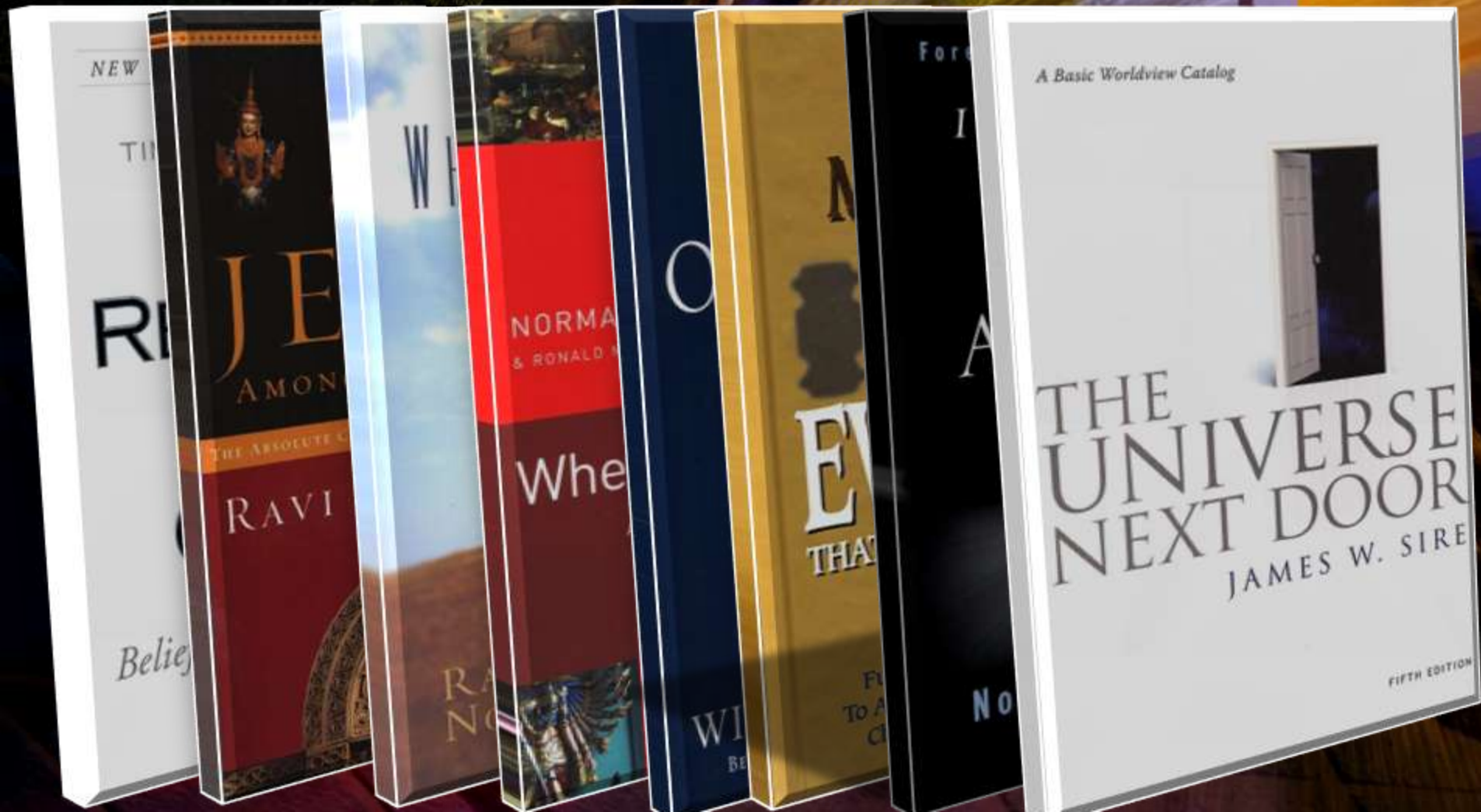


APOLOGETICS 101:

