

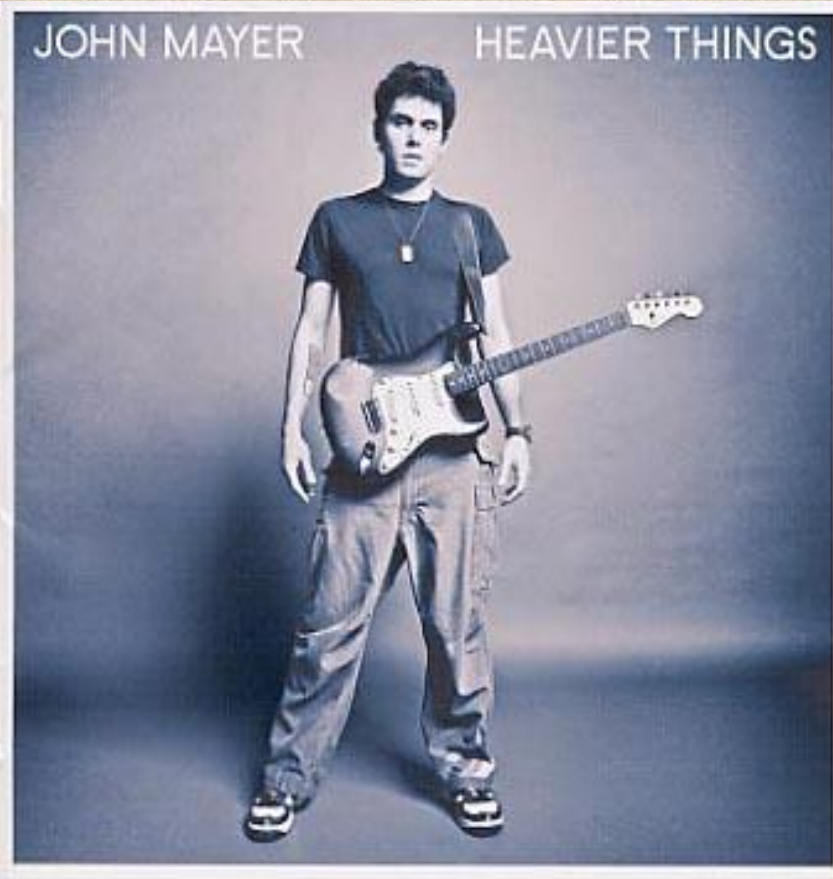
CURRENT TRENDS

PARADIGMS

LOST

**Good (and Bad) News for the
Thoroughly Modern World**

Part One



“New Deep”

