

Journal314 Recall Summary

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✓ # Journal314 All Quotes

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Augustine's Reflections and Personal Struggles with Worldly Desires

- St. [Augustine](#) reflects on the allure of worldly things, such as physical beauty, wealth, and power, but emphasizes the importance of not departing from God's law in pursuit of these desires.
- He notes that sin is committed when one's inclination towards lower goods leads to the forsaking of higher and better things, including God and His truth.
- Augustine describes his own struggles with worldly desires and his eventual conversion to a life focused on seeking God, citing the influence of the [Platonists](#) and the life of Anthony.
- The author reflects on their spiritual journey, describing the struggle between their old, carnal will and their new, spiritual will, which tears their soul apart.

Seeking the Supreme God through Purification and Humility

- They express admiration for those who have dedicated themselves to God, such as [Victorinus](#) and the "poor in [spirit](#)," and lament their own inability to do the same.
- The author references various philosophers, including [Socrates](#) and [Plato](#), who believed in the importance of seeking the one true and supreme God through purification of the mind and [good](#) morals.
- Miguel de Molinos' concept of the "[Nihilistic](#) experience" is mentioned, where one must acknowledge their own nothingness and misery in order to attain a higher state of being and union with God.
- To achieve internal peace and closeness to God, one must die to their self, embracing nothingness and humility, and resign themselves to God's will.
- God loves those who suffer most, if they pray with faith and reverence, and the happy soul is one that is overwhelmed by its own nothingness.

Spiritual Growth through Silence, Suffering, and Internal Recollection

- The senses are not capable of divine blessings, and true happiness and wisdom come from silence, patience, and confidence in God's guidance.
- St. Bonaventure teaches that one should not form conceptions of God, as this is an imperfection, and instead, one should prepare their heart like clean paper for God's wisdom.
- The path to spiritual growth involves [suffering](#), temptation, and darkness, but these are necessary for purging the soul and making it know its own misery.
- Internal recollection is faith and silence in the presence of God, and one should shut up their senses and trust God with all care of their welfare.
- [The devil](#) will conspire against those who seek internal recollection, but perseverance in faith and silence will lead to internal improvement and infinite fruit.

Internal Recollection, Mystical Silence, and the Devil's Interference

- The Devil often disrupts the soul's internal conversation with a multitude of thoughts, causing distress and leading the soul away from God.
- True internal recollection and prayer require patience, humility, and resignation, and can bring greater rewards than external penitential exercises.
- The soul must strip itself of imperfect reflections and sensible pleasures to attain perfect prayer, and few souls achieve this due to a lack of internal recollection and mystical silence.
- Daily occupations do not distract from internal recollection and virtual prayer, as long as they are in line with God's will.
- Mystical silence is achieved by not speaking, desiring, or thinking, allowing God to communicate with the soul and impart wisdom.
- Renouncing worldly desires and thoughts is necessary to gain the treasure of internal recollection and union with God.

Caring for One's Soul and the Path to Spiritual Growth

- [St. Paul](#) and other spiritual leaders emphasize the importance of caring for one's own soul before attending to the needs of others.
- True spiritual growth requires resignation, humility, and a willingness to wait for God's call, rather than relying on one's own judgment and desires.
- The mystical Science is not received by many due to a lack of disposition, and spiritual directors should prioritize internal solitude over guiding souls.
- True preparation for spiritual growth involves living with purity and self-denial, and a universal detachment from the world, with inward mortification and continual retirement.

- One should approach spiritual growth with humility, a desire to do God's will, and the guidance of a confessor, and be willing to suffer and be refined in order to receive divine influence.

The Path to Perfection through Contempt, Suffering, and Union with God

- The path to perfection involves embracing [contempt](#), [suffering](#), and self-annihilation, and few souls are willing to take this path, as stated by the Lord and S. Bernard.
- True union with God arises from suffering, which is the truest proof of love, and one should be constant and quiet in the face of tribulation and affliction.
- The experience of spiritual growth can be marked by feelings of despair, darkness, and desolation, but one should remain resigned and patient, trusting in God's omnipotence to produce wonders in the soul.
- The quotes emphasize the importance of spiritual suffering and self-denial in achieving true union with God, as stated by Teresa and other mystic divines.

