

The Crisis of Philosophy: 1900-2000

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CATHOLIC STUDIES
ACADEMY



The Crisis of Philosophy: 1900-2000

Syllabus & Objectives

The Crisis of Philosophy 1900-2000 - Movements and Major Thinkers

Twentieth century philosophy represents a profound crisis in the history of reason and culture. This crisis is based on the advent of subjectivism (the turn towards consciousness), egalitarian radicalism, and scientism; culture has become at once completely subjective, radicalized, and reductively-scientistic. The upshot is the near total collapse of public discourse. This course will detail the ideas and developments that have created the crisis of twentieth-century philosophy.

Students in this course will be equipped to:

- demonstrate familiarity with the major figures and movements of late modern philosophy including Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Jean Paul Sartre, Postmodernism, et cetera.
- define and critically engage with the core ideas of late modern philosophy including phenomenology, existentialism, and scientism.
- identify the continuing importance and relevance of late modern philosophy for catholic faith, right reason, and contemporary culture.

The Crisis of Philosophy: 1900-2000

Lectures and Recommended Readings

The following lectures will be provided in this course:

1. The End of Idealism: the Background of Late Modern Philosophy
2. Husserl and Phenomenology I: Rediscovering Consciousness
3. Husserl and Phenomenology II: Cartesian Meditations
4. Heidegger I: The Oblivion of Being
5. Heidegger II: Time, Death, and Authenticity
6. Existentialism: Existence, Freedom, Atheism
7. Neo-Marxism, Critical Theory, and Liberation
8. Postmodernism and Deconstruction
9. G. E. Moore, Refuting Idealism, and Logical Positivism
10. Scientism and Physical Realism
11. God and Ethics
12. Postmodern Realism or Post-Postmodernism

Texts for the Course:

1. Various readings for each class. See below for class readings.

The End of Idealism: the Background of Late Philosophy

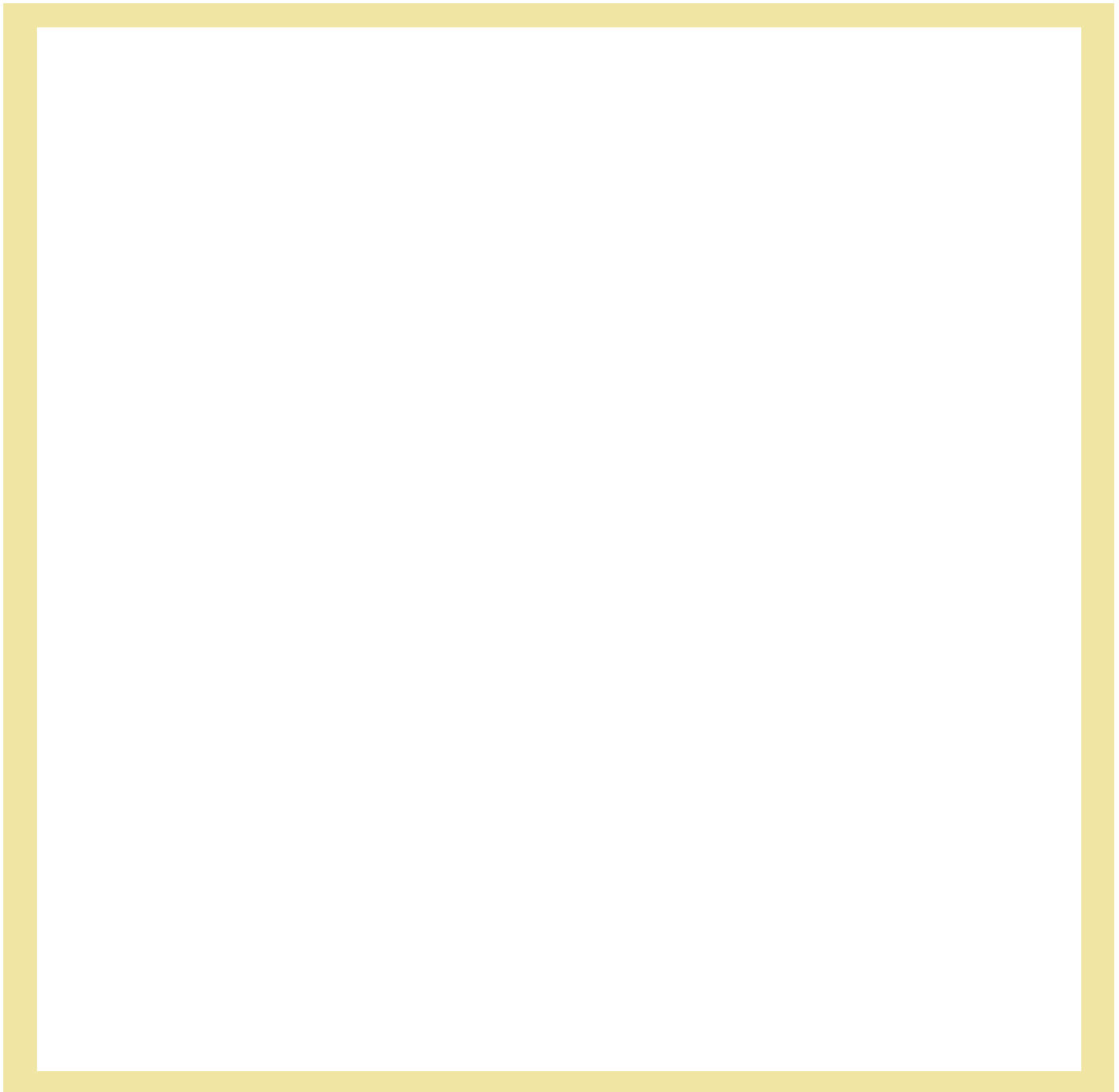
What is idealism? What were the successor movements of idealism?

Why did Idealism decline?

How did the decline of idealism lead to Phenomenology and logical positivism?

The End of Idealism: the Background of Late Philosophy

Notes:



Husserl and Phenomenology I: Rediscovering Consciousness

What is the technical meaning of phenomenology?

