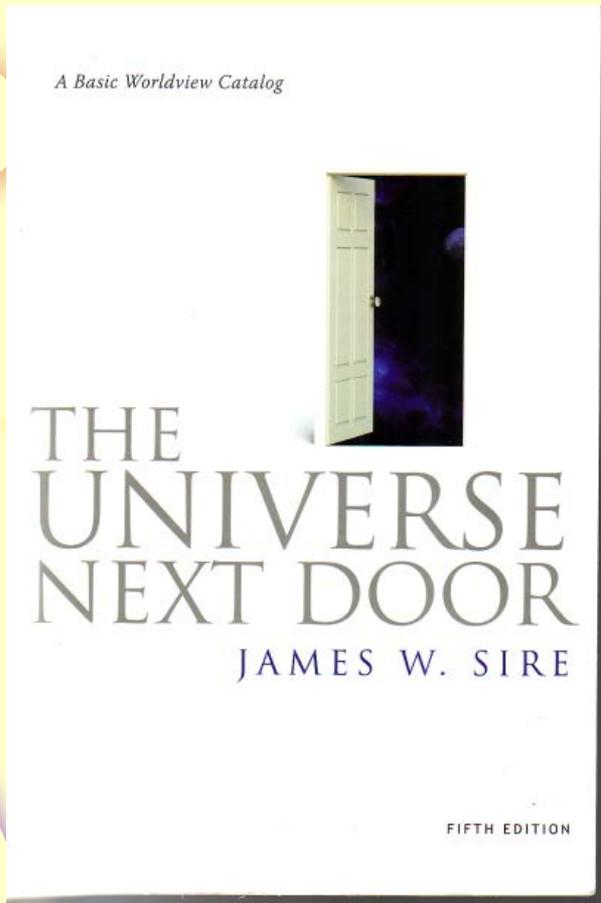


# Worldview Boutique

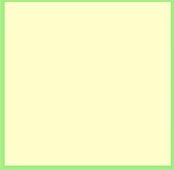


Some key points from  
James Sire's  
*The Universe Next Door*



# Why this book?

- ◆ Outline basic worldviews that underlie the way we think
- ◆ Trace historically how these worldviews developed
- ◆ Show postmodernism's twist
- ◆ Understand ourselves and others so we can genuinely communicate



# Worldview defined

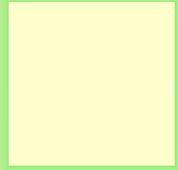
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"A *world view* is a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic make-up of our world." -- Sire

# Worldview: An iceberg analogy

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# What a worldview does . . .

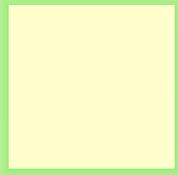
One's worldview determines how the  
events and circumstances of life  
will be understood . . .  
accepted . . .  
and acted upon.



# Sire's 8 questions

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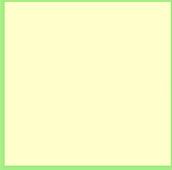
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- 
- ◆ What is prime reality?
  - ◆ What is the nature of external reality, the world around us?
  - ◆ What is a human being?
  - ◆ What happens at death?
  - ◆ Why is it possible to know anything?
  - ◆ How do we know what is right and wrong?
  - ◆ What is meaning of human history?
  - ◆ What personal, life-orienting core commitments are consistent with this worldview?



# How important are religious beliefs to one's world view?

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- ◆ “Theology is not simply a system of beliefs to be added alongside the others. Theology is the master blueprint on which all other blueprints are mapped”
  - ◆ -- Paul Hiebert, missionary anthropologist