by John Mayer

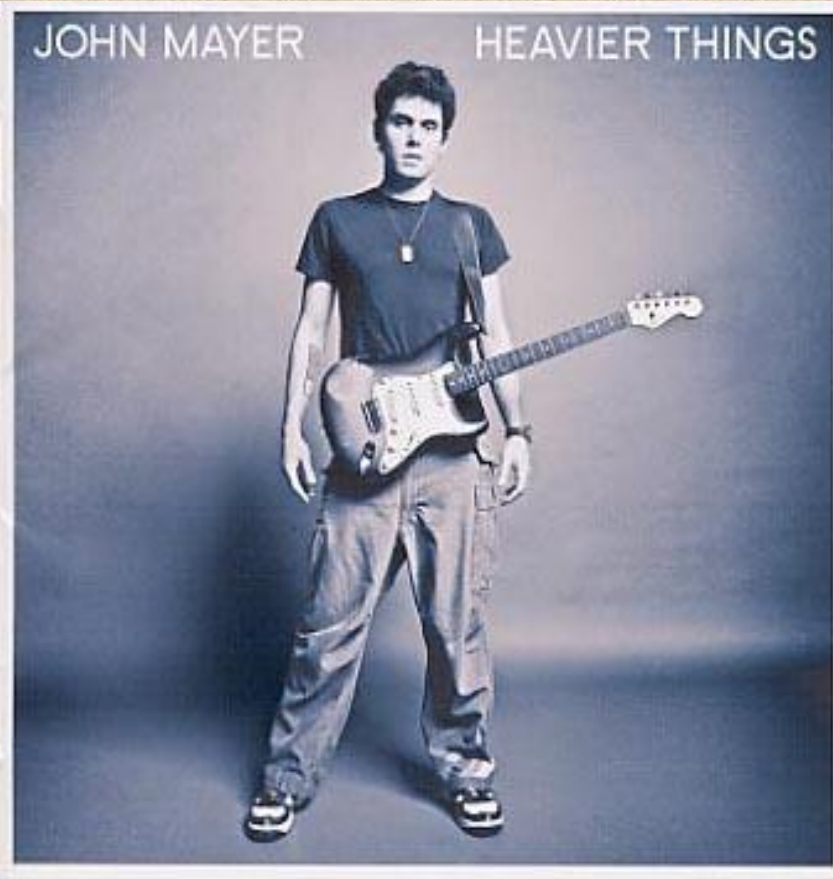
I’m so alive

I’m so enlightened

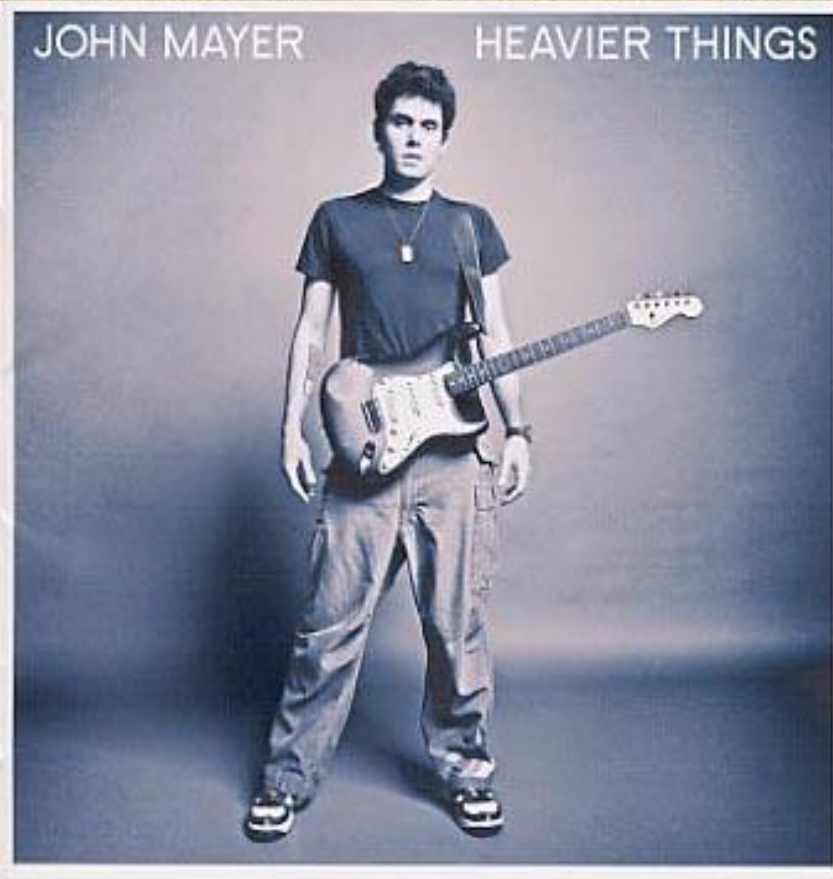
I can barely survive

A night in my mind

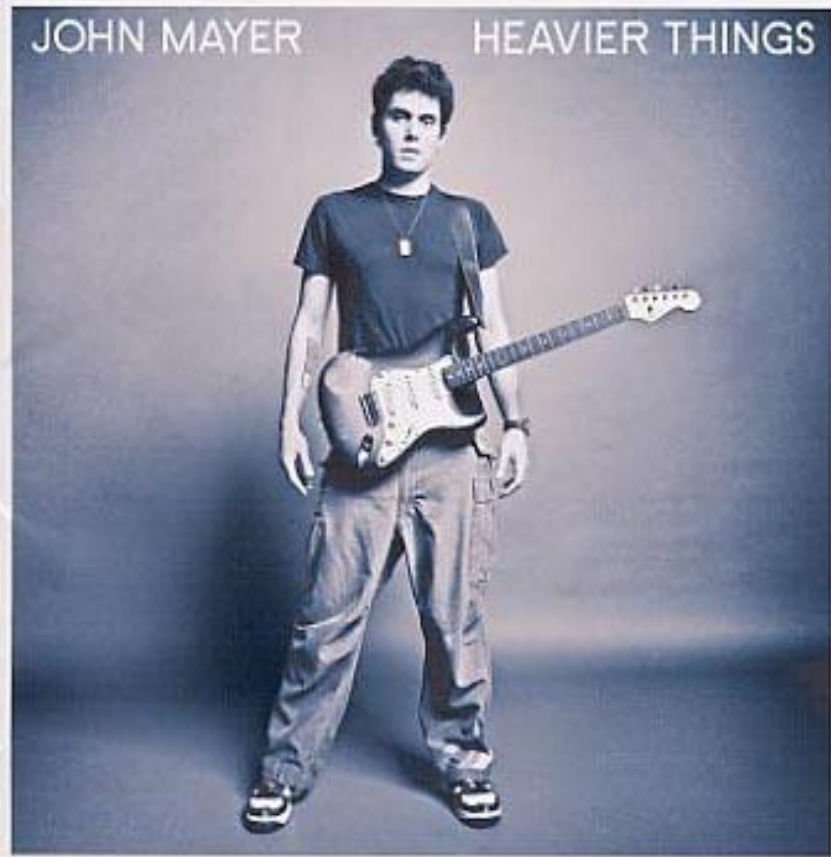
I’ve got a plan



**I'm gonna find out just
how boring I am
And have a good time
Cause ever since I tried
Trying not to find
Every little meaning in
my life**



**I've been fine
I've been cool
With my new golden rule
Numb is the new deep
Done with the old me
And talk is the same
cheap it's been**

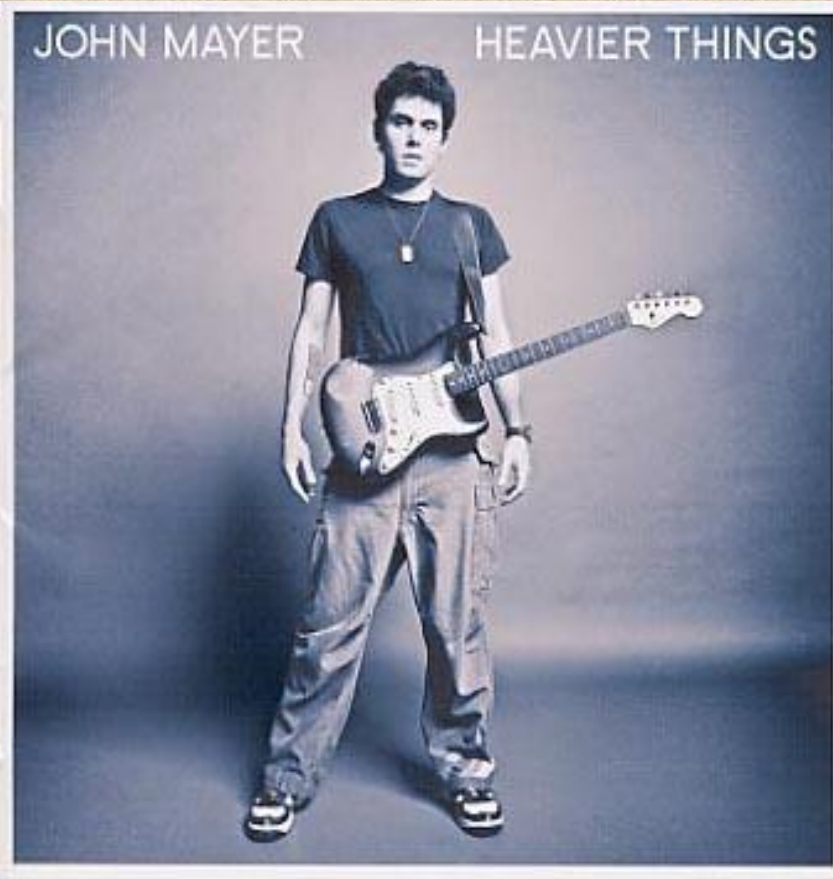


Is there a God?

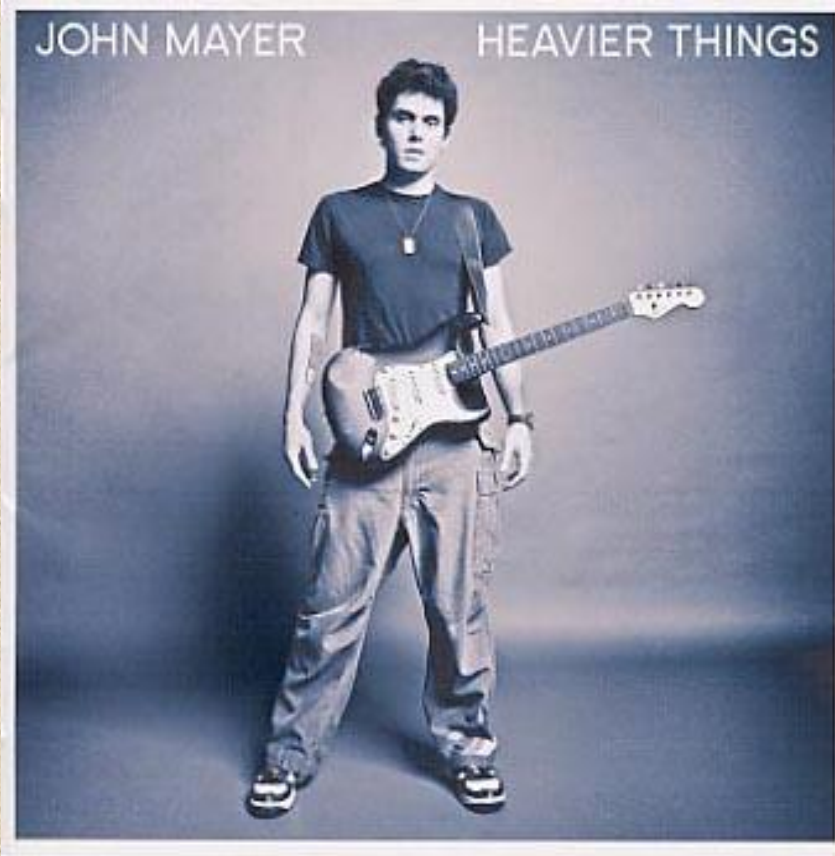
Why is he waiting?

Don't you think of it odd

**When he knows my
address?**



**And look at the stars
Don't it remind you just
how feeble we are?
Well it used to, I guess
Cause ever since I tried
Trying not to find**

