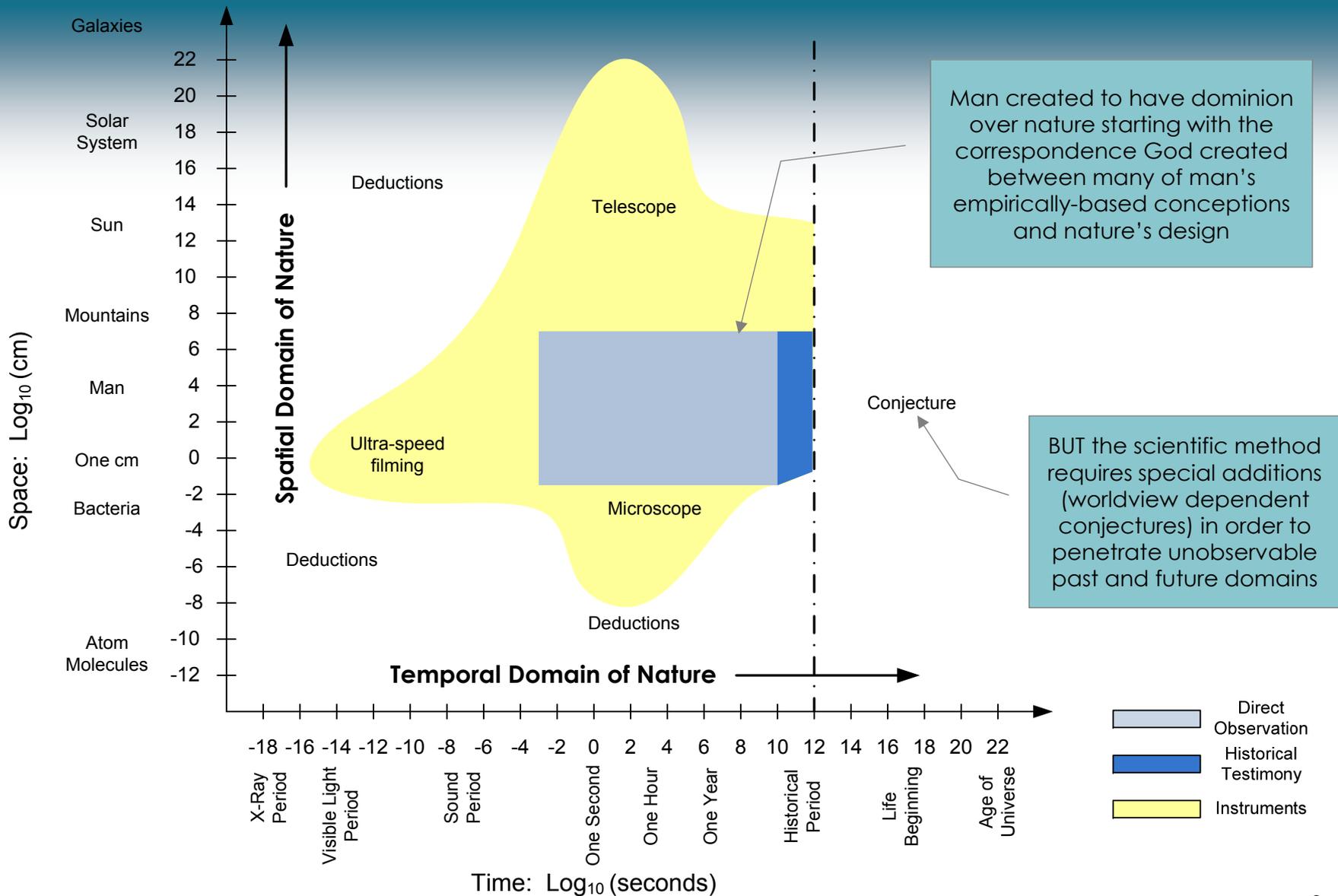


How Can Science Study History?

Beth Haven Creation Conference

May 13, 2017

Limits of empirical knowledge



Does math success imply a pre-established design?



“Nature seems very conversant with the rules of pure mathematics. Nature and our minds works according to the same laws.”

Sir James Jeans (1877–1946)

“The laws of our thoughts coincide with the regularity of the flow of impressions which we receive from the external world.” Max Planck (1858–1947)



Does math success imply a pre-established design?