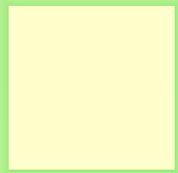


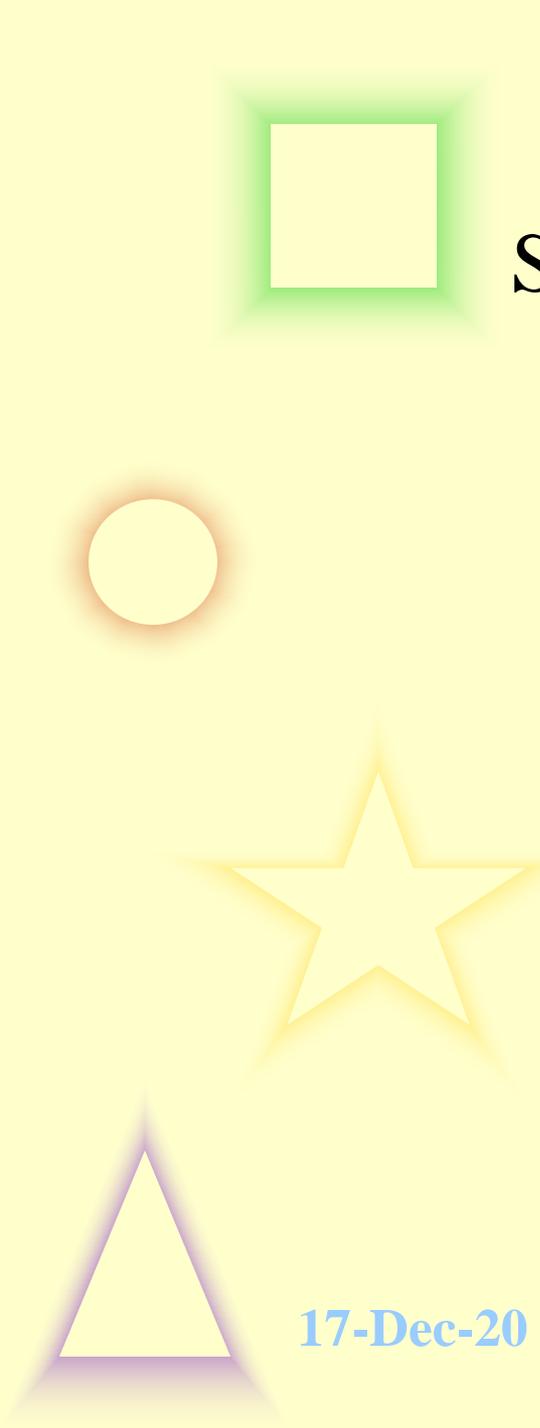
# Christian Theism

Subtitle: A universe charged with the grandeur of God

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- ◆ Knowledge, death, reality, ethics, history, and the realness of human beings are all focused on God.





# Deism

Sire's subtitle: The clockwork universe

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◆ Timeline: 1500

◆ God

◆ is distant:

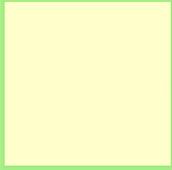
◆ an intellect to be recognized

◆ not a person to be worshipped

◆ is an architect; not a lover or judge

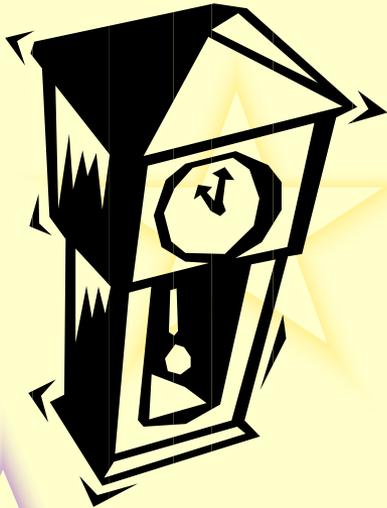
◆ Cosmos is not fallen or abnormal

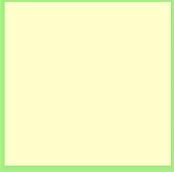
**John Locke, Buckmeister Fuller, Voltaire,  
Albert Einstein**



# The cosmos in Deism

- ◆ Cosmos is a closed, linear cause and effect system
  - ◆ “Clockwork universe” -- God simply left it to run on its own
  - ◆ God, as the First Cause, never intervenes
  - ◆ Miracles are not possible