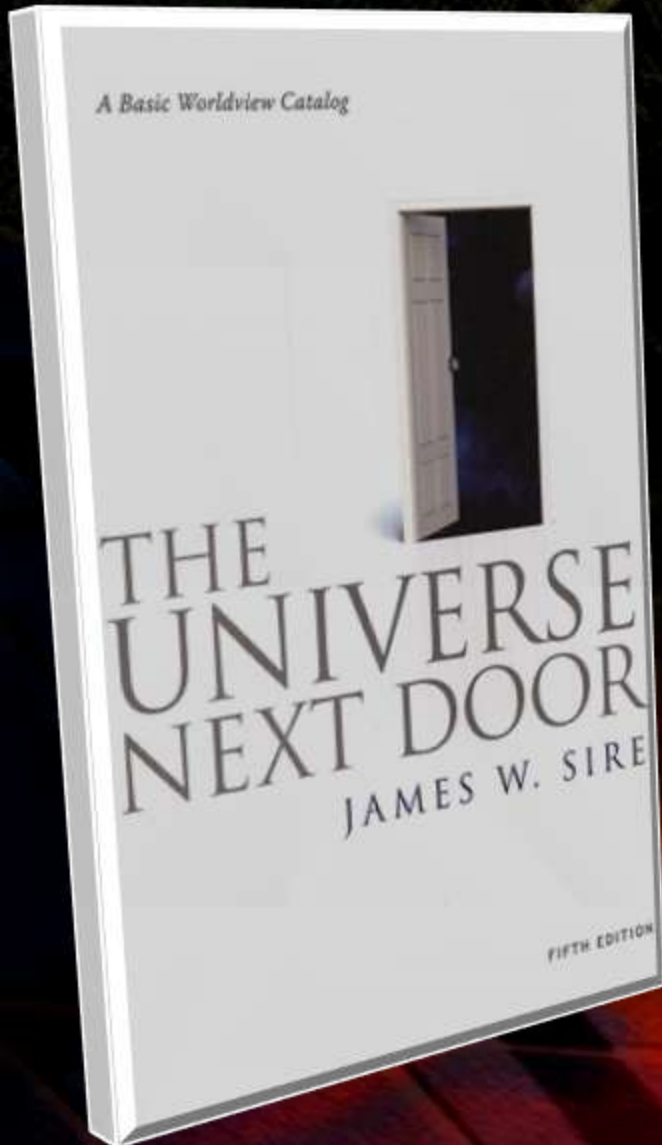
LESSON 2: WORLDVIEWS, PART 1



Ravi's Four Key Questions:

- 1. Origin –** **Where did I come from?**
- 2. Meaning –** **What is life's meaning?**
- 3. Morality -** **How do I define right from wrong?**
- 4. Destiny -** **What happens to me when I die?**

Defining Worldview



“A worldview is a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true, or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic construction of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being.” pp. 15-16

Defining Worldview

A Basic Worldview Catalog



THE
UNIVERSE
NEXT DOOR
JAMES W. SIRE

FIFTH EDITION

He suggests that "we should all think in terms of worldviews, that is, with a consciousness not only of our own way of thought but also that of other people, so that we can first understand and then genuinely communicate with others in our pluralistic society."

Forming a Worldview



- 1. Culture and the traditions associated with it.**
- 2. Experience of empirical data.**
- 3. Feelings, emotional encounters; perhaps a mystical phenomenon.**
- 4. Parents influence your thinking, especially in your younger years.**