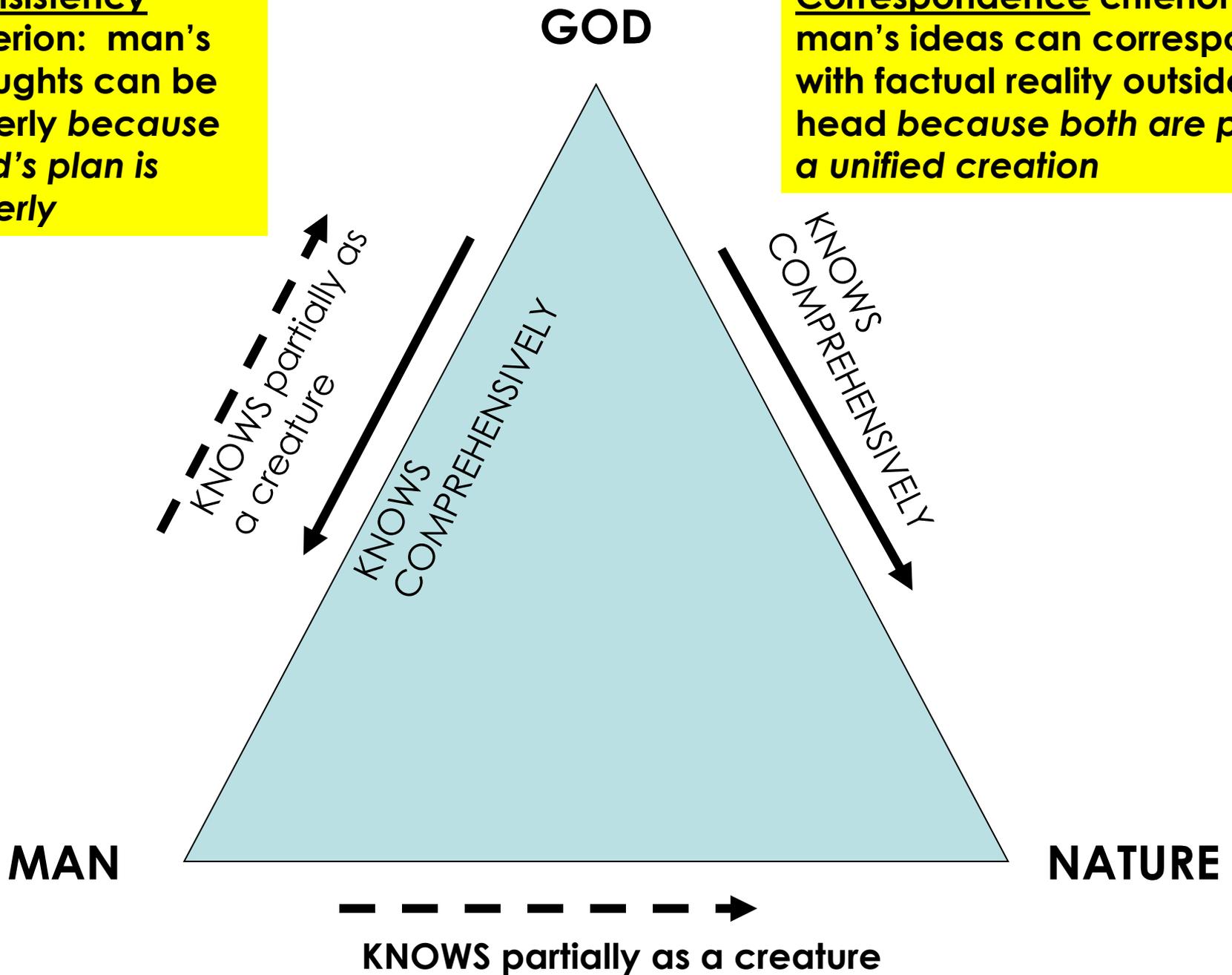


Albert Einstein
(1879–1955)