# Naturalism

Subtitle: The silence of finite space

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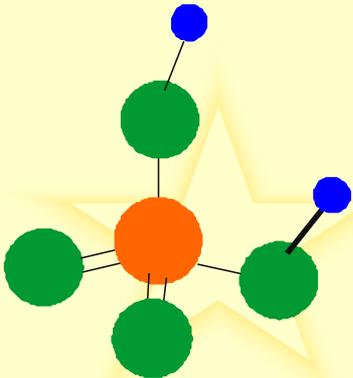
◆ Timeline: 1630

◆ Dialectical materialism / secular humanism

◆ God is removed: history was self-activating

◆ Human personality is only an interrelation of chemical properties

◆ Values are manmade



17-Dec-20

12 **Bertrand Russell, Astrophysicist Carl Sagan**

# Naturalism

- ◆ **“Free will as it is traditionally conceived ...simply does not exist.... There is no way that the evolutionary process as it is currently conceived can produce a being that is truly free to make choices” – William Provine, naturalistic, atheistic biologist at Cornell University**

# Naturalism

- ◆ C.S. Lewis in his book *Miracles* – Naturalism is self-refuting because it is inconsistent with the validity of reasoning.

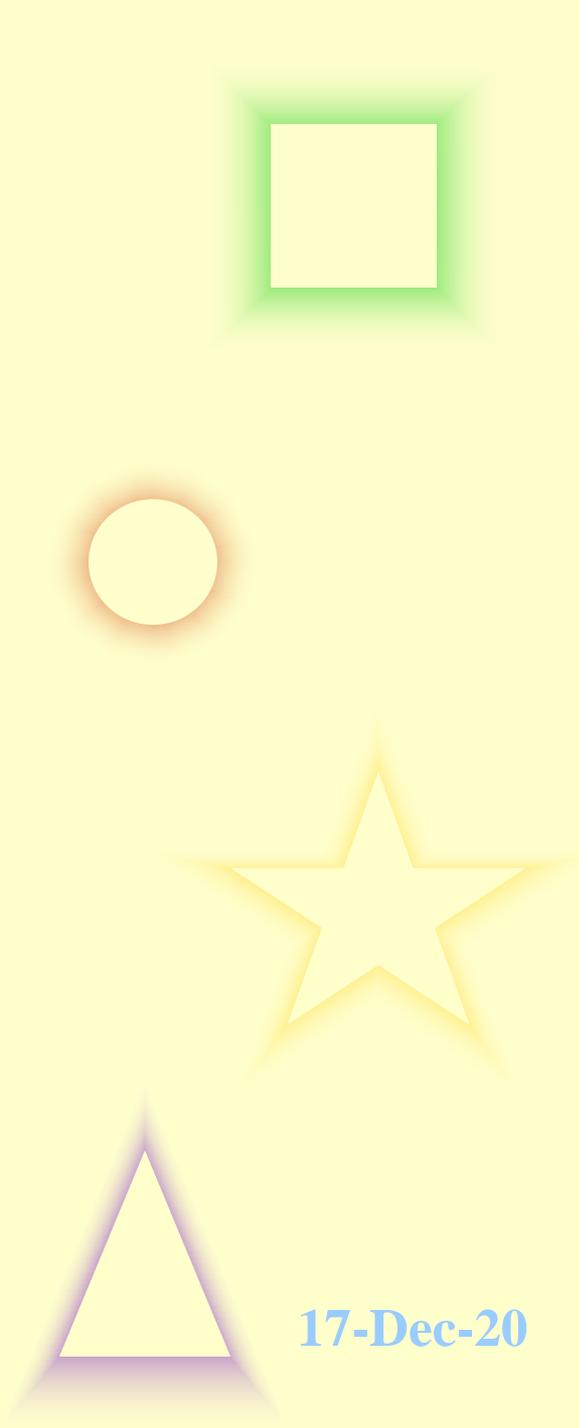
# Nihilism

Sire's subtitle: Zero point

◆ Timeline: 1870

- ◆ Extreme pessimism / skepticism
- ◆ Nothing has meaning, value, significance, dignity or worth
- ◆ Human beings are conscious machines with no ability to effect their destiny
- ◆ Human animal only invents values