Tolstoy on the Futility of Worldly Pursuits and the Search for Meaning

- [Tolstoy](#) highlights the futility of seeking happiness in worldly possessions and the importance of living a simple life, free from the burdens of materialism.
- The quotes also touch on the themes of mortality, the meaninglessness of life, and the search for truth and purpose, as expressed by Tolstoy and other authors, including Kierkegaard and [Vivekananda](#).

The Meaninglessness of Life and the Search for Faith

- The author reflects on the meaninglessness and cruelty of life, feeling that it's a delusion and that bringing others into this reality is pointless.
- They criticize various branches of knowledge for failing to provide answers to life's fundamental questions, instead focusing on specific scientific inquiries.
- The author quotes philosophers like [Socrates](#), [Schopenhauer](#), Solomon, and [Buddha](#), who all seem to agree that life is inherently meaningless and that death is the only escape from its [suffering](#).
- Despite understanding the futility of life, the author struggles to reconcile this knowledge with the desire to continue living, feeling that it's a foolish and painful position to be in.
- Ultimately, the author suggests that faith, or an instinctive consciousness of life, is necessary to find meaning and purpose, even in the face of [nihilism](#) and despair.

The Teachings of Jesus and the Pursuit of a Meaningful Life

- The author reflects on the teachings of [Jesus](#), particularly the command "Resist not evil," and its implications for living a life of non-violence and compassion.
- The author notes that many people, including believers and skeptics, misunderstand the true meaning of Jesus' teachings and instead prioritize their own desires and interests.
- The author draws parallels between the ideas of Jesus and other spiritual leaders, such as the Hebrew prophets, [Buddha](#), and Solomon, who all emphasize the importance of renouncing personal desires and living a life of selflessness.
- The pursuit of a meaningful life beyond personal desires has been a long-standing human quest, with many seeking to live for the greater [good](#) of their families, nations, and humanity.
- The doctrine of Jesus emphasizes the [renunciation](#) of self and service to humanity, with true salvation lying in harmony with God's will, rather than in personal gain or earthly pursuits.
- The author critiques societal norms, highlighting the contradiction between the pursuit of power, wealth, and security, and the teachings of Jesus, which emphasize the importance of living simply, being prepared to die at any moment, and following the commandments of love and non-resistance.

Transformation, Renunciation, and Cosmopolitanism

- The author reflects on their transformation from a judgmental and angry attitude towards others to a more humble and servant-like approach, renouncing worldly values and embracing simplicity and poverty.
- The author quotes [Leo Tolstoy](#), emphasizing the importance of recognizing fellowship with the whole world and renouncing nationalism, and instead cultivating a sense of cosmopolitanism.
- [GK Chesterton](#) is quoted, highlighting the corrupting influence of luxury and the importance of balancing wonder and welcome in one's view of the world, and criticizing materialism for its destructive effects on humanity.

Questioning Logic, Evolution, and the Nature of Reality

- The author questions the reliability of logic and observation, suggesting that even [good](#) logic can be misleading.
- Evolution is seen as a threat to rationalism, not religion, as it implies that there is no objective reality, only a flux of everything.
- The author criticizes philosophers like Nietzsche and [Tolstoy](#), arguing that they have lost their right to rebel against anything by rebelling against everything.
- In contrast, [Joan of Arc](#) is presented as a figure who embodied the best qualities of both Tolstoy and Nietzsche, with a strong sense of purpose and conviction.

- The author argues that true optimism is based on the fact that humans do not fit into the world, and that [Christianity](#) offers a unique combination of [pessimism](#) and optimism.

