



A World of Difference



Foundational
Questions
About Life

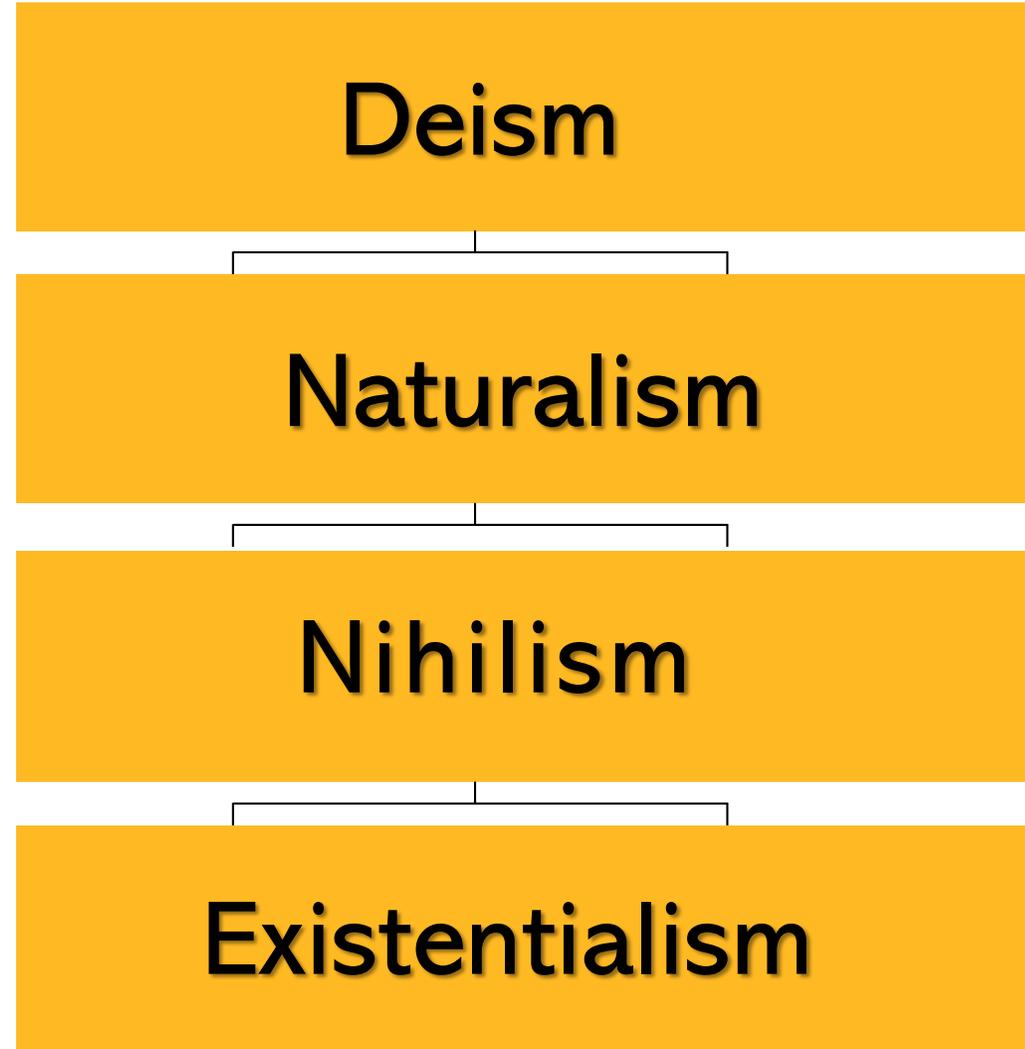
Part 2
By Eric Urabe

HOW DID WE GET HERE AND WHERE ARE WE GOING?

1600's



1900's



Middle Ages

5th Century - 15th Century

The Medieval Period often called the Dark Ages due to the lack of scientific and cultural advancement. Also, the Black Death/The Bubonic Plague, and war.