**B.F. Skinner**

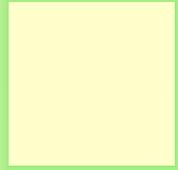


# Existentialism

Subtitle: Beyond Nihilism

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- ◆ Timeline: 1920
- ◆ Humanity is central: people make themselves who they are
- ◆ Knowledge is subjective
- ◆ No absolute moral values
- ◆ History is uncertain and even unimportant
- ◆ Supernatural is brushed aside

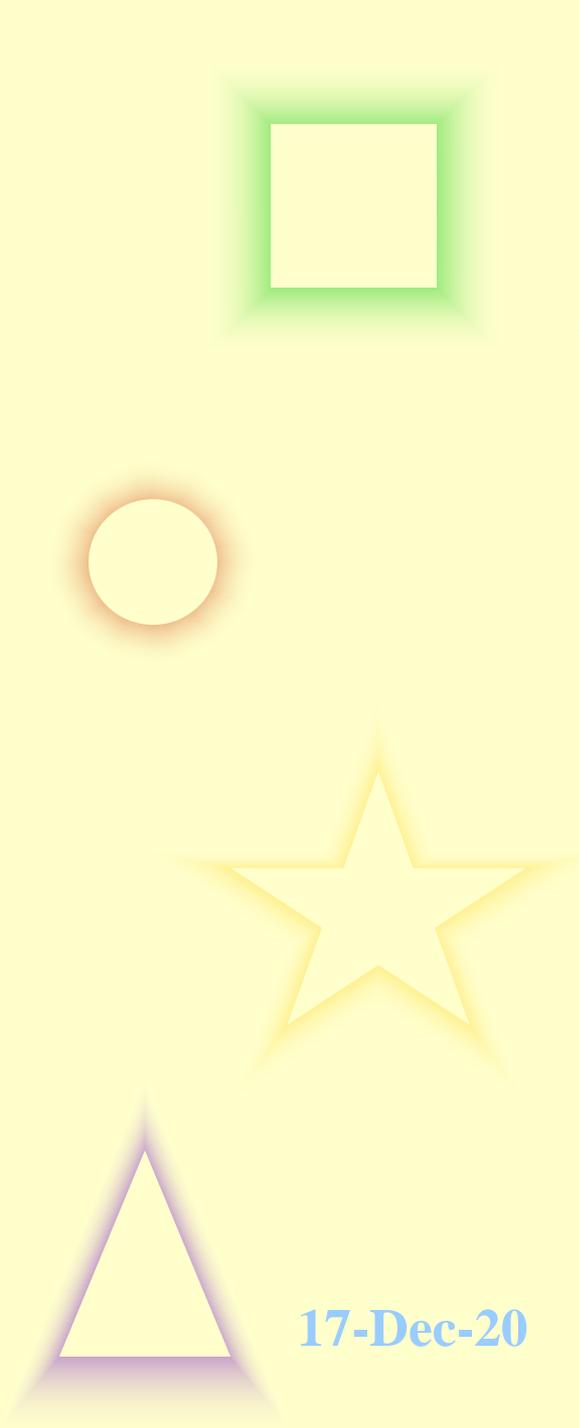


# Existentialism - 2 flavors

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- ◆ Atheistic
- ◆ Theistic





# How existentialists view the Bible

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Even the theistic version says that the Bible, though “religiously true,” is historically untrustworthy.

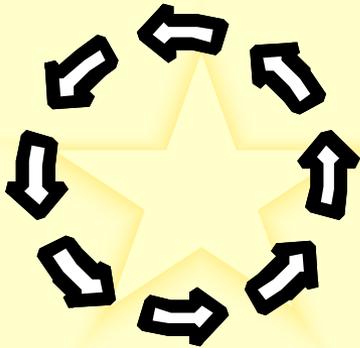
**Tillich, Sartre, Camus**



# Journey to the East: Eastern Pantheistic Monism



- ◆ Many (if not all) roads lead to the One
- ◆ Ideas are not really important
- ◆ Time is unreal
- ◆ History is cyclical
- ◆ Desire to enter the undifferentiated One; in one sense, each person is God