Contempt for Worldly Things and the Path to Spiritual

Transformation

- The author quotes [St. John of the Cross](#), emphasizing the importance of [contempt for worldly things](#) in order to receive spiritual rewards.
- To receive the [Spirit](#) of God in pure transformation, one must withdraw from worldly things, as loving anything more than God wrongs Him.
- The soul must be purged of affections for created things, as these are a hindrance to transformation in God, and only then can one possess God in this life and the next.
- The doctrine of [Christ](#) teaches contempt for all things, allowing one to receive the reward of the Spirit of God, and the journey to perfection requires a perpetual struggle with desires to make them cease.

The Dark Night of the Soul and Detachment from Created

Things

- The soul must be in darkness to journey on the spiritual road and attain divine union, detaching itself from its own understanding, sense, imagination, judgment, and will.
- The soul must be detached from all created things, including its own actions and capabilities, to attain the likeness of God and be transformed in Him.
- True spirituality seeks bitterness and [suffering](#) in God, rather than sweetness and consolation, and involves self-denial, detachment, and a willingness to endure the cross for God's sake.
- The intellect must make itself blind and cover itself with darkness to attain divine enlightening, as it cannot be immediately directed in the way of God by knowledge or understanding.
- The union of the soul and God is the highest and noblest estate attainable in this life, and is achieved through the imitation of [Christ](#) and the annihilation of self.
- The intellect must not rely on external means, such as bodily senses, to achieve union with God, as these can be a hindrance and source of error.
- True union with God is achieved through faith, which surpasses all understanding, and the soul must walk by faith, with its understanding in darkness.

The Dark Night of Contemplation and Union with God

- [The Dark Night of the Soul](#) is a state where God purges the soul of its sensual desires, leaving it in a state of aridity and darkness, but ultimately leading to great blessings and virtues.

- In this state, the soul must detach itself from sense and strip itself of its desires, establishing itself in faith, which is a stranger to all sense.
- The benefits of this night include the knowledge of oneself and one's misery, and the enlightenment of the soul, giving it knowledge of the greatness and excellence of God.
- The "dark night of contemplation" is a state where the soul is purified and instructed by God, leading to a deeper understanding of oneself and God.
- This process involves the soul feeling empty, impoverished, and detached from worldly things, which can be a painful and afflictive experience.
- The soul's faculties and affections are hindered, making it unable to pray or attend to temporal affairs, and it may feel a sense of emptiness and forgetfulness.
- The ultimate goal of this process is for the soul to be united with God, which requires it to be free from particular forms or conceptions and to be willing to lose itself and become nothing.

Nihilism, Absolute Truth, and the Kingdom of God

- As Fr. [Seraphim Rose](#) notes, the Christian's "[Nihilism](#)" is one that proceeds from abundance, where the world is nothing and God is all, and true fulfillment can only be found in the [Kingdom of God](#).
- The pursuit of pleasure and happiness in this world can lead to a lack of desire for a more profound happiness beyond it, while pain and [suffering](#) can drive one to seek a deeper meaning.
- Nihilism is characterized by the absence of absolute truth, with no clear point of orientation, and is often accompanied by a sense of meaninglessness and despair.
- The theory of the "relativity of truth" is self-contradictory and collapses when confronted with the acknowledgment of an absolute truth, such as the [Christian](#) God or the ultimate coherence of things.
- Liberals and Realists often reject absolute truth, instead embracing a quasi-Nihilist worldview that prioritizes worldly ends and materialism over spiritual or metaphysical concerns.
- The rejection of immortality and the denial of absolute truth can lead to a worldview in which "all things are lawful" and there is no restraint on human behavior, as seen in the philosophy of Nietzsche.

The Rejection of Absolute Truth and the Corruption of the Academic System

- The author critiques the academic system for promoting a false conception of truth and corrupting those who live and work within it, and argues that true seekers of truth must be willing to challenge worldly interests and ideas.
- The Liberal is indifferent to absolute truth, while the Realist is hostile to it, with a fanatical devotion to the world.