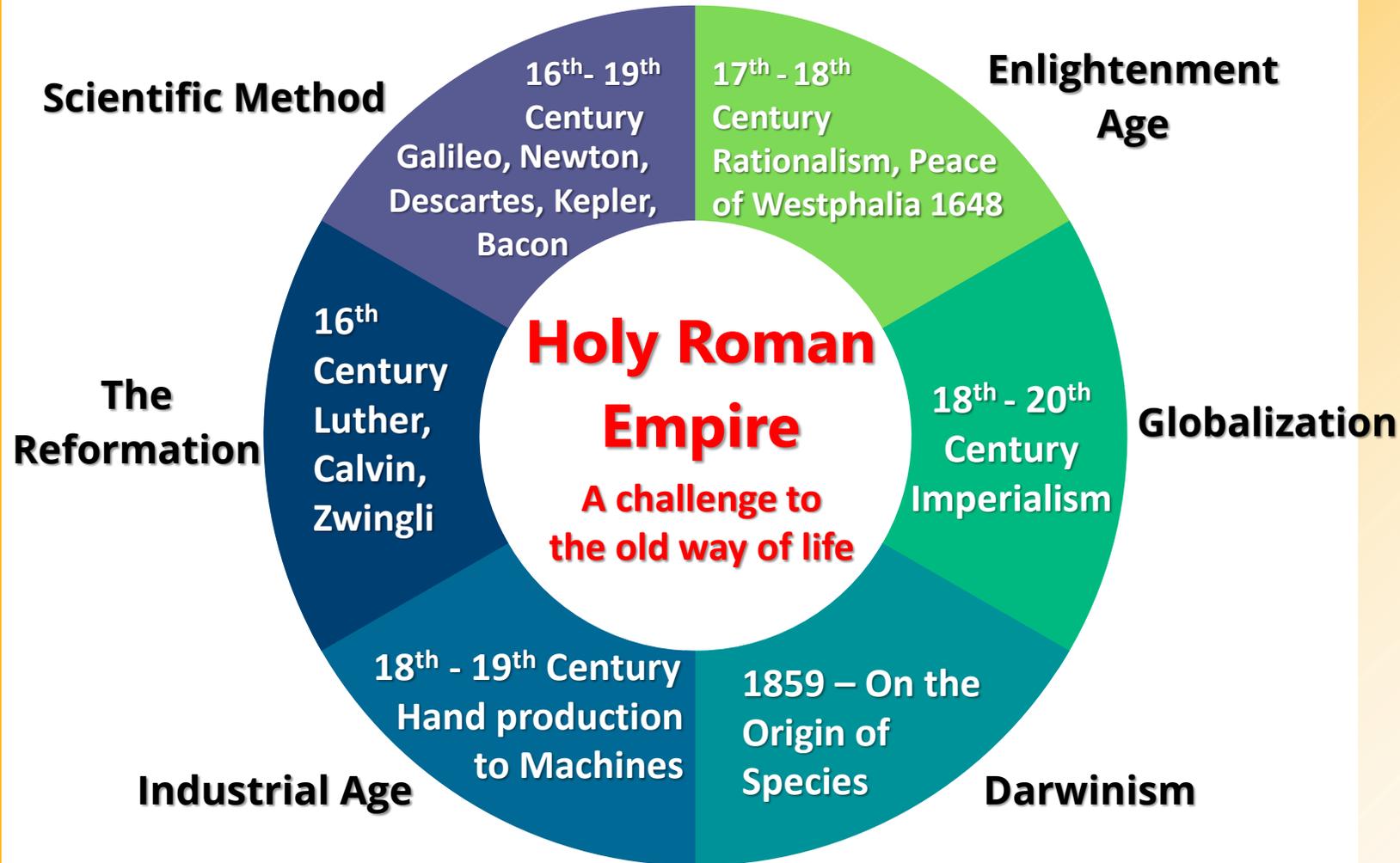
Renaissance

14th century - 17th century

Revival of classical learning particularly the areas of art, religion, literature, and politics.

Modern Period

(1500 – 1945)



Deism

**Deism was a change in location of the authority for knowledge about the divine; it shifted from special revelation found in Scripture to the presence of Reason”
- James Sire**

What is Prime Reality?



A transcendent God, first cause, created the universe but left it to run on its own. God is thus not immanent, not triune, not fully personal, not sovereign over human affairs, no providential. No special revelation.

Natural religion

Freedom from orthodox
Christianity

In the Early modern period, they started to believe or theorize that opinions and actions should be based on reason and knowledge rather than on religious belief or emotional response. They did not need God of the Gaps for explanation to phenomena. They could now use reason and the scientific method of empiricism to understand God in nature.