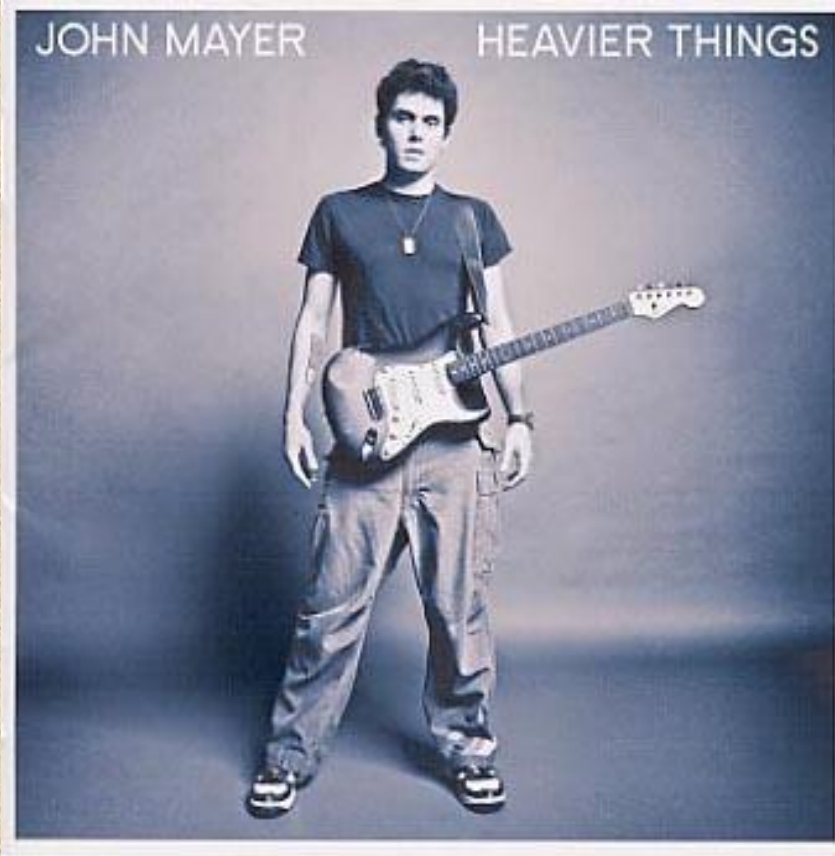


**Every little meaning in
my life**

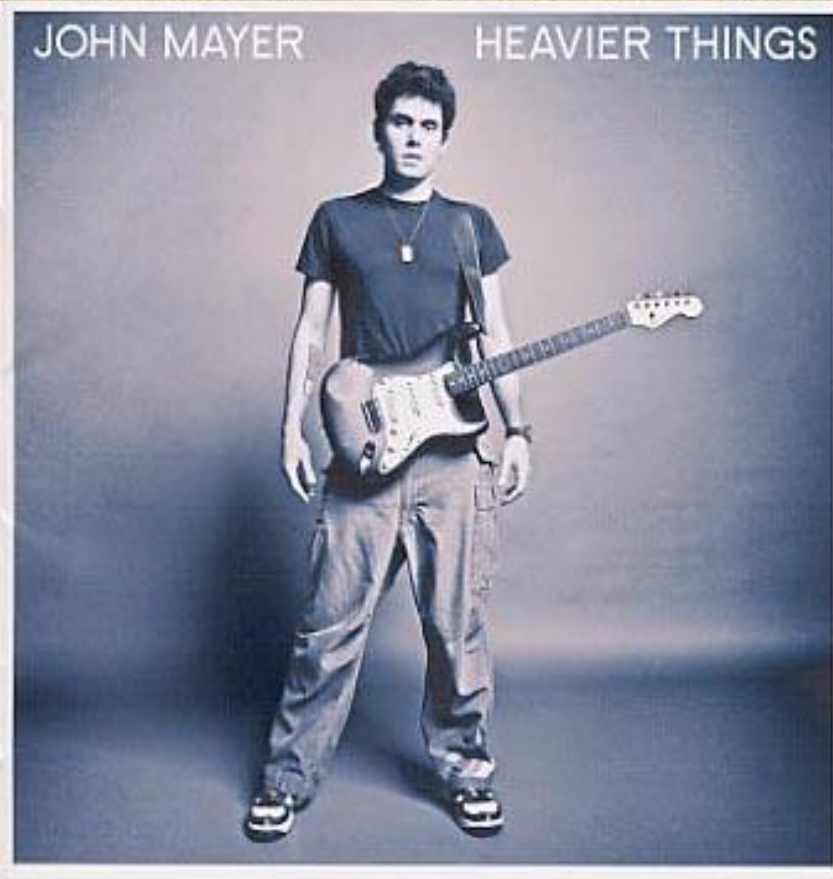
I've been fine

I've been cool

With my new golden rule

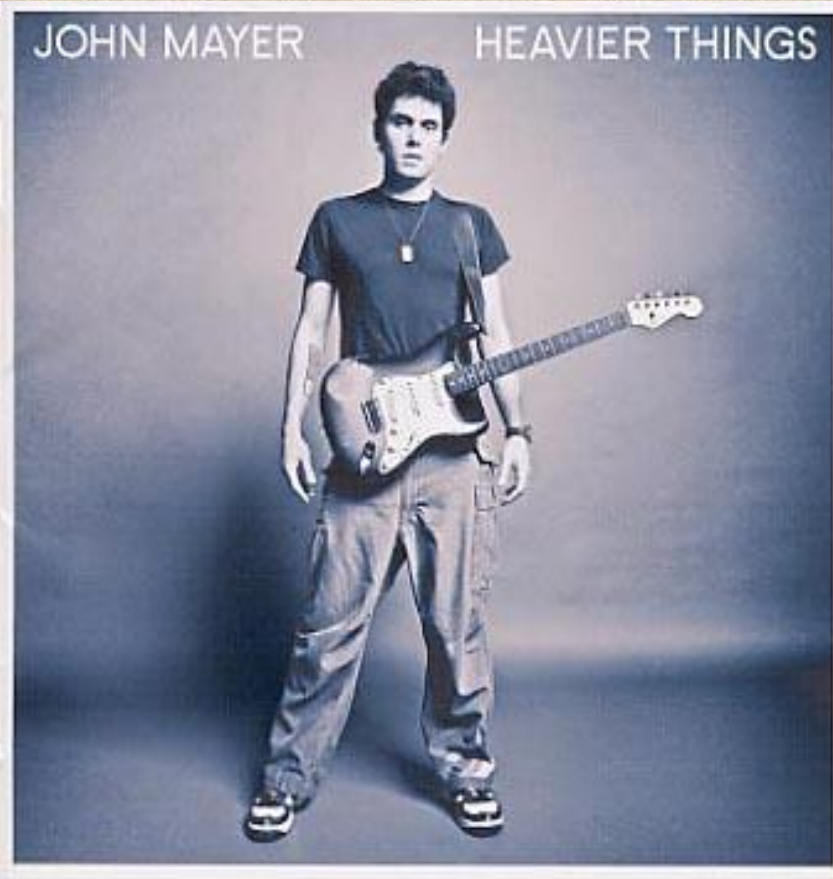


**Numb is the new deep
Done with the old me
And talk is the same
cheap it's been**



**Stop trying to figure it
out**

**Deep will only bring you
down . . .**



**Numb is the new deep
Done with the old me
I'm over the analyzing
tonight**

Millard Erickson

Modern view of knowledge:

certain

objective

good

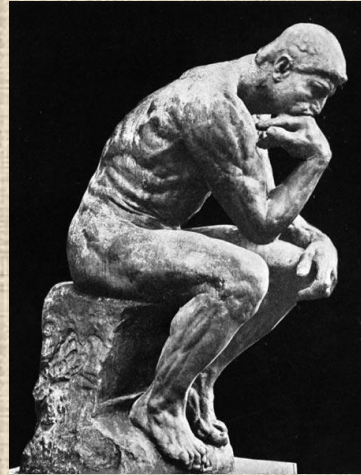
Postmodern view of knowledge:

uncertain

not objective

not good

Modernism: Good News/Bad News



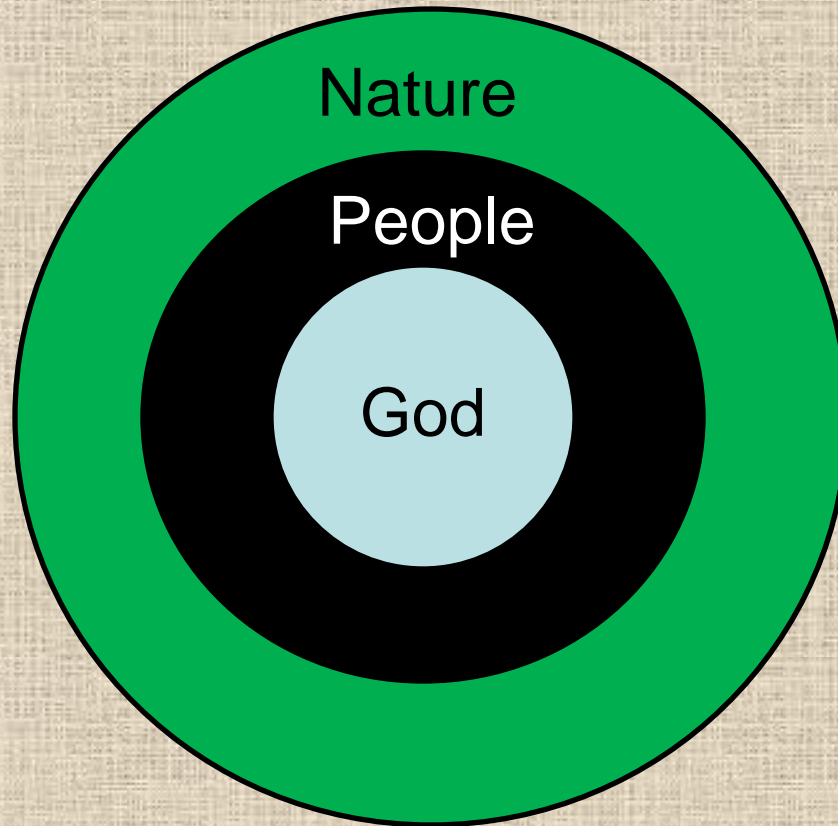
What *is* Modernism?