- Nietzsche rebelled against a diluted [Christianity](#), rejecting it for a fanatical devotion to the world, mistaking it for the only reality.
- Vitalism, a form of [Nihilism](#), has no relation to truth, devoting itself to something entirely different, often manifesting as a cult of "awareness" and "realization."

The Death of God and the Spiritual Disorder of Nihilism

- The "death of God" means that modern man has lost faith in God and Divine Truth, leading to an abyss of nothingness and uncertainty.
- Nihilism is a spiritual disorder that can only be overcome by spiritual means, but the contemporary world has not attempted to apply such means.

True Christianity and the Renunciation of Worldly Ideals

- The pursuit of [Christian](#) "ideals" in the world is considered idolatry and of the [Antichrist](#), as Christ's [Kingdom](#) is not of this world.
- True Christianity is about the transformation of men, not society, and its end is not a Christian society but the salvation of individuals.
- The emphasis on "action" and "projects" in social Christianity can lead to a focus on outward ideals, obscuring inward truth and the true Kingdom of God.
- The central need of our time is not in the area of "political commitments" and "social responsibilities," but in "prayer and penance" and the preaching of the true Kingdom.
- Christians should not seek to build a Kingdom in the world, but rather renounce worldly ideals and seek the true Kingdom of God, which is not of this world.

Turning Inward, Embracing Humility, and the Importance of Prayer

- The quotes emphasize the importance of turning inward to find God, as stated by [Augustine](#), and that one need not go to heaven to see God, but rather settle in solitude.
- The writers, including Teresa, express their dissatisfaction with the earthly life, describing it as a "prison-house" and a source of "vexation, and disappointment, and manifold trouble."
- The key to spiritual growth is humility, which involves giving up attachment to worldly things, including relationships with relatives, and focusing on God; this is echoed in the writings of [Schopenhauer](#) and the [Pessimists](#).
- True humility requires recognizing one's own unworthiness and being content with the least that God allows, as well as applying oneself to daily mortification of the mind and heart.
- The writers emphasize the importance of prayer, particularly supernatural and transcendental prayer, which involves surrendering oneself entirely to God and allowing Him to work through them.

Detachment, Freedom from Worldly Cares, and the Interior Castle

- Detachment from worldly things is crucial for spiritual growth, but it can be challenging due to worldly trappings and desires for honor and precedence.
- One must flee from the idea of personal rights and instead focus on pleasing God, as [Jesus](#) suffered many insults and injustices.
- The goal is to achieve freedom from worldly cares and desires, which can be attained through prayer, meditation, and self-detachment.
- [St. Teresa of Avila](#) emphasizes the importance of withdrawing from unnecessary cares and business to enter the second mansion of the Interior Castle.

Discomfort, Reality, and Kierkegaard's Sickness Unto Death

- C.S. Lewis notes that if the universe is governed by absolute goodness, then our efforts are hopeless unless we align ourselves with that goodness, and God is both the ultimate comfort and terror.
- The [Christian](#) religion begins with a sense of dismay and discomfort, rather than comfort, and it's necessary to go through this phase to reach comfort.
- Reality can be unbearable and consciousness can be a terrible phenomenon that allows us to see and recoil from it in loathing.
- [Grief](#) and agony can be intense, but they may eventually subside into apathy or boredom.
- Kierkegaard's concept of "[sickness unto death](#)" refers to a state of despair that is a necessary step towards faith and spiritual growth.
- Despair can be an advantage, as it allows individuals to confront their own mortality and the existence of God, leading to a deeper sense of self-awareness and spirituality.

The Advantage of Despair and the Importance of Spiritual Awareness

- The natural man is often ignorant of what is truly dreadful and may shudder at things that are not actually frightening, whereas the [Christian](#) knows what is truly dreadful and shudders at it.
- The possibility of despair is what sets humans apart from animals, and being able to despair is an infinite advantage that allows for spiritual growth and healing.
- According to [Vivekananda](#), individuals who die without realizing their true Self as [Spirit](#) are comparable to a dog's death.
- Kierkegaard describes people who live without being conscious of themselves as spirit or before God as being in despair, even if they accomplish great things or intensely enjoy life.

