



# No Purpose Question

## Game Design Document

<https://jin4liuconnedu.itch.io/no-purpose-question>

“DEFINING MEANING IS MEANINGLESS”

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# Game Overview

## Working Title

No Purpose Question

## Elevator pitch

"No Purpose Question" is a first-person VR game that blends puzzle-solving with an exploration of philosophical themes. Players navigate a maze, using light and props gained from assembling puzzles to illuminate their path, while delving into a narrative that explores nihilism and the concept of meaninglessness.

## Developer

Jin Liu

## Genre

[Walking Simulator](#)

## Platform & System Requirements

Oculus Quest 2 & Windows

## Target audience

E14+; Indie fans; Walking sim fans; Philosophy lovers

## Art Style

Low-poly; Fantasy

## Keywords

Virtual reality; Walking simulator; Puzzle; Assembling; Maze; Low-poly; Philosophic; Fantasy

## Budget

\$1000 (external assets purchasing & releasing)

## Timeline

2022 Summer & Fall - Thesis Research  
2022 Winter - Thesis Drafting & Game Design  
2023 Spring - Art Assets Development  
2023 Summer - Game Prototype 1 Development & Test  
2023 Fall - Game Prototype 2 Development & Test  
2023 Winter - Official Game Development & Test  
2024 Spring - Optimization & Game Releasing & Final Thesis Drafting

## Theme & Setting

"No Purpose Question" is a first-person VR experimental game set in a maze dream world. Players gain lighting support or props by solving assemble puzzles in the maze and light up the environment to explore the path. The narrative is a personal and intimate journal through the author's dream, pieced together through the progressive distortion scene and the discussion of explorational meaningless. This experimental game challenges players to question the essence of purpose and meaning, merging immersive gameplay with deep philosophical inquiry.

...

Learn more about the [Map](#), [Locations](#), [Story](#), [Characters](#) and [Puzzles](#) of the game.

## Key Features

### 1. Non-linear Gameplay

While the game's maze scene seems linear, the gameplay is non-linear, with the player moving backward and continuing exploring the pre-maze scene using the light-up props obtained later in the maze.

### 2. The Narrator and the Inside Call Narrator's Role

A distinctive feature is the omnipresent narrator who leads and comments on the player's actions, while the other "inside call narrator" usually challenges the narrator's guidance with the player. This narration adds a philosophical layer to the gameplay, often breaking the fourth wall.

### 3. Personal and Introspective Storytelling

The game is presented as a dream of the player. The narrator and the "inside call narrator" share thoughts and interpretations while gradually merge at the end, offering a deeply personal and introspective experience.

#### 4. Minimalist Gameplay

Unlike traditional video games, “No Purpose Question” focuses less on action or complex mechanics and more on exploration and thinking. It's more about the experience than gameplay challenges.

#### 5. Visual and Audio Design

While simple, the visual and audio design of the game effectively supports its narrative and thematic elements, enhancing the overall experience.

## Game Setting

### Map

Beside the tutorial level, the main level and ending level are both inherited from a maze map. The path from the beginning to the end of the maze is relatively linear with some branches. At the end of the maze, there is an open space, including the game's grand final puzzle and the only way to the ending level.



### Locations

In keeping with the theme of exploration and enlightenment in a dream world, the entire maze world consists of six scenes. Players will pass through CBD, City, Suburban, Farm and Nature from the start of the maze to reach the ending scene Fantasy. While these six scenes transition

harmoniously in the map, the static models that make up the scenes are gradually scaled down to create a sense of "everything becomes small or unimportant" and "I am the main character of the world" for the player.

At the same time, the scene from the player's point of view will be richly and brightly illuminated, in addition to the gradual shrinking of the buildings. This undermines the player's temporary goal of solving puzzles to get lighting. It symbolizes that through exploration and thinking, the player gradually finds a bright and open way out of the very confusing and scary dark environment, and possesses an optimistic mindset and firm confidence.



## 1. CBD

**Atmosphere: Darkest, snowing**

**Architectural Style: Modern office building architecture, neon city decorations**

**Contains puzzles: Maze; Game Set; Eyeball**



The CBD is the beginning of the maze and has almost no lighting, having an out-of-reach environment where the player appears to be very small. This is the scene in the entire game where the player needs to provide the most lighting, and puzzle solving is necessary here.



## 2. City

**Atmosphere: Wee hours, quietness**

**Architectural Style: Neighborhood streets**

**Contains puzzles: Brain; Swollen Body; Heart**

City's environments are illuminated with some streetlights, the ambient light feels like the wee hours of the morning after midnight, and the player doesn't look too small here. It is possible to attempt to move forward without relying on lighting, but it is relatively difficult, so solving puzzles to obtain lighting is recommended.





### 3. Suburban

**Atmosphere: Dawn & morning, peaceful**

**Architectural Style: Houses, courtyards, churches and stores**

**Contains puzzles: Buddha; Science Model; Black Hole; Living well; Animal; Hero**

The suburban has a calm and peaceful atmosphere, with lighting that looks like the sun rising early in the morning, and it's from here that the player can start to realize how small everything has become. As the lighting fulfills the need for wayfinding, the puzzles here become unnecessary in terms of game progression.





#### 4. Farm

**Atmosphere: Noontime, warmth**

**Architectural Style: Crops, warehouses and agricultural implements**

**Contains puzzles: Sports shoes; Passion; Impulses**

Farm's setting was a warm midday with a breeze and everything was organized. Everything in the scene looks like a miniature model, and the player can even ignore the maze of paths to move through the scene at will. From here on the maze paths become non-essential to the progress of the game.



## 5. Nature

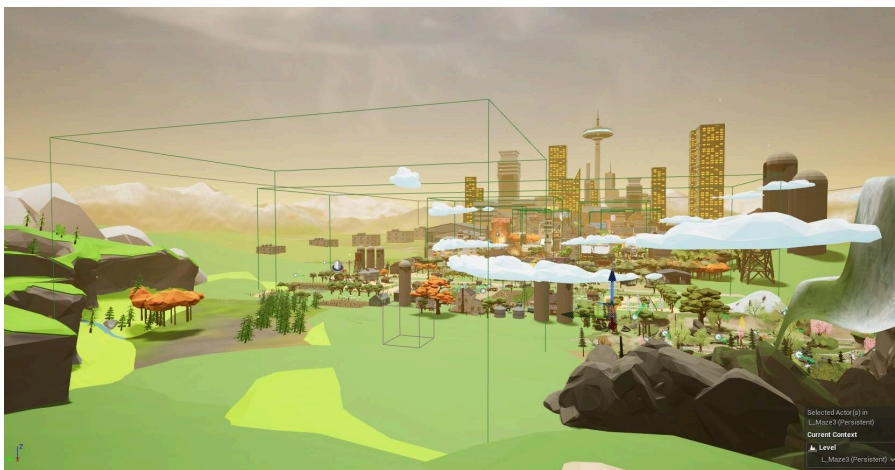
**Atmosphere: Breezing, Spring-like**

**Architectural Style: Mountain forests, waterfalls and streams**

**Contains puzzles: Grand Final Puzzle**

Nature's environments create a fantastical natural forest waterfall feel, with two isolated mountain waterfalls to the left and right, and the Grand Final Puzzle in the center. While the player doesn't have to solve this puzzle in order to get to the ending level, the game progresses in a non-linear path from here on out.