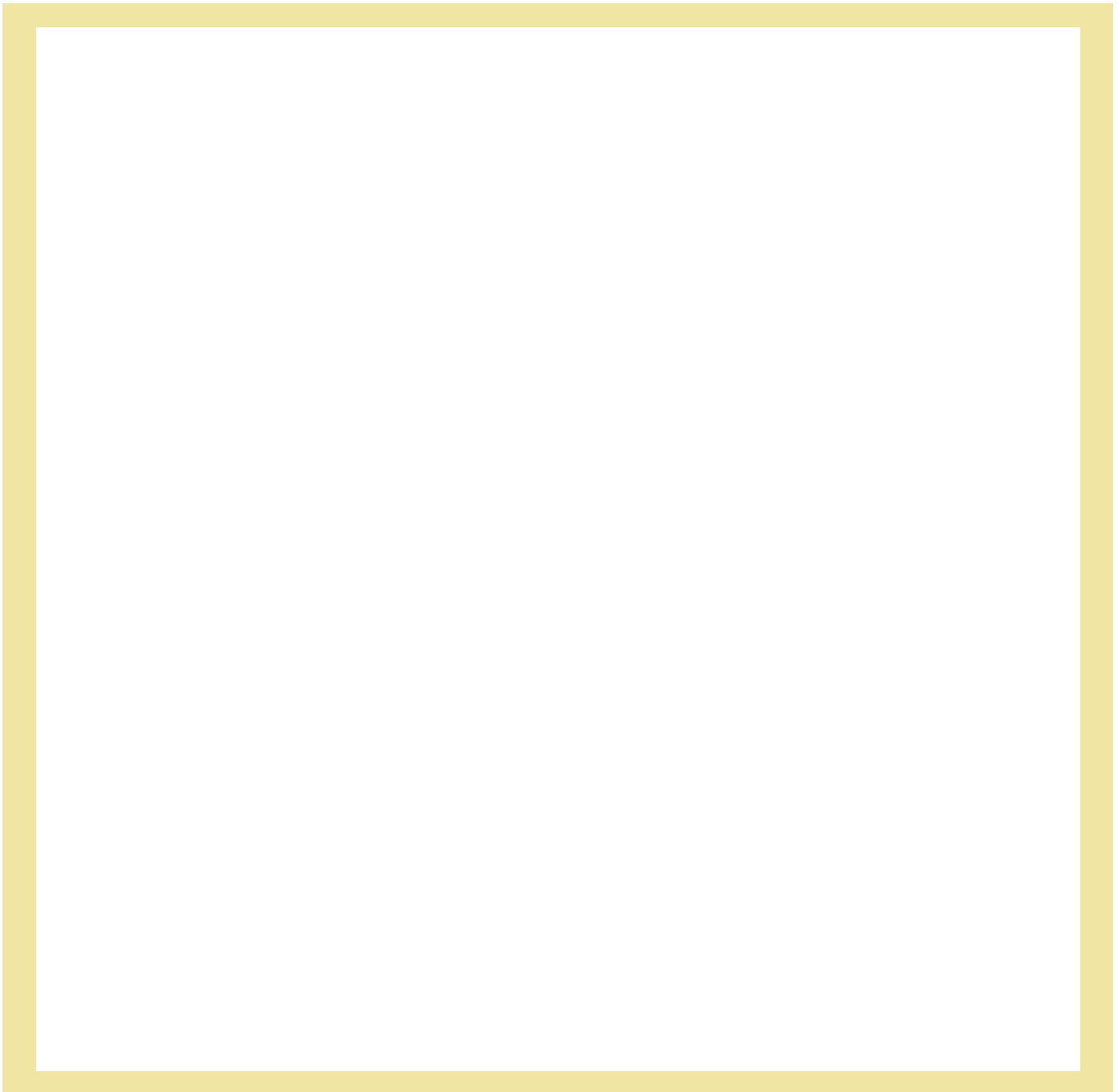
Explain: the self-understanding of consciousness is the ground of all science.

Define: intentionality, transcendental reduction, eidetic reduction.

Reading: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/husserl/> (sections 1-6)

Husserl and Phenomenology I: Rediscovering Consciousness

Notes:



Husserl and Phenomenology II: Cartesian Meditations

How is phenomenology connected to Cartesian philosophy?

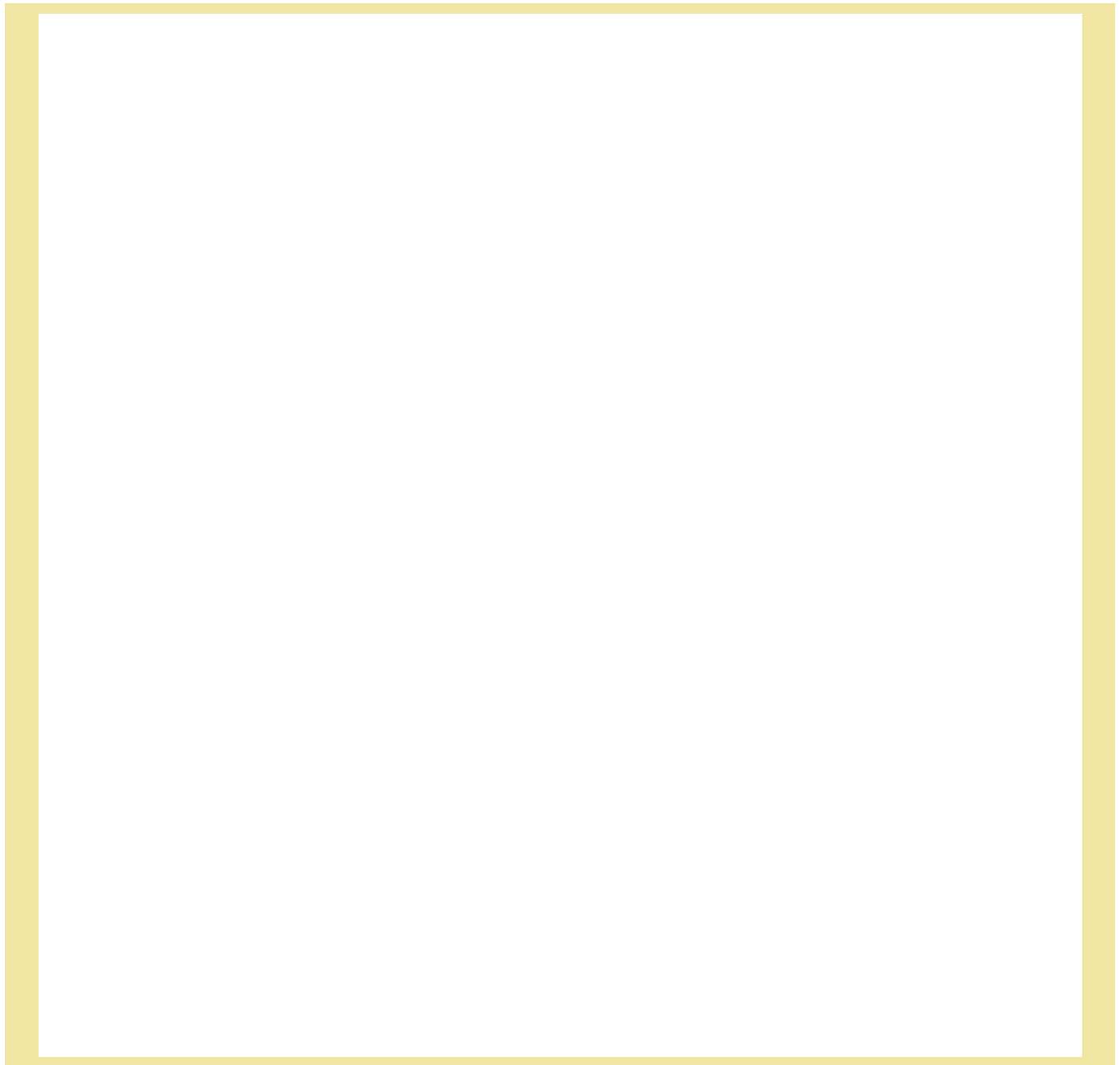
Explain the phenomenological reinterpretation of being.

Consider whether phenomenology is a form idealism.

Reading: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/husserl/> (sections 7-8)

Husserl and Phenomenology II: Cartesian Meditations

Notes:



Heidegger I: The Oblivion of Being

Explain the relationship of man to being.