- He argues that true despair is losing the eternal, not just earthly things, and that people often misunderstand and mislabel their emotions as despair.

Kierkegaard on Solitude, Faith, and the Offense of Christianity

- Kierkegaard emphasizes the importance of solitude, stating that the need for it is a sign of a deeper nature and spirit in a person.
- He defines faith as the self being grounded transparently in God and willing to be itself, and asserts that the opposite of sin is not virtue but faith.
- Kierkegaard believes that people are offended by [Christianity](#) because it sets a goal that is too high for humans, making them feel inadequate and unable to comprehend it.

The Disconnect between Understanding and Action, and the Superficiality of Modern Christianity

- The quotes emphasize the disconnect between understanding and action, as people often claim to comprehend moral and spiritual truths but fail to live up to them.
- [Socrates](#) is referenced as a model for acknowledging the limits of human understanding and the importance of humility in the face of the divine.
- The author critiques the superficiality of modern Christianity, arguing that it has lost sight of the true nature of sin and the need for genuine spiritual transformation.
- The concept of sin is explored as a state of being that develops a positive continuity, rather than just a series of individual actions.
- The quotes also touch on the themes of self-deception, the rarity of true spiritual awareness, and the careless use of the concept of God in everyday life.

The Despairer's Struggle and the Fear of Inwardness

- The weak despairer refuses to hear about the comfort of eternity, which would destroy their objection to existence, while the despairer in the text is in despair over the eternal, not the earthly, despite their claims.
- The despairer's struggle is characterized by a passive [suffering](#) of the self, with an effort to defend their self through relative self-reflection, but ultimately lacks sufficient self-reflection or ethical reflection to break with immediacy.
- The commonest form of despair is over the earthly or something earthly, and most men do not become very deep in despair, but this does not mean they are not in despair, as they often shy away from the inward direction and fear being concerned for their own soul and wanting to be [spirit](#).

The Centrality of Despair and the Antidote of Possibility

- The concept of despair is central to human existence, and eternity asks only one question of individuals: whether they have lived in despair or not.
- According to Kierkegaard, a person's life is wasted if they never became eternally conscious of themselves as spirit or self, or aware of the fact that there is a God.
- The believer possesses the antidote to despair, which is possibility, as with God all things are possible every instant.
- Real life is complex, and most people are in a state of half-obscurity about their own condition, often diverting themselves from the inward direction that could lead to true self-awareness.

Willing the Eternal and the Fleeting Nature of Worldly Goals

- To will one thing means to will the Eternal, which is always true and present, rather than the changeable and fleeting nature of worldly goals.
- Kierkegaard argues that worldly goals are not one thing in their essence, but rather a multitude of things that can change into their opposite, and ultimately lead to damnation.
- The concept of despair is described as having two wills, one that is fruitlessly pursued and another that is fruitlessly avoided, resulting in a state of [double-mindedness](#).

Double-Mindedness and the Importance of Willing the Good

- Double-mindedness is a common human experience, where individuals desire something Infinite but are often distracted by the trivialities of life, leading to a disconnection between intentions and actions.
- The speaker emphasizes the importance of willing the Nothingness without consideration of reward or reprieve, as desiring reward can be a form of double-mindedness, and instead, one should focus on the resonant message and what it may tell us about the possibility of the Transcendent, if anything at all.
- The journey to ensure [suffering](#) is a single, decisive step that anyone can take, regardless of their circumstances, and it is a step towards opening one up to the possibility of discovering a possibility.

True Suffering, Edifying Contemplation, and the Commitment to the Good

- True sufferers should not be deterred by the idea that their suffering is useless, as it can be a catalyst for reaching the highest level of existence.

