speculative knowledge about the world which it is, in principle, beyond the power of science to give."***

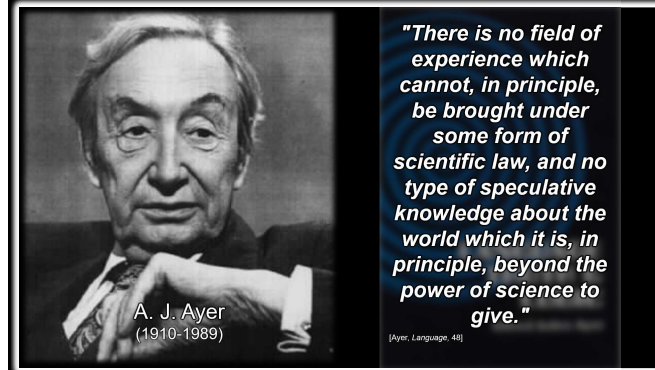
[Ayer, *Language*, 48]



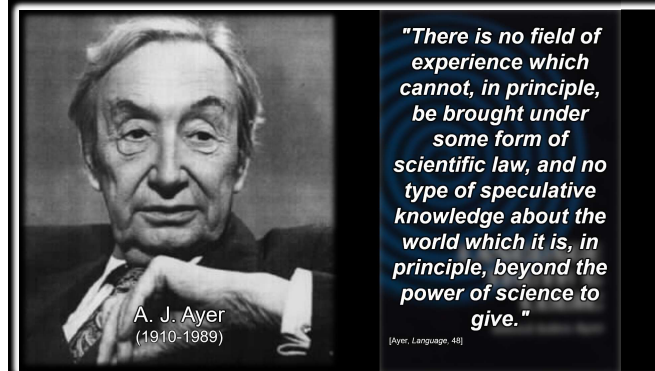
**Can this statement be "brought under some form of scientific law?"**



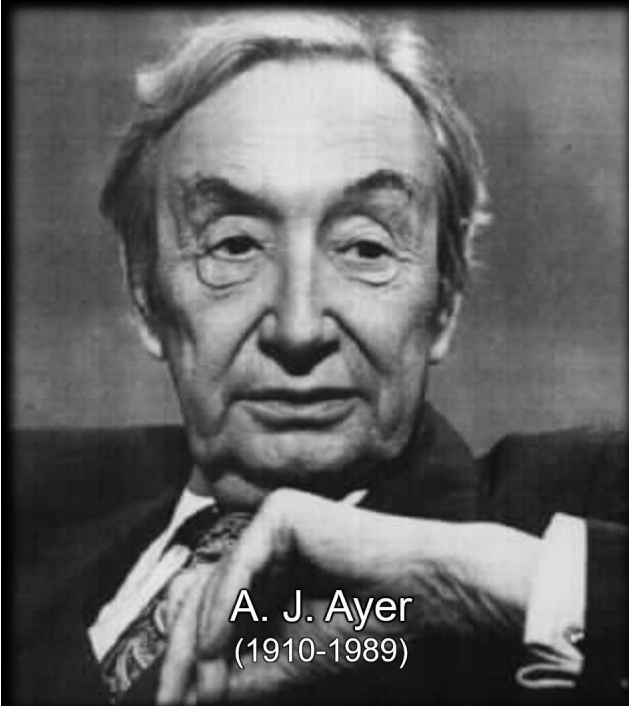
**If the answer is no, then this statement is not a scientific statement.**



**If this statement is not a scientific statement, what kind of statement is it?**




**If this statement is **It is a philosophical statement.** a scientific statement is it?**



A. J. Ayer  
(1910-1989)

"The philosopher, as an analyst, is not directly concerned with the physical properties of things. **He is concerned only with the way in which we speak about them.** In other words, the propositions of philosophy are not factual, but linguistic in character."

[Ayer, *Language*, 57]



A. J. Ayer  
(1910-1989)

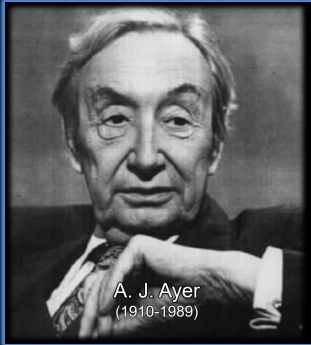
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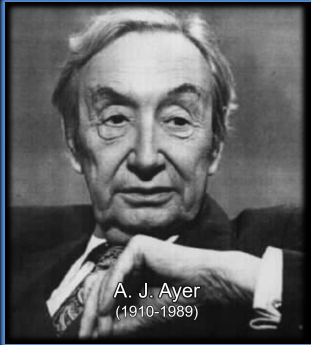
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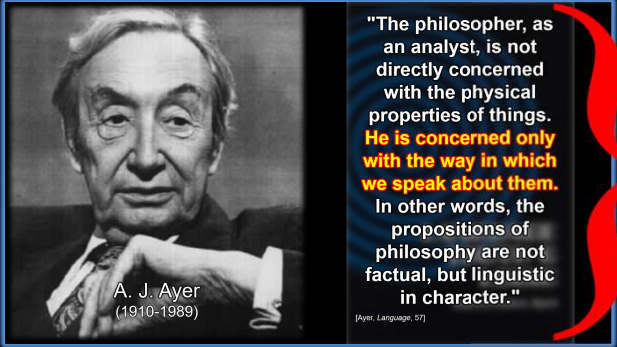
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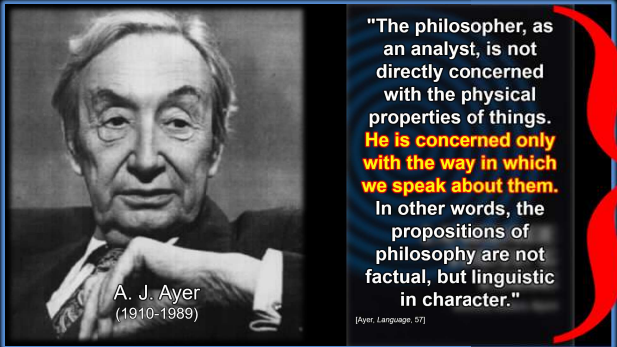
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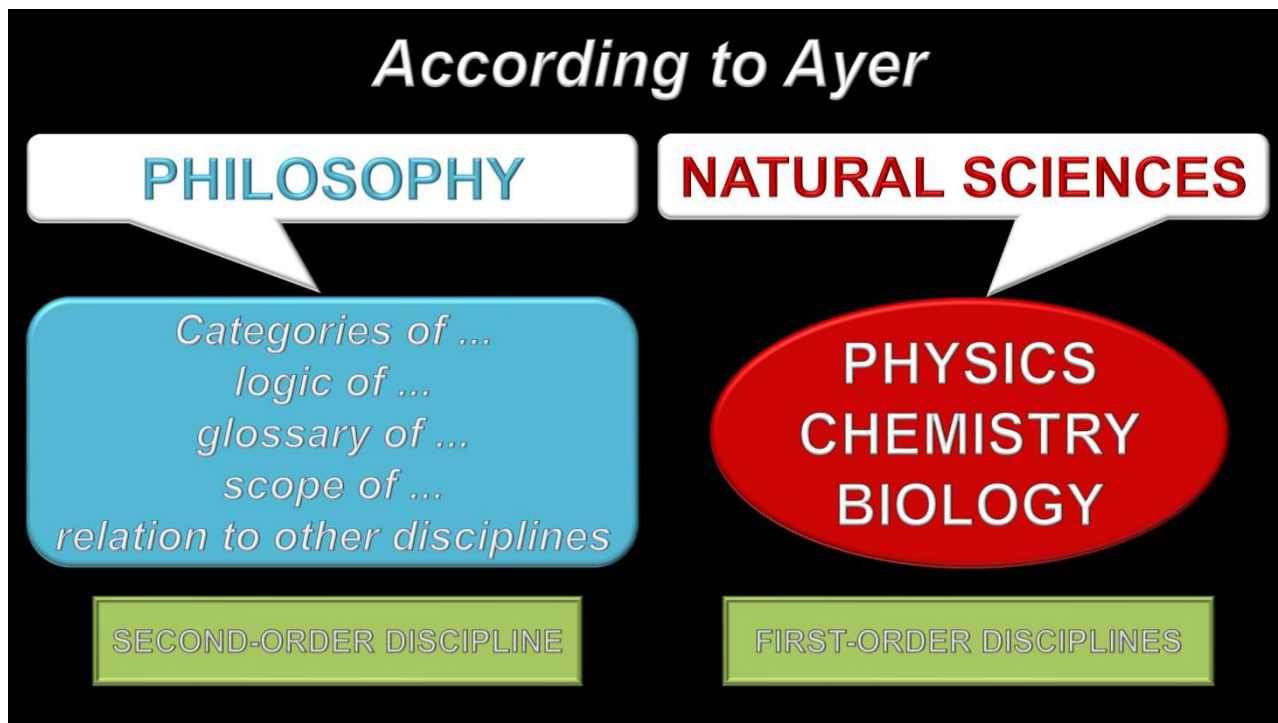
For Ayer, exactly what is it about which the philosopher is concerned?

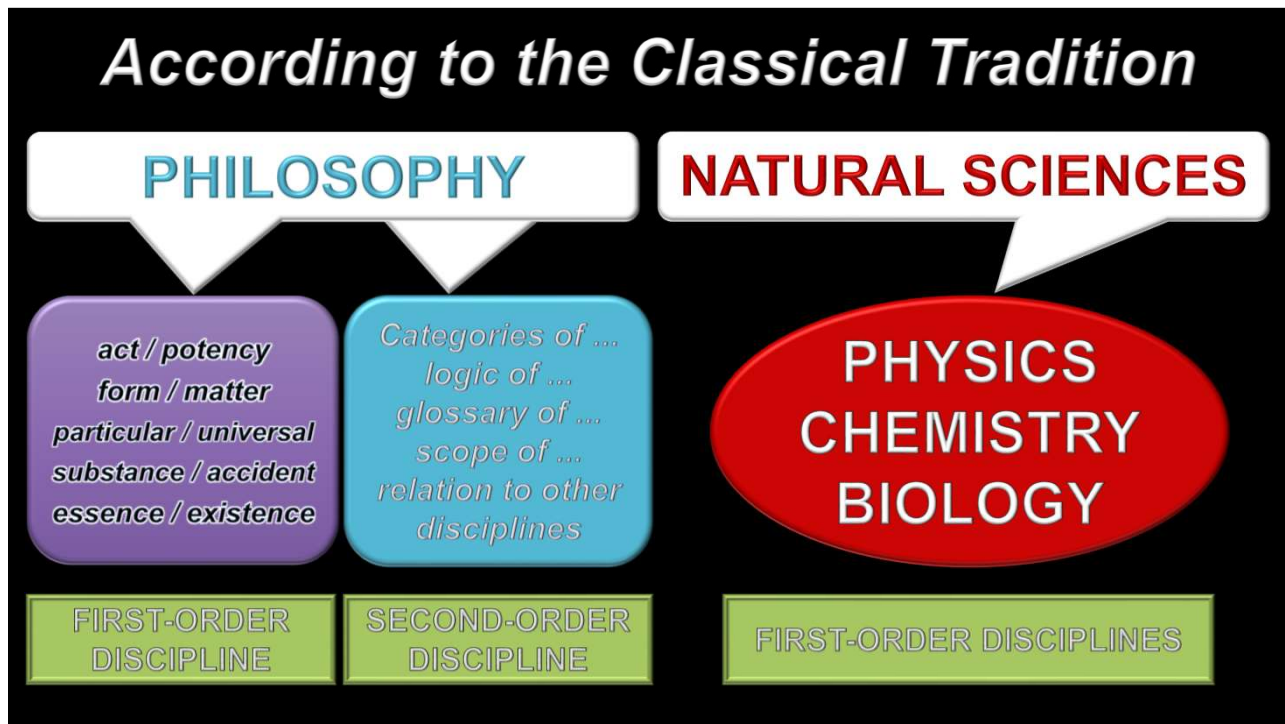


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[Ayer, Language, 57]

For Ayer, exactly what is the way we speak about things philosopher is concerned?