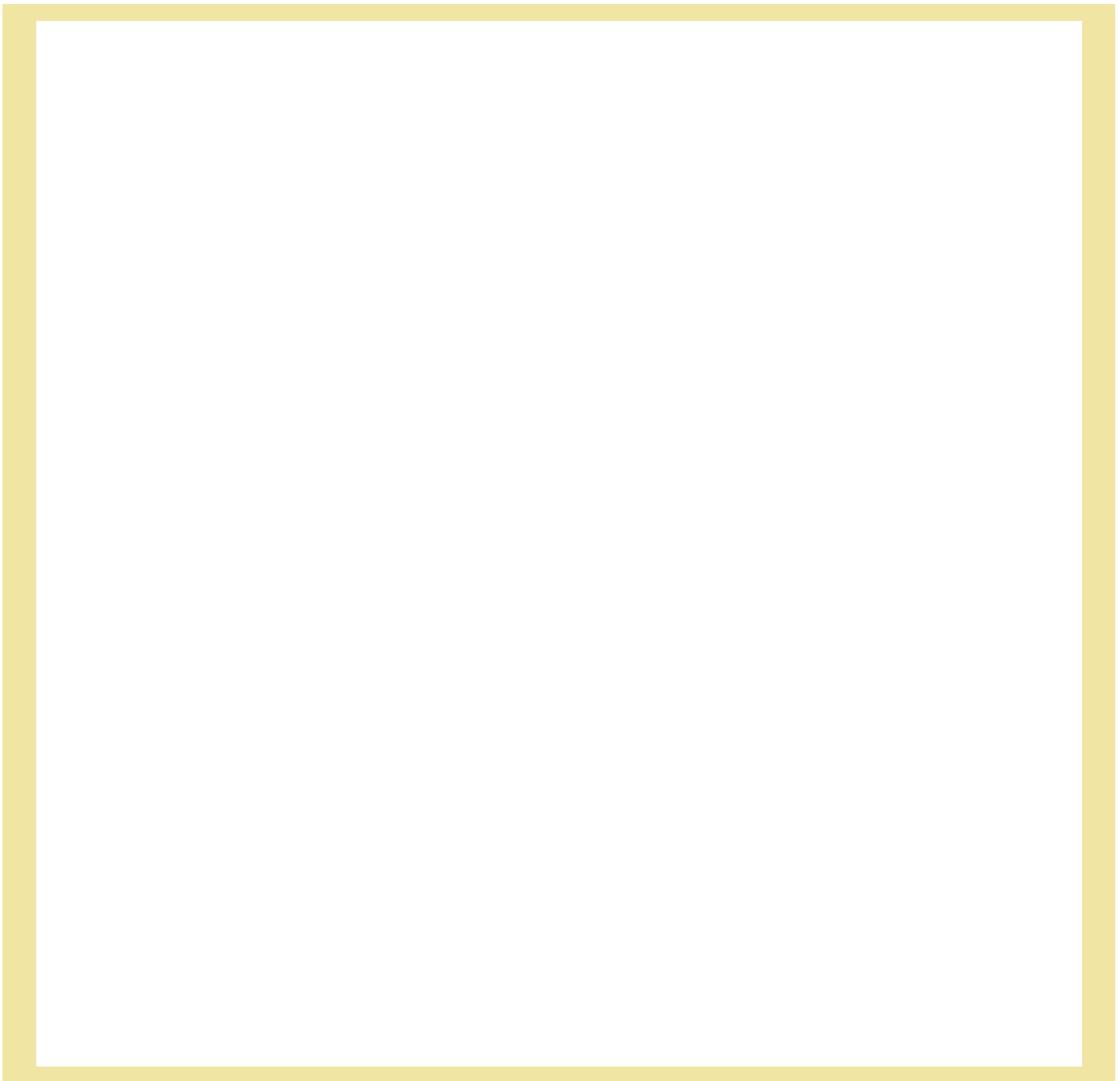
What is the oblivion of being?

Explain onto-theology.

Reading: The Great Conversation, Martin Heidegger: the Meaning of Being (c. 27)

Heidegger I: The Oblivion of Being

Notes:



Heidegger II: Time, Death, and Authenticity

What is inauthenticity?

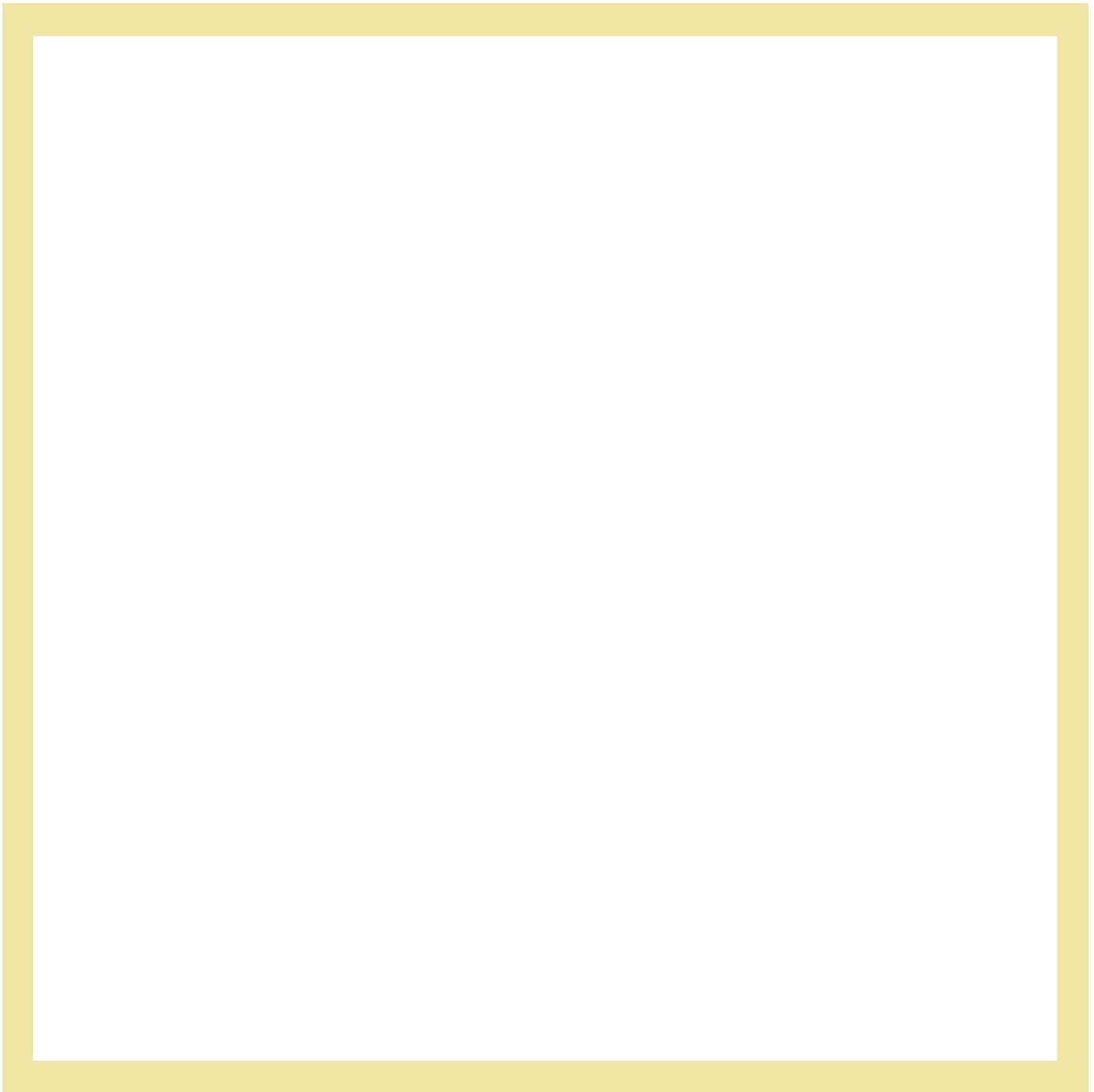
How do we achieve authenticity?