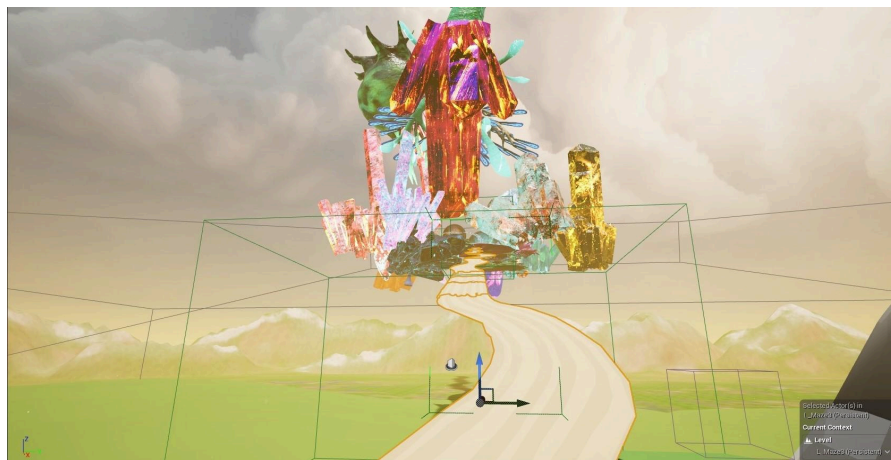


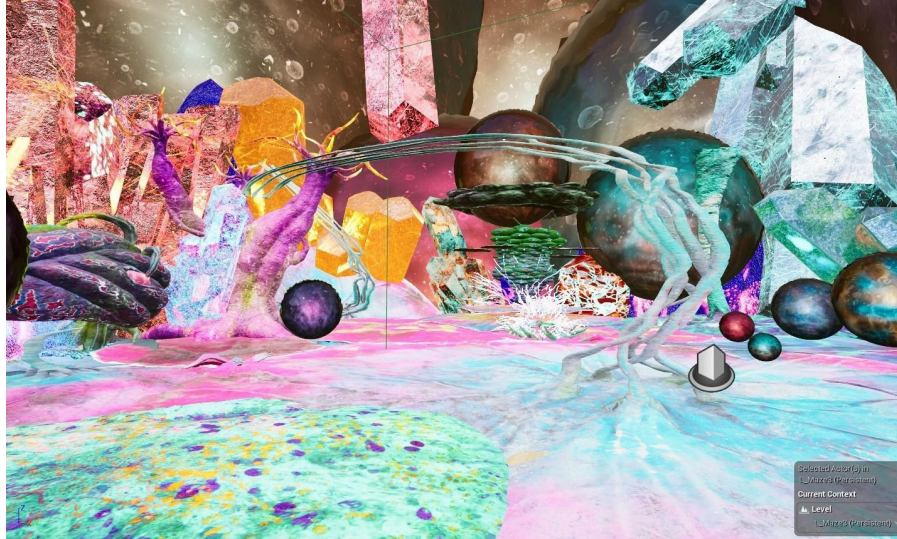
## 6. Fantasy (Ending Level)

**Atmosphere: Colorful, dazzling**

**Architectural Style: Fancy crystal, bubble slimes and creeping plants**

The ending level is a scene out of reality, dazzling and full of color. There are no puzzles and the player can move freely while the game plays the ending plot.





## Story

In the game "No Purpose Question," the narrative unfolds in a maze dream world created by Narrator 1. Players step into the shoes of narrator 1, finding itself in a dark maze that symbolizes its inner struggles. As players solve puzzles, they not only illuminate the environment but also unravel Narrator 1's confessions and emotional turmoil.

The lighting of the maze parallels the evolution of Narrator 1's diary entries. Initially filled with feelings of depression and emptiness, the diary's tone gradually shifts towards an acceptance of nihilism and a realization of the importance of living in the moment without obsessing over life's inherent meaning. This journey culminates in the grand final puzzle, where Narrator 1 directly addresses the player, sharing insights from its personal journey.

Simultaneously, the game introduces a meta-narrative layer with Narrator 2, who transcends the game's world. This narrator challenges the traditional game narrative structure, addressing the player directly from a spectator's perspective. Narrator 2's interventions are designed to encourage players to question and critically evaluate the narrative, rather than passively accepting it. This element adds depth to the gameplay, emphasizing the importance of independent thought and the player's active role in shaping their understanding of the game's themes.

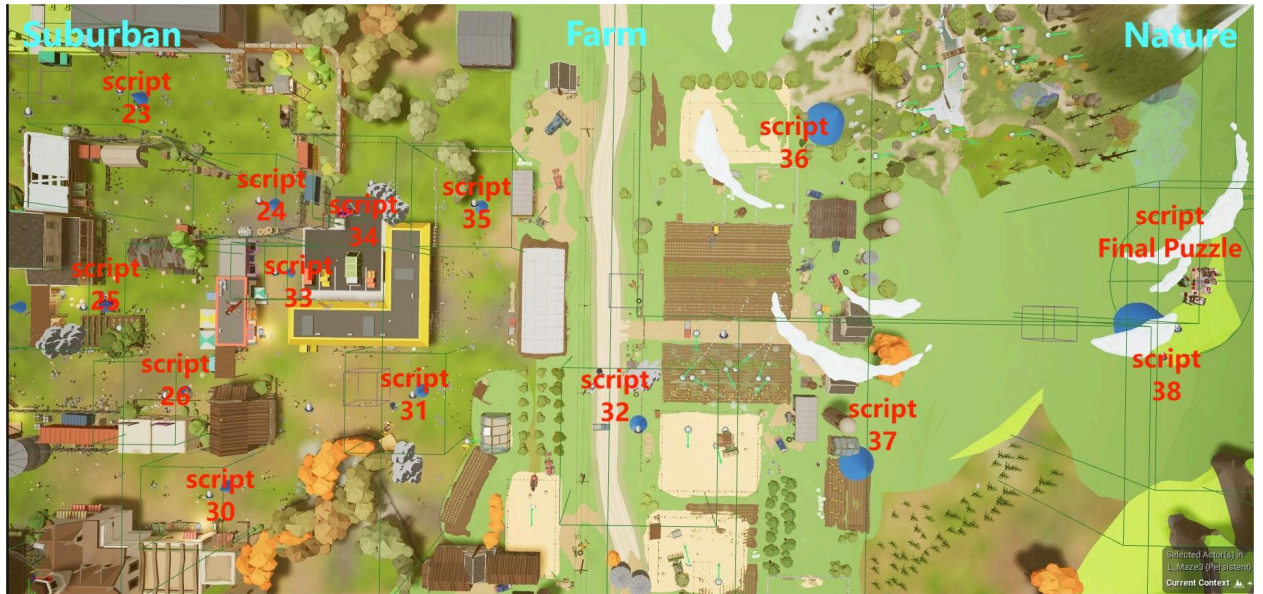
### 1. Script

[Narrator 1 & 2 Script\\_English](#)

## 2. Corresponding location on the map







## Characters

### 1. Player

First-person perspective, has full game control.