# A Separate Universe

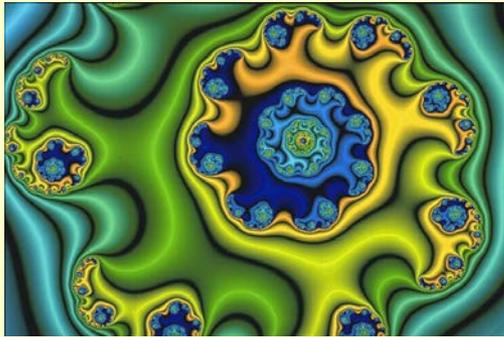
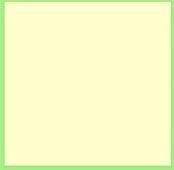
Sire's subtitle: The New Age – Spirituality  
Without Religion

- ◆ Timeline: 1965
- ◆ “Core” experience is cosmic consciousness
- ◆ No personal God; only a mysterious Force; no Lord of the Universe unless it be us
- ◆ Borrows heavily from animism

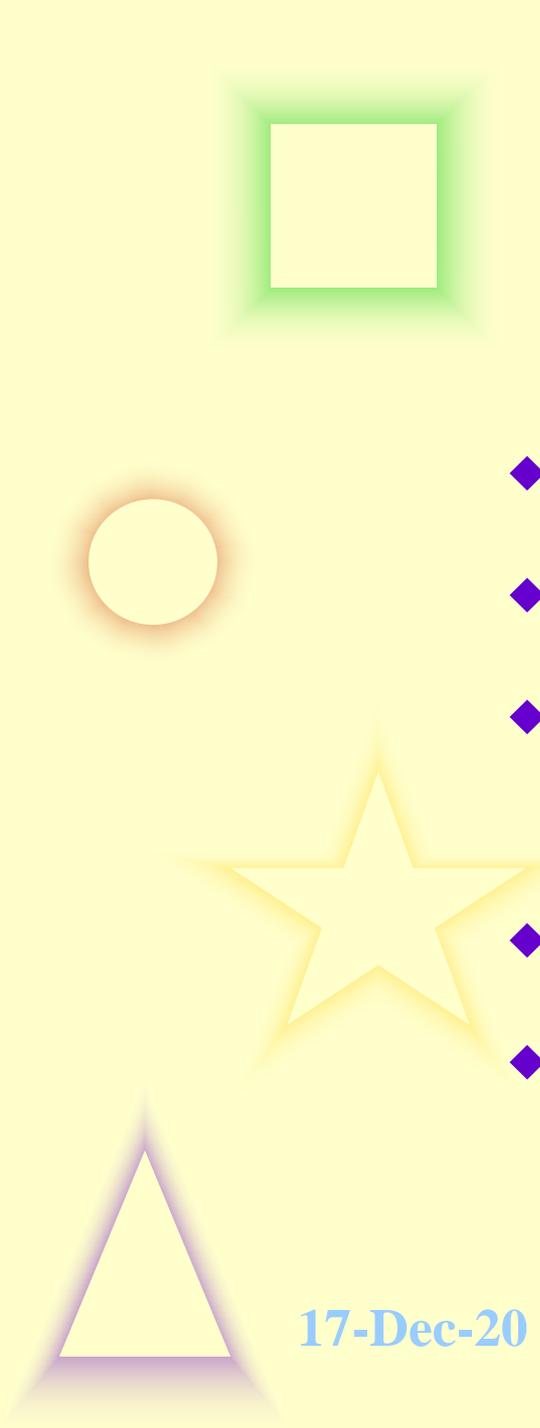
**Actress Shirley McClaine**



# New Age and altered consciousness



- ◆ The invisible universe is accessible through altered states of consciousness
  - ◆ Drugs used to enhance human consciousness