What is the relation of time and being?

Reading: The Great Conversation, Martin Heidegger: the Meaning of Being (c. 27)

Heidegger II: Time, Death, and Authenticity

Notes:



Existentialism: Existence, Freedom, Atheism

What is the meaning of existence?

Explain: existence precedes essence.

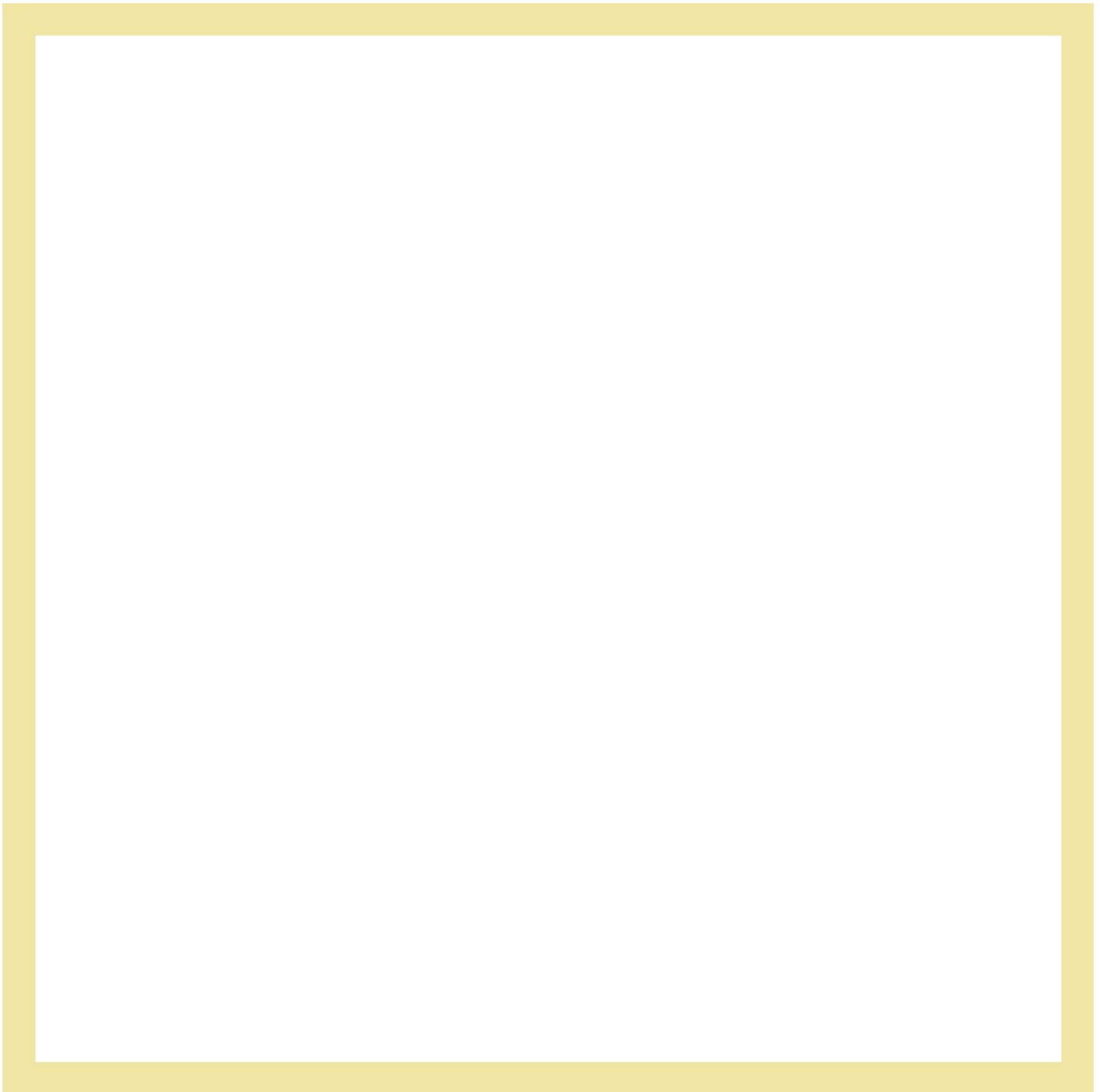
Why does freedom require atheism?

Reading:

<http://homepages.wmich.edu/~baldner/existentialism.pdf>

Existentialism: Existence, Freedom, Atheism

Notes:



Neo-Marxism, Critical Theory, and Liberation

Explain the connection of Marxism and Neo-Marxism

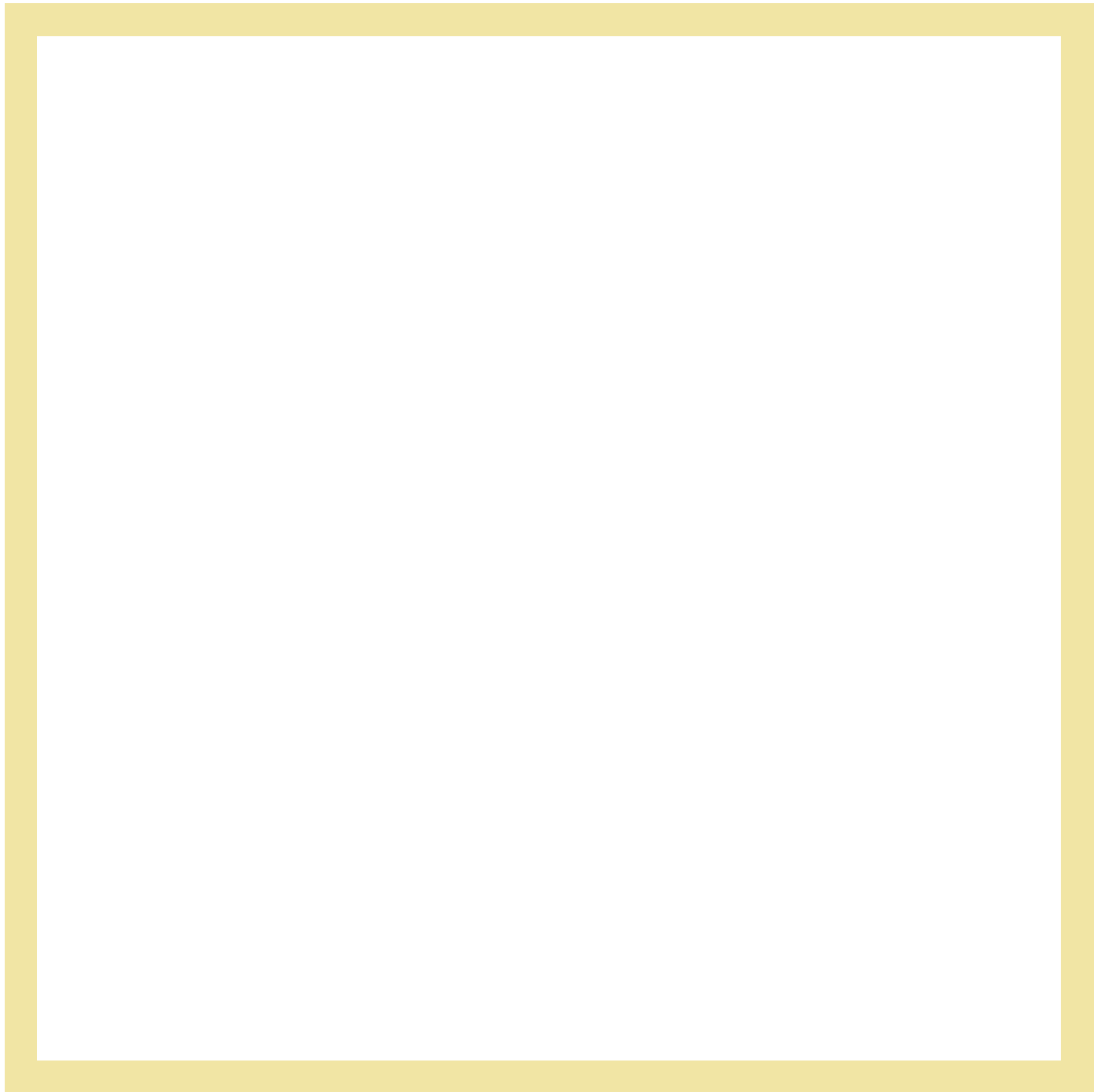
What distinguishes critical theory from traditional theory?