- **Ancient, Medieval and Modern**
- **Thomas Oden asks is modernism a . . .**
 - **Time period (between the “two walls”)?**
 - **A moral phenomenon?**
 - **A worldview?**
 - **All of the above!**

Theism

God

God

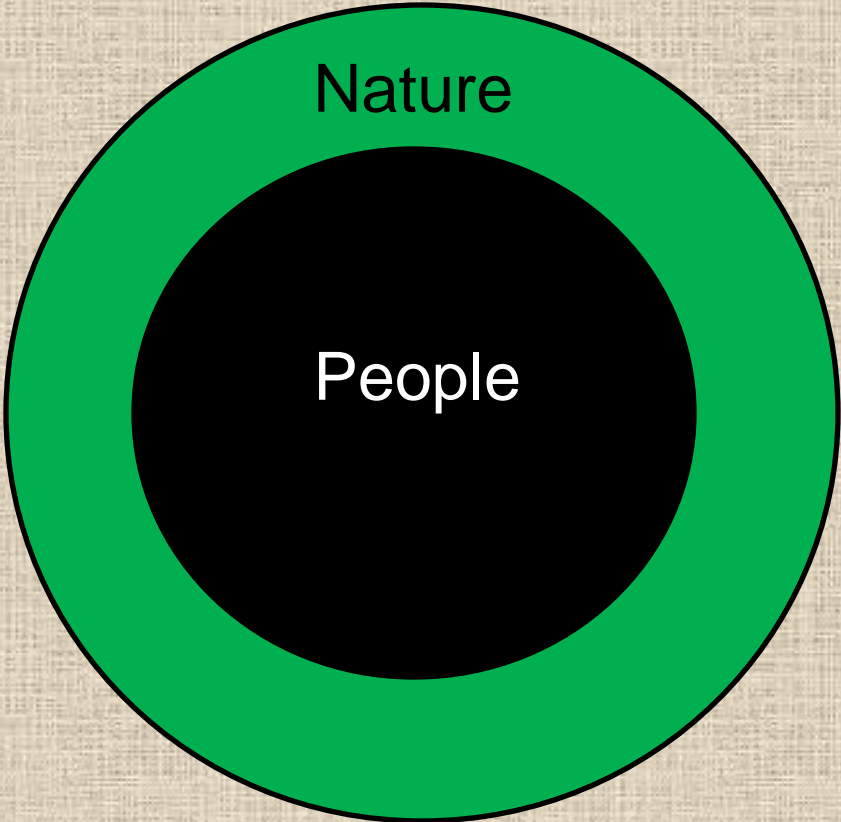


God

Deism

God

God



People

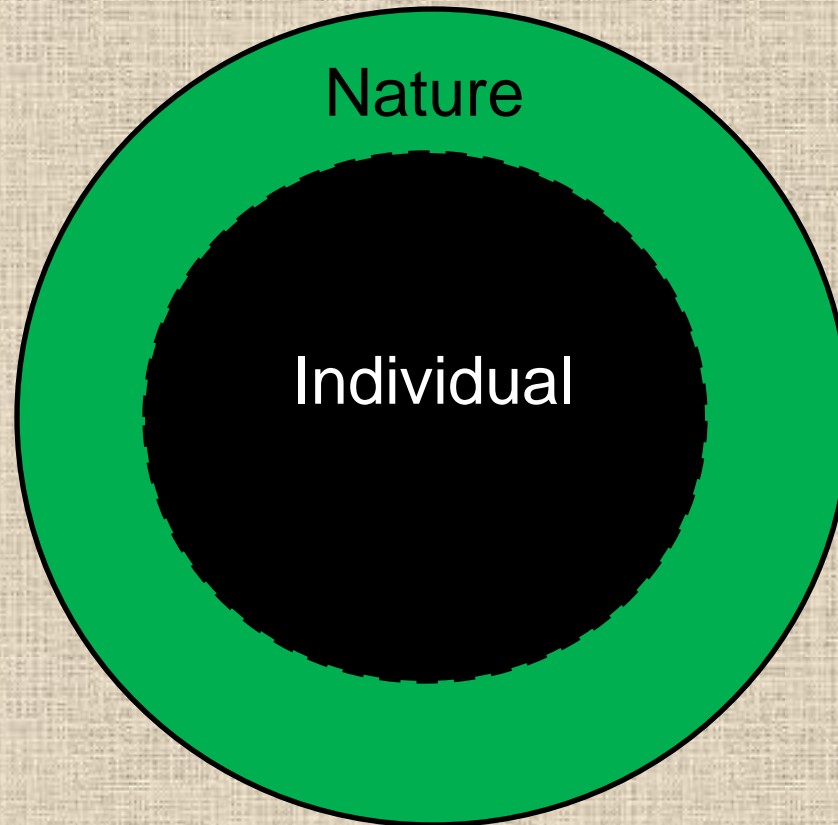
Nature

God

Modernism/Naturalism/Secularism

God?

God?



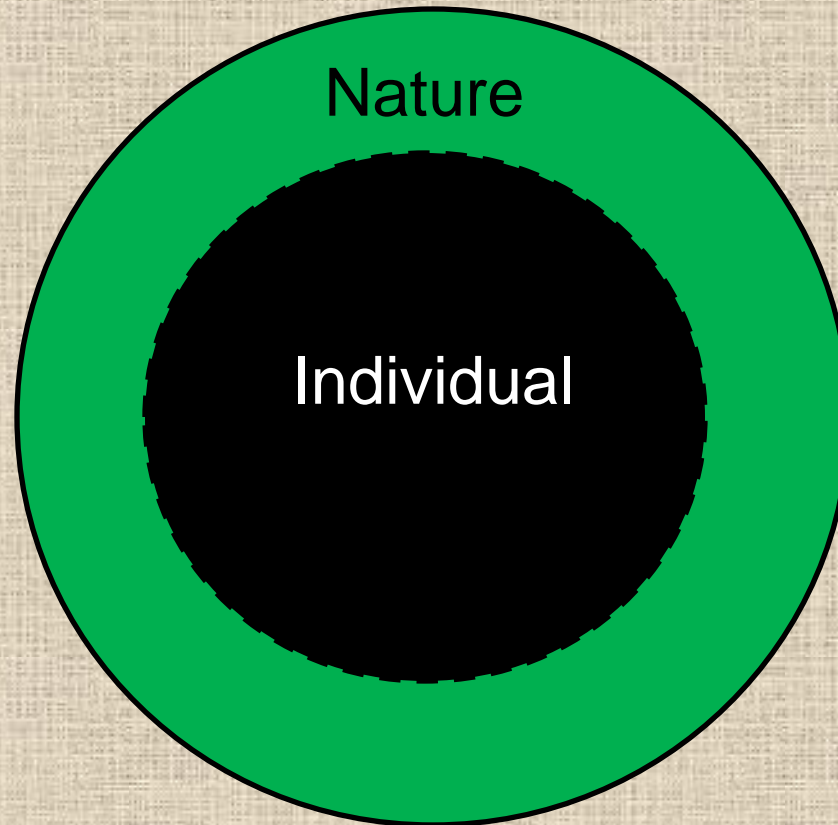
God?

Modernism/Naturalism/Secularism

God?

God?

Mechanistic

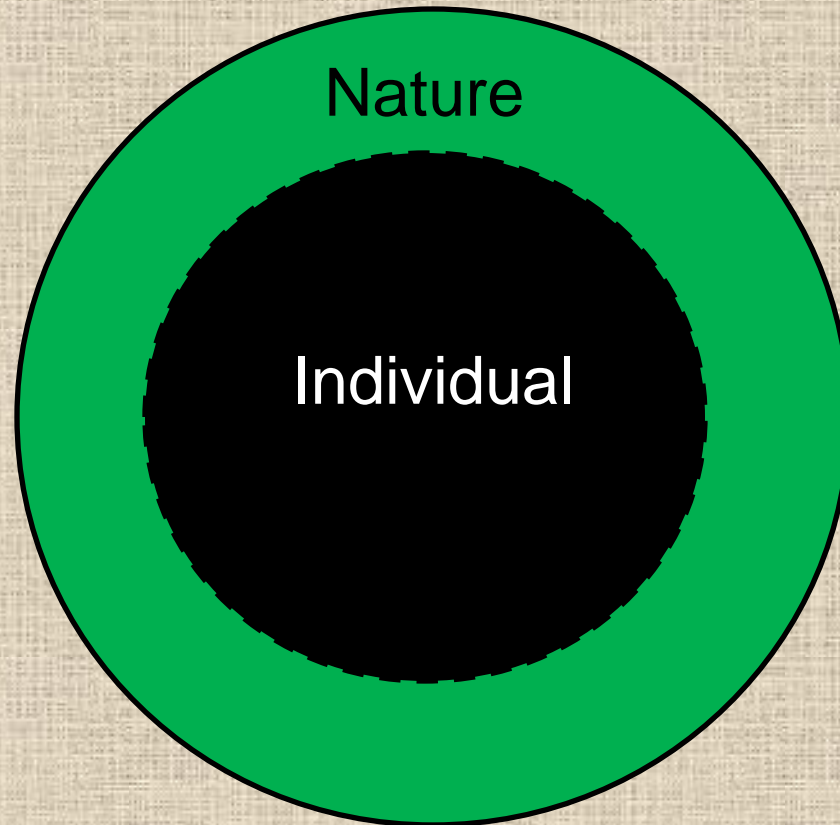


God?