## 2. Narrator 1

The character who tells the main story by monologue plots and gives player guidance and questions. Narrator 1 is the owner of the maze dream world and the reflection of the author's concept. Everything that narrator 1 said has the subtitle objects (“word blocks”), which the player can pick up and use to generate puzzle pieces.

## 3. Narrator 2

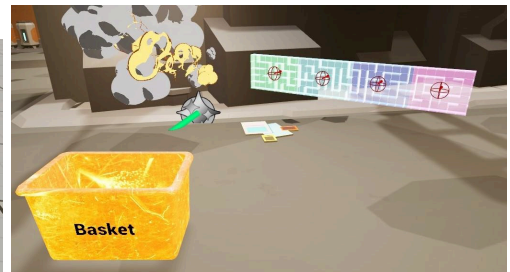
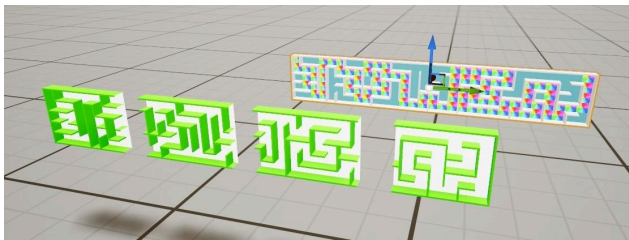
The character who gives player comments and misguidance, sometimes trying to challenge the narrator 1 by talking to the player privately. Narrator 2 has only voice and no subtitles, players can only access the narrator 2 content through the headphone.

## Puzzles

### 1. Maze

**Assembly pieces: 4**

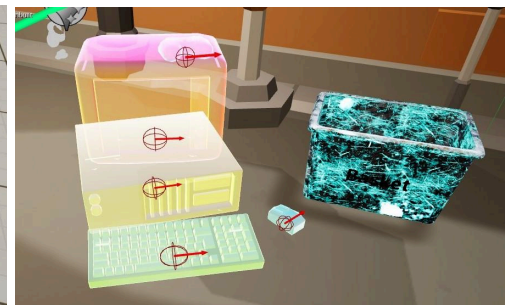
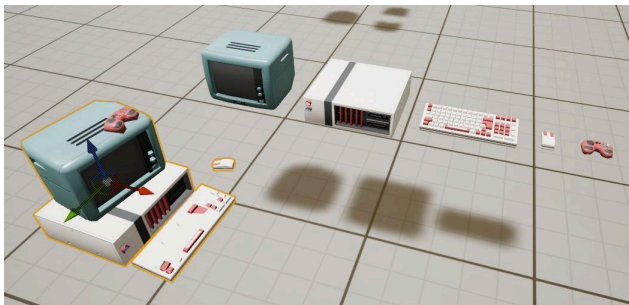
**Corresponding monologue:** I've been asking myself for many years, do I really have depression? Sensitive, paranoid, irritable, anxious... It's like I've placed myself in a **maze**, with no escape. It seems like I am truly ill.



### 2. Game Set

**Assembly pieces: 5**

**Corresponding monologue:** I hate brightness, prefer darkness, prefer excitement. I play **games** when I can't sleep. Once I start, I can't stop. I'm addicted to the feeling of 'forgetting time, starting new level, escaping reality'.



### 3. Eyeball

**Assembly pieces: 3**

**Corresponding monologue:** The night gave me **black eyes**, but I use them to seek the passcard of despicable.



### 4. Brain

**Assembly pieces: 2**

**Corresponding monologue:** Pessimistic, conspiracy theories, nihilism, perfectionism... I've **thought a lot**, yet it seems there's nothing left behind.



### 5. Swollen Body

**Assembly pieces: 3**

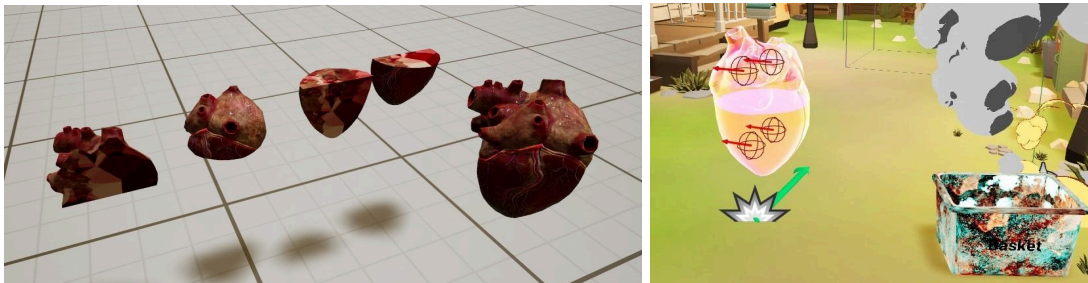
**Corresponding monologue:** Looking at myself in the mirror, **swollen limbs, swollen belly, and swollen face**. Why have I become like this, can't I control myself? Has my freedom ever existed?



### 6. Heart

**Assembly pieces: 4**

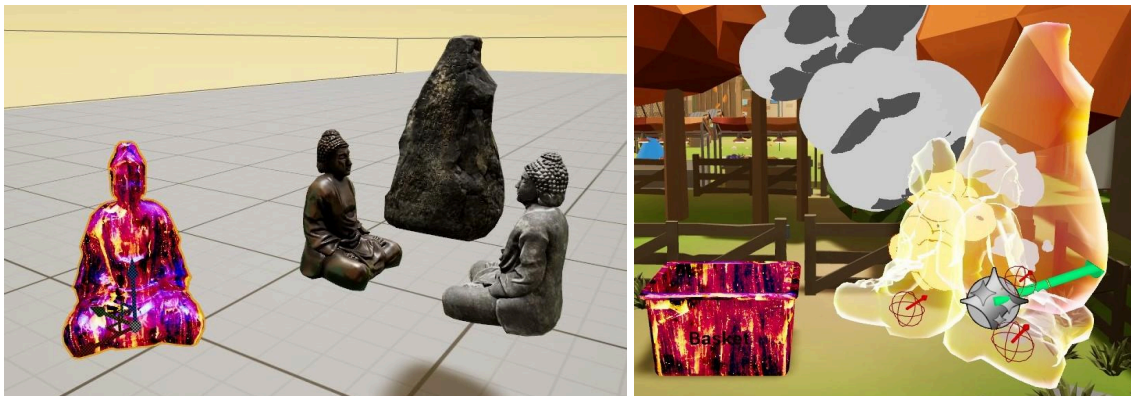
**Corresponding monologue:** Think more, think even more. Why is my paranoia so double standards? I feel extremely uncomfortable with the various asymmetries of the universe. Yet forget that my **heart** is on the left.