What is the critique of the Enlightenment?

Reading: <https://iep.utm.edu/frankfur/>

Neo-Marxism, Critical Theory, and Liberation

Notes:



Postmodernism and Deconstruction

How is postmodernism related to poststructuralism?

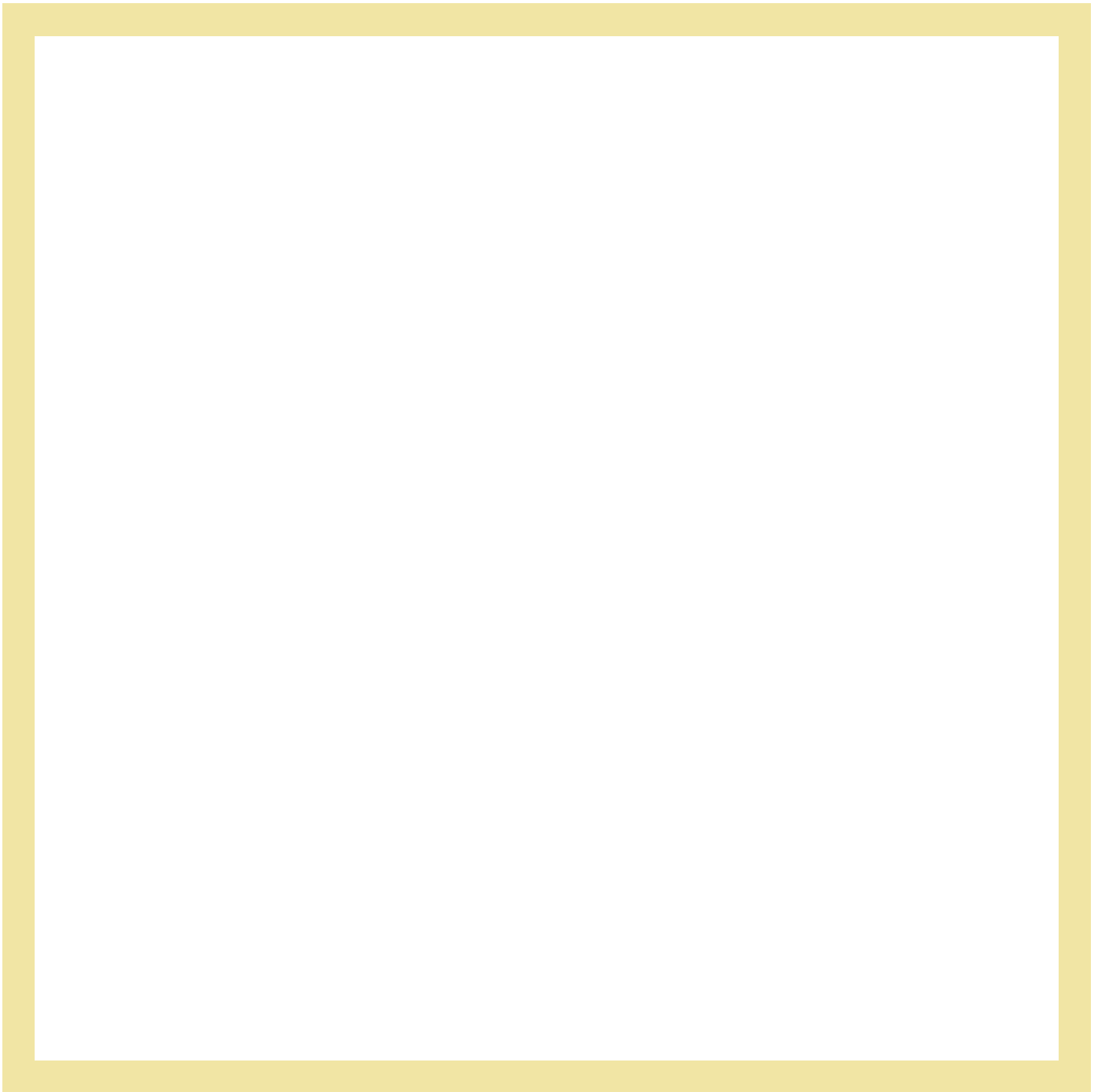
What is deconstruction?

What is the connection between knowledge and power?

Reading: The Great Conversation, Postmodernism (c. 29, pp. 698-711.)

Postmodernism and Deconstruction

Notes:



G. E. Moore, Refuting Idealism, and Logical Positivism

Define idealism.

Explain Moore's critique of idealism.

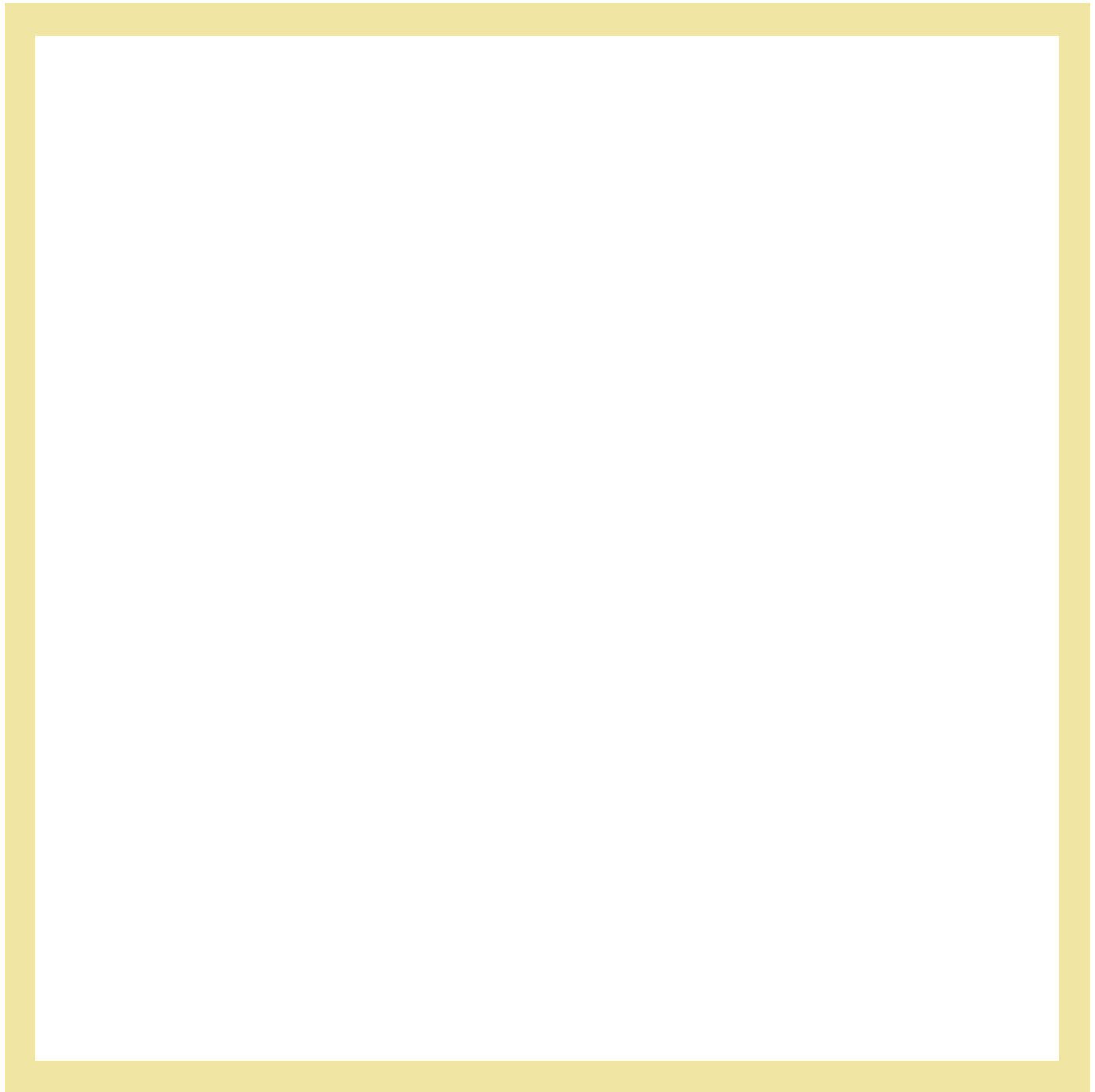
What is the verification principle? Why is it self-defeating.