Forming a Worldview

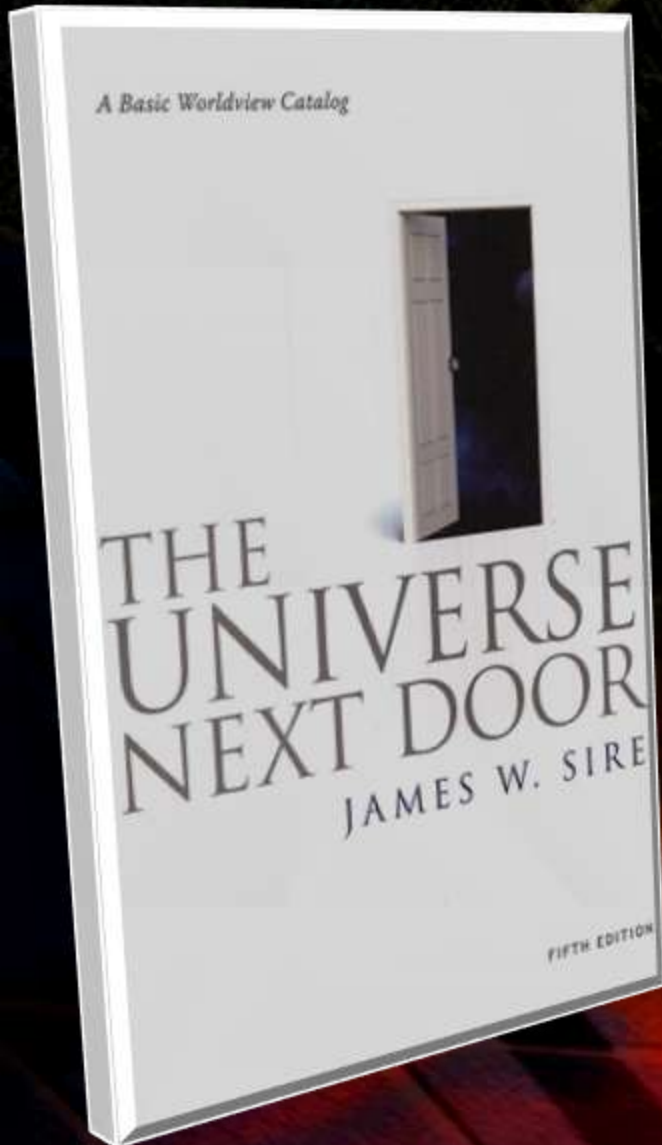


5. Peers - influence you, especially in adolescence and young adulthood, but also throughout your life though to a greater or lesser degree.

6. Reason - nothing influences you more than yourself, as you consider the world around you and engage it.

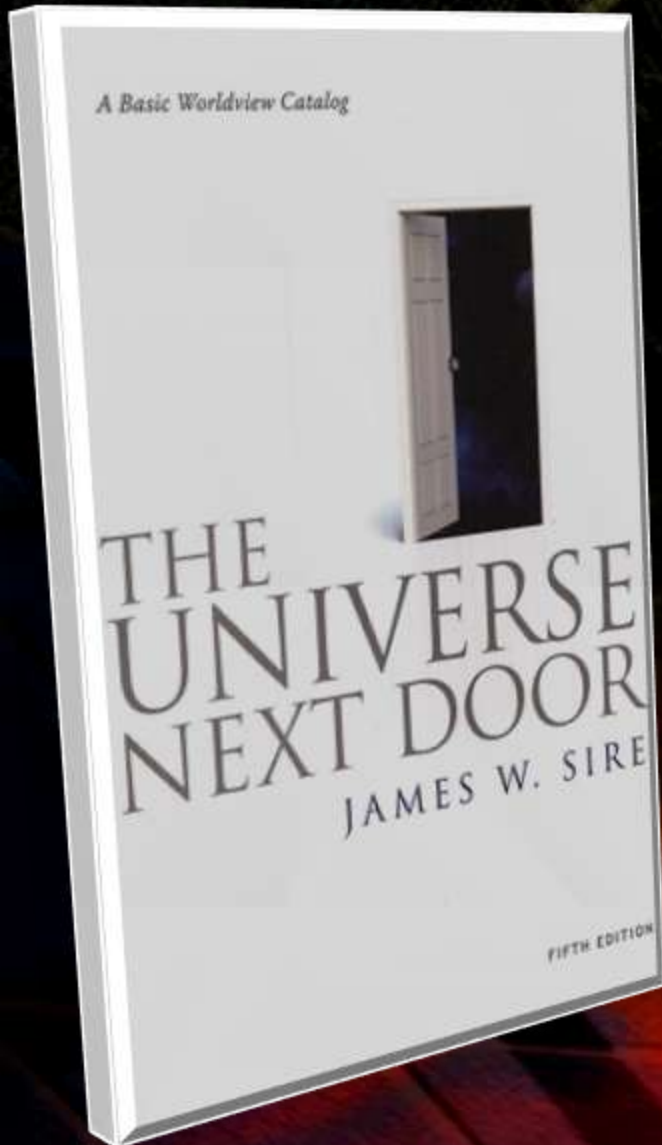
7. Revelation – ‘Holy books’

Seven (+One) Basic ???



1. What is prime reality—the really real?
2. What is the nature of external reality, that is, the world around us?
3. What is a human being?
4. What happens to a person at death?

Seven (+One) Basic ???



5. Why is it possible to know anything at all?
6. How do we know what is right and wrong?
7. What is the meaning of human history?
8. What personal, life-orienting core commitments are consistent with this worldview?

Validating Worldviews

1. Coherence – *It should have an inner intellectual coherence.*

2. Comprehensive – *It must be able to comprehend the data of reality;*

3. Complete – *It must be able to explain what it claims to explain;*

4. Subjectively Satisfying – *It should be able to ring true in our hearts*



Worldview

Origin/Reality

"Where does life come from?"; What is the nature of reality?"

Meaning/Value

"How is life meaningful?"; "Do I have any value?"

Morality

"Is there any real morality needed?"; "Is there an innate moral law?"

Destiny

"What happens at death?"; "Is this life all there is?"