JOHN LOCKE, THOMAS PAINE, BEN FRANKLIN, & THOMAS JEFFERSON

GOD IS THE FIRST CAUSE

Man is the second cause

COLD

- Removal of man's sinfulness
- Self-deterministic "I do what I think is right for me"
- God is a transcendent force, not a personal God.

Deism

WARM

- Immortality of the Soul
- God should be worshipped
- Externally-inferred purpose "I do what I believe the creator would want me to do."

COLD Deism: The God that is not there

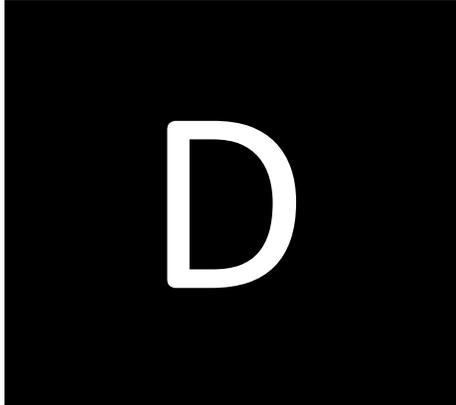
- God or "Higher Power"
- Created the universe
- Does NOT participate in our universe
- May or may not know about humans
- Does not necessarily interact with us
- Does not listen/care about prayers
- Rejects revelation
- Unknowable
- Unaware of the ongoing effects in our universe
- Does not subscribe to the claims of religion (holy books, supernatural claims, prophets, etc.)



H

Human Being

Humans are personal but are part of the mechanized world. They have intelligence, a sense of morality, community, and creativity. These characteristics are not derived from God



D

Death

There may be an afterlife depending on if you're a cold or warm Deist. No redemption for man is not needed because sin and evil do not exist.



K

Knowledge

God is identified through nature and reason, not through special revelation. We can know the universe and infer at least something of what God is like.



M

Morality

Morality is related to human beings only. Human reason is not fallen, free to discern good and evil.



The Barna Group, a leading research organization whose focus is on the relationship of faith and culture, found that less than 1 percent of the young adult population in the United States has a biblical worldview. Even more startling, the data shows that less than one half of one percent of Christians between the ages of 18 and 23 has a biblical worldview. The Barna Group defined a biblical worldview as belief in the following:

Absolute moral truth exists. The Bible is completely inerrant. Satan is a real being, not symbolic. A person cannot earn his way into the kingdom of God through good works. Jesus Christ lived a sinless life on earth. God is the supreme Creator of the heavens and the earth and reigns over the whole universe today

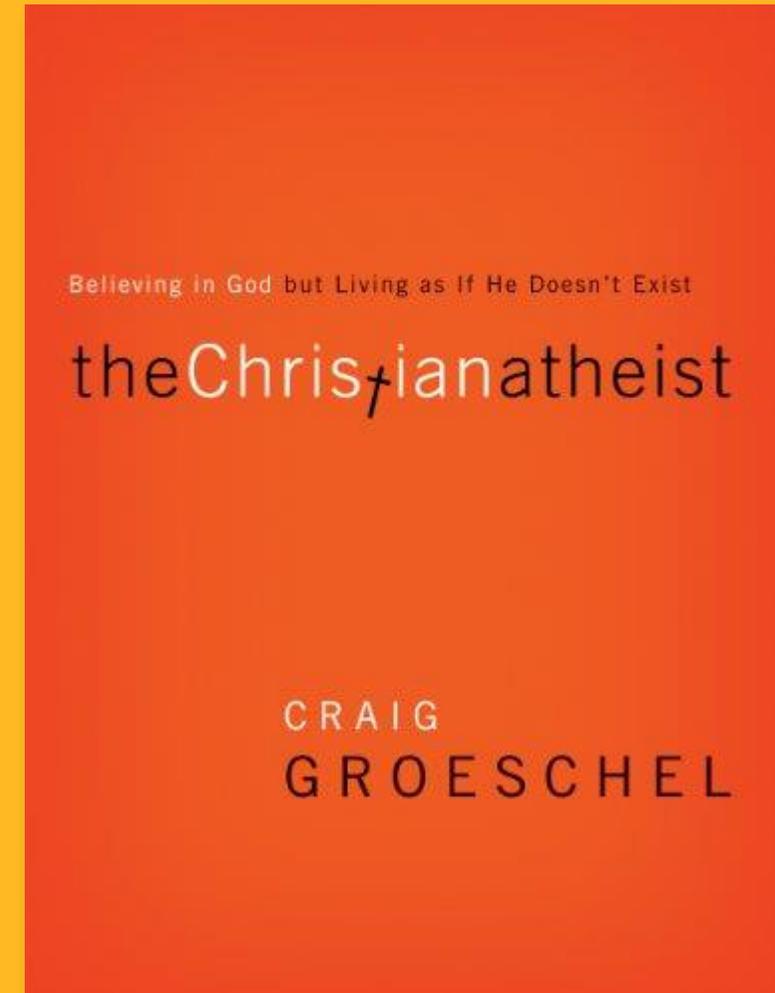
The research confirmed that the younger a person is, the less likely they are to trust the Bible as their source of moral guidance or to believe that absolute moral truth exists. For instance, 20% of adults 60 or older base their moral choices on the Bible and only 18% of Baby Boomers but only 13% of Baby Busters (1965 through 1983) and a mere 9% of Mosaics (1983- 2000) follow suit.