Modernism/Naturalism/Secularism

God?

God?



Mechanistic

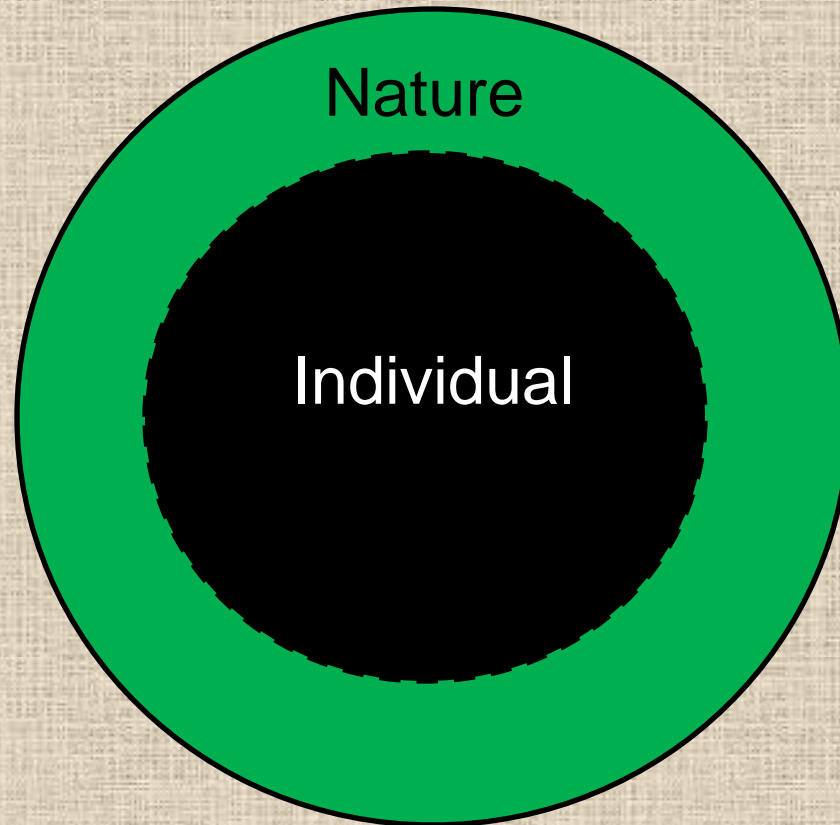
Materialistic

God?

Modernism/Naturalism/Secularism

God?

God?



Mechanistic

Materialistic

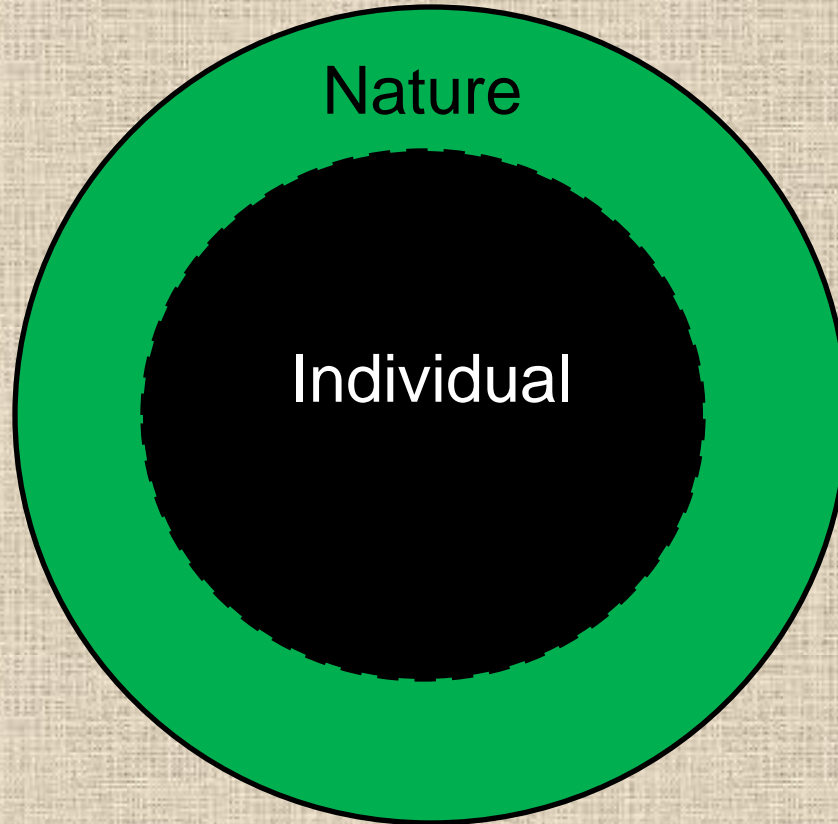
Individualistic

God?

Nihilism

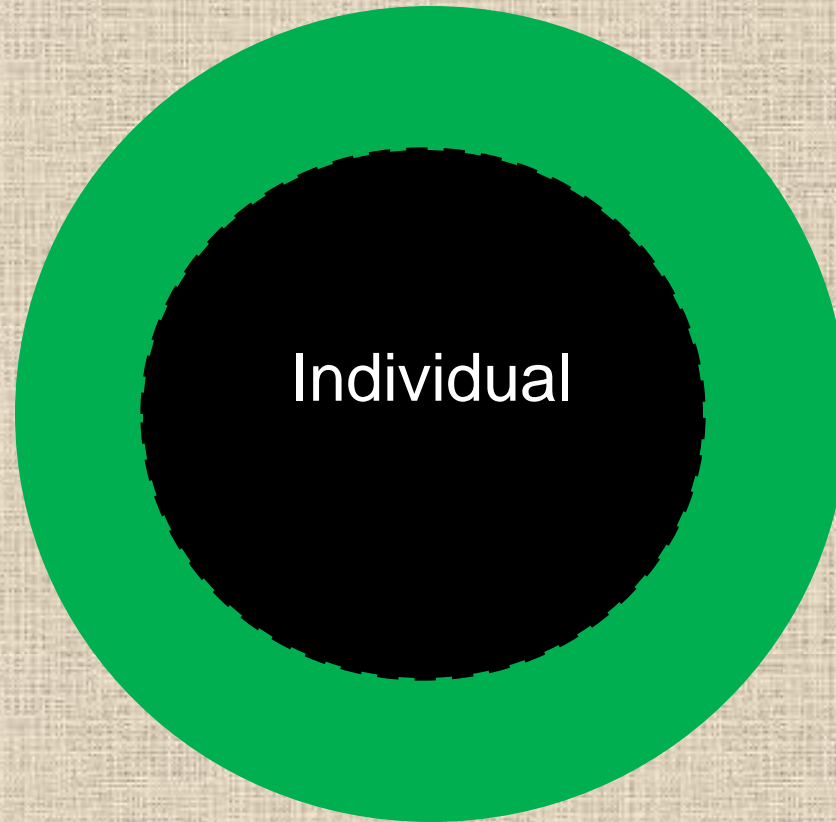
~~God~~

~~God~~



So what?!?!

Existentialism



~~Objective/Subjective~~

Post-Modernism



**There is no truth,
only perception**

What *is* Modernism?

The modern worldview:

1. “The world is a machine” (mechanistic)

sense of control

optimism

pragmatism

analytical thinking

future orientation (e.g. planning,
predicting)

What *is* Modernism?

The modern worldview:

1. “The world is a machine” (mechanistic)

measurability

order

fairness

frankness

luck

What *is* Modernism?

The modern worldview:

2. “Only matter matters” (materialistic)

“seeing is believing”

focus on the physical and visible

What *is* Modernism?

The modern worldview:

2. “Only matter matters” (materialistic)

dualism evident in:

spiritual vs. physical

faith vs. science

private vs. public

What *is* Modernism?

The modern worldview:

2. “Only matter matters” (materialistic)

accumulation of things

athletic achievement

physical beauty and prowess

view of time

What *is* Modernism?