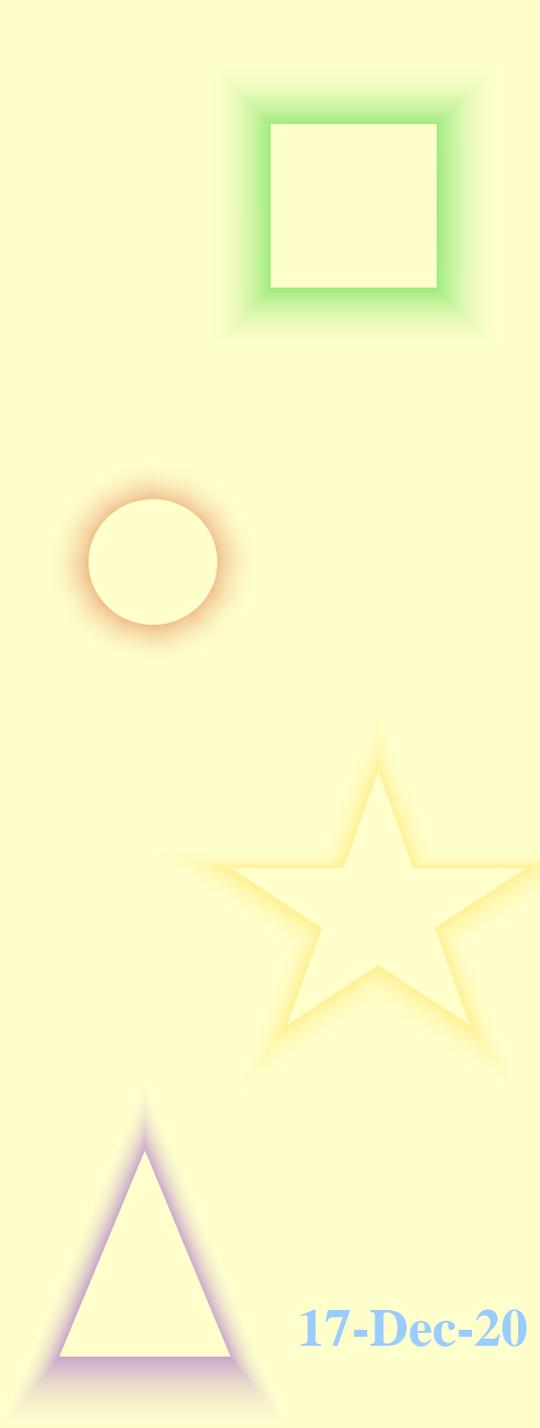


# Postmodernism

Sire's subtitle: The vanished horizon

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- ◆ All stories equally valid
- ◆ Focus changes from *being* to *knowing*
- ◆ Paradoxically, reality is forever hidden
- ◆ Any story but my own is oppressive
- ◆ Social good = whatever society takes it to be at the moment



# Postmodernism

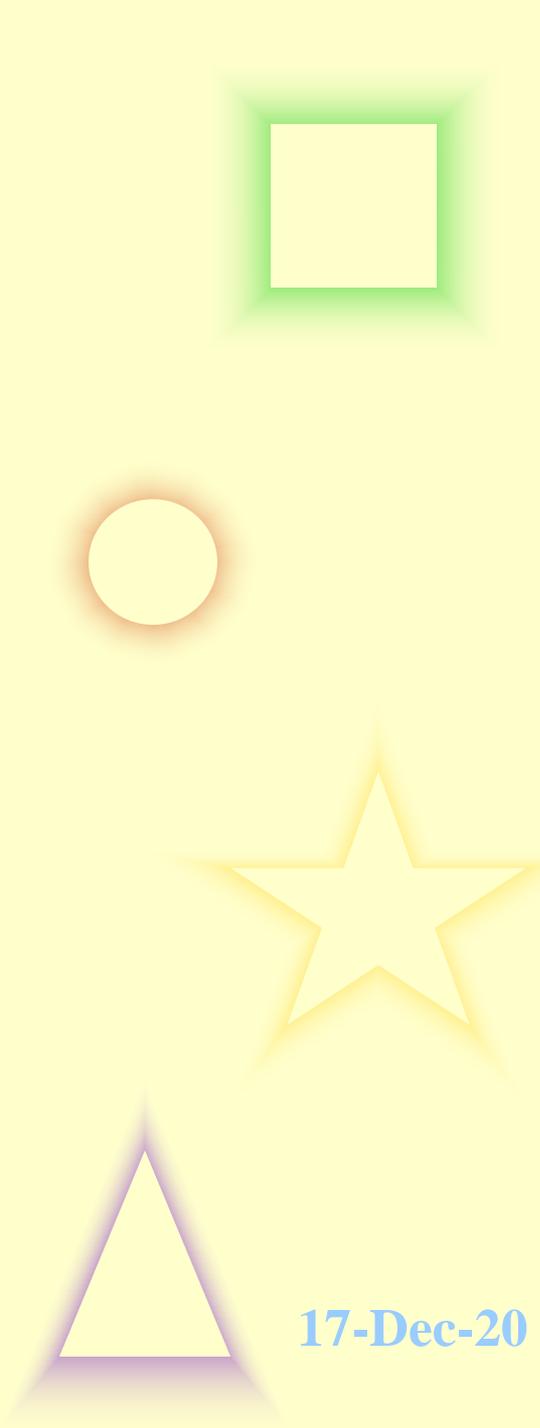
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The postmodernist stares blankly at  
any claims to truth and shrugs:  
**“Okay if it works for you.”**