*Note that this entire position that Ayer puts forth is neither a physical property of a thing nor is it the way we speak about the physical property of a thing.*

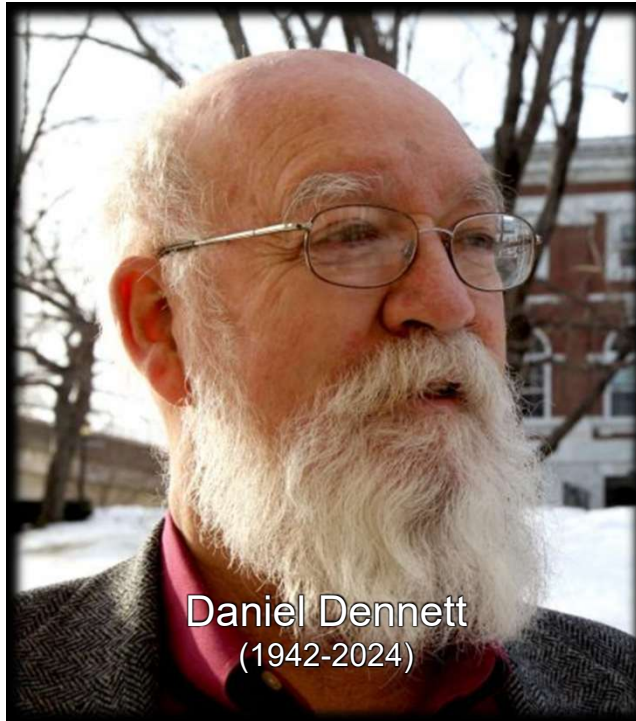
*Rather, it is speaking about the way we speak about the physical properties of things.*

*Thus, Ayer's view does not fit the criterion of Ayer's own view!*

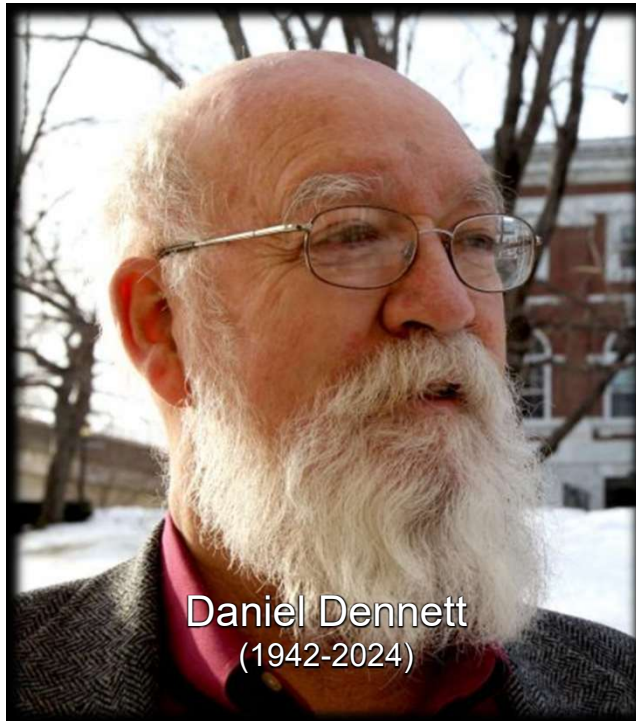
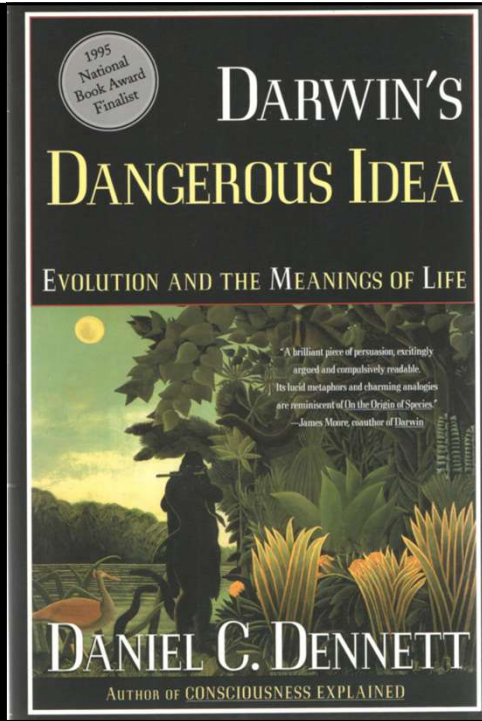
*The reason is because, since his view is a philosophical view, it is about the philosophical aspects of physical things.*

*This make it just as factual a statement as are statements about the physical properties of things.*

# Answering the Philosophers: Daniel Dennett



Daniel Dennett  
(1942-2024)



Daniel Dennett  
(1942-2024)

**"It is not 'scientism' to concede the objectivity and precision of good science, any more than it is history worship to concede that Napoleon did once rule in France and the Holocaust actually happened. Those who fear the facts will forever try to discredit the fact-finders."**

[*Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meaning of Life* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 495]

This is a straw man fallacy.  
The critics of scientism are not denying the objectivity and precision of good science.  
Thus, this ad hominem does nothing to respond to the critics of scientism.

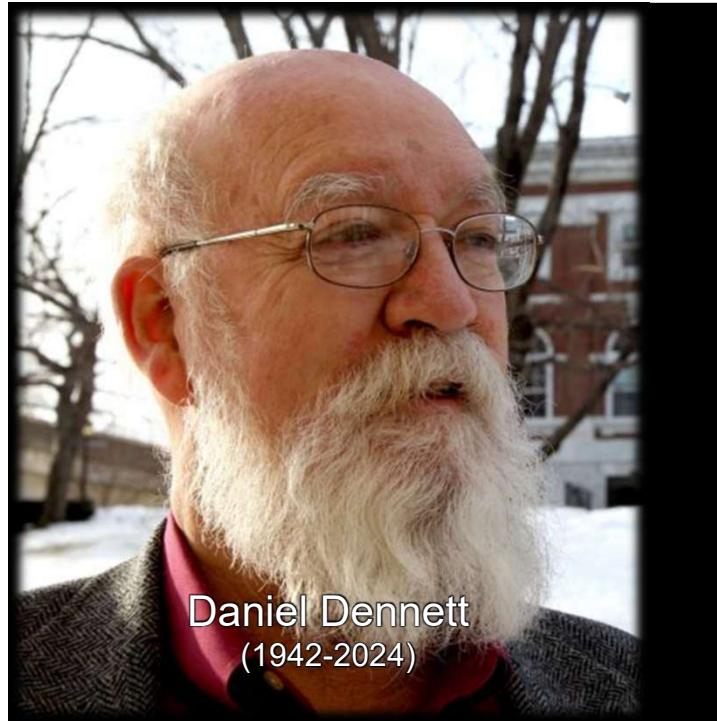
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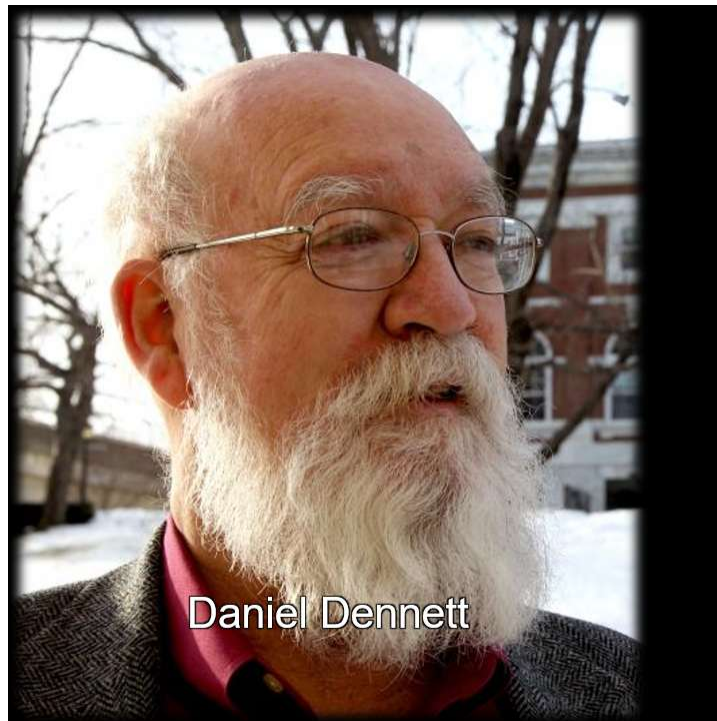
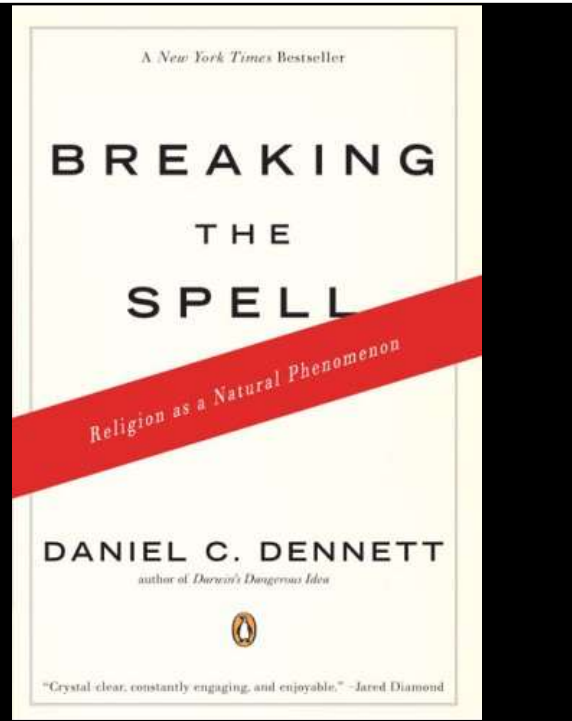
The critics of scientism will argue that there are facts that are no less true about reality but are not amenable to the tools and methods of the natural sciences.

"It is not 'scientism' to concede **the objectivity and precision of good science**, any more than it is history worship to concede that Napoleon did once rule in France and the Holocaust actually happened. **Those who fear the facts will forever try to discredit the fact-finders.**"

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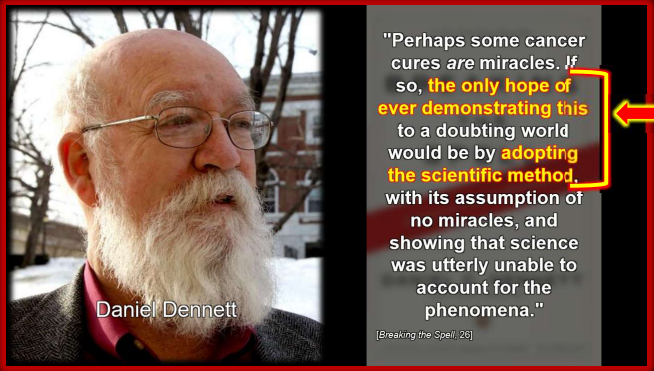
Daniel Dennett  
(1942-2024)



Daniel Dennett

"Perhaps some cancer cures *are* miracles. If so, **the only hope of ever demonstrating this** to a doubting world would be by **adopting the scientific method**, with its assumption of no miracles, and showing that science was utterly unable to account for the phenomena."

[*Breaking the Spell*, 26]



Daniel Dennett

"Perhaps some cancer cures are miracles. If so, **the only hope of ever demonstrating this** to a doubting world would be by **adopting the scientific method**, with its assumption of no miracles, and showing that science was utterly unable to account for the phenomena."

[Breaking the Spell, 26]

***What is the argument offered to support this claim?***

***Whatever that argument might be, what KIND of argument would it have to be?***




**philosophical**

*"Perhaps there are sea shells on the beach. If so, the only hope of ever demonstrating this to a doubting world would be by adopting the metal detector method, with its assumption of no calcium carbonate, and showing that the metal detector method was utterly unable to account for the sea shells."*



# Answering the Philosophers: John Shook



**John Shook**

*"Philosophical naturalism undertakes the responsibility for elaborating a comprehensive and coherent worldview based on experience, reason, and science, and for defending **science's exclusive right to explore and theorize about all of reality.**"*

["The Need for Naturalism in a Scientific Age" [https://centerforinquiry.org/blog/the\\_need\\_for\\_naturalism\\_in\\_a\\_scientific\\_age/](https://centerforinquiry.org/blog/the_need_for_naturalism_in_a_scientific_age/), accessed 06/22/22, emphasis added]



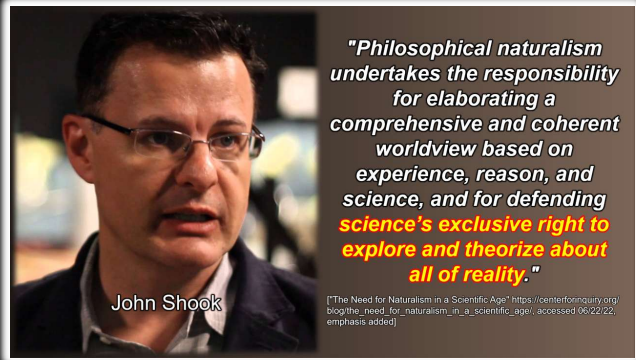
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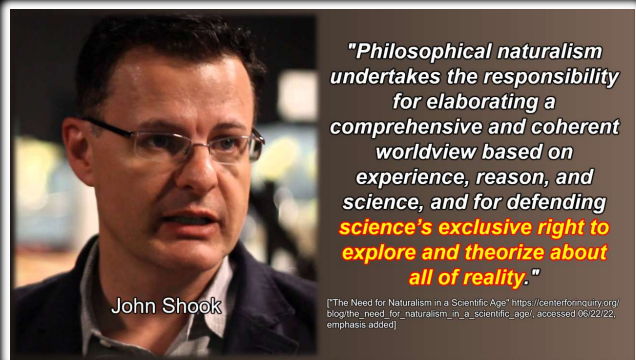
*Is Shook's statement a part of reality?*

*Then, what scientific method could possibly be used to prove that this statement is true?*



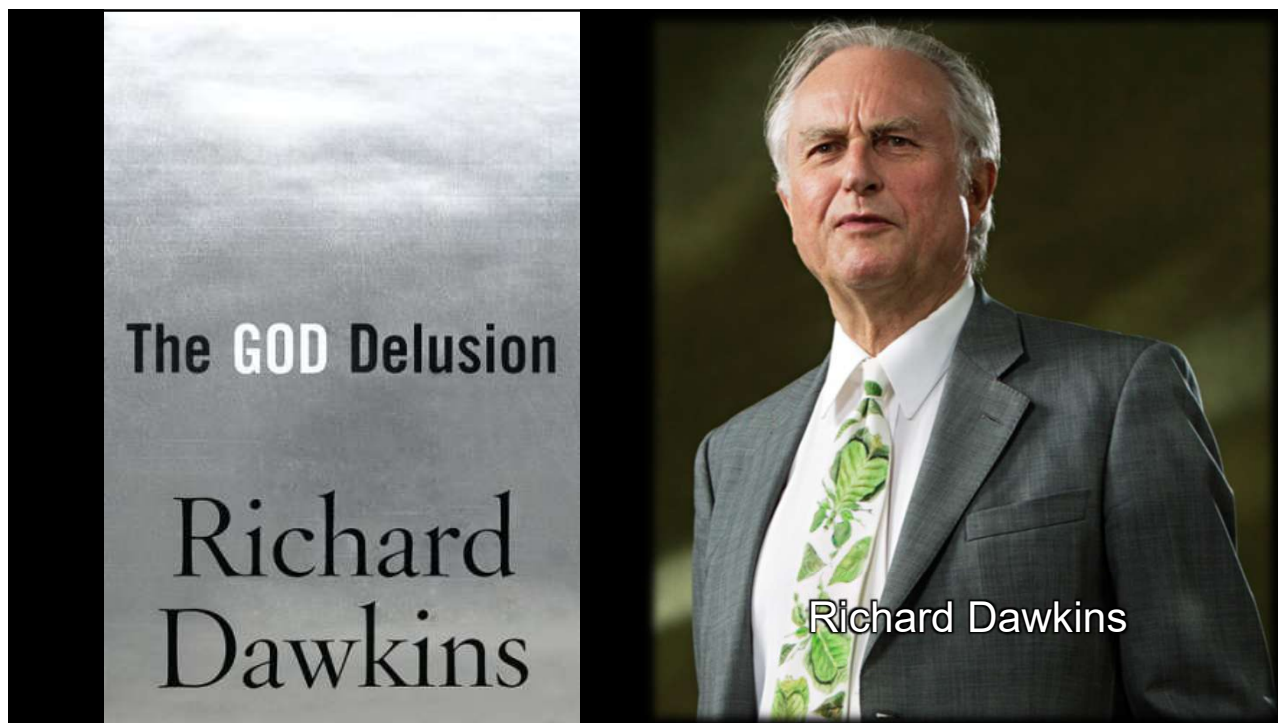
*The fact is, there is no scientific method that could possibly prove Shook's statement.*