Reading:

https://jonathankvanvig.files.wordpress.com/2015/12/moore__g-_1903-_the_refutation_of_idealism-_in_mind.pdf. The Great Conversation, "The Logical Positivists," p. 636-637.

G. E. Moore, Refuting Idealism, and Logical Positivism

Notes:



Physicalism and Reductionism

Explain the commitment to naturalism.

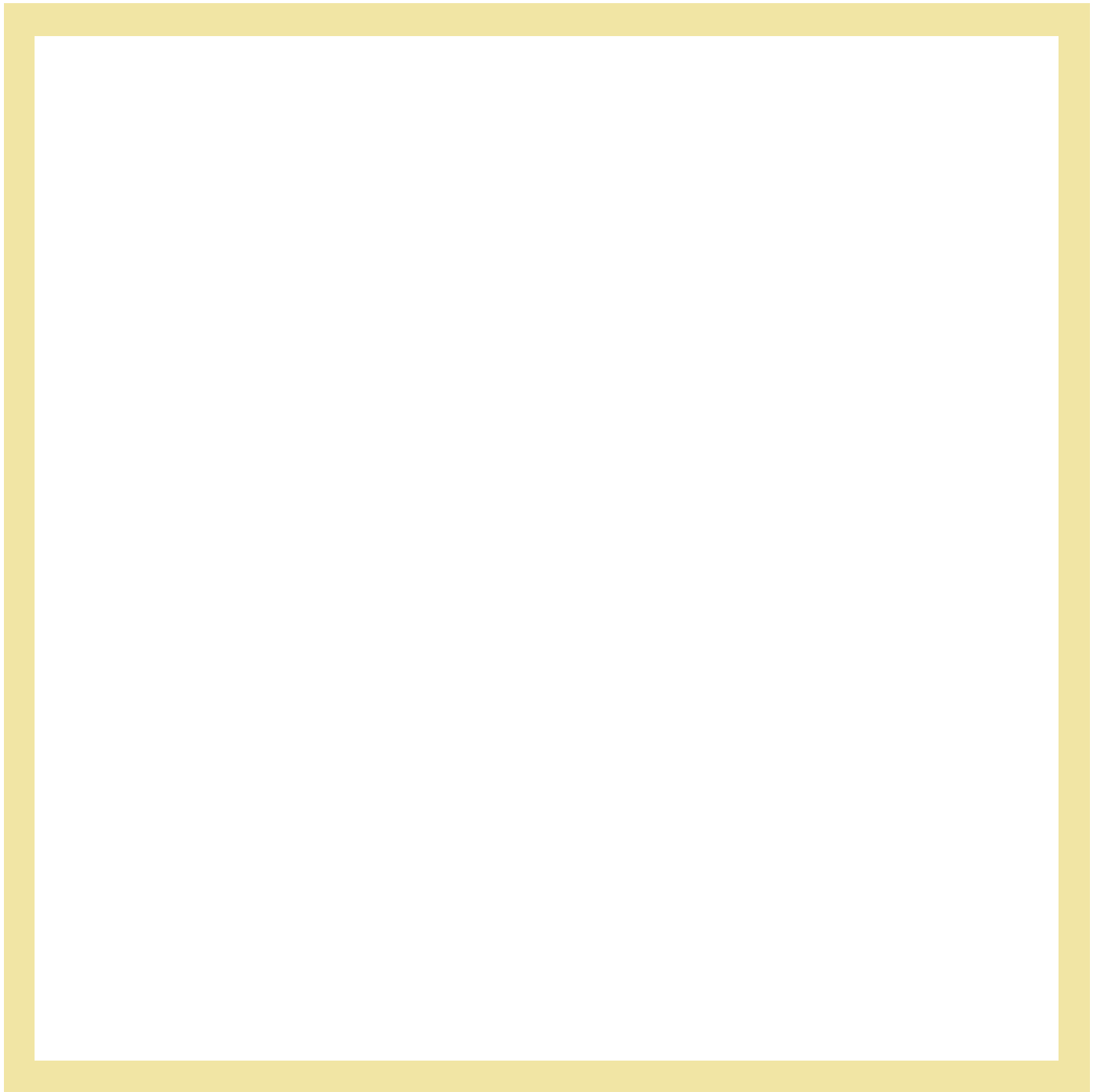
How are minds reduced to matter?

What is physicalism?

Reading: The Great Conversation, Physical Realism and the Mind
(c. 30).

Physicalism and Reductionism

Notes:



Atheism and Moral Skepticism

How does Hume (and later followers) critique religious belief?