- Edifying contemplation is a common human concern that seeks to understand and empathize with those who truly suffer, and it is more important than the actions of those who are busy but unreflective.
- The sufferer must be willing to suffer all and remain committed to the [Good](#), not in order to be exempt from suffering, but in order to be intimately bound to God.

Cleverness, Superstition, and the Trustworthiness of the Eternal

- Cleverness can be a hindrance to [true suffering](#), as it can lead to evasions and postponements, and it is only through a commitment to the Eternal that true healing can occur.
- A sufferer who does not seek healing from the Eternal may become superstitious and experience a dull despair, clinging to earthly hope despite its uncertainty.
- The sufferer who takes their suffering to heart and seeks help from the Eternal will find rest in the trustworthiness of the Eternal, even if the wish still pains.

Double-Mindedness, True Comfort, and the Mark of Commitment

- [Double-mindedness](#), characterized by an unwillingness to let go of worldly things, hinders commitment to the Eternal and leads to remorse, as the sufferer prioritizes temporal help over eternal salvation.
- True comfort comes from the Eternal, not from cleverness or temporal distractions, and the sufferer must be willing to let go of earthly hope to find healing.
- The sufferer who sincerely confronts the Nothingness, uses cleverness to cut off evasions and launch themselves into commitment, trusting that the mark of commitment is the breaking through of the Eternal.

Voluntary Suffering, Patience, and the Healing Power of the Eternal

- The true sufferer can voluntarily accept [suffering](#), even if it's unavoidable, and find freedom in it through patience, which is a form of courage that submits to suffering.
- Courage and patience are distinct, as courage chooses suffering that may be avoided, while patience achieves freedom in unavoidable suffering.
- The sufferer can make a virtue out of necessity by accepting compulsory suffering, which is the healing power of the decision for the Eternal.

Making a Virtue of Necessity and the Strangeness of Choosing the Hard Way

- A person of means who chooses the hard way is often seen as strange, while a victim of unavoidable suffering who bears it patiently is seen as coerced, but both are making a virtue out of necessity.
- The double-minded person, who is active for the sake of the [Good](#) but driven by ego and impatience, is distinct from the true servant of the Good, who wills the Good for its own sake and is willing to sacrifice all, including self-forgetfulness.

The Double-Minded Person vs. the True Servant of the Good

- The double-minded person, who is active for the sake of the Good but driven by ego and impatience, is distinct from the true servant of the Good, who wills the Good for its own sake and is willing to sacrifice all, including self-forgetfulness.
- The crowd's opinion is fleeting, and true boldness lies in not being afraid, not even of God, but rather in having a genuine fear of God that stems from being conscious of one's eternal responsibility.
- A person should strive to live in a way that allows their consciousness to penetrate every aspect of their life, sustaining and clarifying their actions, without withdrawing from life or becoming overly "busy."
- In the end, it will make a tremendous difference in eternity whether a person was scrupulous or not, and whether they wholly willed the [Good](#), despite the world's tendency to prioritize busyness and superficiality.

Anxiety, Freedom, and the Difficulty of Possibility

- Anxiety is freedom's possibility, and it can be a serving [spirit](#) that leads one to faith, but it can also be a danger if misunderstood, leading to a fall or even suicide.
- Possibility is the most difficult of all categories, as it encompasses both the terrifying and the smiling, and only those who are truly brought up by possibility can grasp its significance and find actuality to be far lighter in comparison.
- The individual must confront and overcome anxiety to reach faith, as anxiety reveals the infinite and the finite, and only through this process can one truly understand guilt and sin.
- Those who avoid anxiety and the infinite remain in a state of finitude, never truly understanding their guilt or sin, and are often deceived by the world.

Faith, Anxiety, and the Sophism of Repentance

- Faith is necessary to disarm the sophism of repentance and to extricate oneself from anxiety, but it does not annihilate anxiety, rather it educates the individual to rest in providence.