*The reason is because it is a philosophical statement.*



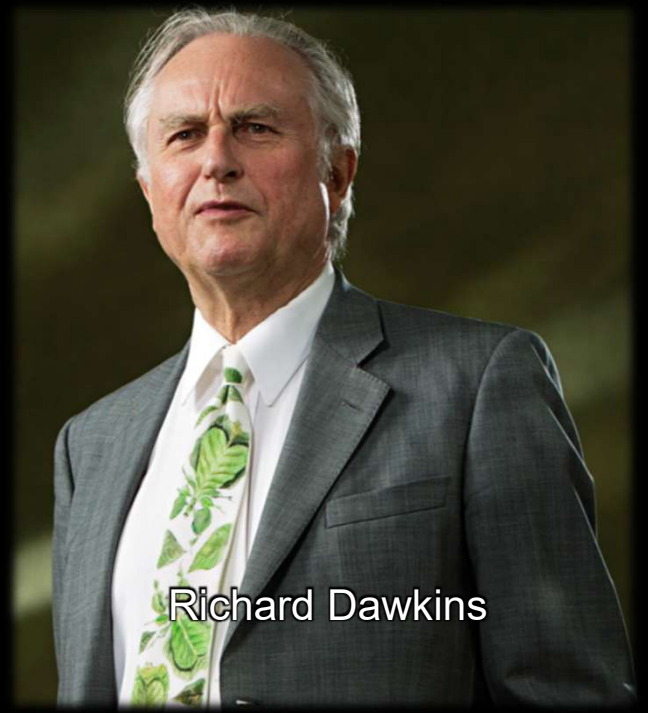
*Thus, Shook is making a philosophical statement to the effect that philosophy has no right to explore any aspect of reality!*

# Answering the Scientists: Richard Dawkins

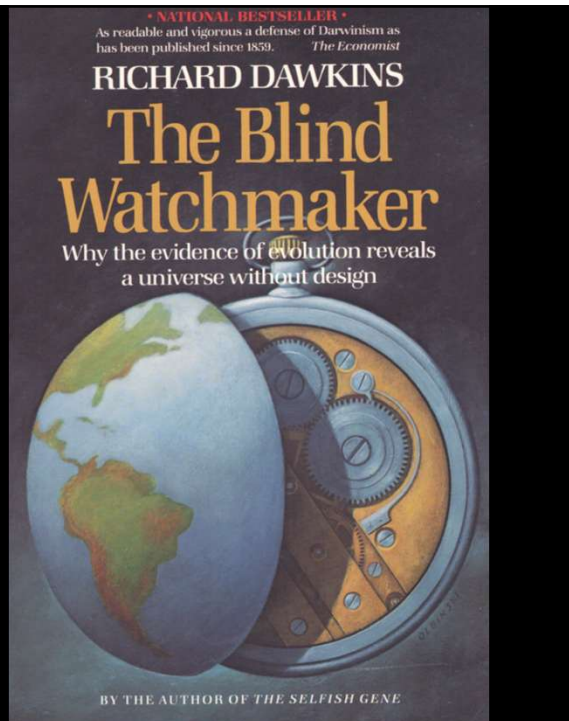
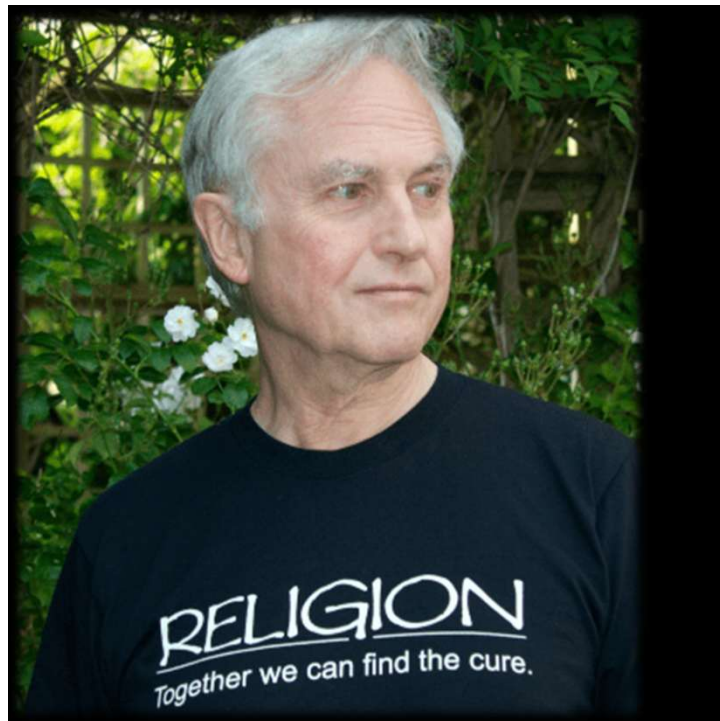


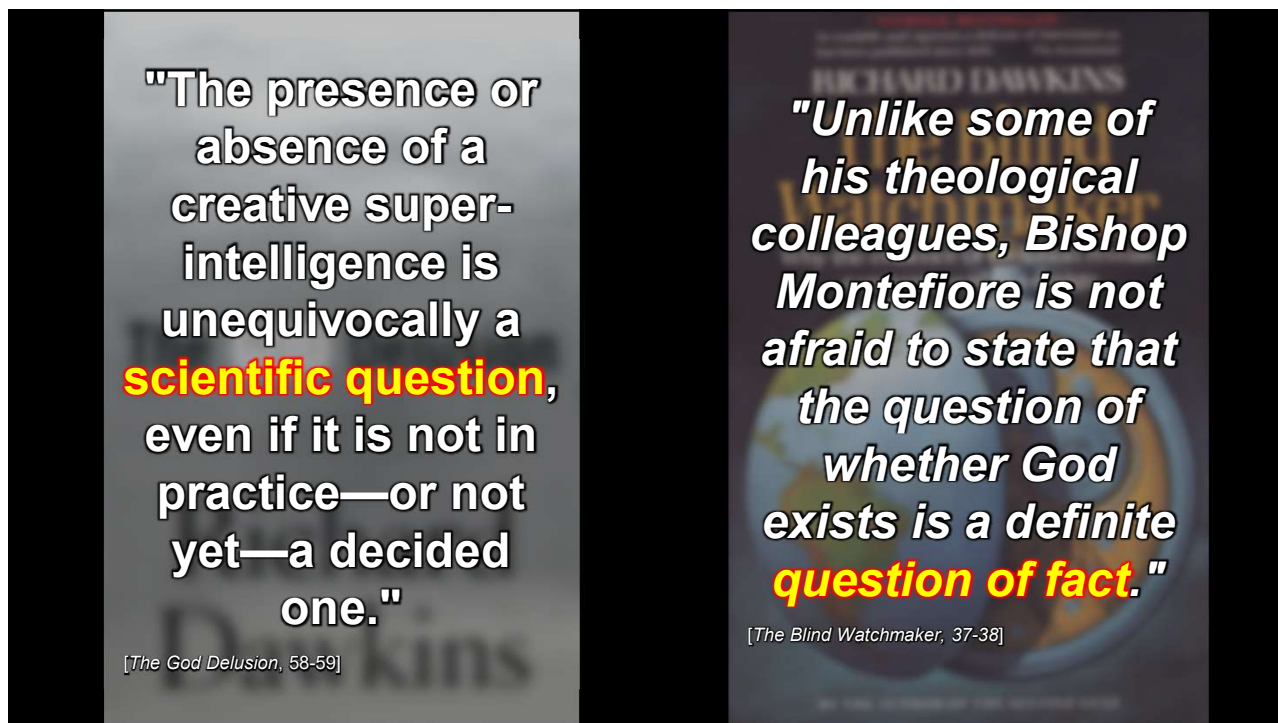
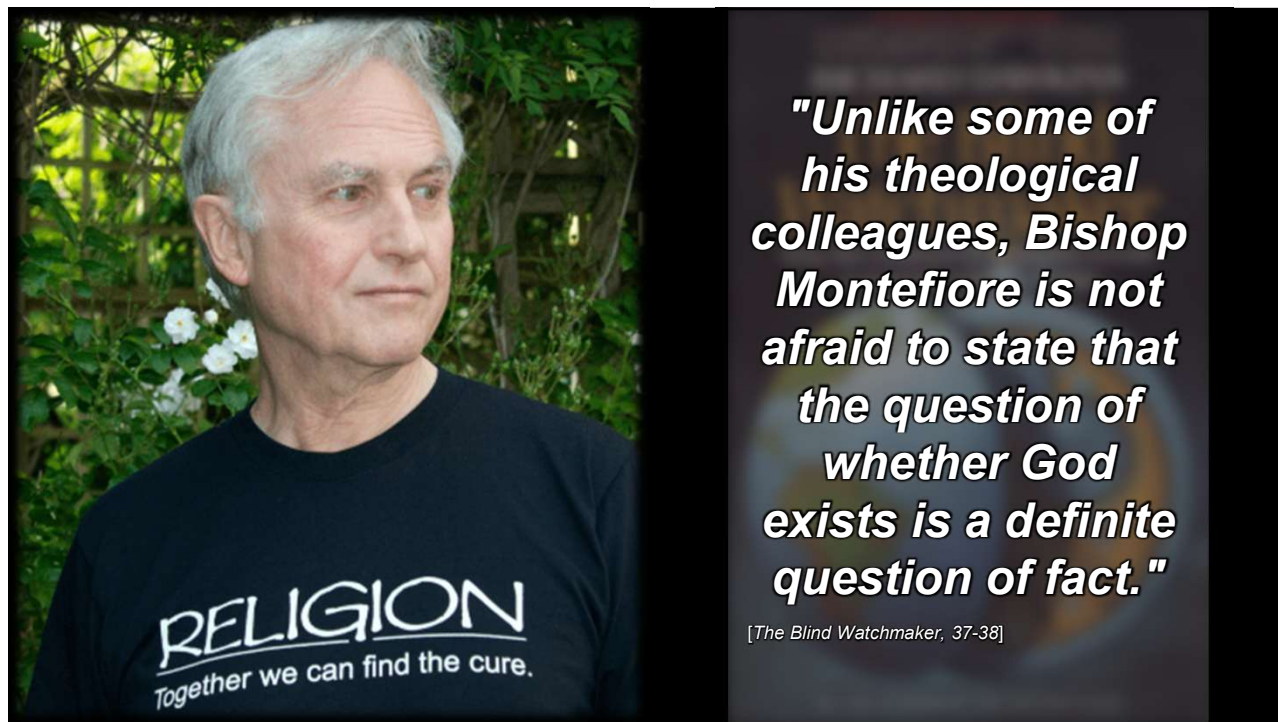
**"The presence or absence of a creative super-intelligence is unequivocally a scientific question, even if it is not in practice—or not yet—a decided one."**

[*The God Delusion*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006), 58-59]



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*[The God Delusion, 58-59]*

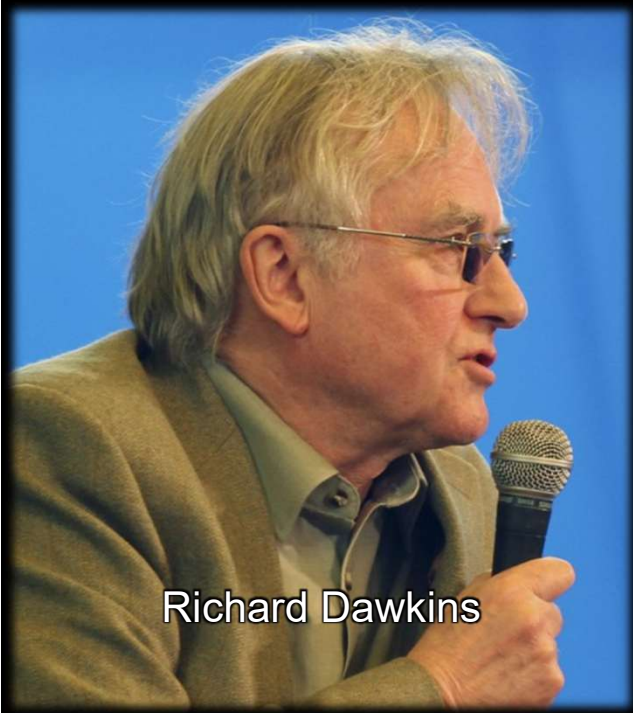
*"Unlike some of his theological colleagues, Bishop Meade is not afraid to state that the question of whether God exists is a definite **question of fact.**"*

*[The Blind Watchmaker, 37-38]*

Richard Dawkins

The **GOD** Delusion

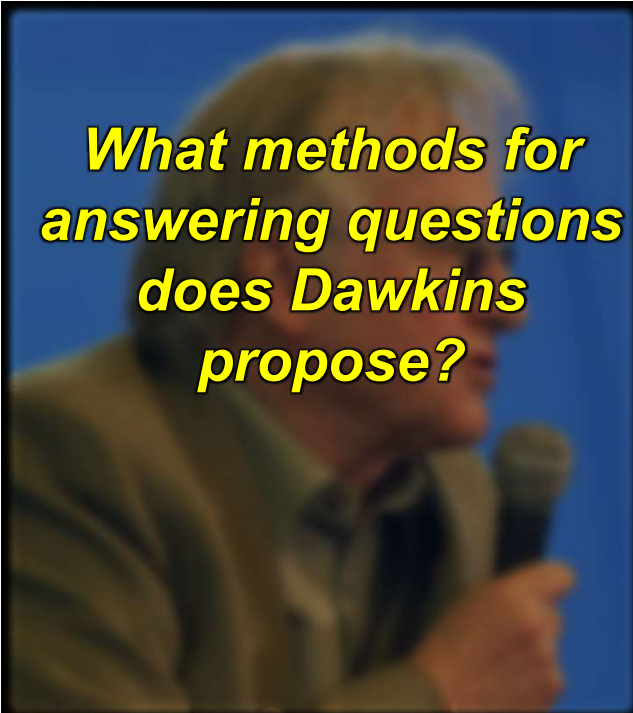
Richard Dawkins



Richard Dawkins

"There is an answer to every such question [about God and miracles], whether or not we can discover it in practice, and it is a strictly scientific answer. The methods we should use to settle the matter, in the unlikely event that relevant evidence ever became available, would be purely and entirely scientific methods."

[Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, 59.]



**What methods for answering questions does Dawkins propose?**

"There is an answer to every such question [about God and miracles], whether or not we can discover it in practice, and it is a strictly scientific answer. The methods we should use to settle the matter, in the unlikely event that relevant evidence ever became available, would be **purely and entirely scientific methods.**"

[Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, 59.]

**According to Dawkins, should scientific methods be used only for certain kinds of questions or for every kind of question?**

"There is an answer to every such question [about God and miracles], whether or not we can discover it in practice, and it is a strictly scientific answer. The methods we should use to settle the matter, in the unlikely event that relevant evidence ever became available, would be purely and entirely scientific methods."

[Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, 59.]

**Is this statement here provable by "purely and entirely scientific methods"?**

**Absolutely Not!**

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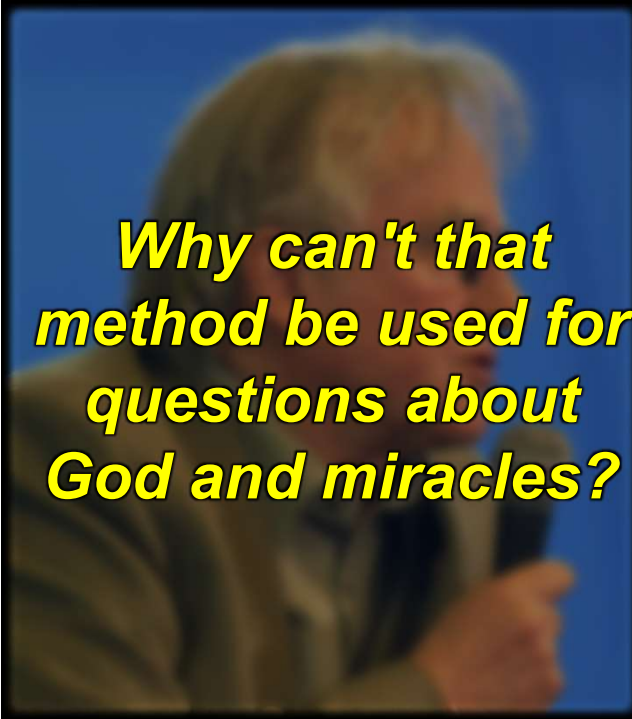
[Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, 59.]

**Since Dawkins' statement is not provable by "purely and entirely scientific methods," what kind of method must be used?**

"There is an answer to every such question [about God and miracles], whether or not we can discover it in practice, and it is a strictly scientific answer. The methods we should use to settle the matter, in the unlikely event that relevant evidence ever became available, would be purely and entirely scientific methods."

[Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, 59.]

**Philosophical Method!**



**Why can't that  
method be used for  
questions about  
God and miracles?**

"There is an answer to every such question [about God and miracles], whether or not we can discover it in practice, and it is a strictly scientific answer. The methods we should use to settle the matter, in the unlikely event that relevant evidence ever became available, would be purely and entirely scientific methods."

[Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, 59.]



**Answering the  
Scientists:  
Marcia McNutt**

*"Science is a method for deciding whether what we choose to believe has a basis in the laws of nature or not."*

[In Joel Achenbach, "The Age of Disbelief," *National Geographic* (March 2015): 40]



Marcia McNutt

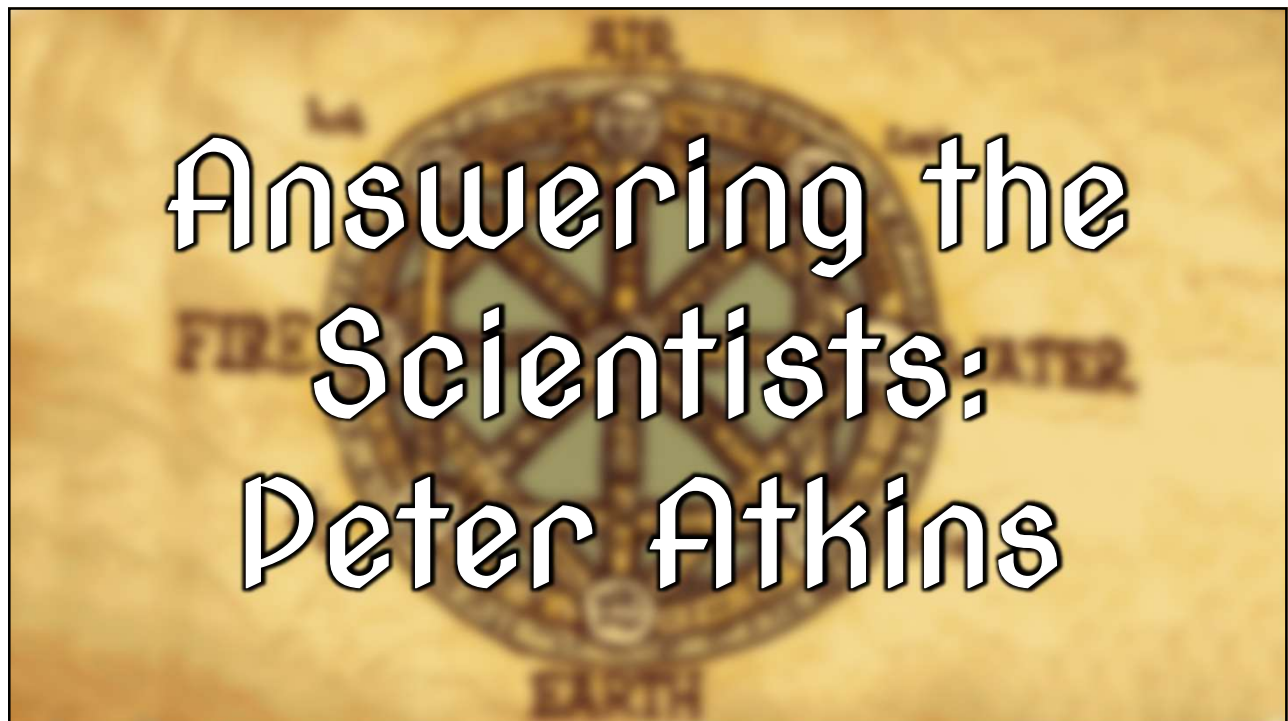
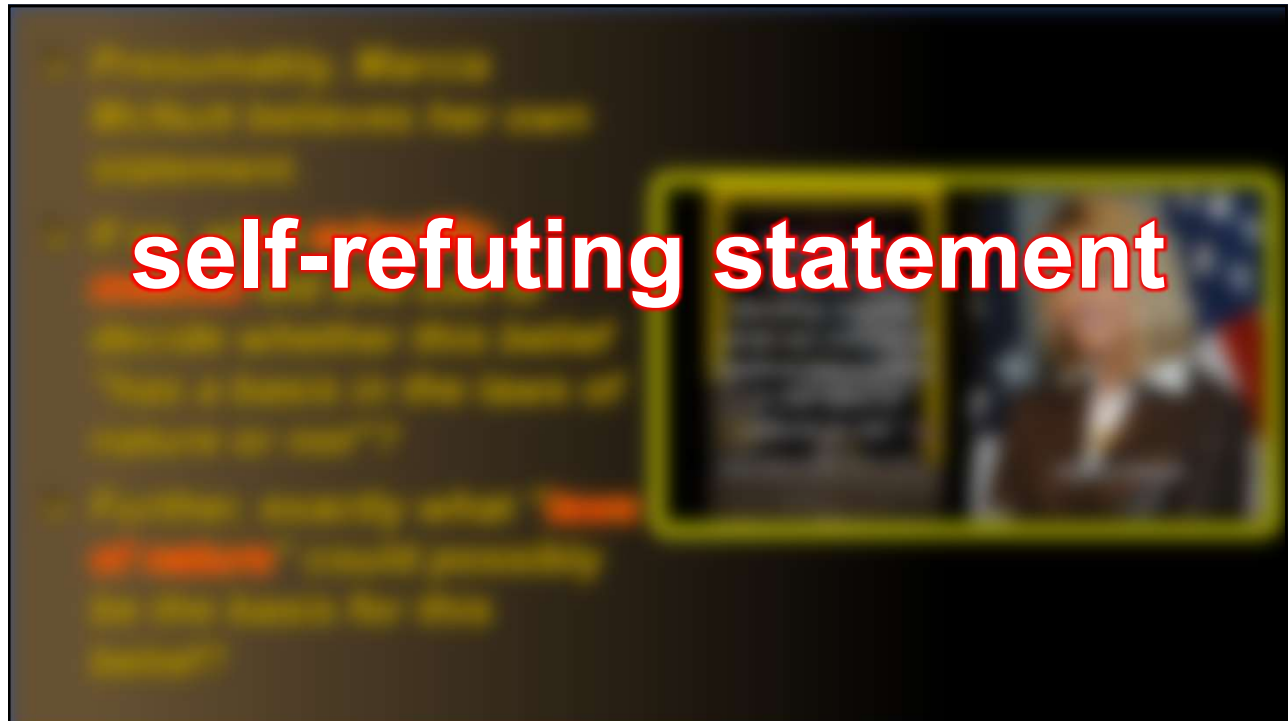
- Presumably, Marcia McNutt believes her own statement.
- If so, what **scientific method** did she use to decide whether this belief "has a basis in the laws of nature or not"?
- Further, exactly what "**laws of nature**" could possibly be the basis for this belief?

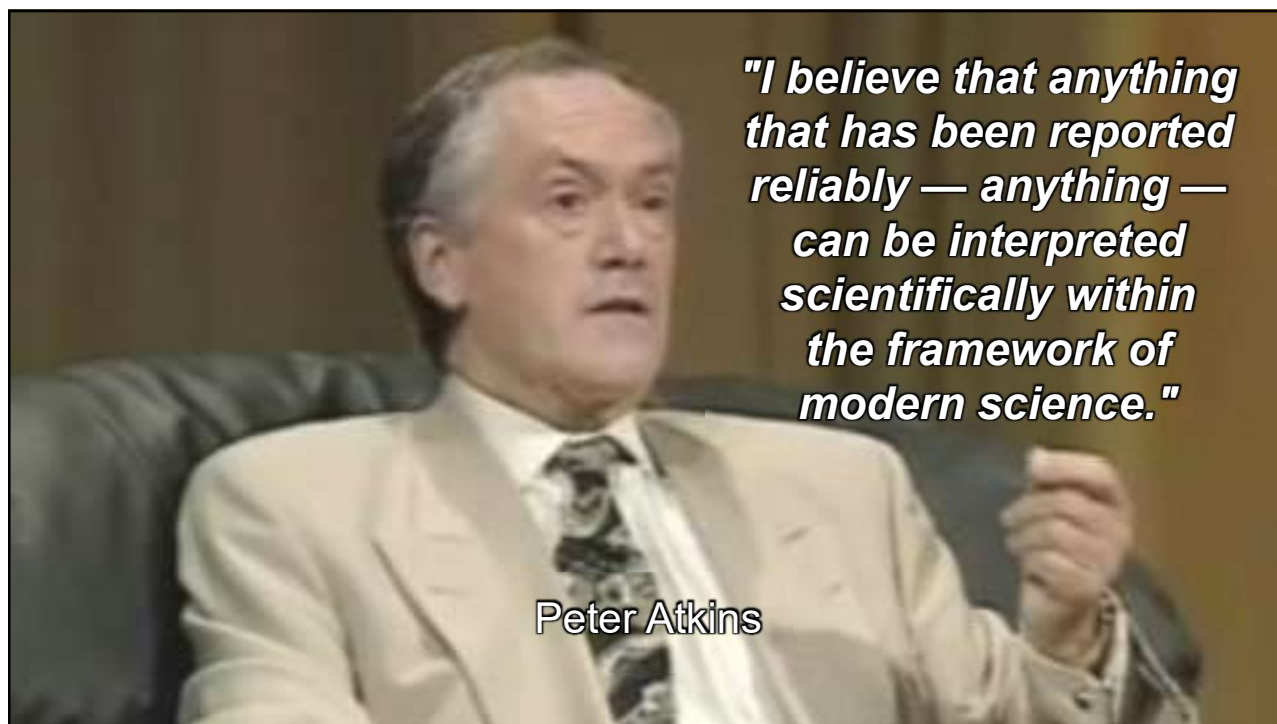
*"Science is a method for deciding whether what we choose to believe has a basis in the laws of nature or not."*

[In Joel Achenbach, "The Age of Disbelief," *National Geographic* (March 2015): 40]