## 7. Buddha

**Assembly pieces: 3**

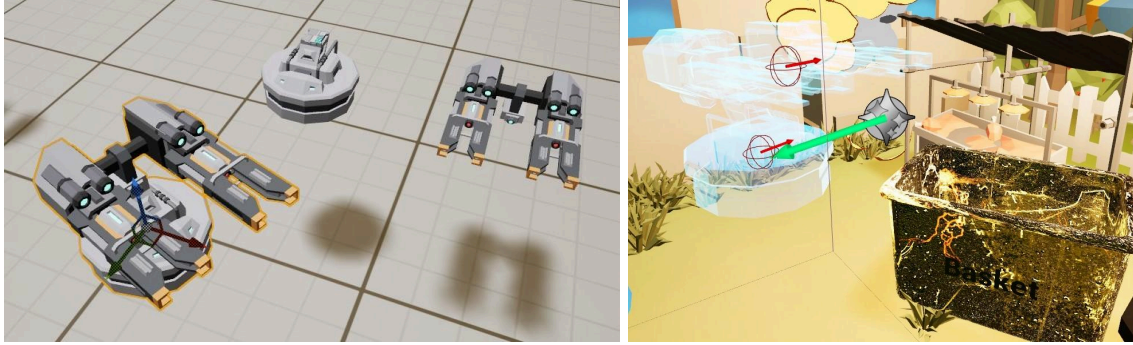
**Corresponding monologue:** I ask Buddha why people cling, **Buddha** says it's because of greed, anger, and obsession. I continue to ask why there is greed, anger, and obsession, why, why, why? Until in the end, Buddha says, this is what I see, what I believe.



## 8. Science Model

**Assembly pieces: 2**

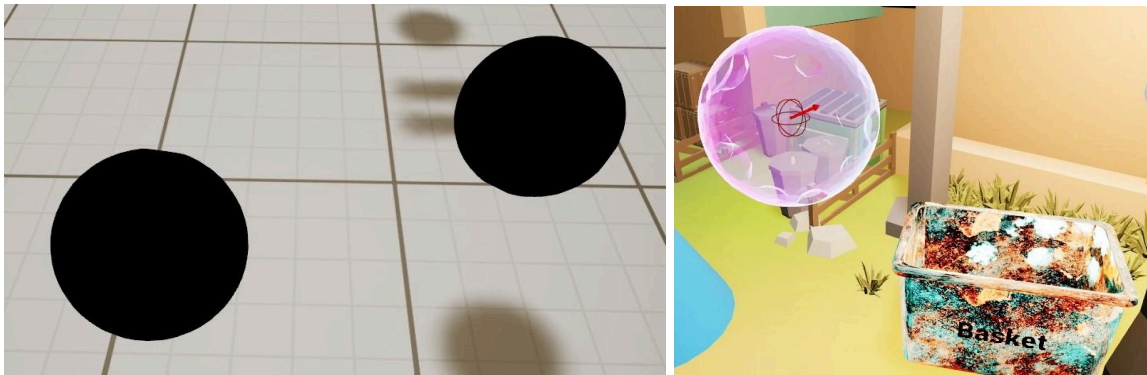
**Corresponding monologue:** I seek the truth, think unscientific isn't truth, but **science** isn't the same as truth, truth may be the value of meaning. Science brings knowledge, yet it is meaningless. Nothingness is also meaningless. The depression that nothingness brings me is also meaningless.



## 9. Black Hole

**Assembly pieces: 1**

**Corresponding monologue:** The meaning of life is a 'not given' question, not 'true or false'. Nothingness is like a **blackhole** that haunts me.



## 10. Living Well

**Assembly pieces: 5**

**Corresponding monologue:** I have never been in agricultural or industrial production. Yet I live well, live in **good clothing, food, house, transportation and entertainment**, enjoying many rights.



## 11. Animal

**Assembly pieces: 2**

**Corresponding monologue:** I thought pondering life and meaning was a reflection of humanity. In fact, seeking benefit, driven by instinct, avoiding reality, is a reflection of **animal** nature.



## 12. Hero

**Assembly pieces: 3**

**Corresponding monologue:** Suicidal nihilists are cowardly. I realized I've always thought of myself as the **hero** of a kungfu novel. I must find the strongest technique and the meaning of everything. Only then can I cultivate and live properly.



## 13. Sportshoes

**Assembly pieces: 2**

**Corresponding monologue:** Everything can be negated, which means everything can be affirmed. I free myself from my obsession with the question. I free myself from the importance of myself. So what should I do while living? Weirdly, when I **start to do**, I forget that I need meaning.



## 14. Passion

**Assembly pieces: 3**

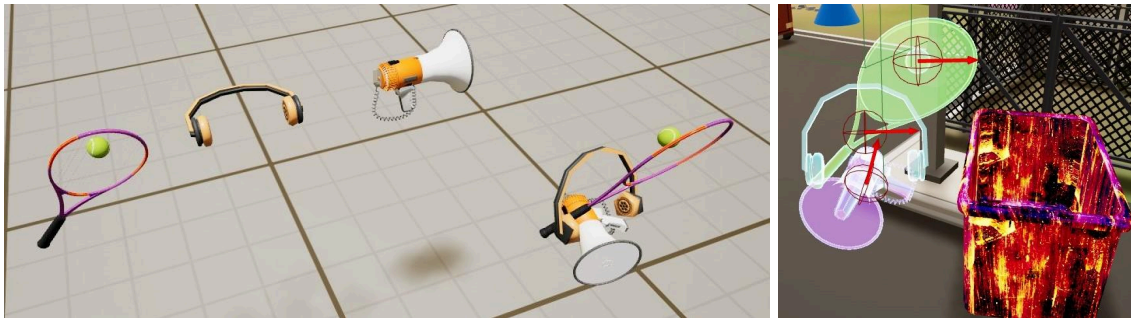
**Corresponding monologue:** Many people say you need to find your passion and spark. Without them, you'll achieve nothing. I know that **money, power, and creation** can all be meanings, but it's hard to admit that this is my passion.