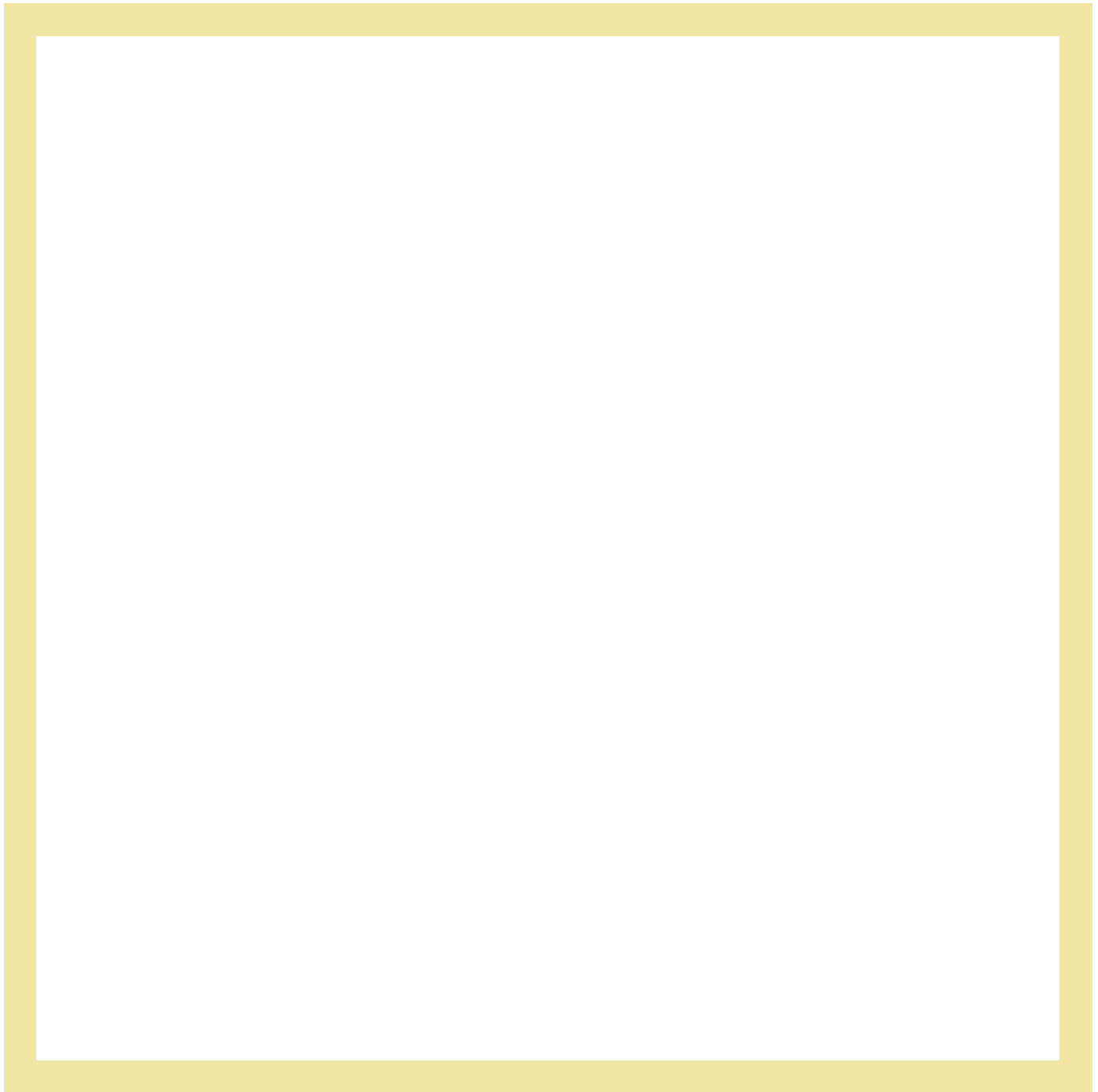
What is the fact-value distinction? Why is it important for morality?

Explain this claim: morality is not a matter of reason.

Background Reading: The Great Conversation, David Hume (c. 19, pp.455-464)

Atheism and Moral Skepticism

Notes:



Postmodern Realism or Post-Postmodernism

What is the objective/ subjective bifurcation?

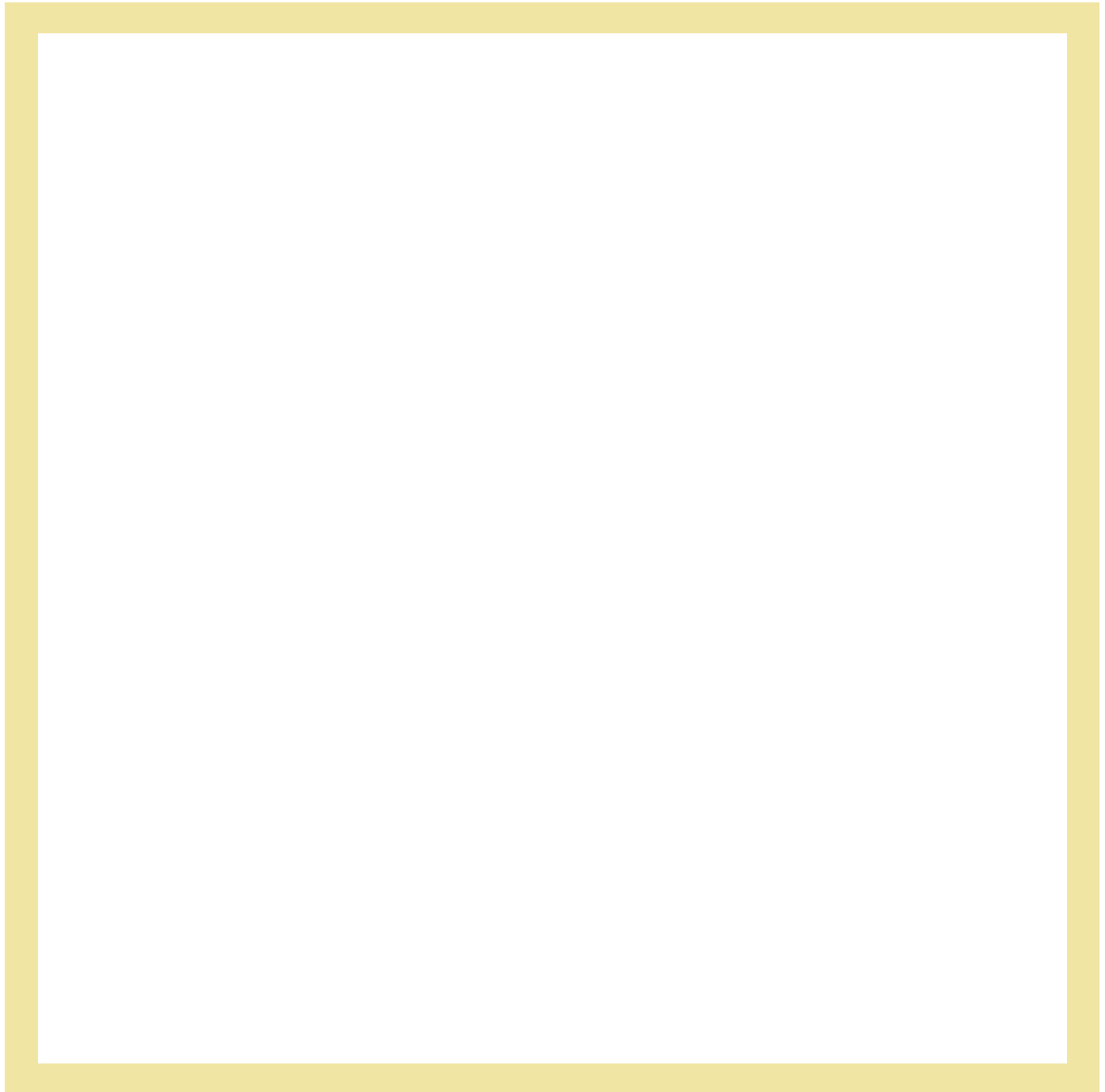
How does the current bifurcation model trace back to Kant?

Why is the bifurcation model both incoherent and useful?