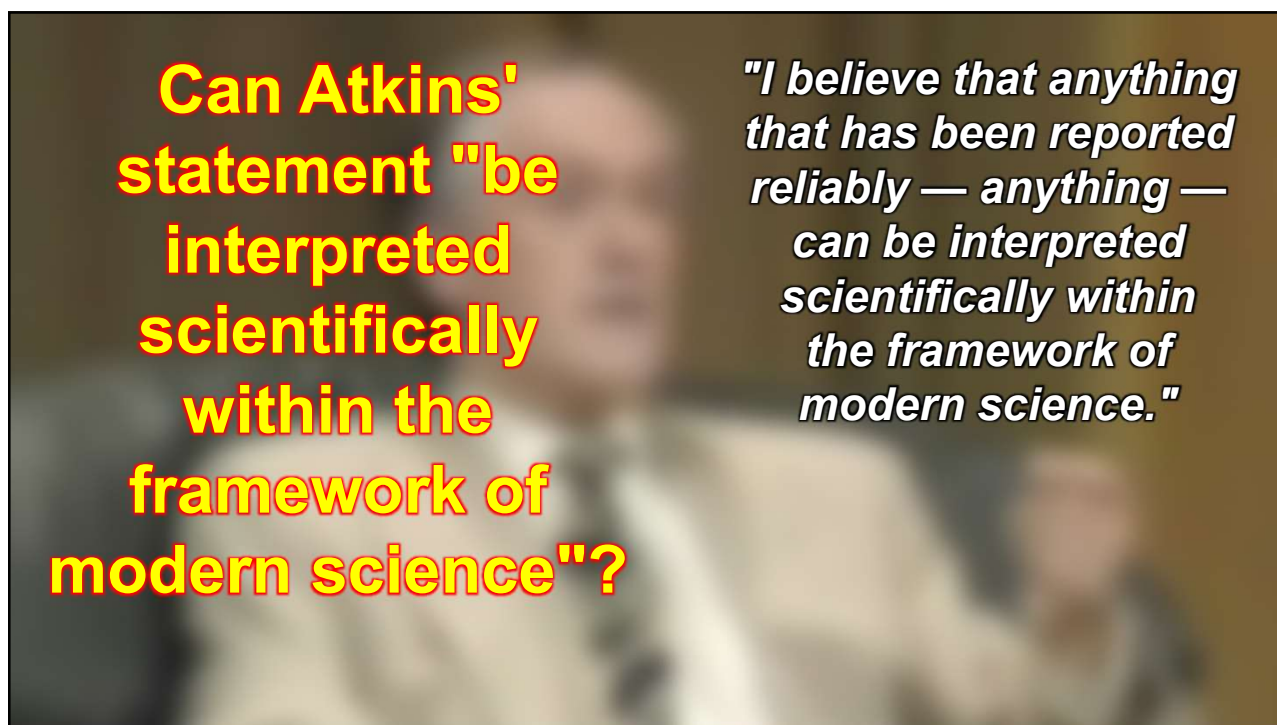
Marcia McNutt





*"I believe that anything that has been reported reliably — anything — can be interpreted scientifically within the framework of modern science."*

Peter Atkins



**Can Atkins' statement "be interpreted scientifically within the framework of modern science"?**

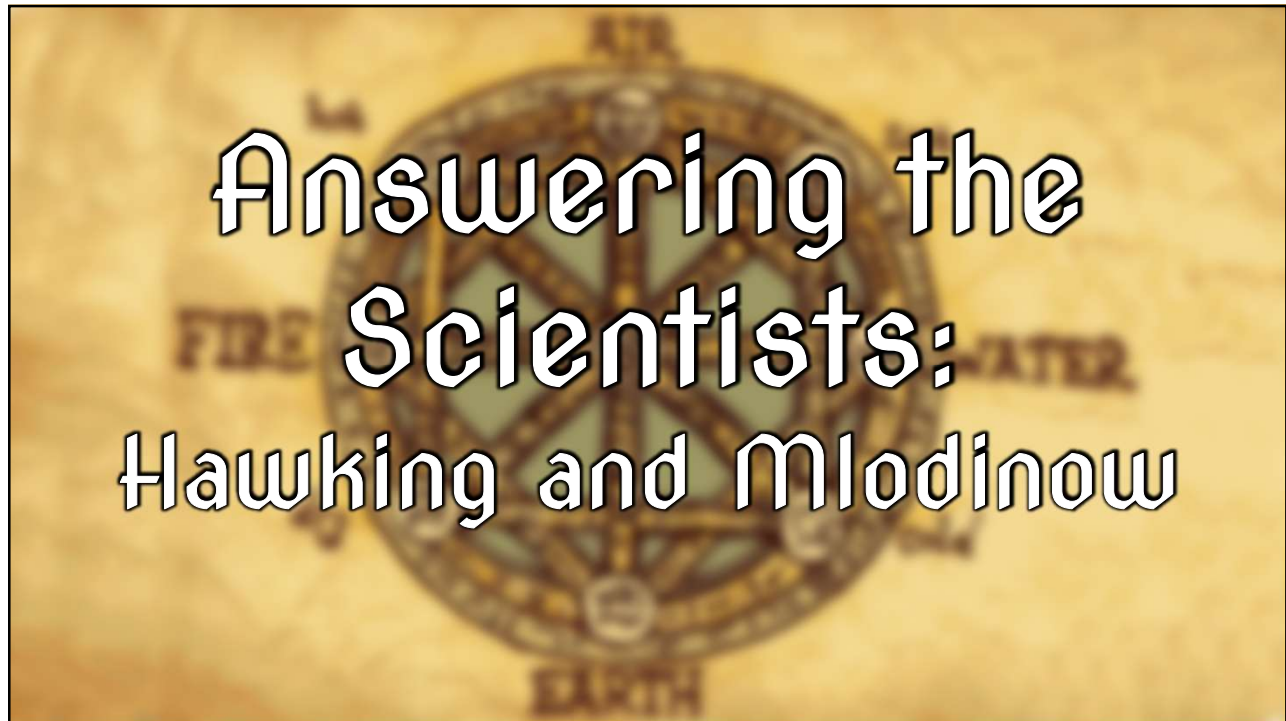
*"I believe that anything that has been reported reliably — anything — can be interpreted scientifically within the framework of modern science."*

**It would seem one could interpret any statement within any framework.**

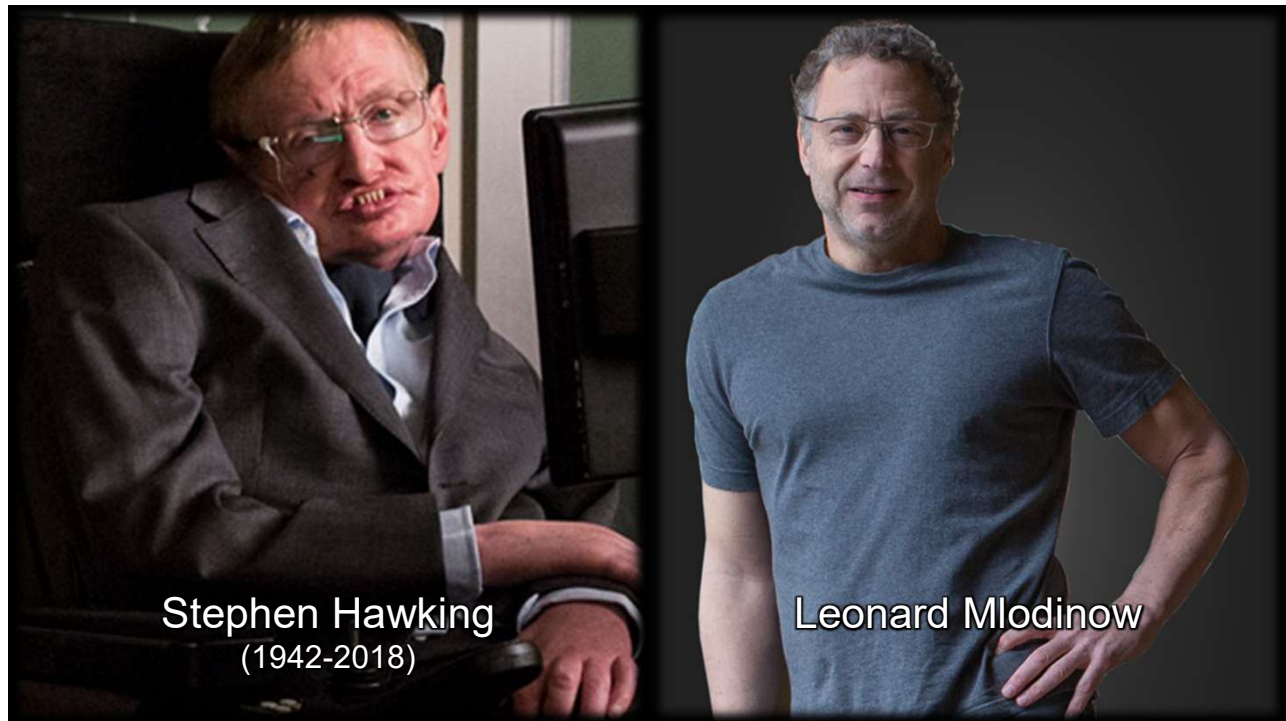
*"I believe that anything that has been reported reliably — anything — can be interpreted scientifically within the framework of modern science."*

**Can Atkins' statement "be CORRECTLY interpreted scientifically within the framework of modern science"?**

*"I believe that anything that has been reported reliably — anything — can be interpreted scientifically within the framework of modern science."*

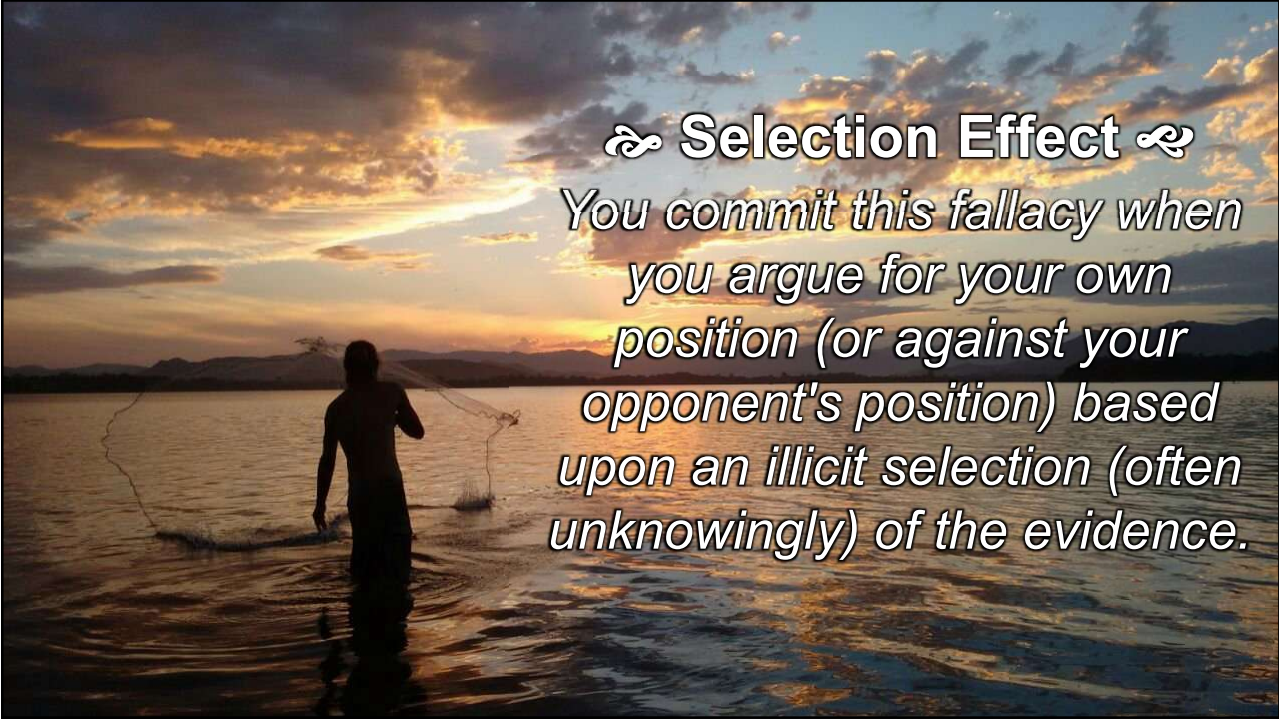


# Answering the Scientists: Hawking and Mlodinow

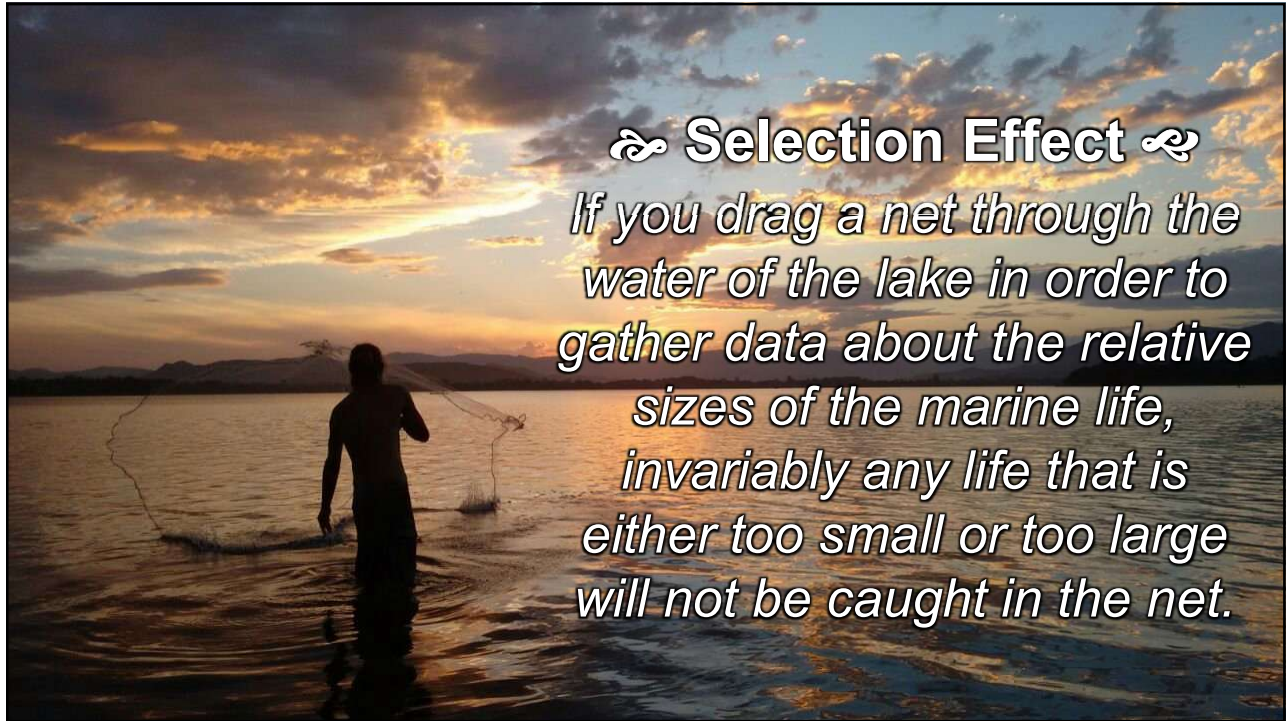


*"How can we understand the world in which we find ourselves? How does the universe behave? What is the nature of reality? Where did all this come from? Did the universe need a creator? ... Traditionally these are questions for philosophy, but **philosophy is dead**. Philosophy has not kept up with modern developments in science, particularly physics."*

[Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow, *The Grand Design* (New York: Bantam Books, 2010), 5]

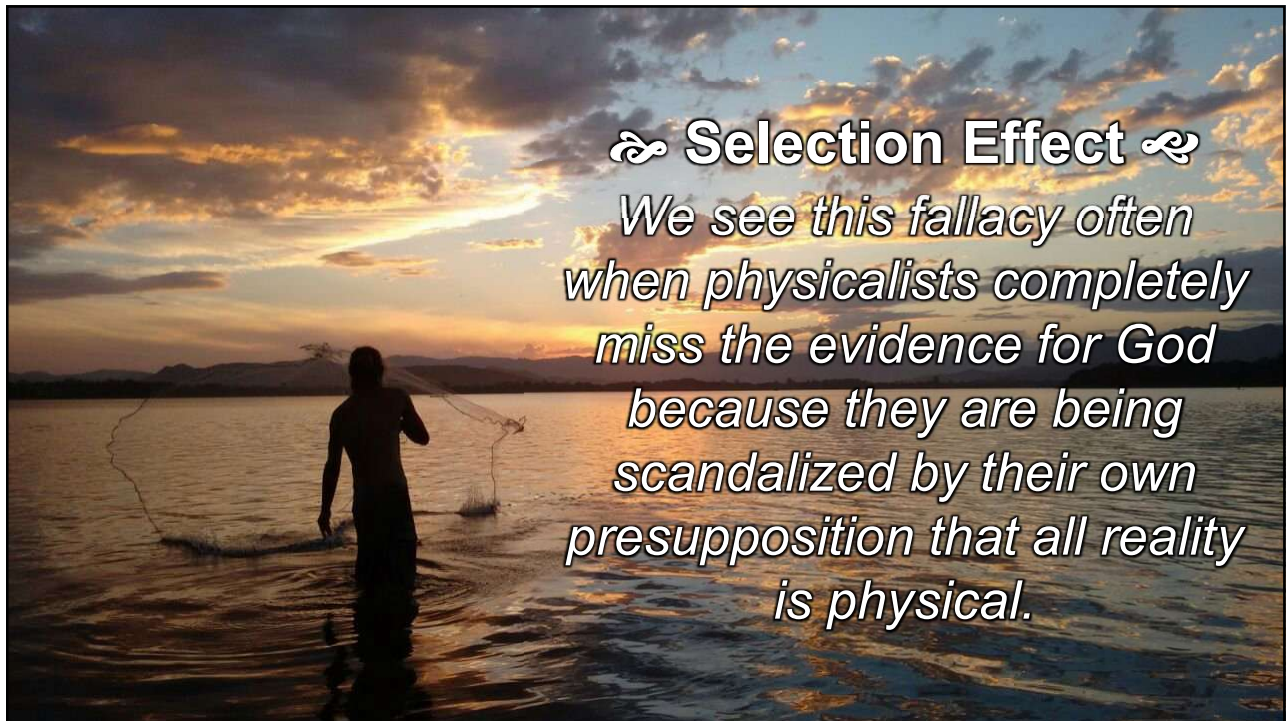


∞ Selection Effect ∞  
*You commit this fallacy when you argue for your own position (or against your opponent's position) based upon an illicit selection (often unknowingly) of the evidence.*



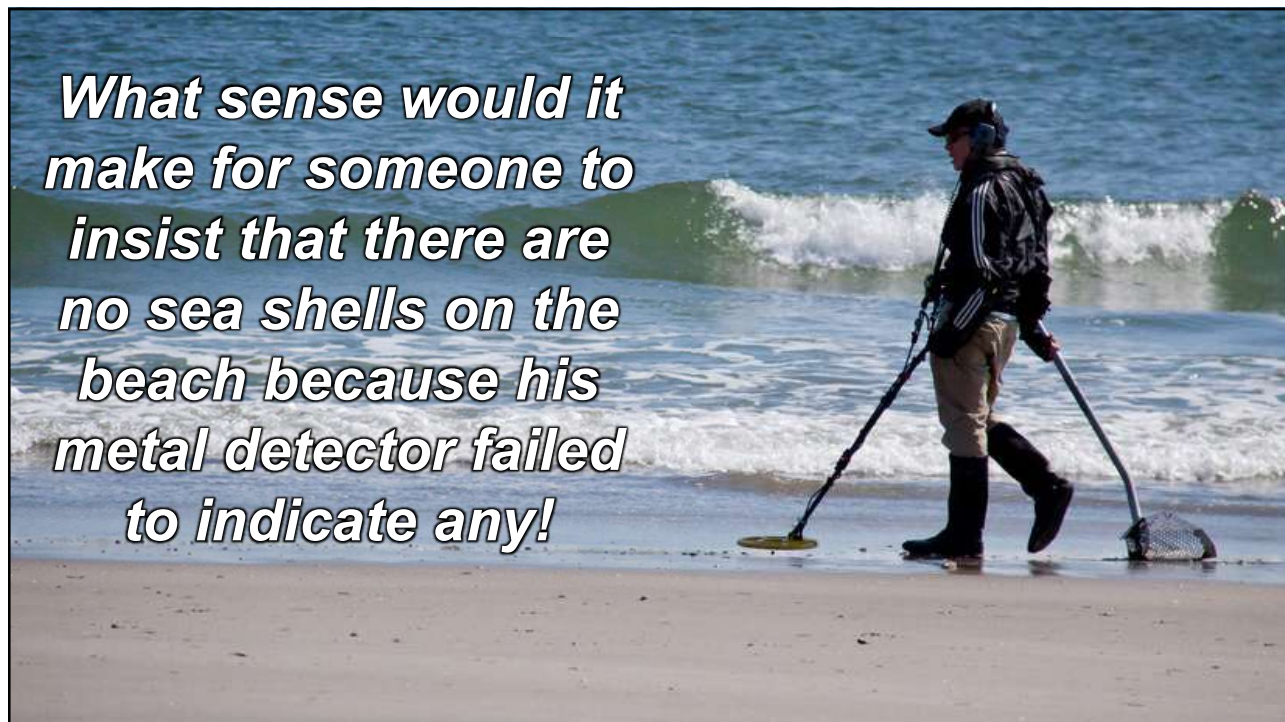
☞ Selection Effect ☞

*If you drag a net through the water of the lake in order to gather data about the relative sizes of the marine life, invariably any life that is either too small or too large will not be caught in the net.*

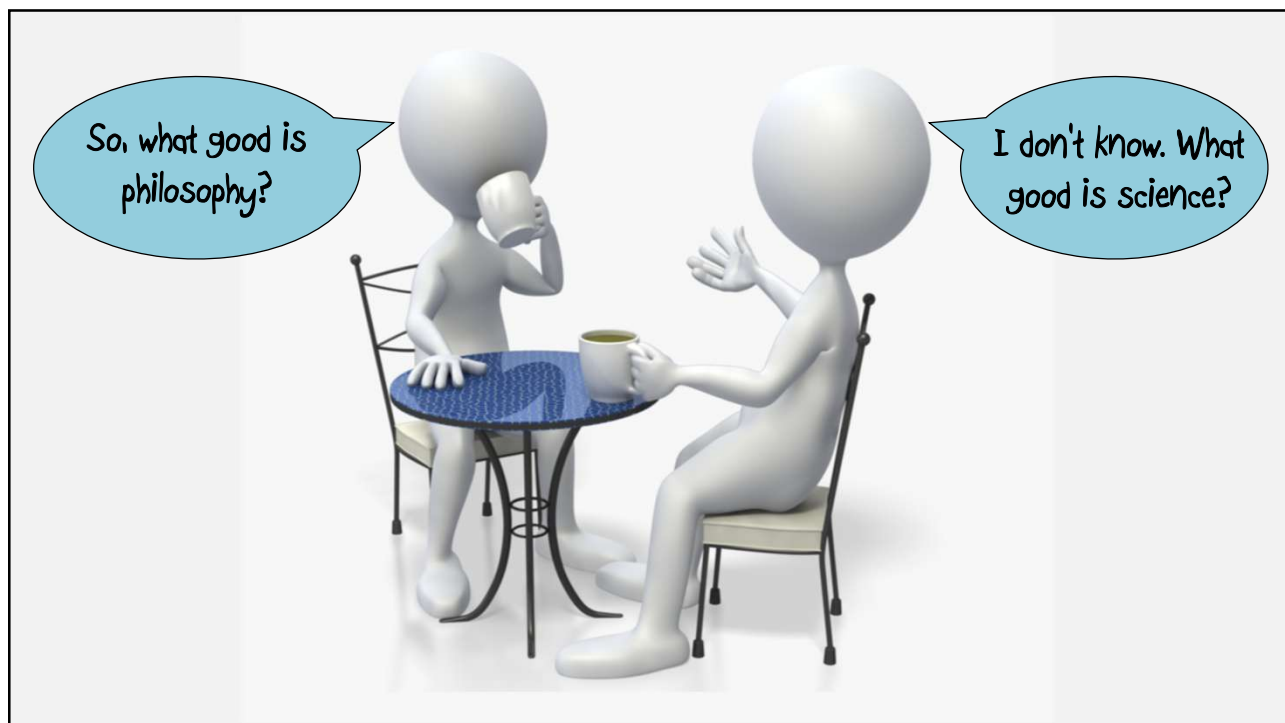


☞ Selection Effect ☞

*We see this fallacy often when physicalists completely miss the evidence for God because they are being scandalized by their own presupposition that all reality is physical.*

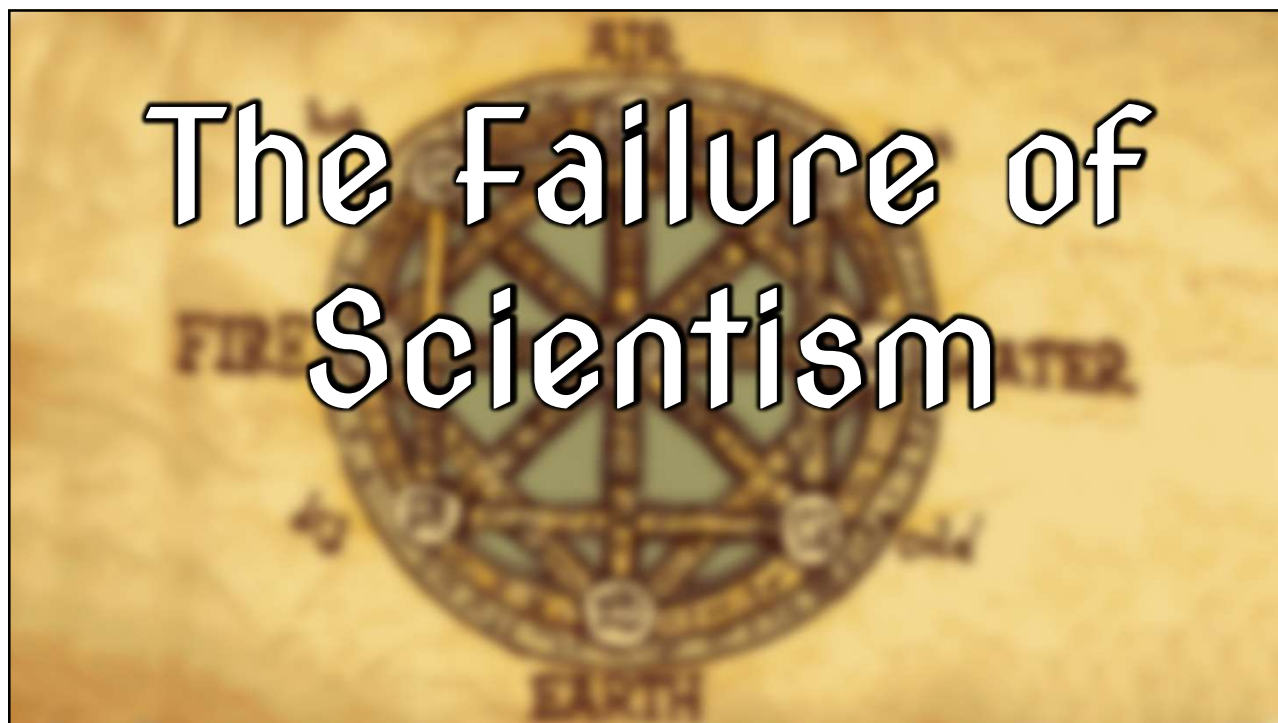


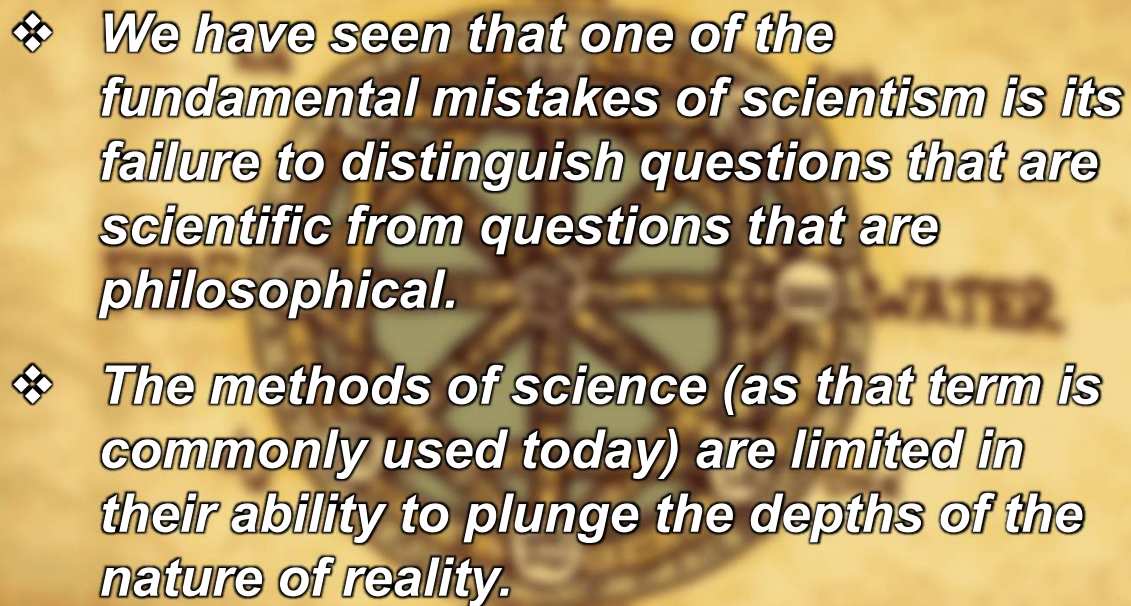
*What sense would it make for someone to insist that there are no sea shells on the beach because his metal detector failed to indicate any!*