Christian Theism

God

God is infinite and personal (triune), transcendent and immanent, omniscient, sovereign and good. God created the cosmos ex nihilo to operate with a uniformity of cause and effect in an open system.

God's image

Human beings are created in the image of God and thus possess personality, self-transcendence, intelligence, morality, gregariousness and creativity.

God's Law

Moral values are the objective expression of an absolute moral being. Ethics is transcendent and is based on the character of God as good (holy and loving).

Eternity – Heaven or Hell

For each person death is either the gate to life with God and his people or the gate to eternal separation from the only thing that will ultimately fulfill human aspirations.

Naturalism

I am only matter and machine

Worldview

Origin/Reality

Meaning/Value

Morality

Destiny

"Where does life come from?"; What is the nature of reality?"

"How is life meaningful?"; "Do I have any value?"

"Is there any real morality needed?"; "Is there an innate moral law?"

"What happens at death?"; "Is this life all there is?"

Naturalism

Agnosticism;
Atheism;

Matter exists eternally and is all there is.

*Reality is physical or "one-dimensional."
There is no such thing as a soul or a spirit.
Everything can be explained on the basis of natural law.*

Life has no ultimate meaning or value.

Man is the chance product of a biological process of evolution.

There are no moral absolutes.

*Ethics is related only to human beings. **Or, Morality is merely a social construct.**
Whether it is society, a 'strong man' or self constructing the morality.*

Death is the extinction of personality and individuality.

There is no life after death.

A Critique of Naturalism

Naturalism is the view that physical reality is all there is - no god, no soul. Naturalism in practice can be seen in atheism, secular humanism and Marxism. It is the starting point for several others. There are some big problems with naturalism, as a persuasive worldview; because is that it fails to answer questions like,

- ***“How is life meaningful?”***,
- ***“Do I have any value?”***,
- ***“Is there any real morality needed?”*** and
- ***“How can I trust my own mind?”***

Nihilism

I find no meaning to life

Introducing Nihilism

“Nihilism is more a feeling than a philosophy, more a solitary stance before the universe than a worldview. Strictly speaking, nihilism is the denial that anything is valuable. If it proceeds to the absolute denial of everything, it even denies the reality of existences itself. In other words, nihilism is the negation of everything – knowledge, ethics, beauty, reality. In nihilism no statement has validity; nothing has meaning. Everything is gratuitous, de trop, that is, just there.” Sire, p. 94

Worldview

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Meaning/Value

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Nihilism

Naturalism

Matter exists eternally and is all there is.

Necessity - As complex machines in a closed universe we are determined, merely part of a mechanistic universe.

Life is meaningless.

*No free will exists. Ergo: **metaphysical nihilism.** Chance is merely seen as unknown determinism, not freedom.*

There are no moral absolutes

*Can we really find any 'oughts' for morality?
"Naturalism places us as human beings in as ethically relative box."
Ergo: moral nihilism.*

Death is the extinction of personality and individuality.

There is no life after death. And it doesn't really matter.

A Critique of Nihilism

Nihilism is the view that absolutely nothing matters. Life and death, happiness and sorrow, are all meaningless- and so is all of reality.

This rather depressing viewpoint, Sire contends, is actually unlivable. Nobody truly acts as though nothing matters at all. Nobody truly acts as though there is no morality.

Therefore, nihilism - the direct result of naturalism - is an unlivable and perhaps impossible worldview.

Existentialism

I create value in an absurd universe

Two Types of Existentialism

Existentialism's task is to provide a framework over which naturalism may escape the bleakness of nihilism.

Sire distinguishes between two type of existentialism, stating that existentialism is not a full-fledged worldview.

“Atheistic existentialism is a parasite on naturalism; theistic existentialism is a parasite on theism.” p. 118

Worldview

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Existential -ism

*Atheistic
existentialism
from
Naturalism*

Matter exists eternally and is all there is.

The cosmos is composed solely of matter, but to human beings reality appears in two forms – subjective and objective.

I create my own meaning or value in an absurd universe.

For human beings alone existence precedes essence; people make themselves who they are. Each person is totally free as regards his or her nature and destiny.

**There are no moral absolutes.
*Or, Morality is merely a social construct.***

**Death is the extinction of personality and individuality.
*The ultimate absurdity is death.***

A Critique of Atheistic Existentialism

Existentialism's task is to provide a framework over which naturalism may escape the bleakness of nihilism.

However, atheistic existentialism only fends off nihilism by adopting the position of solipsism - *the view that the subjective self is what matters.*

Moreover, the supposed value which *atheistic existentialism* wishes to construct is destroyed by the grip of death.

