

# The New Age



# Introduction



- People don't usually label themselves "New Age"
- New Age has no legitimate organizational or institutional center (Wilkins and Stanford, 120)

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- Endeavors to help individuals recognize their inner divinity: god consciousness or higher self.
- The “New” in new age signals the movement’s dissatisfaction with both the present and past (121)

# West meets East



## The East – Eastern Pantheistic Monism

- “Atman is Brahman; that is, the soul of each and every human being is the Soul of the cosmos (ultimate reality)” (Sire, 149).
- “Some things are more than others.”
  - Matter, vegetable life, animals then humans (150-151).
- “Many (if not all) roads lead to the One” (151).

# West meets East



## The East – Eastern Pantheistic Monism

- “To realize one’s oneness with the cosmos is to:
  - pass beyond personality” (Sire, 154).
  - pass beyond knowledge” (155).
  - Pass beyond good and evil” (156).
- “Death is the end of the individual, personal existence, but it changes nothing essential in an individuals nature” (158).
- “To realize one's oneness with the One is to pass beyond time. Time is unreal. History is cyclical” (158).

# West meets East



- Monism
- Pantheism
- Panentheism
- No “right way” to access the divine
- Syncretistic approach to salvation
- Eclecticism



# Unleashing the Higher Self

- Are we gods?
- New Age Dilemma: “The modern mind, under the influence of dualistic thought, either rejects the existence of a spiritual dimension (materialism) or assumes that created reality is separate and estranged from God...We never entertain the possibility that the divine, and our salvation, is within us” (Wilkins and Sanford, 124).
- “We have wasted history by looking for salvation in all the wrong places” (124).

# Unleashing the Higher Self

- ...In other words, “The spiritual force is within us all, and within all of nature” (124).





# Gnosis Versus Logos



- Do we limit the realm of truth to material things?
- *Logos* – word based approach to life (Enlightenment)
- *Gnosis* – Spiritual based approach to life (mystical)
- New Age longs for a reconnection with the *Gnosis* – the spiritual sphere.
- Proof of New Age – there is none...completely subjective.

An aerial photograph of a large, white iceberg floating in the ocean. The iceberg is the central focus, with its white surface contrasting against the dark blue water. The surrounding water is a deep, dark blue, and the horizon is visible in the distance under a clear sky.

# The Quest for Holism and Unity

Why are these elements important for New Age?

- Individualism
- Environmentalism
- Coexistence

# Christians and New Age



- Christianity and the fear of New Age
- Many Christians engage in New Age lifestyles
- Three Most prevalent New Age Influences on contemporary Christianity:
  - Individualism/Subjectivism
  - Anti-intellectualism
  - Denigration of the physical realm (129)



# Positive Aspects of New Age Thought

- “New Age recognizes and gives priority to the spiritual dimension” (130).
- The New Age reminds us of common problems within organizational religion” (131).
- The New Age correctly questions Enlightenment rationality as truth’s gatekeeper” (131).



# Potential Problems with the New Age

- “The New Age simply replaces the one-sidedness of materialism with a one-sided spiritualism” (132).
- “The New Age envisions self-salvations” (133).
- “The New Age cannot justify its own social agenda” (135).
- “New Age spirals toward irrationality” (136).



- Wilkens, Steve and Mark Sanford. *Hidden Worldviews: Eight Cultural Stories that Shape Our Lives*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2009.
- Sire, James W. *The Universe Next Door 5<sup>th</sup> ed.* International Varsity Press: Downers Grove, 2009.
- Image: <http://www.avatarnation.net/>. Accessed April 14, 2014.
- Image: <http://starwars.wikia.com/wiki/File:Yoda.jpg>. Accessed April 14, 2014.