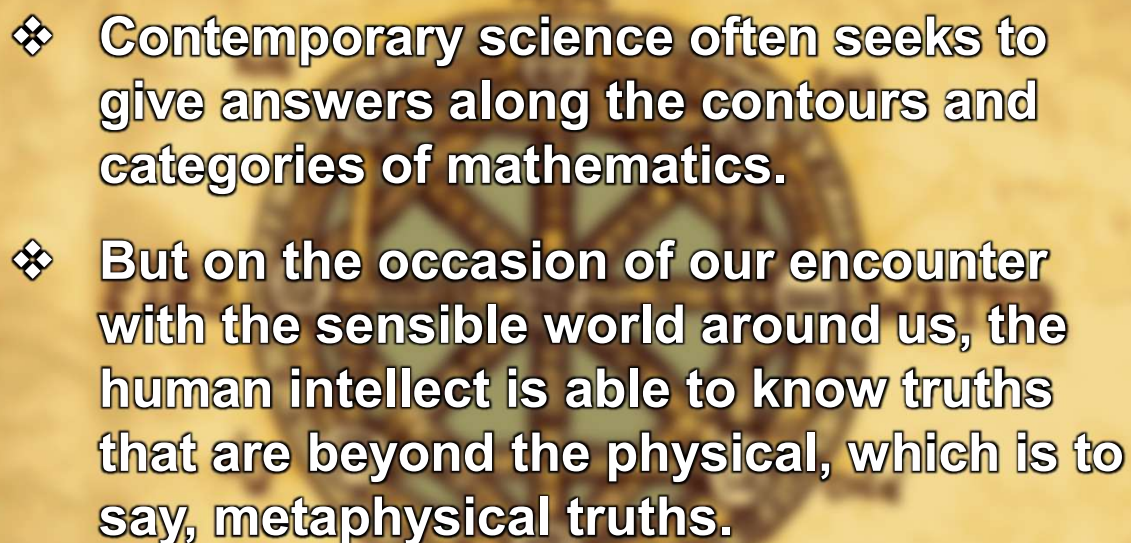


So, what good is philosophy?

I don't know. What good is science?



- 
- ❖ *We have seen that one of the fundamental mistakes of scientism is its failure to distinguish questions that are scientific from questions that are philosophical.*
  - ❖ *The methods of science (as that term is commonly used today) are limited in their ability to plunge the depths of the nature of reality.*

- 
- ❖ *Contemporary science often seeks to give answers along the contours and categories of mathematics.*
  - ❖ *But on the occasion of our encounter with the sensible world around us, the human intellect is able to know truths that are beyond the physical, which is to say, metaphysical truths.*



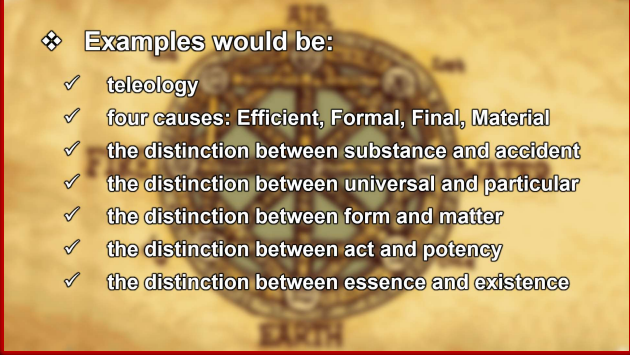
❖ **Examples would be:**

- ✓ teleology
- ✓ four causes: Efficient, Formal, Final, Material
- ✓ the distinction between substance and accident
- ✓ the distinction between universal and particular
- ✓ the distinction between form and matter
- ✓ the distinction between act and potency
- ✓ the distinction between essence and existence



❖ **Examples would be:**

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***With these metaphysical truths, the classical philosopher (i.e., the Thomist) can demonstrate the existence and attributes of the God of Classical Theism.***



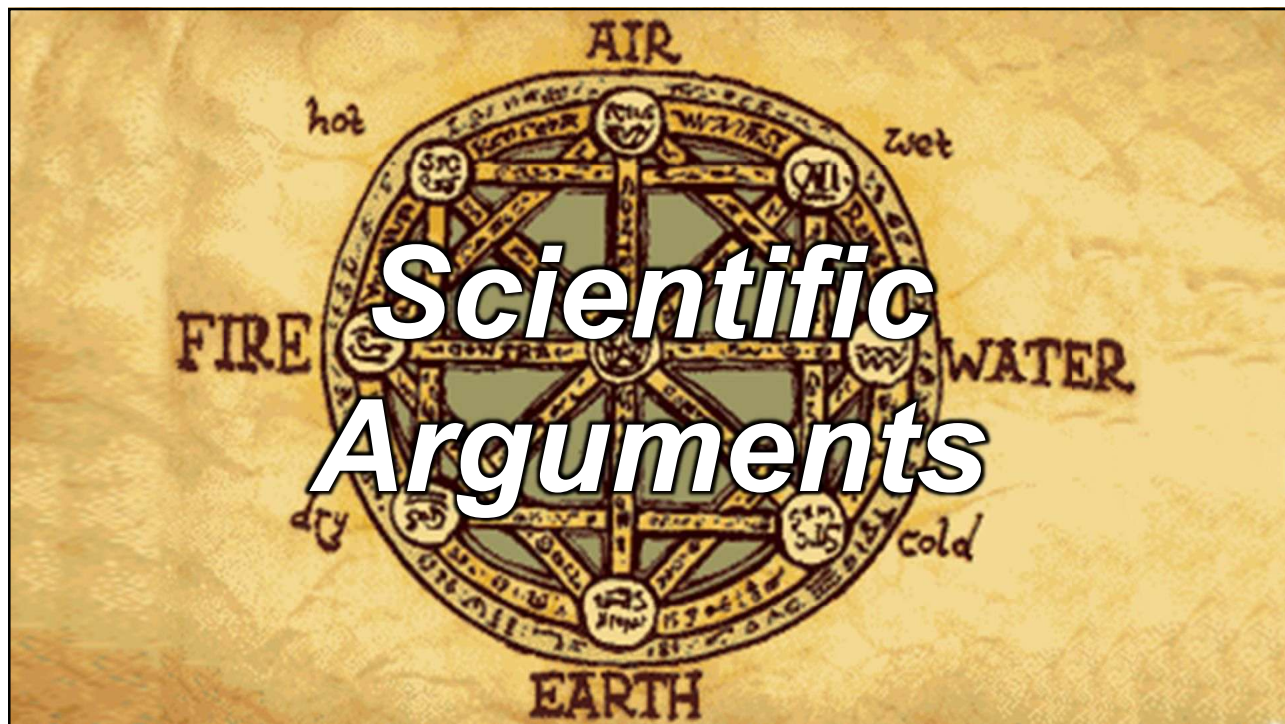
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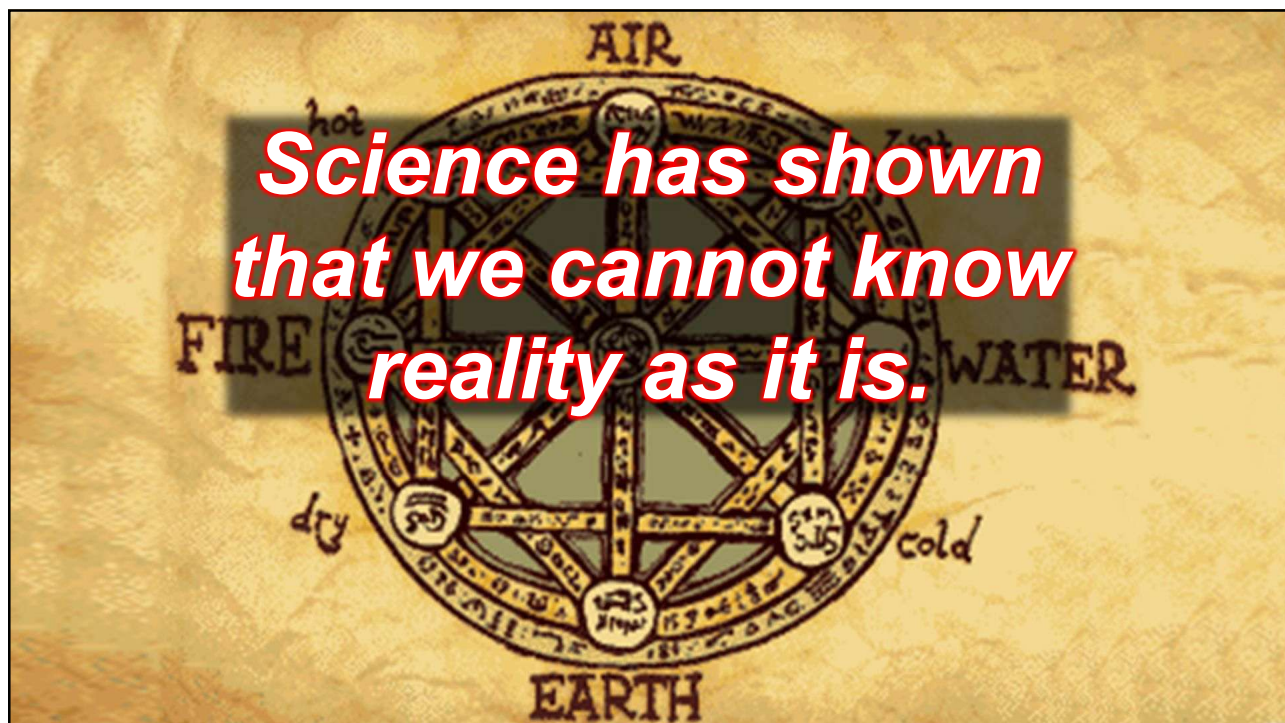
***Further, since God exists, then miracles are possible.***


***It remains to show whether miracles have actually occurred.***

***From here, we move from philosophy to history.***



# ***Scientific Arguments***





**Nikos Konstantinou**  
 Heads the Brain and Cognitive Science  
 Department of Rehabilitation Science  
 Cyprus University of Technology

*“When you study the human brain, you realize that we know almost nothing about it. But if there is one thing that we do know is that the human brain does not mirror reality for us. It has rather evolved to construct reality for us. ... It takes information from the sensory organ ... and a constructs reality that is largely based on two things ... the context [and] ... our previous experience with the world.”*


[“Your Perception is not always reality,”  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbmqku\\_jpHg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbmqku_jpHg), accessed 02/02/26]

**How can he claim to know any thing about the brain if our brain does not mirror reality for us, but rather constructs reality for us?**

**In other words, how can he know that what he says the brain does is actually what the brain does in reality and not merely a construction of what the brain does based on context and previous experience with the world?**

*“When you study the human brain, you realize that we know almost nothing about it. But if there is one thing that we do know is that the human brain does not mirror reality for us. It has rather evolved to construct reality for us. ... It takes information from the sensory organ ... and a constructs reality that is largely based on two things ... the context [and] ... our previous experience with the world.”*

[“Your Perception is not always reality,”  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbmqku\\_jpHg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbmqku_jpHg), accessed 02/02/26]



*“How many of you think that these two oval shapes in the middle have the same brightness? When we look at them, we see them as being slightly different. ... However, these are two identical pieces of information. They have the same shape, same size, same color, same brightness. But this reality is only revealed to us ... when we remove the context which is causing the illusion.”*