➤ The Christian Atheist – Craig Groeschel

Growing up, my family was what I'd call "cultural Christians." We'd go to church on Christmas and Easter... We'd pray at Thanksgiving meals. But that was basically the extent of it. Even though I believed in God, all I knew was about him—and very little of that. *I didn't know him...* I lived according to my own rules. My very actions revealed my lack of intimate knowledge of God.

According to 1 John 2:3 – 4, "*We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, 'I know him,' but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*" A little harsh? I prefer to think of it as straightforward and honest. Truthfully spoken by someone who truly cares and wants what's best for us.

– The Christian Atheist: Chapter 1, Not Knowing God, pg. 34

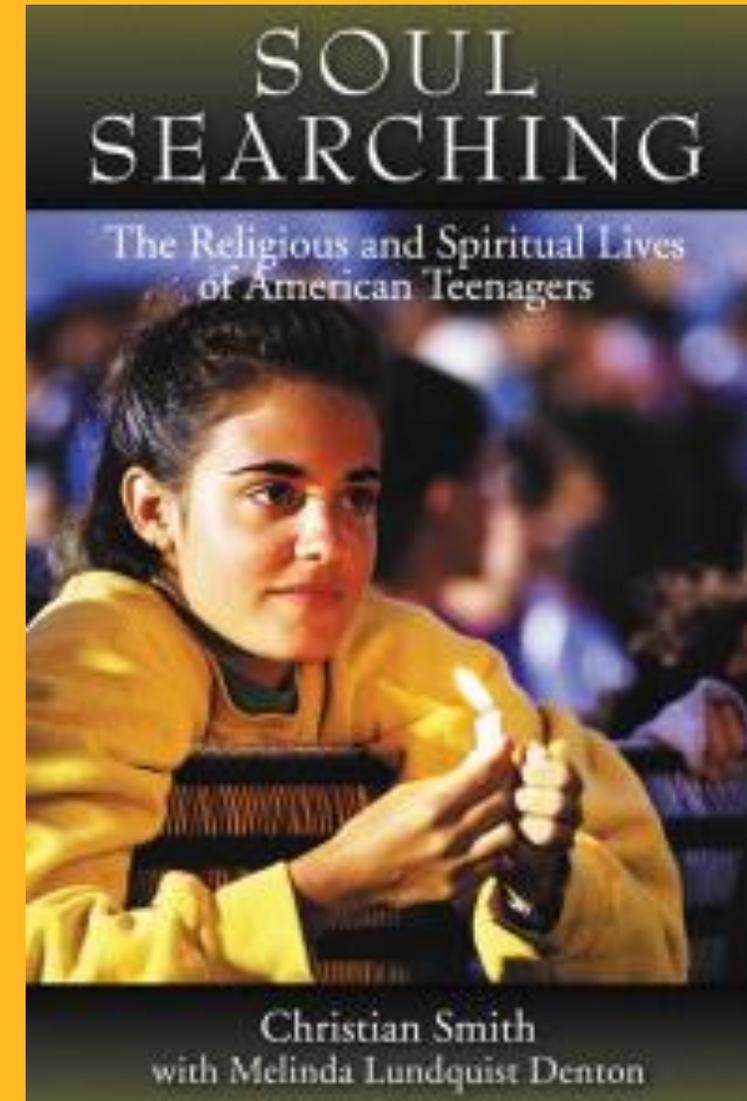


➤ Moralistic Therapeutic Deism

University of North Carolina sociologists Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton in 2005 published a massive study of the religious beliefs of teenagers.