Worldview

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Meaning/Value

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Destiny

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Existential -ism

*Theistic
existentialism
from
Theism*

God

God is infinite and personal (triune), transcendent and immanent, omniscient, sovereign and good. God created the cosmos ex nihilo to operate with a uniformity of cause and effect in an open system.

God's image but...

Human beings are personal beings who, when they come to full consciousness, find themselves in an alien universe; whether or not God exists is a tough question to be solved not by reason but by faith. The personal is most valuable.

God's Law

Moral values are the objective expression of an absolute moral being. Ethics is transcendent and is based on the character of God as good (holy and loving).

Eternity – Heaven or Hell

For each person death is either the gate to life with God and his people or the gate to eternal separation from the only thing that will ultimately fulfill human aspirations.

A Critique of Theistic Existentialism

Theistic existentialism is not a full blown worldview but is a *particular set of emphases* within theism and these tendencies actually puts it at odds with traditional theism.

Theistic existentialism does not start with God but man who must come to self-awareness, each person must choose darkness or light.

A Critique of Theistic Existentialism

The subjective and personal relationship with God is pre-eminent (The I-Thou relationship). This subjectivity as it relates to the paradoxical nature of truth in their view is justly criticized by traditional theists. The lack of belief in historical reliability of the Bible, or even the need for it, is another failing of this view.

“Theists charge the existentialists with building theology on the sand of myth and symbol...it has led to a leap of faith. Meaning is created in the subjective world, but it has no objective referent” Sire, p. 142

Postmodernism

I create my reality through language

Introducing Postmodernism

“Our age, which is more and more is coming to be called postmodern, finds itself afloat in a pluralism of perspectives, a plethora of philosophical possibilities, but with no dominant notion of where to go or how to get there. A near future of cultural anarchy seems inevitable.”

Sire, p. 215

Introducing Postmodernism

Before answering our worldview questions first issue the postmodernists addresses...

'...is not what is there or how we know what is there but how language functions to construct meaning. In other words, there has been a shift in "first things" from being to knowing to constructing meaning.' Sire, p. 217

For the postmodern there has been a shift from knowing (modernity) to meaning.

Introducing Postmodernism

- *So instead of speaking about the death of God, postmodernity cries out that truth is dead.*
- *It leans on naturalism for Origin and Destiny.*
- *Because the movement is in flux it doesn't present itself as a full-fledged worldview.*
- *However, the influence of the movement is seen in the study of literature, history, science and even theology.*

Worldview

Origin/Reality

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Postmodern -ism

Naturalism

Matter exists eternally and is all there is.

Reality must be interpreted through our language and cultural "paradigm." Therefore, reality is "socially constructed."

Life has no ultimate meaning or value.

Humans are nodes in a cultural reality – they are a product of their social setting. The idea that people are autonomous and free is a myth.

Morality is merely a social construct.

Values are part of our social paradigms as well. Tolerance, freedom of expression, inclusion, and refusal to claim to have the answers are the only universal values.

Death is the extinction of personality and individuality.

A Critique of Postmodernism

Pick a truth any truth...

Simplistically, Postmodernism is the view that there is no “one truth”, but rather all worldviews are equally valid. We can have meaning but we cannot have truth; not absolute truth but only pragmatic truth. When it comes to understanding ourselves postmoderns are very existential.

A Critique of Postmodernism

What has postmodernism contributed? Why are some people attracted to it?

- (1) Its critique of modernity's confidence in human reason seems to be on target.**
 - (2) Its recognition that language is closely related to power.**
 - (3) Its attention to the ways in which we are molded by society is also very insightful.**
- Yet, despite these pluses the minuses overwhelm the system.**

A Critique of Postmodernism

Here are four major problems –

- (1) The rejection of all metanarratives is itself a metanarrative.**
- (2) To state that there is no reality only story is self-referentially incoherent, for it tells us something that we cannot know!**
- (3) Regarding the indeterminacy of language, how are we to understand the deconstructionist's own propositions?**
- (4) Postmodern's critique of the autonomy and sufficiency of human reason rests on the autonomy and sufficiency of human reason!**

A Critique of Postmodernism

“If postmodernism has not taken us beyond naturalism but rather enmeshed us in a web of utter uncertainty, why should we think it describes us as we really are?...In postmodernism the essence of modernism has not been left behind. Both rest on two key notions: (1) that the cosmos is all there is – no God of any kind exists – and (2) the autonomy of human reason.”

APOLOGETICS 101:

LESSON 2: WORLDVIEWS, PART 1