Listening: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lx106FLCatQ>

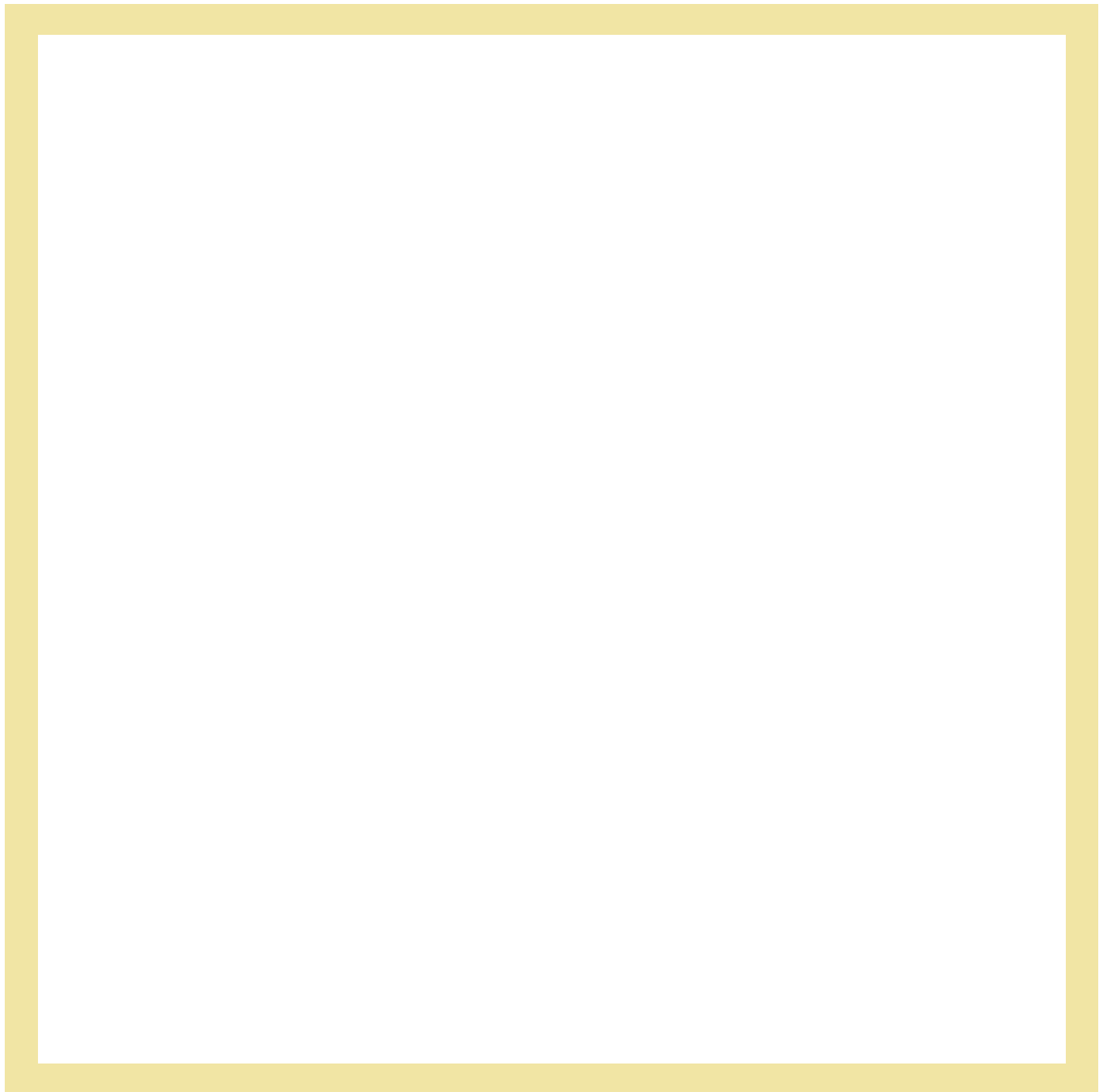
Postmodern Realism or Post-Postmodernism

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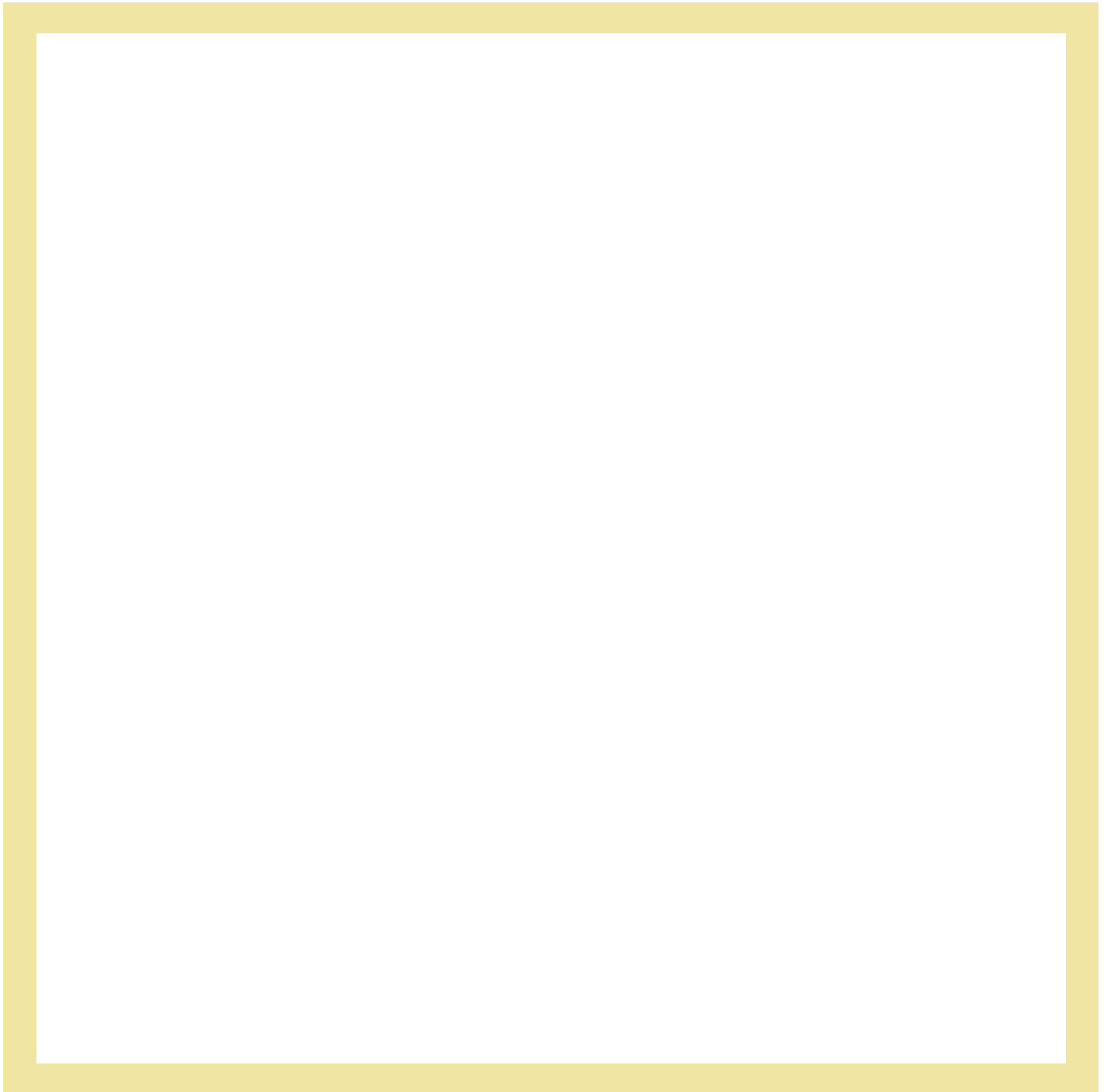
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