“There are many kinds of truths and  
consequently, there is no truth” --  
Nietzsche



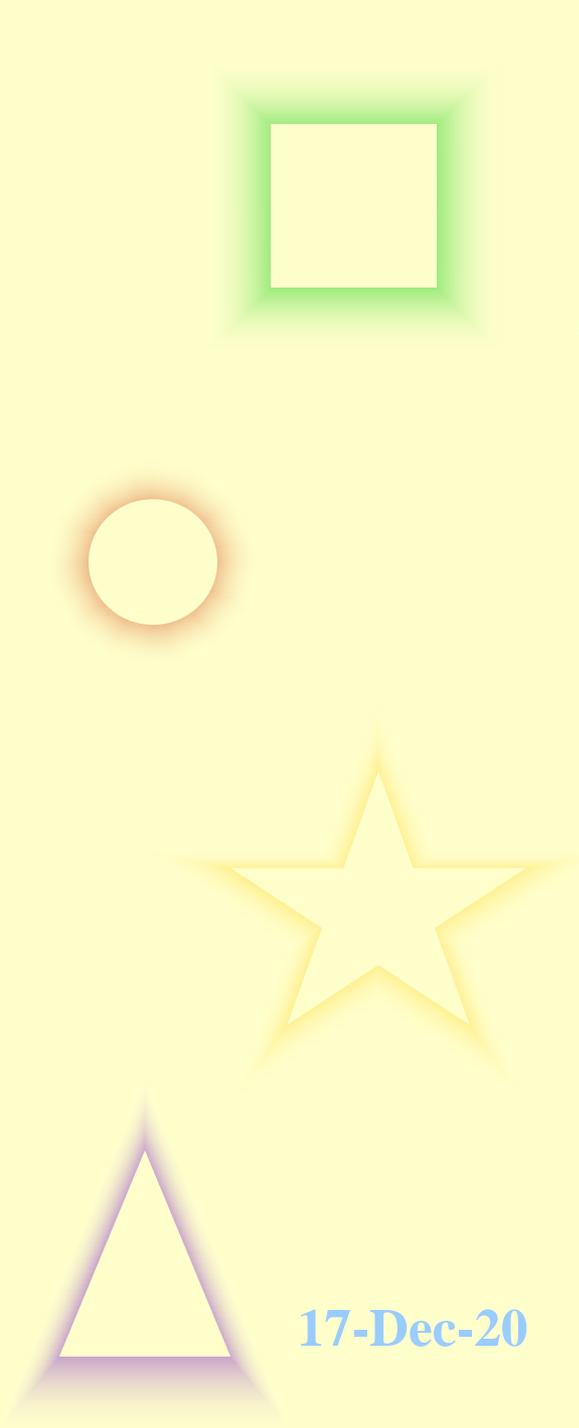
Wayne Stayskal, *Tampa Tribune*



# Postmodernists and truth

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- ◆ “Truth is what one’s peers let one get away with” -- Richard Rorty
- ◆ “Postmodern ethics inevitably slides in the direction of nihilism, holding that since nothing is really true, nothing is necessarily good” -- Gerard Reed