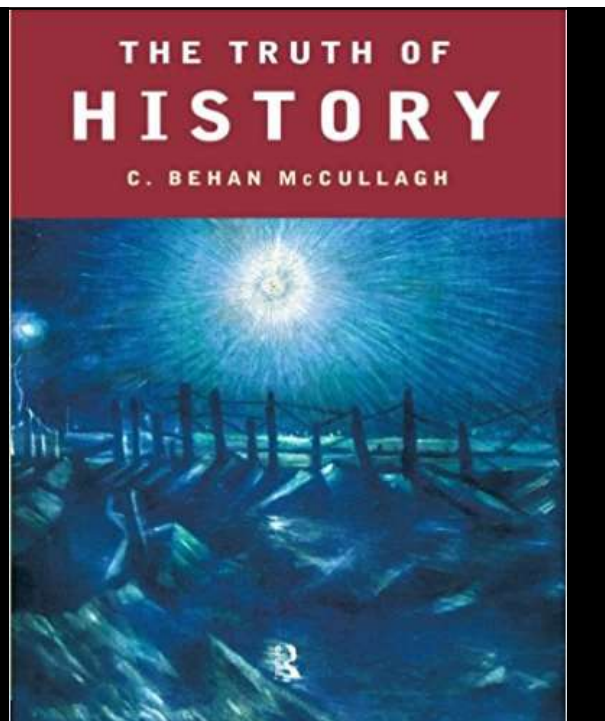
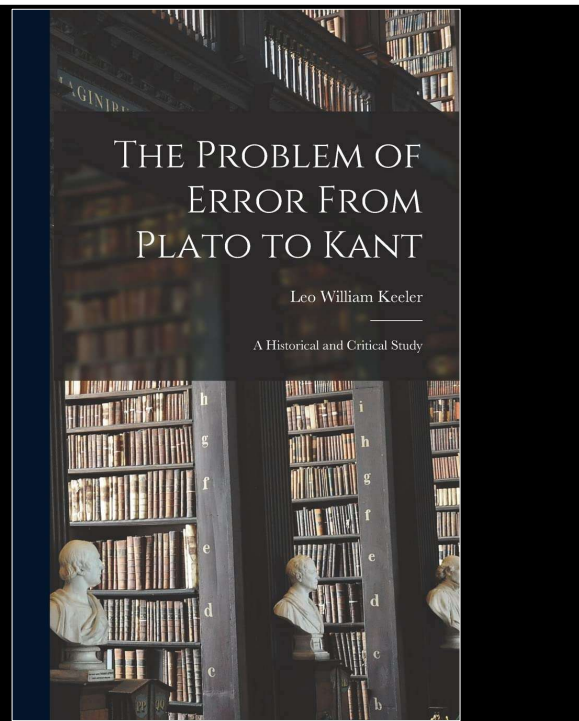
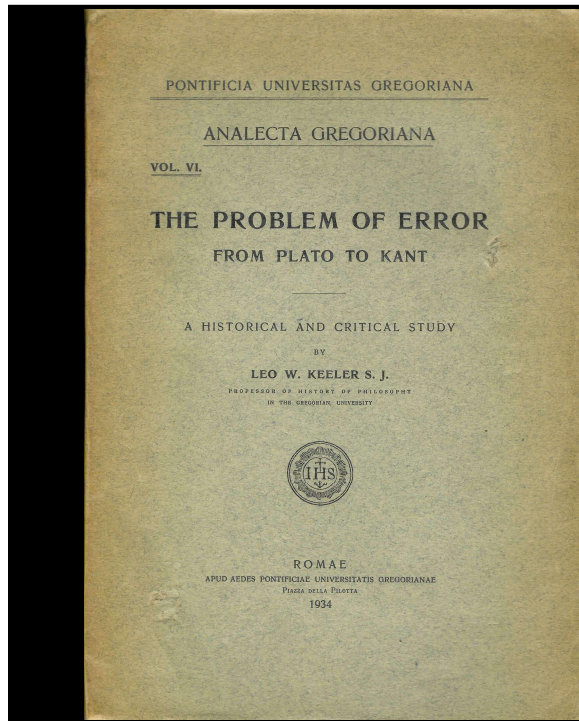
[“Your Perception is not always reality,”  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbmqku\\_jpHg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbmqku_jpHg), accessed 02/02/26]


Again, given what he has said about our reality being constructed for us, how can he know that in reality the ovals are the same?

While he claims that they only appear to be different in brightness because of the context of the different backgrounds behind the ovals, how can he know that the ovals are not really different and that his experience that they are identical was not caused by a different previous background?

*“How many of you think that these two oval shapes in the middle have the same brightness? When we look at them, we see them as being slightly different. ... However, these are two identical pieces of information. They have the same shape, same size, same color, same brightness. But this reality is only revealed to us ... when we remove the context which is causing the illusion.”*

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C. Behan McCullagh

*"First, scientists tell us that our perceptions are caused by things in the world stimulating our sense receptors ...*

*This being so, our perceptions are best described as providing us with information about reality, but not necessarily mirroring it precisely. ...*



C. Behan McCullagh

*"Second, our perceptions are influenced by our culture. ...*

*So our perceptions of the world are not pure sense impressions of it. ...*


*Finally, our perceptions are influenced by our needs, interests and desires. ...*



**"For these three reasons, at least, it is wrong to say that our perceptions simply correspond to the world."**

[C. Behan McCullagh, *The Truth of History* (London: Routledge, 1997), 17]

C. Behan McCullagh




**1. They do not necessarily mirror things precisely.**

**2. They are influenced by our culture and so are not pure sense impressions of it.**

**3. They are influenced by our needs, interests and desires.**

C. Behan McCullagh



C. Behan McCullagh

1. *They do not necessarily mirror things precisely.*
2. *They are influenced by our culture and so are not pure sense impressions of it.*
3. *They are influenced by our needs, interests and desires.*

*Therefore, "it is wrong to say that our perceptions simply correspond to the world."*

1. *They do not necessarily mirror things precisely.*
2. *They are influenced by our culture and so are not pure sense impressions of it.*
3. *They are influenced by our needs, interests and desires.*

*Therefore, "it is wrong to say that our perceptions simply correspond to the world."*

***Does McCullagh's observations about perceptions mirror the perceptions precisely?***

***If so, then he has contradicted himself.***

***If not, then why should we think his observations are objectively true?***

1. *They do not necessarily mirror things precisely.*
2. *They are influenced by our culture and so are not pure sense impressions of it.*
3. *They are influenced by our needs, interests and desires.*

*Therefore, "it is wrong to say that our perceptions simply correspond to the world."*

*Are McCullagh's observations about perceptions influenced by his culture?*

*If not, then he as contradicted himself.*

*If so, then why should we think his observations are objectively true?*

1. *They do not necessarily mirror things precisely.*
2. *They are influenced by our culture and so are not pure sense impressions of it.*
3. *They are influenced by our needs, interests and desires.*

*Therefore, "it is wrong to say that our perceptions simply correspond to the world."*

*Are McCullagh's observations about perceptions influenced by his needs, interests, and desires?*

*If not, then he as contradicted himself.*

*If so, then why should we think his observations are objectively true?*

1. *They do not necessarily mirror things precisely.*
2. *They are influenced by our culture and so are not pure sense impressions of it.*
3. *They are influenced by our needs, interests and desires.*

*Therefore, "it is wrong to say that our perceptions simply correspond to the world."*

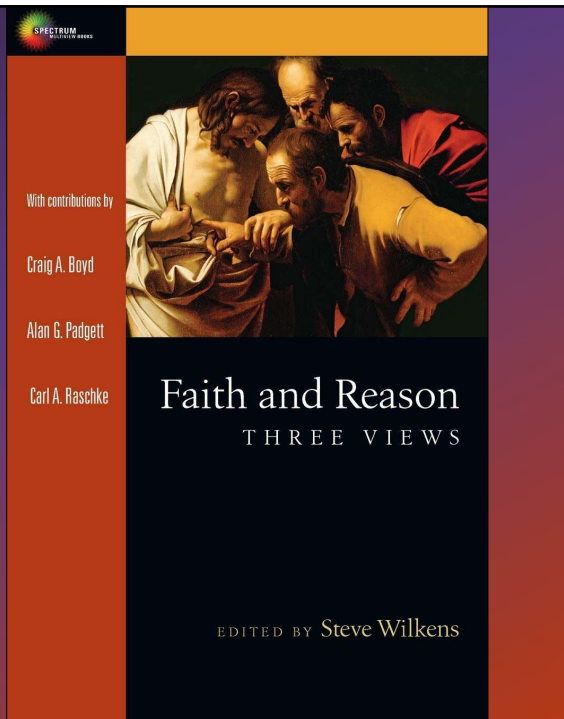
*Do you see how self-refuting McCullagh's argument is?*

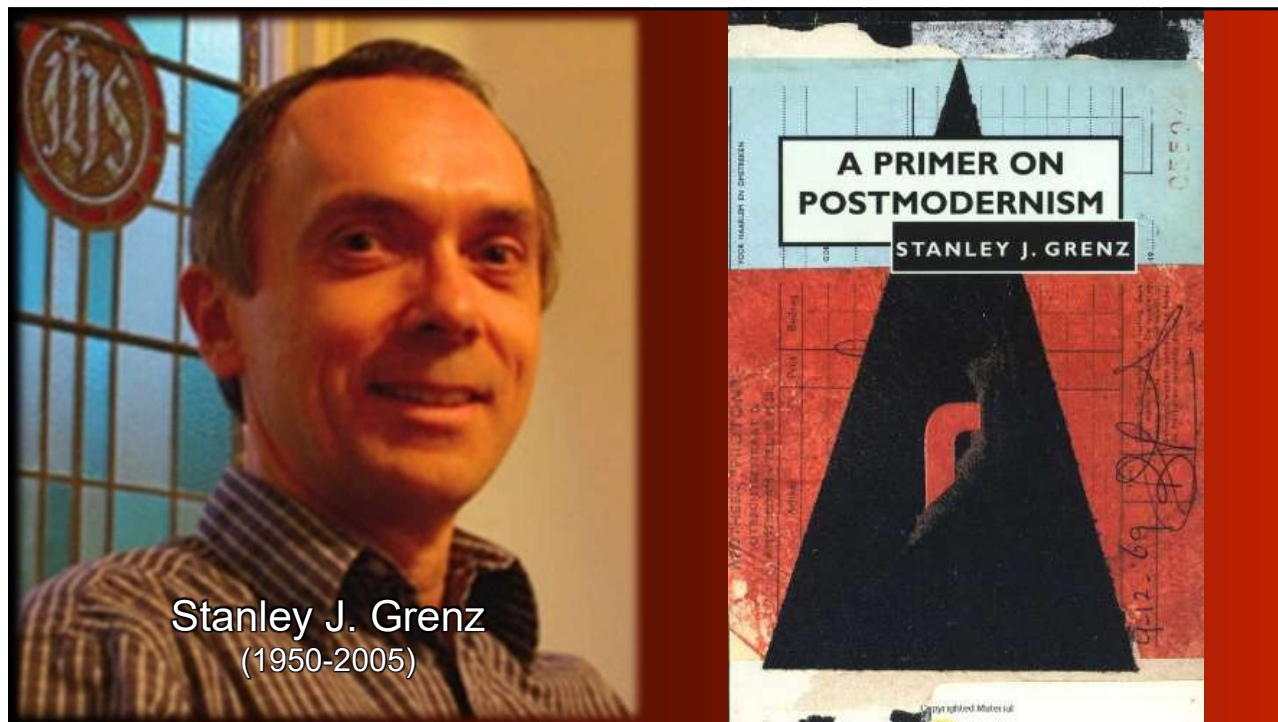
*If it is wrong to say that "our perceptions simply correspond to the world" then it would be wrong for McCullagh to say that his conclusion corresponds to the world since his conclusion is his perception about our observations.*

*But if McCullagh's conclusion does not correspond to the world, then his conclusion is false.*

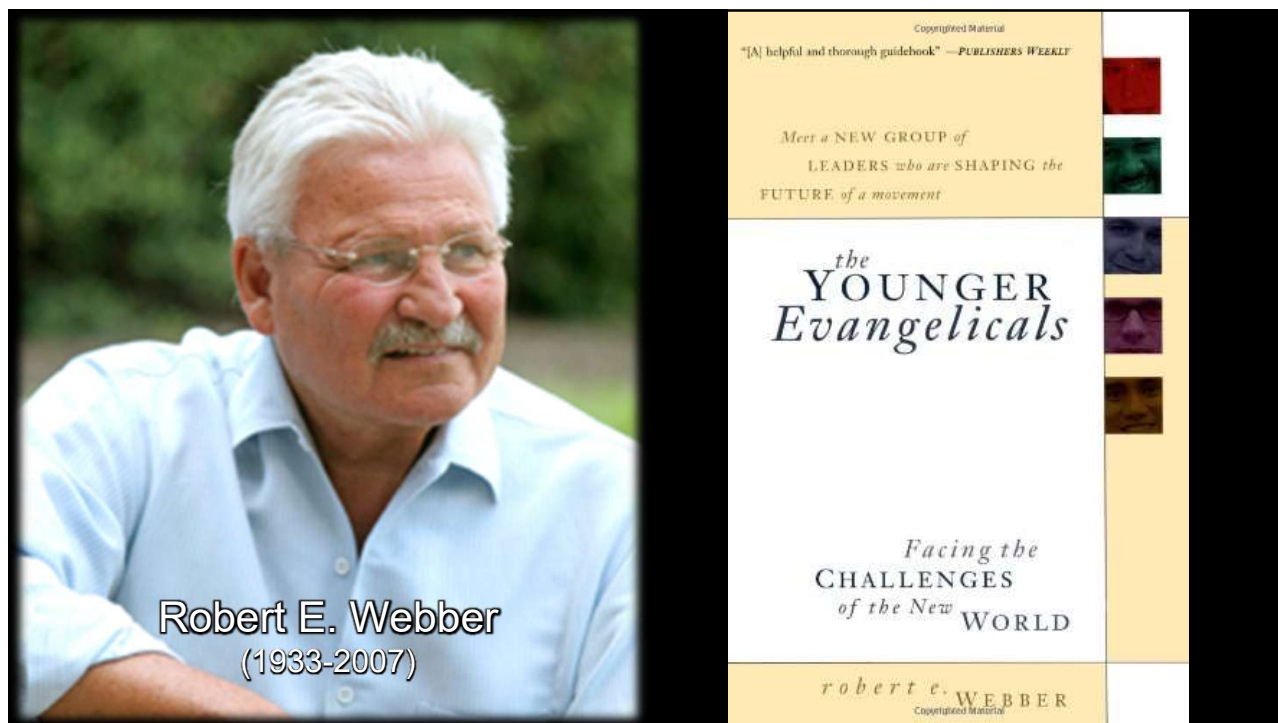


Carl A. Raschke





Stanley J. Grenz  
(1950-2005)



Robert E. Webber  
(1933-2007)