The modern worldview:

3. “I am alone” (individualistic)

self-reliance

contractual groups

private ownership

future orientation

privacy

moral relativism

Hebrews 13:7-8

⁷Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.

⁸Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

2 Corinthians 10:5

⁵We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

CURRENT TRENDS

PARADIGMS

LOST

**Good (and Bad) News for the
Thoroughly *Post-Modern* World**

Part Two

POSTMODERNISM

I. What *is* “postmodernism”?

Depends on who you ask! People use the term “postmodern” in different ways.

POSTMODERNISM

I. What is “postmodernism”?

A. Huston Smith’s three types:

1. Minimal postmoderns: simply observe that there is no single worldview accepted by everyone.

2. Mainline postmoderns: believe no single worldview will *ever* be accepted by everyone again.

POSTMODERNISM

I. What *is* “postmodernism”?

A. Huston Smith’s three types:

3. Hardcore postmoderns: say “good riddance” to the days when major worldviews prevailed because they oppressed people.

POSTMODERNISM

I. What *is* “postmodernism”?

A. Huston Smith

B. Millard Erickson’s “soft” and “hard”
postmodernism:

1. soft: rejects the absoluteness of science
(and other modern excesses) without
denying the possibility of truth.

POSTMODERNISM

I. What *is* “postmodernism”?

A. Huston Smith

B. Millard Erickson’s “soft” and “hard”
postmodernism:

2. hard: rejects any notion of truth,
objectivity or rationality

POSTMODERNISM

I. What *is* postmodernism”?

A. Huston Smith

B. Millard Erickson

C. Stanley Grenz:

From Mr. Spock to Data



POSTMODERNISM

I. What *is* postmodernism”?

A. Huston Smith

B. Millard Erickson

C. Stanley Grenz

**D. Walter Truett Anderson: From
“exoterica” to “esoterica”**

POSTMODERNISM

EXOTERIC

doctrinal

objective

external source of
authority

revelation

exegesis

outward symbols

ESOTERIC

experiential

subjective

internal source of
authority

mysticism

feelings

inward

transformation

POSTMODERNISM

EXOTERIC

**organizational
structures**

**attempts to order
society**

**worship as
information**

**Holy Spirit wrote
the book**

ESOTERIC

personal, individualistic

makes no such attempt

worship as celebration

Holy Spirit still inspires

POSTMODERNISM

I. What *is* postmodernism”?

A. Huston Smith

B. Millard Erickson

C. Stanley Grenz

D. Walter Truett Anderson

E. Monte Cox

POSTMODERNISM

WEST v. EAST

Mechanical

Personal

Material

Spiritual

Individual

Communal

POSTMODERNISM

MODERN

Be rational, be in control.

Plan ahead.

Big and complex is good.

POSTMODERN

Be loose, even lose control.

Focus on the here and now.

Simplify. Minimize.

POSTMODERNISM

MODERN

We can do it.

**Be aggressive, aspire to
greatness.**

Law and order.

POSTMODERN

**Go with the flow. Why
fight it?**

Chill.

Spontaneity.

POSTMODERNISM

II. What's driving it?

A. Simplest answer?

Dissatisfaction with modernity.

POSTMODERNISM

II. What's driving it?

B. Change in the way we view knowledge (Erickson):

1) For moderns, knowledge is **certain, objective** and inherently **good**.

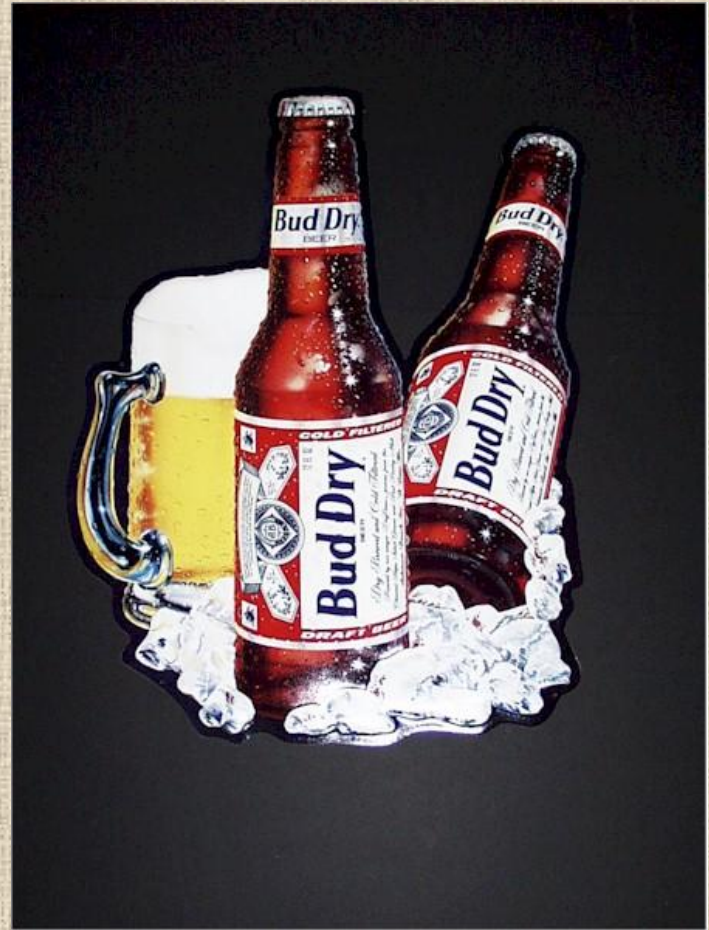
2) For postmoderns, knowledge is **NOT certain, NOT objective** and **NOT necessarily good**.

POSTMODERNISM

II. What's driving it?

C. Cynicism about truth

1. "Why ask why?"



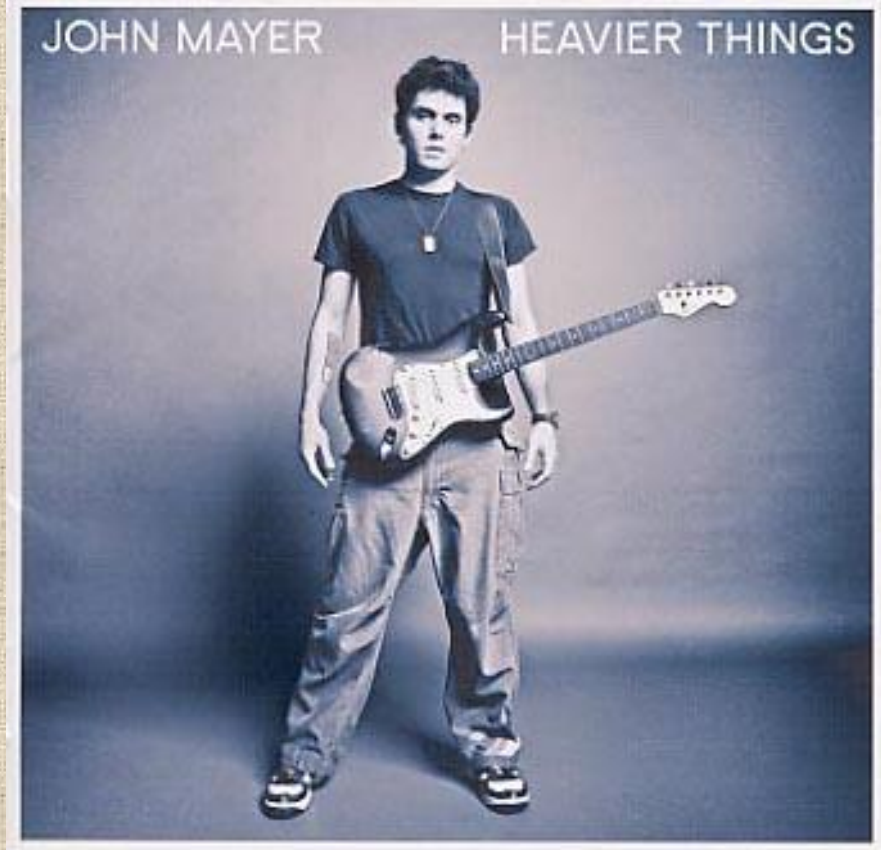
POSTMODERNISM

II. What's driving it?

C. Cynicism about truth

1. “Why ask why?”

2. “Numb is the New Deep”



POSTMODERNISM

II. What's driving it?

D. Four driving -isms:

1. Pluralism

a. urbanization

b. mass communication

c. immigration

d. increased mobility and exposure to others

POSTMODERNISM

II. What's driving it?

D. Four driving -isms:

1. Pluralism

2. Relativism

POSTMODERNISM

II. What's driving it?

2. Relativism

a. Three umpires:

1) “There’s balls and strikes and I call’em the way they are.”