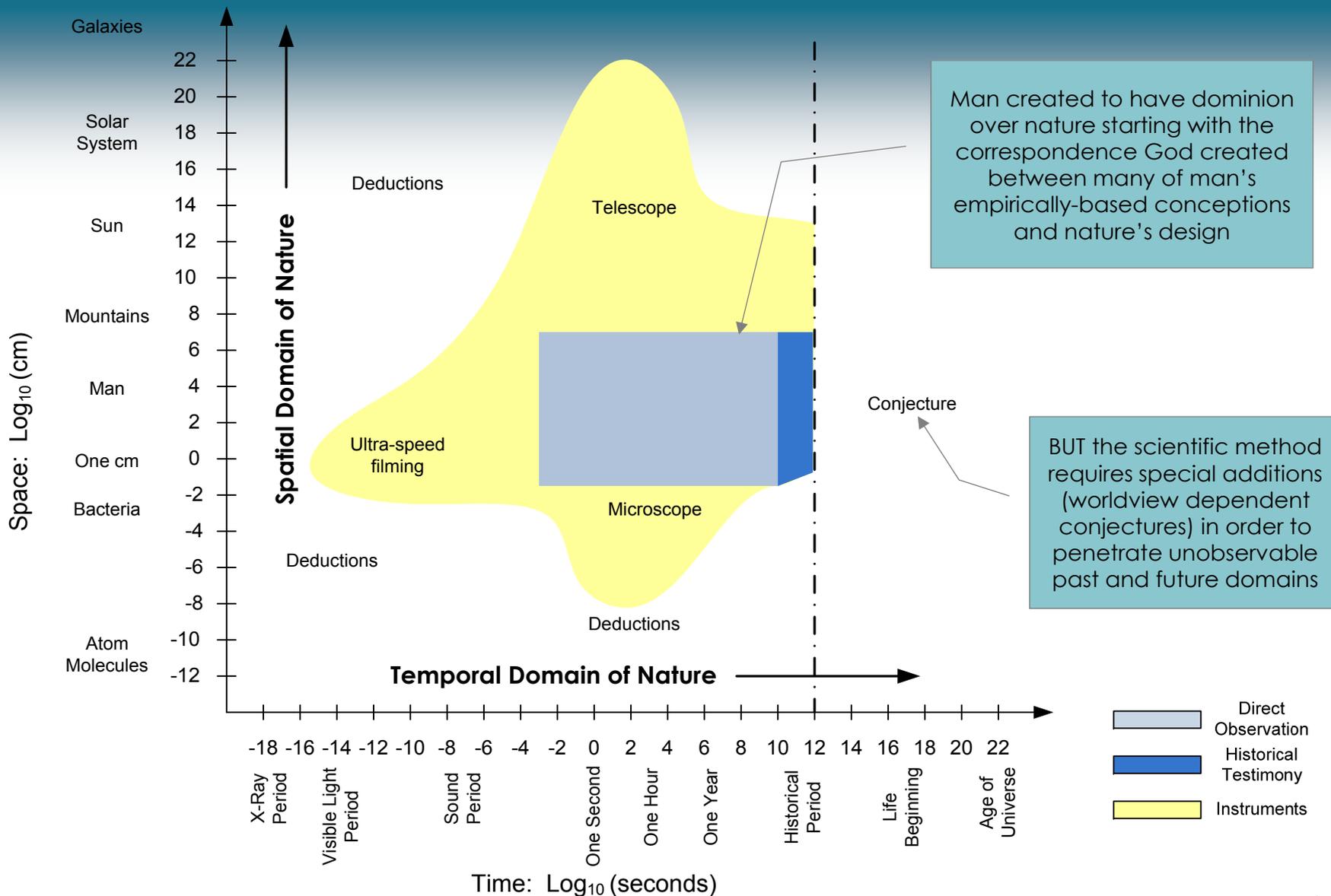
“The success of [scientific] procedure supposes in the objective world a high degree of order which we are in no way entitled to expect a priori. There lies the “miracle”...I think of the comprehensibility of the world as a miracle or an eternal mystery.”

Consistency
criterion: man's thoughts can be orderly because God's plan is orderly

Correspondence criterion:
man's ideas can correspond with factual reality outside his head because both are part of a unified creation



Limits of empirical knowledge



What methods can science use to study history?

“Evolutionary biology, in contrast with physics and chemistry, is a historical science: ... *Laws and experiments are inappropriate* ... Instead one constructs a historical narrative, consisting of a tentative reconstruction of the particular scenario that led to the events one is trying to explain.” [Emphasis supplied]