- A God exists who created and orders the world and watches over human life on earth.
- God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most religions.
- The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.
- God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem.
- Good people go to heaven when they die.

God, ultimate reality, in this view makes no demand on his creation to be holy, righteous, or even very good.



Naturalism

“THE COSMOS IS ALL THAT IS, OR EVER WAS, OR EVER WILL BE. NO GODS, NO SOULS, NO HEAVEN, NO HELL, NO MIRACLES, NO MORALITY, NO SIN, NO FORGIVENESS, NO TRANSCENDENT PURPOSE—JUST MOLECULES IN MOTION.”

- CARL SAGAN

What is Prime Reality?



Matter exists eternally and is all there is. It does not believe that God exists. The cosmos is the primary reality and pushes God out of the picture..

“Deism, historically, produces atheism. First you make God a landlord, then an absent landlord, then he becomes simply absent” – N.T. WRIGHT

The universe is a closed system not open to reordering from the outside nothing spiritual or transcendent emerges from the cosmos. Autonomous humans are part of the uniformity of the universe. Only natural laws and forces operate in the universe.

Naturalism

As the name implies, looking upon nature as the one original and fundamental source of all that exists, and attempting to explain everything in terms of nature.

METHODOLOGICAL NATURALISM

- Scientific Method - observe, predict, measure and quantify
- Scientific Method does not address the supernatural.
- Intelligent Design

DETERMINISM

METAPHYSICAL NATURALISM

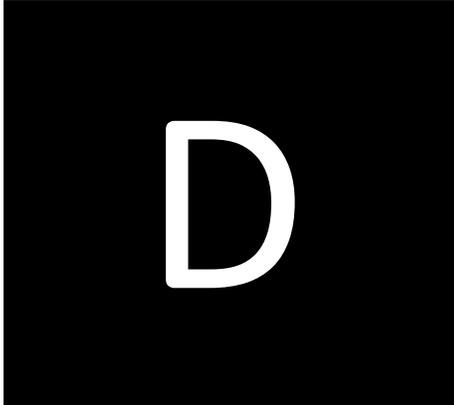
- Philosophical Naturalism
- Ontological Naturalism
- Materialism - There is no supernatural, soul or spirit, nor ghosts.



H

Human Being

Human beings are complex machines, personality is an interrelation of chemical and physical properties we do not fully understand.



D

Death

Death is the extinction of personality and individuality. Death is emptiness, the end of experience; it is eternal nothingness, the permanent extinction of being.



K

Knowledge

Through our innate and autonomous human reason and the methods of science, we can know the Universe. The Cosmos, including this world, is understood to be in its normal state.