(naive realist)



POSTMODERNISM

II. What's driving it?

2. Relativism

a. Three umpires:

2) “There’s balls and strikes and I call’em the way I see’ em.”

(perspectivalist or critical realist)



POSTMODERNISM

II. What's driving it?

2. Relativism

a. Three umpires:

3) “There’s balls and strikes, but they ain’t nothin’ til I call’ em.”

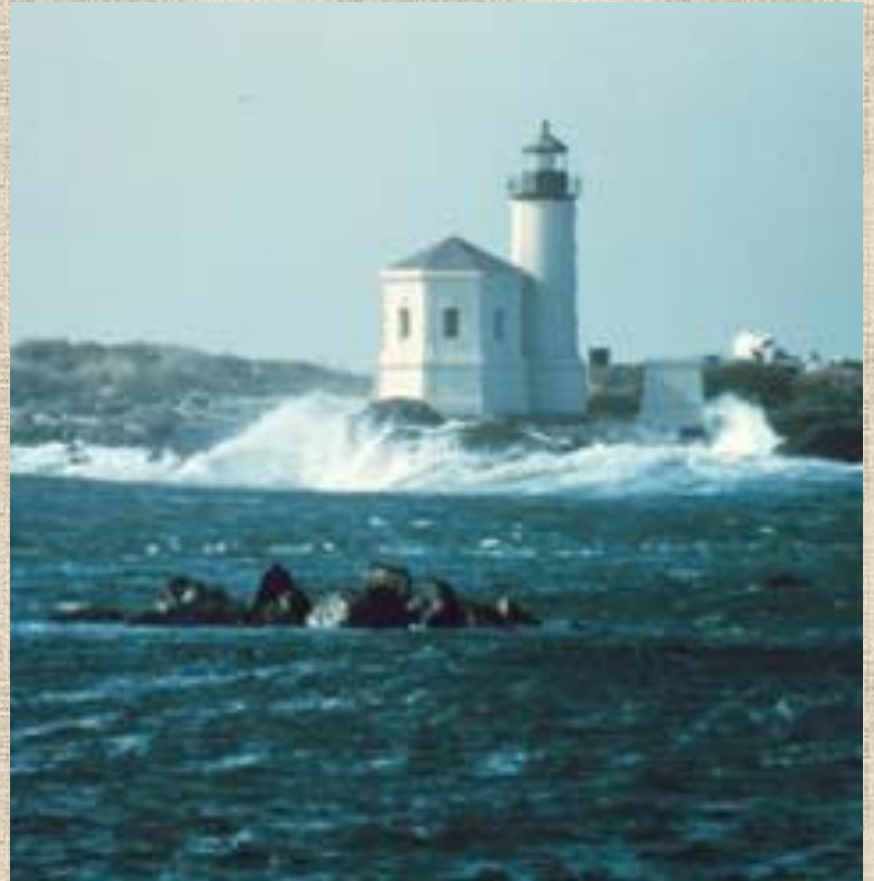
(postmodernist or radical perspectivalist)



POSTMODERNISM

“There is no lighthouse keeper. There is no lighthouse. There is no dry land. There are only people living on rafts made from their own imaginations. And there is the sea.”

(Dominic Crossan)



POSTMODERNISM

II. What's driving it?

D. Four driving -isms:

1. Pluralism
2. Relativism
3. Individualism
4. Materialism

POSTMODERNISM

III. Implications for spiritual formation

A. Changes what it means to be “spiritual.” Spirituality can be customized from many options to suit one’s own tastes.

POSTMODERNISM



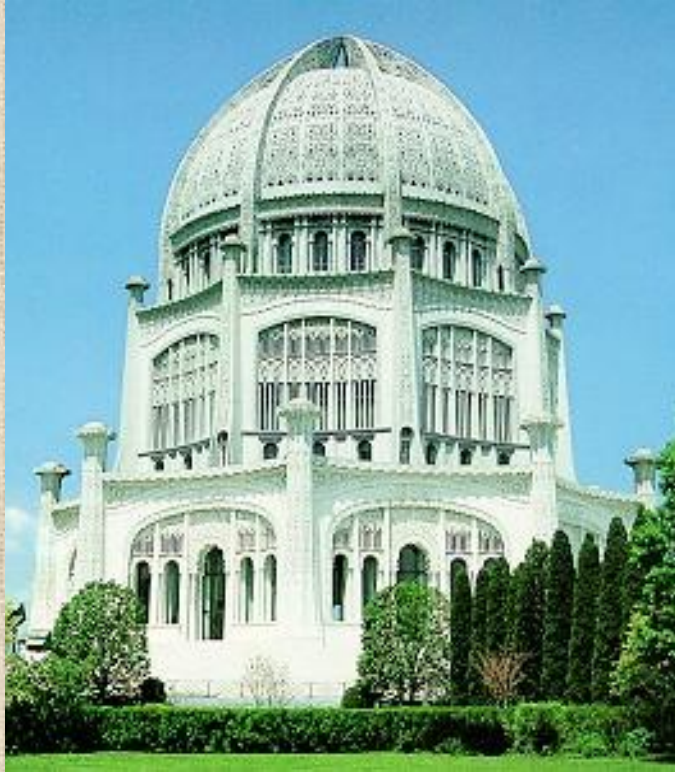
1. Phil Jackson's "Zen Christianity"

POSTMODERNISM



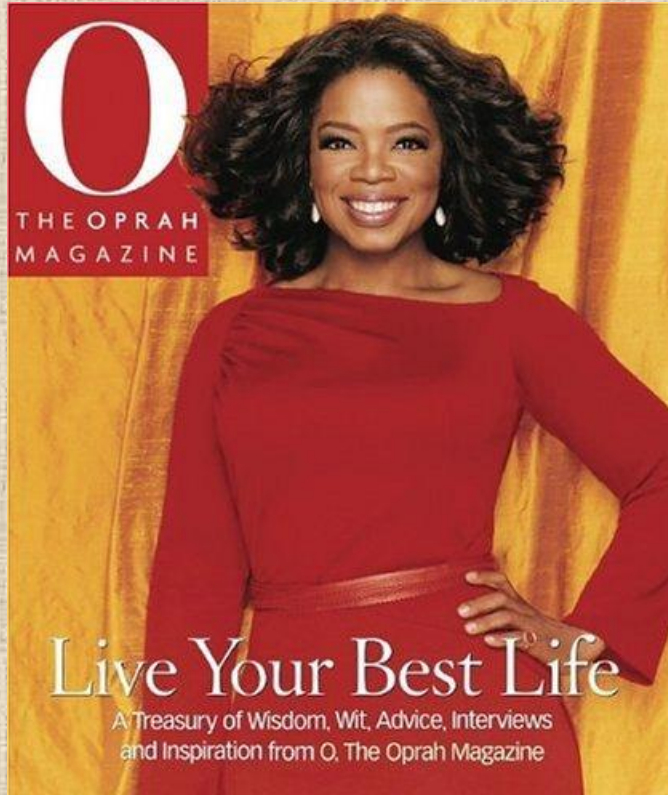
1. Phil Jackson's "Zen Christianity"
2. "JewBu"

POSTMODERNISM



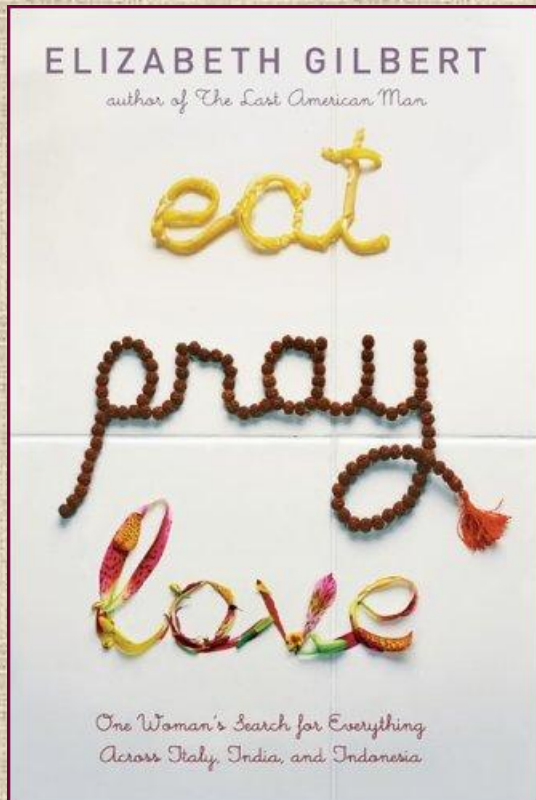
1. Phil Jackson's "Zen Christianity"
2. "JewBu"
3. Baha'i