Scientific American Vol 283 (2000) 80



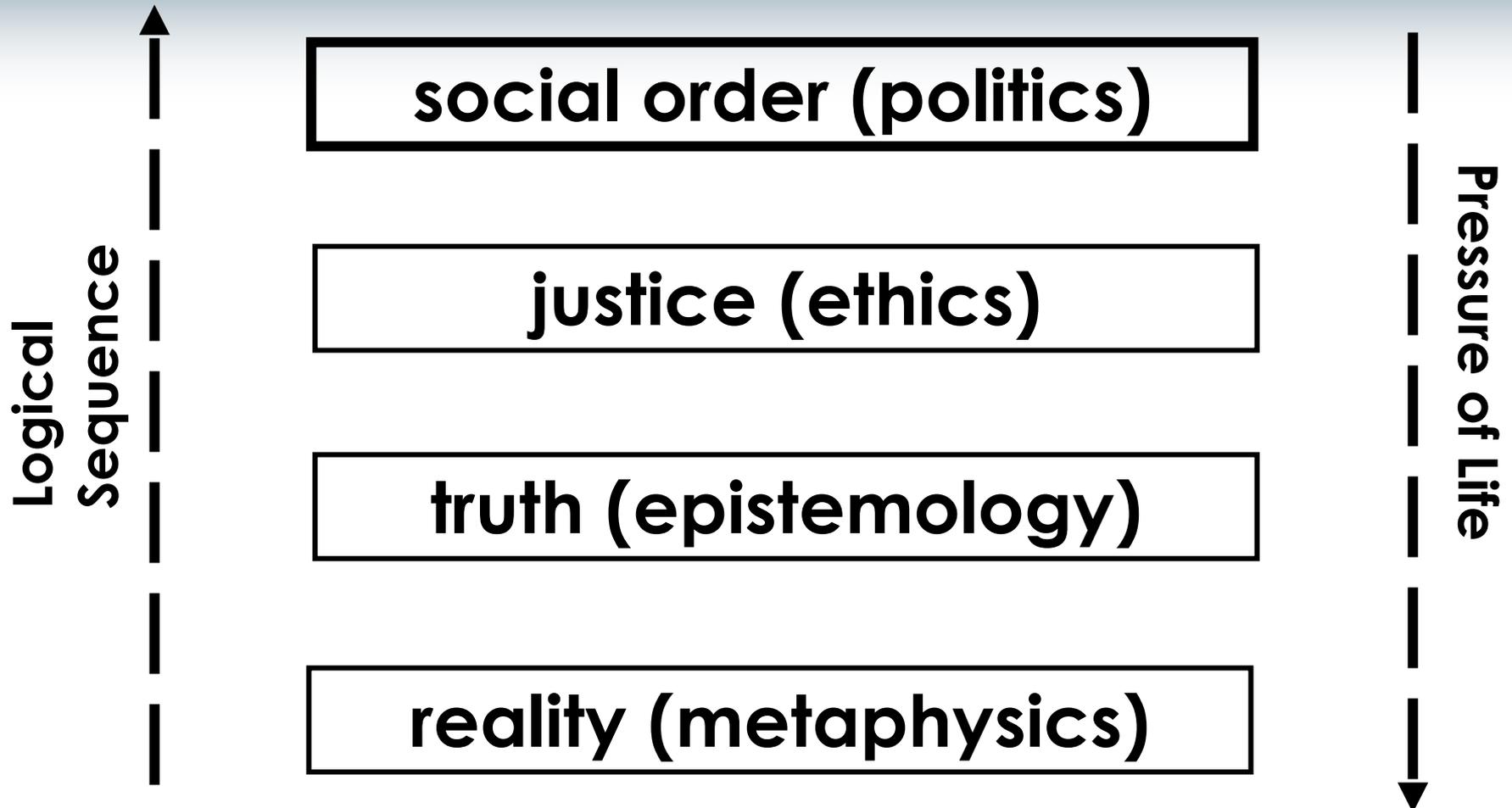
Ernest Mayr (1904–2005)

What methods can science use to study history?

“Our theory of evolution has become . . . one which cannot be refuted by any possible observation. . . . Ideas, either without basis or based on a few laboratory experiments carried out in extremely simplified systems, have attained certainty far beyond their validity. They have become part of an evolutionary dogma accepted by most of us as part of our training.”

Birch, L.C, and Ehrlich, P.R., “Evolutionary History and Population Biology,” *Nature* Vol 214 (1967) 349–352.

Levels of Discourse



Historical science is very worldview dependent

“I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn’t just that I don’t believe in God. . . . It’s that I hope there is no God! I don’t want there to be a God; I don’t want the universe to be like that!”

Thomas Nagel, *The Last Word* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 130

Historical science is very worldview dependent

“It is not that the methods of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our a priori adherence to material causes . . . that produce material explanations, no matter how counter-intuitive. . . . Moreover, that materialism is an absolute, for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door.”

Richard Lewontin, “Billions and billions of demons”, *The New York Times Review*, p 31, 9 January 1997.

Shall I bow to my Creator?

- **YES!**

- ancient monotheism
- ancient Israel
- Bible
- fundamentalism

- **CREATOR/creature**

- God || man | nature
- everlasting distinctions

- **PERSONAL SOVEREIGN**

- ultimate responsibility

- **NO!**

- ancient myths
- eastern religions
- western philosophy
- modern theology

- **Continuity of Being**

- nature > gods > man
- transmutation / evolution

- **IMPERSONAL FATE & CHANCE**

- ultimate victimization