## 15. Impulses

**Assembly pieces: 3**

**Corresponding monologue:** I have my existence. I feel many impulses. I believe these impulses exist. I go to the **tennis court** and I want to play. I hear **music** and I want to create melodies. I see injustice and I want to **shout out**.



## 16. Grand Final Puzzle

**Assembly pieces: 15**

**Corresponding monologue:** So yes, you may feel it's nebulous, but this is my story. This is the workbench I'm at, working, eating, gaming, making games. Feeling busy, feeling free, feeling stimulated, feeling emptiness. While I struggle here, focusing on reality is my way out. When I focus on the pizza flavor of the day that I haven't had in a long time, when I focus on the engaging game I got to play, when I focus on the scratches on my model ..... It was as if there was no more meaningless or emptiness. So I decided to focus on the present moment, to experience the joys and sorrows of the moment, which may be truly precious.



## Gameplay & Mechanics

### Gameplay

#### 1. Game progression

**Introduction:** Beside the tutorial and disclaimer, the game begins with an introduction to the dream world and the core philosophical themes. Players start in a maze-like environment.

**Exploration and Puzzles:** Players explore the maze, encountering various puzzles. Each puzzle solved gives lightning props to explore paths and reveals more of the game's narrative and philosophical discussions. At the beginning, solving puzzles seems necessary, because players need to generate lightning to find paths. It also intentionally trains players to "achieve the goal".

**Narrative Unfolding:** As players progress, the dual narrators guide and challenge them with philosophical questions and perspectives, deepening the existential exploration. Players will intend to think and act independently based on the dual narrators' content. Meanwhile, the goal of "solving puzzles" becomes unnecessary because the environment changes (there are enough lights to see the paths), which means to



decentralize the “goal”. Players will proceed game progression if they don’t achieve any goals.

**Climax:** The game reaches a climax at the grand final puzzle where players confront the central philosophical dilemma - the “no purpose question”: Defining meaning is meaningless.

**Resolution:** The game concludes with a resolution that reflects the player's journey and interpretations of the philosophical themes explored. The narrator 2 will ask the final question at the end of the game - are you walking out of the maze? It’s an open question, asking both the “player character” and the “player in reality”, and the maze reflecting both “physical maze in game map” and “the nihilism maze”.

## 2. Objectives

**Current objective:** Assemble puzzles to get lighting props.

**Stage objective:** Use existing lighting to find the path out of the maze.

**Final objective:** Use the puzzle-generated props to assemble the grand final puzzle. Thinking about the “no purpose question” that the narrator 2 asks at the end. (How to survive in a world where everything is meaningless?)

## Mechanics

### 1. Physics

**Perspective:**

Viewport: Player viewport aligns with the VR headset.

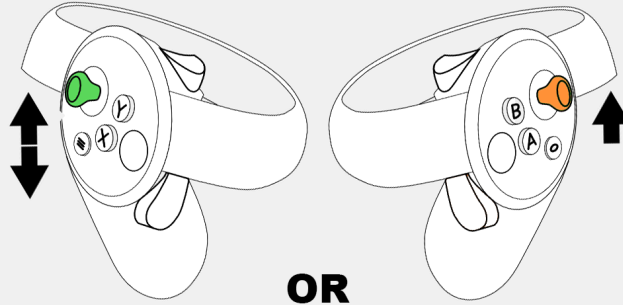
**Movements:**

Teleport - Push the Oculus Touch Right thumbstick to teleport to a selected location. (This is the recommended way to move for players with motion sickness).

Walking simulation - Push/Pull the Oculus Touch Left thumbstick to move forward and backward smoothly in the scene.

## Move

1. Push/Pull **LEFT** thumbstick to move forward or backward smoothly.
2. Push **RIGHT** thumbstick to teleport location.

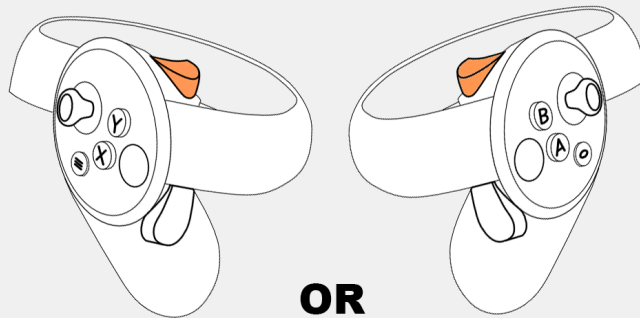


## Actions:

Select - Click the Oculus Touch Trigger (left or right).

## Select

Click **LEFT** or **Right Trigger** to select.

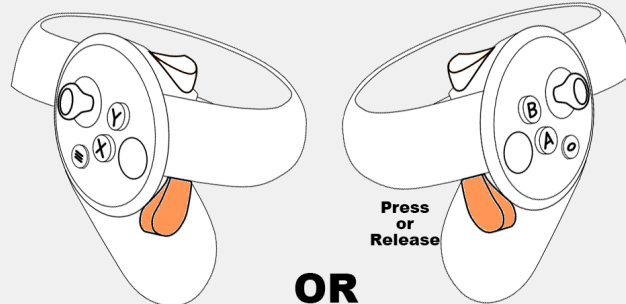


Grab - Press and hold the Oculus Touch Grab button (left or right).

Drop/Throw - Release the Oculus Touch Grab button (left or right).

## Grab & Drop

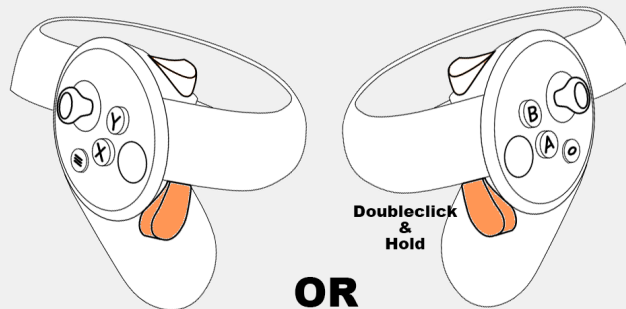
1. Press the **LEFT** or **Right Grab** to grab.
2. Release the **LEFT** or **Right Grab** to drop



Remote Grab - Aim the object then double click and hold the Oculus Touch Grab button (left or right).

## Remote Grab

- Aim, doubleclick and hold the LEFT or Right Grab to get an object.**



## 2. Assembling Puzzles

### Get puzzle pieces:

Players need to grab/remote grab the “word blocks”, then throw them into the basket to generate puzzle pieces.