M

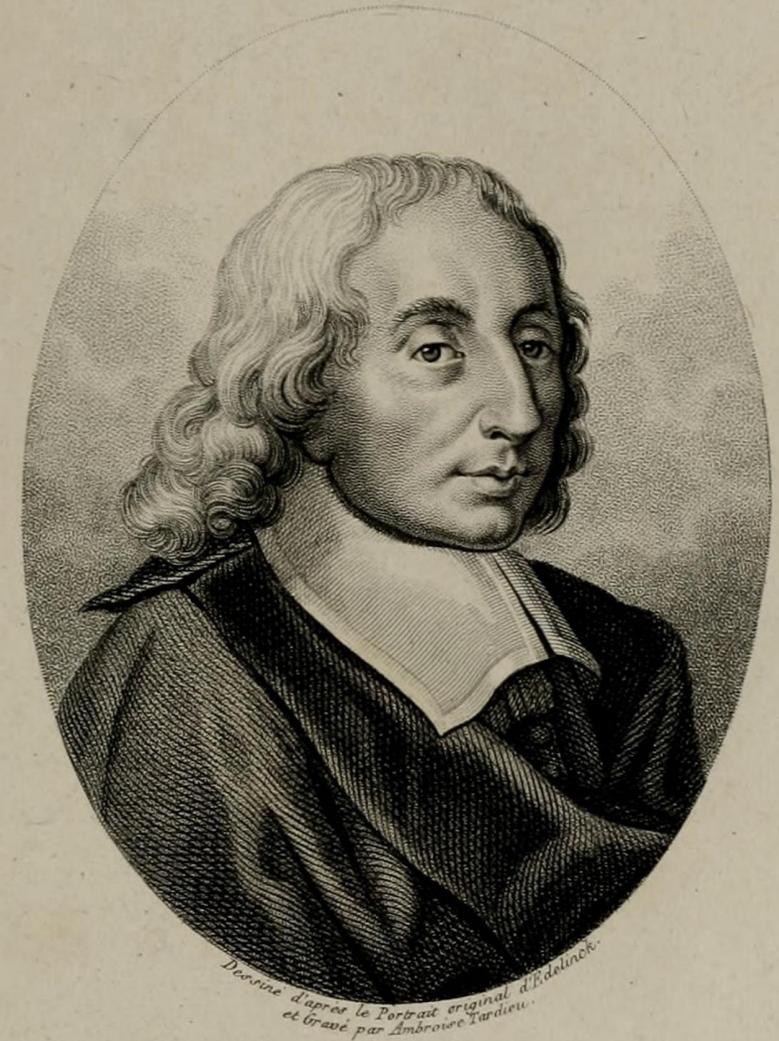
Morality

Morality is related only to human beings subjective understanding of right or wrong. No ethical system can be derived solely from the nature of things outside human consciousness

➤ Pascal's Wager

Blaise Pascal, (born June 19, 1623, Clermont-Ferrand, France—died August 19, 1662, Paris), French mathematician, physicist, and religious philosopher. One of Pascal's most famous religious works was the *Pensées* ("Thoughts").

The Wager	God exists	God does not exist
You believe in God	+ <i>infinite reward</i>	+ <i>something finite</i>
You do not believe in God	- <i>infinite punishment</i>	+ <i>something finite</i>



BLAISE PASCAL
(Physicien, Géomètre et Philosophe),
Né à Clermont (Dép^t du-Puy-de-Dôme) le 19 Juin 1623.
Mort à Paris le 19 Aout 1662.

Nihilism

“Everything in the world displeases me: but, above all, my displeasure in everything displeases me.”

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE
Oct 15, 1844 - Aug 25, 1900
(age 55)

What is Prime Reality?



There is no prime reality. Nihilism is the negation of everything - knowledge, ethics, beauty, reality. It's all an illusion.

Nihilism is more a feeling than a philosophy. The rejection of all religious and moral principles, It's the belief that life is meaningless.

It is often associated with extreme pessimism and radical skepticism. Nihilists believe in nothing, have no loyalties, and no purpose other than, perhaps, an impulse to destroy.

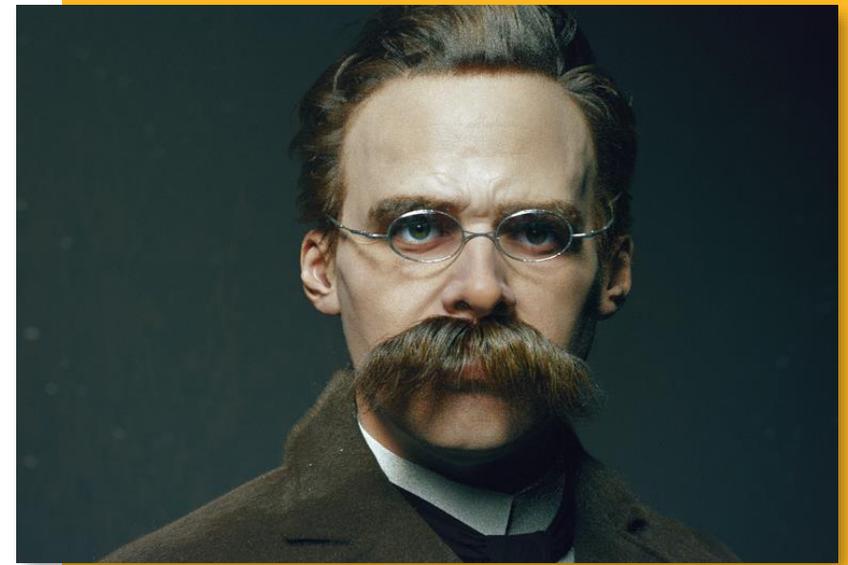


Intellectual Honesty

The logical implication of Naturalism's primary proposition is Nihilism.

- Matter is all there is, and it is eternal.
- The cosmos operates with uniformity of cause and effect in a closed system.
- Human beings are part of the closed system. Free will is delusional.
- Reason cannot establish values.
- Therefore, Human beings are just complex machines whose personality is a function of highly complex chemicals and physical properties that are not yet understood.