POSTMODERNISM



1. Phil Jackson's "Zen Christianity"
2. "JewBu"
3. Baha'i
4. Oprah spirituality

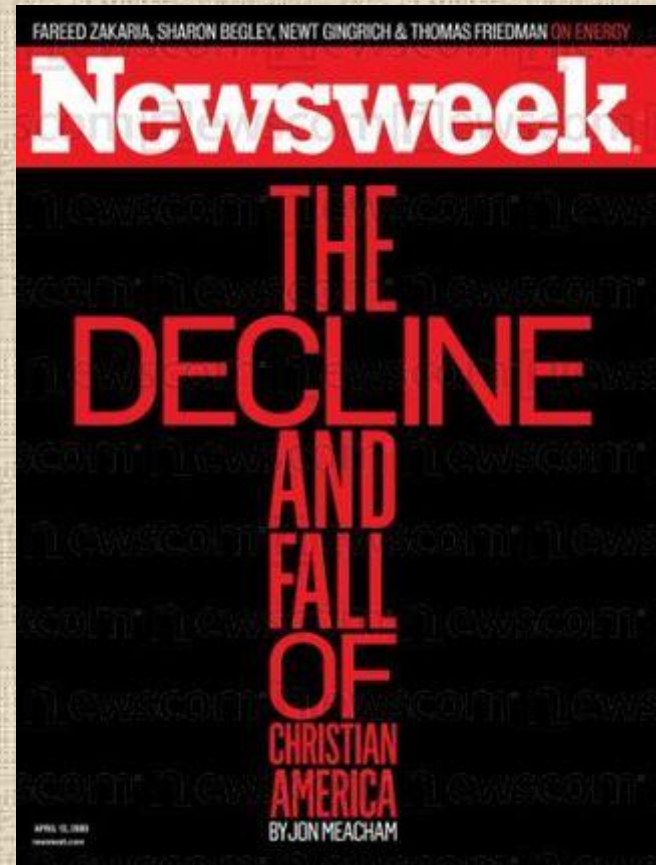
POSTMODERNISM



1. Phil Jackson's "Zen Christianity"
2. "JewBu"
3. Baha'i
4. Oprah spirituality
5. *Eat, Pray, Love*

POSTMODERNISM

**Self-identified
“spiritual but not
religious” rose
from 24% in 2005
to 30% in 2009.**



POSTMODERNISM

“The trouble when people stop believing in God is not that they thereafter believe in nothing; it is that they thereafter believe in everything.”

G. K. Chesterton

POSTMODERNISM

III. Implications for spiritual formation

**A. Changes what it means to be
“spiritual.”**

**B. Makes religious exclusivism (and
evangelism) extremely unpopular.**

C. Frees us from modern excesses

POSTMODERNISM

IV. Bridging the gap

A. Must retool in light of these changes.

POSTMODERNISM

IV. Bridging the gap

A. Must retool in light of these changes.

B. Must build bridges using the raw materials of postmodernism.

POSTMODERNISM: Good News/Bad News

story

spirituality

holism

experience

tolerance

POSTMODERNISM

Humility . . . because

- **“We know in part”**
- **We are messengers**
- **We follow Jesus**

Confidence . . . because

- **“We know in part”**
- **We are messengers**
- **We follow Jesus**

CURRENT TRENDS

PARADIGMS

LOST

Making the Best of It

Part Three

Jeremiah 29:11

**11“For I know the plans I have for you,”
declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you
and not to harm you, plans to give you hope
and a future.**

Jeremiah 29:4-10

⁴This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵"Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. ⁶Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease.

Jeremiah 29:4-10

⁷Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper." ⁸Yes, this is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have.

Jeremiah 29:4-10

⁹They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them," declares the LORD. ¹⁰This is what the LORD says: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place.

Jeremiah 29:11

**¹¹“For I know the plans I have for you,”
declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you
and not to harm you, plans to give you hope
and a future.**

MAKING THE BEST OF IT

The relationship between “Christ and Culture”? Richard Niebuhr’s (1951) classic categories:

1. “Christ against culture.”

Christians should withdraw from society to avoid being tainted by it.

2. “Christ of culture.” Christians should adapt the church to the culture in which they live.

MAKING THE BEST OF IT

The relationship between “Christ and Culture”? Richard Niebuhr’s (1951) classic categories:

3. “Christ above culture.” God is “neutral” on “culture”; Christians should embrace great diversity when it comes to Christian faith and practice.

MAKING THE BEST OF IT

The relationship between “Christ and Culture”? Richard Niebuhr’s (1951) classic categories:

**4. “Christ and culture in paradox.”
Christians must live in the tension
between loyalty to Christ and
conformity to culture.**

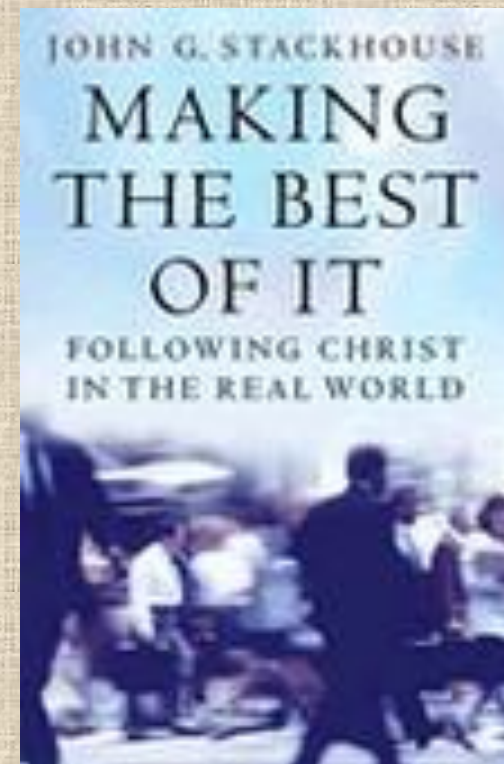
MAKING THE BEST OF IT

The relationship between “Christ and Culture”? Richard Niebuhr’s (1951) classic categories:

**5. “Christ transforming culture.”
Christians live in the world to
transform the culture.**

MAKING THE BEST OF IT

Is John Stackhouse, Jr. right? Is “Christ and culture in paradox” the best answer option? Can we only hope to “make the best of it?”



MAKING THE BEST OF IT

**Craig Van Gelder in
Missiology (October
2002) on postmodern
“bridges” and
“challenges” . . .**



MAKING THE BEST OF IT

Postmodern bridges—good news/bad news:

1. Spirituality

a. Good news: now people take for granted the possibility of God or the supernatural

b. Bad news: the relativistic, customized and personalized views of “God.”

MAKING THE BEST OF IT

Postmodern bridges—good news/bad news:

2. Community

a. Good news: tapping into the desire among many to belong

b. Bad news: to get past their objections to organized religion

MAKING THE BEST OF IT

Postmodern bridges—good news/bad news:

3. Story/Narrative

a. Good news: to present the gospel as story, not just principles and/or rules

b. Bad news: to not lose the truth in the midst of stories that all seem equally legitimate

MAKING THE BEST OF IT

Postmodern bridges—good news/bad news:

4. Preference for the experiential

a. Good news: we do offer the possibility of an experiential encounter with the living God

b. Bad news: experiential faith must be supported and sustained by an intellectual understanding of the faith

MAKING THE BEST OF IT

Postmodern bridges—good news/bad news:

5. Holism

a. Good news: the gospel properly understood does present a holistic view of creation

b. Bad news: presenting a Christian holism that takes sin seriously

MAKING THE BEST OF IT

Postmodern bridges—good news/bad news:

6. Individual preferences

a. Good news: Christ can come into any and all contexts.

b. Bad news: convincing people that the “finite” (God Incarnate as a Jew in ancient Palestine) can bear the “infinite” (the timeless message for all everywhere)

MAKING THE BEST OF IT

Postmodern bridges—good news/bad news:

7. Irony and Paradox

a. Good news: You want irony? There's plenty of irony here!

b. Bad news: Can lead to relativism

MAKING THE BEST OF IT

Postmodern bridges—good news/bad news:

8. Openness to different ways of “knowing”:

a. Good news: God can and does reveal Himself through intuition and emotion.

b. Bad news: Grounding intuition and emotion in the facts of the gospel and getting our own folks to embrace these other ways of knowing.