### Match puzzle pieces to holos:

Players need to grab the puzzle pieces, then put them in the corresponding holos, when piece and holo are matched, another holo will appear.

### Get the prop:

When all holos are matched with proper pieces, the puzzle will generate the corresponding prop. Players can use the generated props as puzzle pieces for the grand final puzzle.

# Levels

[\[Realtime Recording\] No Purpose Question Gameplay](#)

## Tutorial Level

**Gameplay Video** [00:05 - 02:14](#)

### 1. Synopsis

In the tutorial level, players are introduced to the core VR mechanics essential for navigating the game's main levels. This tutorial is designed as a simple, intuitive experience, guiding players through basic VR interactions such as movement, selection, object manipulation (grabbing and dropping), and remote grabbing. The culmination of the tutorial is a mini-puzzle ("the maze", also it's the first puzzle to solve in the main level), offering players a hands-on opportunity to practice these newly learned skills. This initial puzzle serves as both a teaching tool and a gateway to the game's deeper, more complex challenges in the main levels.

### 2. Objectives

**Familiarize with Basic Movement:** Teach players how to navigate the VR environment, including walking, teleporting and looking around.

**Master Object Interaction:** Instruct players on how to interact with objects — grabbing, holding, dropping, throwing and remote grabbing them within the VR space.

**Learn Selection Techniques:** Guide players on selecting items for options within the game, crucial for the disclaimer in the main level.

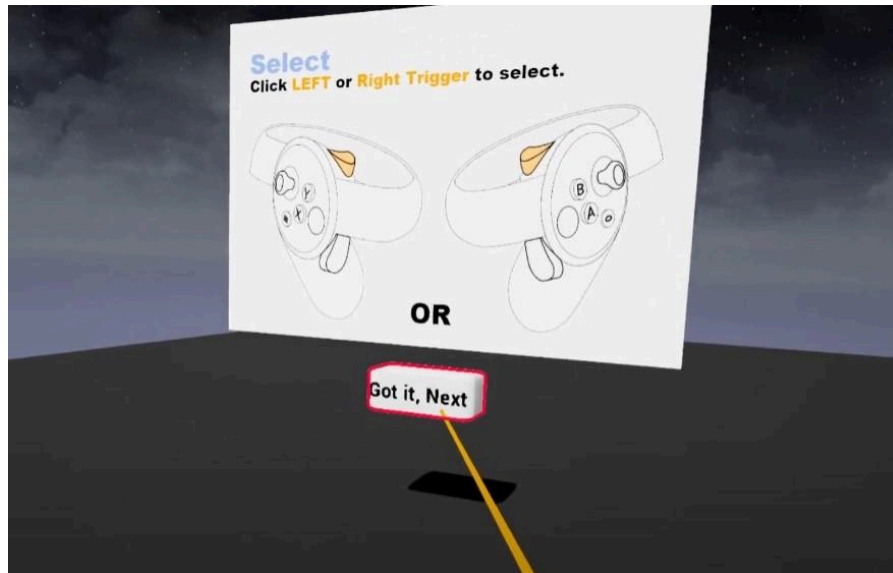
**Practice Remote Grabbing:** Introduce the concept of remote grabbing, allowing players to manipulate objects from a distance, crucial for puzzle-solving.

**Solve the Initial Maze Puzzle:** Provide players with a simple puzzle to apply their newly acquired skills, ensuring they are prepared for the main game's challenges.

**Build Confidence in VR Mechanics:** Ensure players are comfortable and confident with the VR controls and the game's interface before advancing to the main levels.

### 3. Locations

**Tutorial platform:** a simple floor at night, limited space to move.



## Main Maze Level

Gameplay Video [02:17 - 27:35](#)

### 1. Synopsis

This level is a core part of the gameplay, where the player navigates through a maze that symbolizes the inner struggles of the character, Narrator 1. As players solve puzzles, they illuminate the maze and uncover layers of the narrative, delving deeper into themes of nihilism and the search for meaning. The maze's design and the progression of the puzzles are intricately linked to the unfolding of the story, offering a unique blend of gameplay and philosophical exploration.

While Narrator 1's journey through the maze is marked by introspection and a philosophical quest for meaning, Narrator 2 brings a different perspective. This character is designed to challenge the player's thoughts and decisions, adding depth to the narrative and gameplay. The dynamic between the two narrators enriches the storyline, providing a multifaceted exploration of the game's themes.

### 2. Objectives

**Exploration:** Players must navigate the complex maze, uncovering its secrets and understanding its layout. This exploration is key to progressing in the game.

**Puzzle-Solving:** The maze contains various puzzles that players need (or not, it's always there) to solve. These puzzles are integral to the storyline and help players to advance to deeper narration of the concept.

**Complete the Grand Final Puzzle:** Collecting all puzzle-generated props is crucial for completing the grand final puzzle.

**Narrative Progression:** As players explore and solve puzzles, they will unravel the intertwined stories of Narrator 1 and Narrator 2. They will reach a consensus and merge to one person in the end. The player's understanding of the game's themes deepens as they progress and intend to think independently.

**Narrative Integration:** The script's exploration of themes like meaninglessness, the search for purpose, and the questioning of life's value should be intertwined with gameplay. Players should feel that their actions and choices in the maze are part of a larger philosophical conversation initiated by the narrators.

**Emotional Resonance:** The game should aim to evoke emotional responses that align with the narrators' existential struggles, allowing players to empathize with the characters' journeys through nihilism and possibly their own philosophical inquiries.

### 3. Locations

A [big maze map](#) decorated with [CBD/City/Suburban/Farm/Nature](#) architecture.

**CBD:** The oppressive, dark, cold and high-rise environment creates a sense of insecurity for the player, symbolizing helplessness and insignificance in the face of deep nihilism.

**City:** From here, the player can see the "Ending Level" in the distance, which also provides a general direction. The environment is still dark, but the surrounding buildings are less oppressive. Symbolizing the beginning of the search for a way out of the nihilistic dilemma.

**Suburban:** It's a long road to explore, taking up half of the total map area. This is where the player will solve most of the puzzles and listen to most of the scripts, and where the player will discover the conflict, consensus, and merger of Narrator 1 and 2, symbolizing the emergence of a methodology that coexists with nihilism after some struggle and reflection.

**Farm:** Players will be given access to themes that are directly illuminated in the game's narrative here, about how nihilism is viewed when it comes to life.

**Nature:** It is here that the player is introduced to the grand final puzzle, and can decide whether or not to return to the main body of the maze to complete the grand final puzzle. the player receives a blurb from the author of the game, which further elucidates the game's aim of exploring nihilistic methodology.

In the game's climactic the "grand final puzzle", the culmination of the journey through existential themes and the labyrinth of the maze unfolds. This level synthesizes the

narrative arcs of both narrators, confronting and resolving the central themes of nihilism and the search for meaning. The design of this level reflects a convergence of the philosophical dilemmas explored throughout the game, leading to a final set of challenges that test the player's understanding and emotional engagement with these concepts.