➤ “God is dead; but given the way of men, there may still be caves for thousands of years in which his shadow will be shown – and we – we still have to vanquish his shadow, too.”
Friedrich Nietzsche (p.167) -The Gay Science



“I think human consciousness, is a tragic misstep in evolution. We became too self-aware, nature created an aspect of nature separate from itself, we are creatures that should not exist by natural law. We are things that labor under the illusion of having a self; an accretion of sensory, experience and feeling, programmed with total assurance that we are each somebody, when in fact everybody is nobody. Maybe the honorable thing for our species to do is deny our programming, stop reproducing, walk hand in hand into extinction, one last midnight – brothers and sisters opting out of a raw deal.” - Unknown

➤ The Christian answer to Nihilism

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” - Matthew 11:28–30

The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; - Acts 17:24-28

Says the Teacher. “Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.”... “No one remembers the former generations, and even those yet to come will not be remembered by those who follow them.”... “I have seen all the things that are done under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind.”

Ecclesiastes 1:2, 11, & 14 (NIV)

Existentialism

“In the darkest depths of our nihilism, I have sought only for the means to transcend nihilism”

Albert Camus

Nov 07, 1913 - Jan 04, 1960 (age 46)

Philosopher, Author, Journalist

What is Prime Reality?



The cosmos is composed of solely matter, but to human beings' reality appears in two forms - subjective and objective.

Existential Angst, a sense of dread, disorientation, confusion, or anxiety in the face of an apparently meaningless & absurd world. There is the objective world of material, of cause and effect, of chronology, the fluidity of mechanism. The subjective world, the world is that of the mind, of consciousness, of awareness, of freedom, of stability. The inner awareness to make free choices in life with no restrictions.

Characteristics of Existentialism



EXISTENCE OVER ESSENCES

Persona over identity

SUBJECTIVE OVER THE OBJECTIVE

Mind over material

EMPHASIS ON PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT

My life, my choice, my destiny,
ME, ME

RELATIVE OVER THE ABSOLUTE

The objective life is absurd,
absolute morals are absurd

ANGST - ANXIETY

Nihilism is always around the
corner

FREEDOM OVER DEATH

There is no afterlife, all you have
is this life. Life is short

Two Worlds

Existence precedes essence – Jean-Paul Sartre

Essence to what a thing is.

Objective - Essence

- The machinery of the universe
- Spinning electrons
- A world of Observation
- Hypothesis by experiment

Dichotomy

Existence to the fact it exists.

Subject - Existence

- We can mean
- We can be valuable
- Value and meaning is not tied to science and logic
- Born with a clean slate and man defines his essence

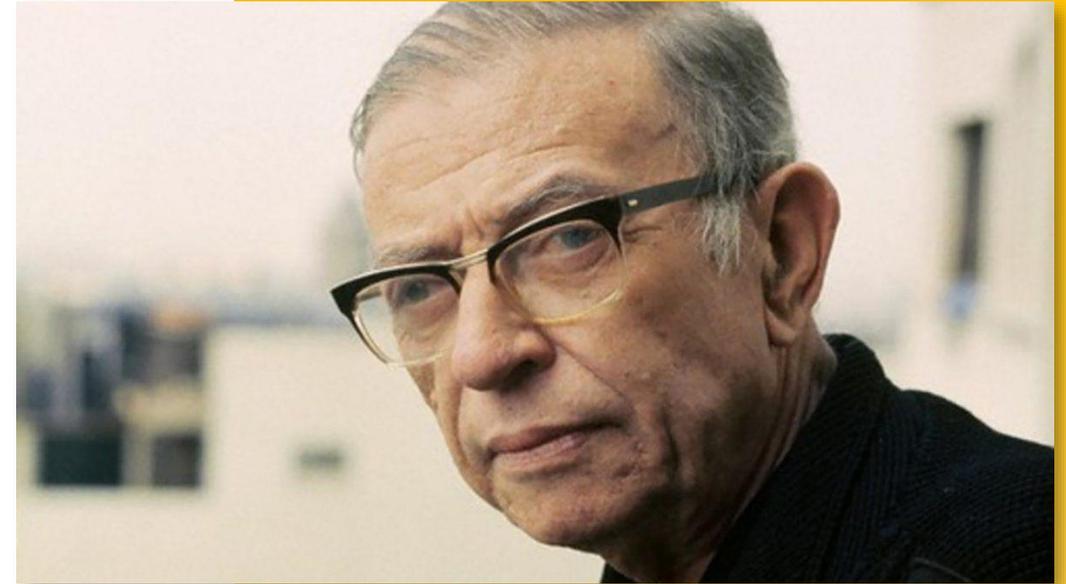
> Jean-Paul Sartre

Jun 21, 1905 - Apr 15, 1980 (age 74)