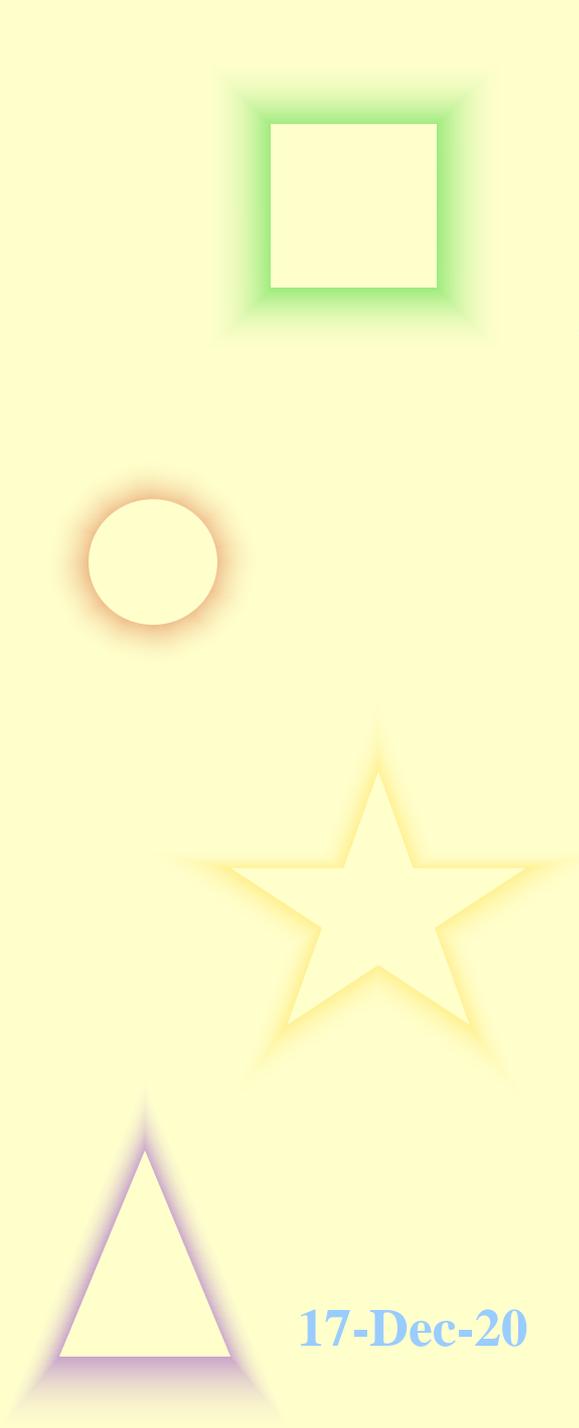


# A View from the Middle East: Islamic Theism

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- ◆ Emphasizes God's oneness, transcendence and sovereignty
- ◆ Nothing happens in world outside of God's divine decrees
- ◆ Devout Muslims strive to follow divine instructions in even the smallest part of life

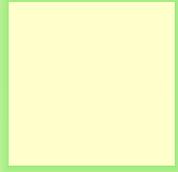




# Secular people

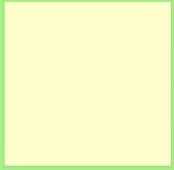
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- ◆ They live without a daily awareness of or reference to God and His church
- ◆ They think God and His people are irrelevant
- ◆ To them Christianity is boring and perhaps even untrue

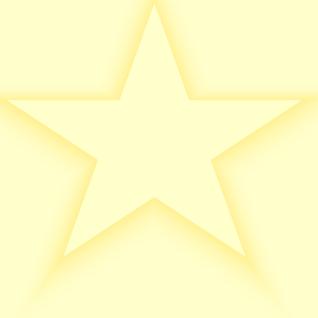


# Secular people

- ◆ They may look and sound religious . . . Their gods are things like money, sex, materialism, success, power, social acceptance or some philosophical system



This PowerPoint presentation is available along with related materials and other PowerPoint presentations at <http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/ppt.htm>



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