## Ending Level

**Gameplay Video** [27:35 - 30:21](#)

### 1. Synopsis

The Ending Level begins with a serene yet thought-provoking journey from the end of the main maze to a paradise-like fantasy scene. As players traverse this path, they are accompanied by the developer's song, whose lyrics (found in the [script](#)) encapsulate the game's themes and the emotional journey of the players. This song serves as a reflective backdrop, enhancing the mood and depth of the experience, and give palyers time to think about the theme. There is also narrator 2's "call on action" to the player himself, encouraging players to leave comments on the game experience or nihilistic themes.

This ending is designed to leave a lasting impression, encouraging players to ponder the nature of existence, meaning, and their personal journey through the game's narrative and thematic maze.

### 2. Objectives

**Resolution and Reflection:** As players progress, they should be guided towards a resolution or deeper understanding of the nihilistic themes, influenced by the evolution of the narrators' perspectives throughout the game. This could culminate in a meaningful reflection on the nature of nihilism and its impact on the human experience.

### 3. Locations

**Fantasy Scene:** The player is explicitly told that this is the end of the game, and narrator 2 throws out the final question "are you walking out of the maze?" It's an open question, asking both the "player character" and the "player in reality", and the maze reflecting both " player character" and "player in reality", and the maze reflecting both " player in reality". It's an open question, asking both the "player character" and the "player in reality", and the maze reflecting both " physical maze in game map" and "the nihilism maze".

# Assets

## Art

### 1. Static Meshes & Materials

- Original design monsters by Jin
- Procedural Maze Generator
- Polygon - Sci-Fi City
- Low Poly Town
- Polygon - Western Pack
- Polygon - Battle Royals
- Polygon - Farm Pack
- Lowpoly Style Woodlands Pack
- Internal Organs
- BFX Status
- Stylized Props 01
- Asian Armour
- Fantastical Resource Shader

### 2. Lightening

- Advanced Street Lights

### 3. Atmospheres

- VFX Weather Pack
- Matte Painting Skybox Pack: Chaotic Skies

### 4. Post Process

- Amplify LUT Pack

### 5. Particles

- Stylized Vfx Mix Niagara
- Niagara Projectiles Vol.1
- Stylized VFX Pack Vol.3 Niagara
- Various Fireworks VFX2



## Sound

### 1. Background Music

**Name:** Richter: Dream 17 (Alpha)

**Artist:** Max Richter

**Album:** Sleep

### 2. Environment Sound

Nature forest birds chipping effect

Windy and breeze effect

City traffic effect

Countryside noise effect

### 3. Characters Voiceover

**Narrator 1:**

English (US) - Andrew

150 wpm

**Narrator 2:**

English (US) - Joanna

150 wpm

### 4. Actions Effect

Boom Library - The Interface: Buttons, Clicks & Jingles

## Concept Thesis

### The Author's Note & Background

I never had a doubt whether I was born thinking differently or whether it was a congenital disease combined with environmental factors in my upbringing that caused me to think differently. But I have come to realize that it doesn't matter. What mattered was that my thoughts kept changing, but never for a moment was I in tune with the world.

Finally a former depressive, I knew profoundly that this time it wasn't depression. This helpless, calm, disheveled and somewhat hopeful mood was new. It even kind of made me re-examine the life I've been living. I hadn't lost the ability to manage myself, I just seemed to feel for a

moment that everything in the world didn't matter so much, that I didn't care about any of the things I used to care about, let alone the ones I didn't care about in the first place. And this happened to happen during the first year I left my hometown, a year in which I thought I was living a good life, but was forever missing something. I later learned that what I was missing was a passion, a drive, as if I didn't have anything left to pursue. I even turned my traditional perception of many things upside down. I didn't doubt my values, but I sincerely believe that they are not that important anymore.

So I began to be obsessed with the question "what is the meaning of the world I live in"? I was caught up in this question for a long, long time, maybe even up to a year or more, and I was very actively searching for the meaning of all kinds of actions, but to my despair, the more actively I searched for meaning, the more meaningless it seemed to become. I didn't realize at the time that I didn't need to have an answer to this question, but I thought I must have had a mental health problem because I was having such vain thoughts.

I began to use my swing time to remember my upbringing. I was born in 1999, one step shy of entering the millennium. I was the only child in my family and China was implementing a fertility policy at that time. So, in a time when most people still preferred to have boys, I was born with a congenital disease in a seaside town. Another huge change in my life, aside from the difficult upbringing, was that I traveled across the ocean to attend school in the United States. It was exciting, and I didn't even think it would be challenging. But in this small, peaceful, and loving village, I finally realized that many of the things I had been concerned about were due to social factors and the impact of my relationships. This problem can be expanded to a major spiritual dilemma of the contemporary immigration asian community, who are perhaps either confused or numb. I say this because I come from among them. I think it may be the social pressure of an increasingly aging developing country and the dilemma of class entrenchment caused by the difficulty of breaking through smooth economic development. What I am experiencing is exactly what they are experiencing, and the fact that I am now temporarily removed from that environment for various reasons has given me some nihilistic myths.

At first I was still actively searching for how to overcome this nihilism and get back to the "right track" of life, but later, after studying nihilistic philosophies and methodologies from both East and West, I realized that the relatively simple and life-like way is to accept this nothingness and not to give up on feeling the world. If searching for meaning is meaningless, then cherishing the precious present moment, experiencing every moment in the present moment, and loving everyone in the present moment will be my ultimate way out.

## Research

### 1. What is Nihilism?

Nihilism is a philosophical concept that refers to the lack of intrinsic meaning or value in life. Nihilists believe that life lacks purpose or objective meaning and that concepts such as truth, morality and values are human constructs that lack any intrinsic meaning.

Nihilism can therefore be seen as a rejection of traditional values and a rejection of the idea that life has any intrinsic meaning or purpose.

In modern life, nihilism can refer to a general attitude of skepticism or cynicism toward traditional values and beliefs. It can manifest itself in a variety of ways, such as a rejection of religious or moral principles and a rejection of social norms and customs. To be more lifelike, it would be indifference or transcendence to the world around us.

For example, indifference to political or social issues, feeling that one's actions or opinions have little impact. Lack of motivation or interest in pursuing personal goals or ambitions. Or a lack of interest in establishing or maintaining personal relationships, and a sense of isolation or disconnection from others. Feeling disconnected from nature and the environment, and lacking concern for ecological issues. These are just a few examples, but it is important to note that apathy and transcendence can manifest themselves in different ways in different people and environments.