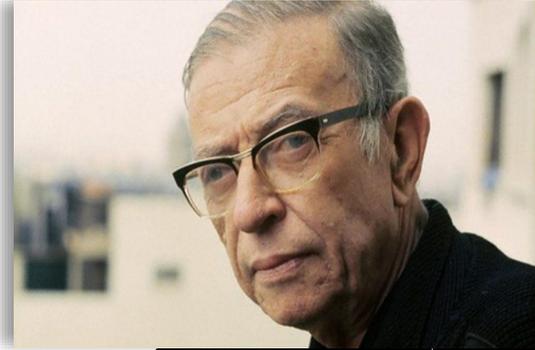
Philosopher, Author, Journalist, Playwright

If I've discarded God the father, there has to be someone to invent values. You've got to take things as they are. Moreover, to say that we invent values means nothing else than this: Life has no meaning *a priori*. Before you come alive, life is nothing; it's up to you to give it meaning, and value is nothing else but the meaning you choose. In that way, you see, there is a possibility of creating human community.

- Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and Human Emotions*



Two Types of Existentialism



Atheistic

- Commitment to self (selfishness)
- Finite beings in an absurd world
- Value comes through choices
- Objective world has no bearing on the subjective world
- Authentic experience
- Subjectivity leads to Solipsism

Autonomy

Theistic

- Theological Nihilism
- Faith and reason are worlds apart
- Fideism - One accepts something as true by an act of the will, not by reason – blind faith
- Opposed to Christian apologetics

Atheistic Existentialism



H

Human Being

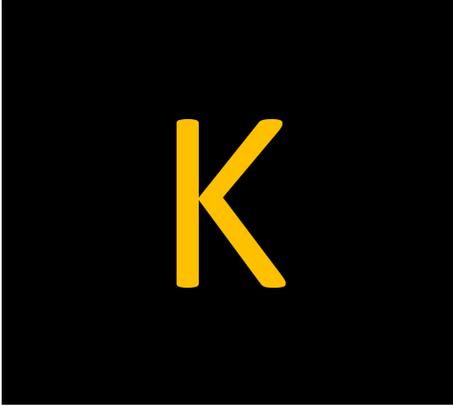
Humans exist first and then each individual spends a lifetime changing their essence or nature. finding meaning of life through free will, choices, & personal responsibility.



D

Death

Death is the tragic, pointless, loss of life. Even though man loses the battle, he may find meaning in the very struggle against death. Death is also meaninglessness and absurdity.



K

Knowledge

Knowledge is subjective. Truth is viewed as something personal, not merely propositional. One's subjective beliefs are of greater importance than the objective truth.



M

Morality

Mortality is subjective. There are no absolute moral laws. The inmost and holiest thing of all in a man, the unifying power of personality. Self interest with social duty.

➤ The Christian worldview toward Atheistic and Religious Existentialism?

- Existentialism believes in total autonomy; the subject gives life meaning.
- Christianity acknowledges the existence of a personal Creator who revealed Himself for the purpose of giving human life meaning.
- Existentialism states that the world is absurd, and there is no hope.
- Christianity states that the world is fallen and there is hope, in Jesus Christ.
- Existentialism is opposed to rationalism.
- Christianity believes in a rational God, and we can relate to him rationally.
- Existentialism asserts that each person is their own authority concerning truth.
- Christianity insists that God is the absolute final authority over His creation and all things.
- Existentialism believes that existence precedes essence.
- Christianity believes that a person's essence is predestined from God and precedes existence.

Why is this relevant?



The Devils Schemes

So that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.

- 2 Corinthians 2:11

Finally, be strong in the LORD and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

- Ephesians 6:10-11

The Great Commission

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

- Matthew 28:19

"I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.

- Matthew 10:16

Distortion of Truth

You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

- John 8:44

TILL NEXT TIME...

Thank You