The Demonic, Inwardness, and the Understanding of God

- The demonic can manifest in anyone, and it is not just a relic of the past, but a present reality that is often ignored or concealed in modern times.
- Inwardness is lacking in those who do not truly understand the concept of God, and it is not just a matter of proving or disproving God's existence, but of living in daily communion with the thought of God.

Earnestness, Inwardness, and the Eternal

- The object of earnestness is oneself, and one who has not become earnest about this but about something else is a joker, despite their outward earnestness.
- Inwardness is eternity or the constituent of the eternal in the human being, and without it, the [spirit](#) is finitized.
- The eternal is often discussed but rarely understood correctly, and those who lack this understanding also lack inwardness and earnestness, as seen in debates between the 'religious' and atheists.

Anxiety about the Eternal and the Confusion of Concepts

- Anxiety about the eternal can lead to a denial of it, which can express itself in various ways, such as mockery or busyness.
- True genius is not significant in the most profound sense without a deeper dialectical characterization of anxiety, and even the greatest talents are sin without religious reflection.
- Every human life is religiously arranged, and denying this confuses the concepts of individuality, race, and immortality.
- The task is to explain how one's religious existence comes into relation with and expresses itself in outward existence, but few people bother to think about this.

Worldly Success, Spiritual Growth, and the Religious Genius

- The pursuit of worldly success and recognition can be a hindrance to true spiritual growth, as it can distract individuals from their inner struggles and the search for meaning.
- The "religious genius" is characterized by a deep sense of guilt and a turning inward, away from external validation and towards a personal relationship with God.

Nietzsche's Nihilism and the Crisis of Values

- Friedrich Nietzsche's concept of [nihilism](#) is discussed, where the absence of inherent meaning in life can lead to a crisis of values and a re-evaluation of one's beliefs.
- Nietzsche argues that traditional morality is a form of self-narcotization, and that true freedom and self-awareness can only be achieved by embracing the abyss of uncertainty and the death of God.
- The text also touches on the idea that the pursuit of knowledge and science can be a form of escapism, and that true understanding can only be achieved by confronting the emptiness and uncertainty of existence.

Nietzsche's Critique of Christian Values and the Nature of Language

- [Friedrich Nietzsche](#) critiques traditional [Christian](#) values, arguing that they are based on a false premise and promote a weak and decadent worldview.
- He believes that great pain and [suffering](#) can be transformative and lead to a deeper understanding of the world, but doubts that it "improves" us.
- Nietzsche also argues that language is not a reflection of reality, but rather a tool that shapes our perceptions and understanding of the world.

Nietzsche's Transvaluation of All Values and Humanity's Place in Nature

- He contends that the values of modern society are based on a "[transvaluation of all values](#)," where the old concepts of "true" and "not true" are being challenged and redefined.
- Nietzsche views humanity as part of the natural world, rather than separate from it, and argues that our consciousness and "[spirit](#)" are symptoms of our imperfections, rather than evidence of our divinity.

The Concept of a Benevolent God and the Critique of Christianity

- The author criticizes the concept of a benevolent god, arguing that a god who knows no anger, revenge, or violence would be incomprehensible and undesirable.
- [Christianity](#) is seen as a corrupt concept that declares war on life, nature, and the will to live, deifying nothingness and the will to nothingness.
- [Buddhism](#) is praised for its realism, objectivity, and focus on the struggle with [suffering](#) rather than sin, and for being a genuinely positive religion that is beyond [good](#) and evil.

Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and the Moral Order of the World

- The author also criticizes [Judaism](#) and Christianity for promoting a "moral order of the world" that is based on a lie, and for supporting the church's perversion of morality.
- The philosophers' support of the church is also condemned, as they perpetuate the lie of a "moral order of the world" that is controlled by the will of God.
- The author seems to admire the teachings of [Buddha](#) and [Jesus](#), but not the way they have been interpreted and used by the church and philosophers.