## 2. Nihilism in eastern and western philosophy

Most of the current references to nihilism come from nihilism as proposed in Western philosophy. It can also be seen in certain cultural and philosophical movements, such as postmodernism, which rejects the notion of objective truth and believes that all knowledge and values are relative and subjective. It can also be seen in the form of existential nihilism, a nihilism that holds that life has no intrinsic meaning or purpose. This can lead to a sense of despair, transcendence or futility. In politics, it can take the form of political nihilism, which rejects any political ideology or system as having any intrinsic value.

It is worth noting that nihilism is not a single concept and can manifest itself in different ways with different people and contexts. After conducting some research on ancient Eastern philosophical thought, I found that, for example, the widely known ancient Chinese idealist Wang Yangming's proposed teleology has a description of nihilism-related feelings.

Wang Yangming's philosophy of mind is a concept in Chinese philosophy and psychology, and its main theories include "there is nothing outside the mind", "my mind is the universe" and "the unity of knowledge and action". Among them, Wang Yangming emphasized that people's feelings about the natural things in the world come from our mind as an ontology, and our present feelings can be used as a guide for our present actions. He also emphasized the importance of the "here and now" and denied the practice of using past experiences to guide future actions. Moreover, everything in the world exists because we can feel it with our hearts, and our feelings can shape the meaning and even the existence of things. If we understand Wang Yangming's teleology from the perspective of nihilism, if we can no longer experience the meaning of things from within, and if we have no understanding or feeling of things, then things in the world will completely lose their meaning of existence and development.

In Western philosophy, philosophers have defined nihilism more explicitly, and many commentators even consider movements such as Dada, Deconstructionism, and Punk to be nihilistic in nature, and nihilism has been defined as a characteristic of certain times. For example, Baudrillard called the postmodern era nihilistic. It is also believed that nihilists realize that truth exists but is unattainable in practice, so nihilists see the search for truth as futile.

Looking at the views and methodologies of nihilistic confusion in Eastern and Western philosophical circles, we can see that there are still differences between the two. Excluding religious and political influences, I believe that Western philosophical circles emphasize that nihilism leads to feelings of despair, transcendence, or futility, and are more methodologically inclined to guide people to overcome or transform such nihilistic emotions to act with more empowering beliefs. Eastern philosophy, on the other hand, emphasizes that people, as somewhat nihilistic and confused subjects, should accept the existence of such feelings and separate such inner feelings from real actions, focusing more on inner cultivation and acceptance, while paying more transcendent attention to people and things in the world.

### 3. What is the antithesis of nihilism in philosophy? Is there a middle ground between them?

The antithesis of nihilism is often considered to be existentialism. While nihilism holds that life has no inherent meaning or purpose, existentialism posits that individuals must create their own meaning and purpose through their choices and actions. Other philosophies such as Objectivism, Humanism, and Stoicism can also be considered as opposite of nihilism as they posit that there is inherent meaning and purpose in life.

A middle ground between nihilism and its antithesis could be the idea that meaning and purpose in life is not fixed or inherent, but can be created and discovered by individuals through their choices and actions. This perspective could be seen as a synthesis of the two opposing viewpoints, and is often referred to as "constructive nihilism."

### 4. Is nihilism a terminal spiritual illness?

The question of whether nihilism is a terminal mental illness is predicated on defining whether we are talking about nihilism as a state of decadence, of looking away from everything, of not caring about anything, of seeing nothing as meaningful, of seeing everything as The state of "nothingness", or the state of pessimism, resistance to action, and the belief that nothing good can come out of it.

I think if it is the first case, it is by no means a spiritual tumor, it is just a kind of insight after the calm. In ancient China, there was a group of people called "hermits" who cut themselves off from the world and hid deep in the mountains, as if they had disappeared from the world. This insight was not necessarily nihilistic, it could be any kind of

understanding of the world that distinguishes them from the mainstream. But we have to deny that it is an admirable attitude and action, they choose to interact with the world in their own way, rather than choosing to end their lives or submit to the mainstream.

In the second case, I think it might be depression with a touch of anxiety. As a former depressive, I can clearly appreciate and distinguish the difference between nihilistic feelings and depressive moods, and I think an important marker is the definition of meaning about anything and whether we, as ontological beings, no longer care or have given up for various reasons.

So-called nihilism is a great profundity, a great insight, and people who uphold nihilism may also be very positive and progressive at the same time, as was the case with Nietzsche. We can say that Nietzsche was a nihilist, but he belonged to the fighting type of nihilism. This can be understood as an active pessimist, a "nihilist" who is still working with all his might to transform reality. I think this nihilism is not a spiritual terminal illness, but rather a spiritual choice, a spiritual style. Nihilism is a profound, insightful value that sees things for what they are.

The feeling of decadence, negativity, and complete lying flat may have a strong nihilistic tendency, but I think it is definitely not a spiritual terminal disease. A true nihilist must have seen the tragic side of the world after a thousand sails, and thus denied the value of tradition.

## 5. My personal understanding and the practice I explored

Live with it, and focus on the current moment. Doing things without obsession, living without defining meaning.

## Ideation

Nihilism holds that life has no objective meaning, purpose or intrinsic value. It can be a difficult concept to convey through art because it often goes against traditional notions of beauty and meaning. But instead of focusing on bringing the player a sense of nihilism, my gaming experience will allow the player to explore through narrator 1's dream world and intimate self-narrative, how it is possible to think your way through a deep nihilism and find a way to coexist with it without being oppressed by it. I added some action-puzzle elements to make the game more playable. At the same time, the puzzles become unnecessary in the middle and late stages of the game (the player's failure to achieve the goal does not affect the overall progress of the game), and this practice of nihilism in action creates a sense of "you don't need a goal or a meaning in order to experience the game" for the player.

Interpretations of artwork are often subjective and can vary from person to person, and some people may find nihilistic games frustrating or painful. But how is this not a precious moment that this game creates in the player's life in the present moment? In the context of a game,

incorporating nihilistic themes or elements, will involve exploring the futility of actions, the meaningless of objectives, or the absence of inherent value in the game world. I'd like to achieve it through gameplay mechanics, narrative elements, or the overall design of the game. However, incorporating nihilistic themes in a game can make it a potentially bleak or depressing experience for players, so I will try my best to keep the balance. Still, it may not be suitable for all audiences.

Defining meaning is meaningless, the current moments are truly precious.

The earth will be destroyed, the sun will explode, the universe is getting colder, all things cannot last forever, and in the end nothing will matter. The more you can pull away, the more you can bear the truth. But when you focus on the earth, on the family, on the person or the experience, what you see is that everything matters. Recognizing the fact that "nothing matters" (nihilism) can actually save you from those bad moments, once you get past the awful truth and accept it. Anywhere is the center of the universe, any moment is the most precious moment, anything is the meaning of life.

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