

Part 1 NIHILISM: Zero Point

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Introduction

- Nihilism is more a feeling...
- Nihilism is denial...
- Nihilism is the negation of everything...

Marcel Duchamp
"Fountain" → → →





Introduction

“But for a growing number of people the results of reason are not so assured, the **CLOSED UNIVERSE** is confining, the **NOTION OF DEATH AS EXTINCTION** is psychologically disturbing, our position as the **HIGHEST IN CREATION** is seen either as an alienation from the universe or as a union with it such that we are no more valuable than a pebble on the beach (Sire, 97).



The First Bridge: Necessity and Chance

- Genetic Makeup
- Perception as illusion
- B.F. Skinner
- What is Chance?
- Conclusion



The Second Bridge: The Great Cloud of Unknowing

- Epistemology
- Matter is all there is...
- Darwin and Logic
- Reason: Paradoxical
- Conclusion: Very destructive



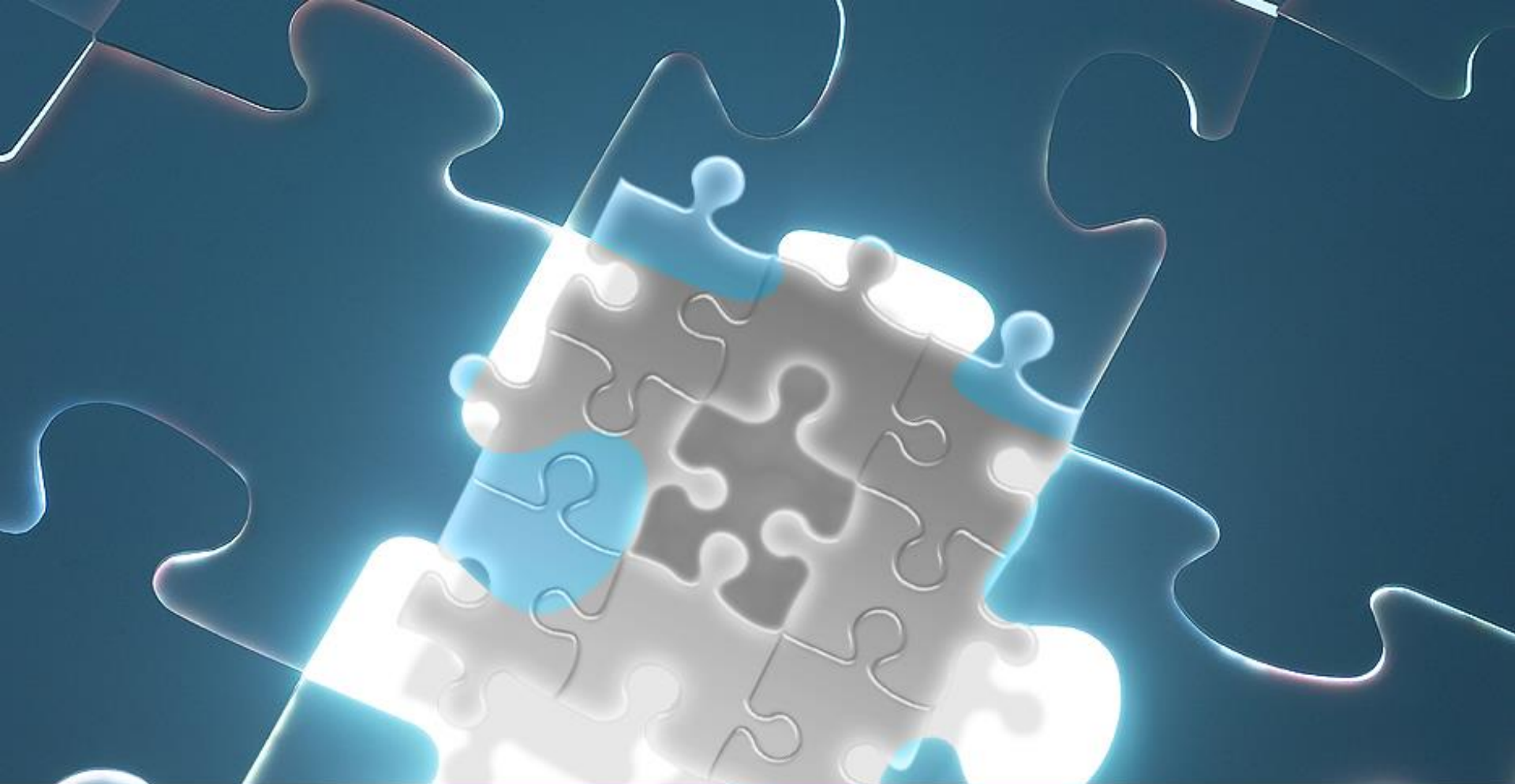
The Third Bridge: Is and Ought

- Is and Ought defined
- Cultural Relativism must be proven



Conclusion

- Why aren't most naturalist nihilists?
- Why is nihilism unlivable?



Part 2 Existentialism: Beyond Nihilism

Contemporary Culture and Worldview



Introduction

- Pitiful State (absurd) of the World...
 - Science
 - Government
 - Economy
- Transcend Nihilism
- Philosophers
 - Camus
 - Sartre
 - Heidegger



Worldview Question 1, 4-6, 7

- God does not exist.
- Death is extinction of personality and individuality.
- Through our innate and autonomous human reason, including the methods of science, we can know the universe.



Worldview Question 1, 4-6, 7

- The cosmos, including this world, is understood to be in its normal state.
- Ethics is related only to human beings.
- History is linear stream of events linked by cause and effect but without an overarching purpose (119).



Worldview Question 2

- What is the nature of the world around us?
- The cosmos is composed solely of matter, but to human beings reality appears in two forms-subjective and objective. (119)



- Existentialism is: “...an ensemble of values distinct from the material realm” (121).
- Humans are:
 - Self - conscious
 - Self - determinate



Worldview Question 3

- What is a human being?
- Human beings are complex “machines”; personality is an interrelation of chemical and physical properties we do not yet fully understand. For human beings alone existence precedes essence; people make themselves who they are.



- Human being is one "...who exists before he can be defined by any concept."
- Sartre: "At first he is nothing. Only afterwards will he be something, and he himself will have made him what he will be" (121).



Worldview Question 3

- What is a human being?
- Each person is totally free as regards his or her nature and destiny.



WE CONTROL OUR OWN DESTINY!!!

WE CAN DO ANYTHING!!!



Worldview Question 2,3, and 4

- What is prime reality—the really real?
- What is the nature of external reality, that is, the world around us?
- What happens to a person at death?

- The highly wrought and tightly organized objective world stands over against human beings and appears absurd.



“As we make ourselves to be by fashioning our subjectivity, we see the objective world as absurd. It does not fit us. Our dreams and visions, our desires, all our inner world of value runs smack up against a universe that is impervious (not allowing us to pass) to our wishes” (123).



“The toughest fact to transcend is the ultimate absurdity—death. We are free so long as we remain subjects. When we die, each of us is just an object among other objects” (123).



Worldview Question 5

- Why is it possible to know anything at all?
- In full recognition of and against the absurdity of the objective world, the authentic person must revolt and create value.



Sartre: "To choose to be this or that is to affirm at the same time the value of what we choose, because we can never choose evil. We always choose good" (124).



- What potential problems do you see?



Worldview Question 8

- What personal, life-orienting core commitments are consistent with this worldview?
- The core commitment of every full-blown atheistic existentialist is to himself or herself.



Bibliography

Sire, James W. *The Universe Next Door*
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