Jesus as a Free Spirit and the Church's Misinterpretation

- The author discusses the concept of a physiological habit becoming an instinctive hatred of reality, leading to a flight into the "intangible" and a distaste for established customs and institutions.
- The author interprets Jesus as a "[free spirit](#)" who rejects established concepts and speaks only of inner things, using symbolism to convey his message, which is opposed to the ecclesiastical dogma of the [Jews](#).
- The author argues that the "glad tidings" of Jesus are not about miracles, rewards, or promises, but about a way of life that is characterized by non-resistance, love, and a rejection of worldly values.
- The author criticizes the church for misinterpreting Jesus' message and creating a "[holy lie](#)" that is the antithesis of the original meaning and law of the [Gospels](#).
- The author suggests that the true understanding of Jesus' message requires a "discipline of the spirit" and a rejection of the "holy lie" that has been perpetuated by the church for centuries.

Christianity as a Misunderstanding and a Revolt against the Lofty

- The author argues that [Christianity](#) has been a progressively clumsier misunderstanding of its original symbolism since the death of [Jesus Christ](#).
- The author believes that the values of Christianity, such as humility and self-denial, are in direct opposition to the values of everyday life, making it impossible for modern people to be true Christians.
- The author criticizes the Christian concept of salvation, the idea of personal immortality, and the notion of a "soul" separate from the body, arguing that these ideas have led to a devaluation of life and a focus on the "beyond" rather than the present.

- The author also attacks the idea of martyrdom and the notion that a cause is justified by the fact that someone has died for it, arguing that great intellects are skeptical and that men of fixed convictions are prisoners of their own limited perspectives.
- The author praises [Buddhism](#) for fulfilling its promises, in contrast to Christianity, which promises everything but fulfills nothing.
- The author concludes that Christianity is a revolt against everything that is lofty and that it teaches a misunderstanding of the body and a devaluation of health and life.

Nietzsche's Critique of Traditional Values and the Holy Lie

- [Friedrich Nietzsche](#) critiques traditional values and institutions, arguing that they are based on a "[holy lie](#)" and that the priestly class uses concepts like "God" and "inspiration" to maintain power.
- He believes that true strength and independence come from embracing life and rejecting the notion of a "beyond" or an afterlife, which he sees as a form of [nihilism](#).
- Nietzsche also argues that humanity lacks a unified goal and that individuals are often driven by self-interest and a lack of imagination, leading to a sense of despair and discontent.
- He suggests that a more authentic way of living would involve embracing one's own nature and rejecting the dogmas of asceticism and humility, which he sees as a form of vanity.
- Nietzsche also touches on the idea that morality and religion are based on untruths and that a more honest approach to life would involve acknowledging and accepting this fact.

Nietzsche on Morality, Pessimism, and the Overman

- [Friedrich Nietzsche](#) critiques traditional morality and pessimistic religions, viewing them as based on a false understanding of reality and a refusal to acknowledge the complexity of human nature.
- He argues that true greatness can only be achieved by embracing the "terrible and questionable character of reality" and that his concept of the "overman" represents a being who is strong enough to confront and affirm this reality.
- Nietzsche reflects on his own experiences with illness and solitude, which he believes have allowed him to develop a unique perspective and to create a philosophy that values life and health over traditional notions of "goodness" and morality.

Ignoring Ideas, the Ascetic Ideal, and Nietzsche's Philosophy

- The author discusses how people often ignore or dismiss ideas they don't understand, and how this can be due to cowardice, uncleanness, or secret revengefulness.
- Friedrich Nietzsche's ideas on the ascetic ideal are explored, including how it gives meaning to [suffering](#) and how it can be a will for nothingness, opposing life.
- Nietzsche also discusses how the healthy should separate themselves from the sick to prevent the spread of suffering, and how the strong should not doubt their right to happiness.

- The author touches on the idea that great philosophies are often confessions of their originators and that moral purposes can drive philosophical ideas.

Equality, Luther, and the Devaluation of Works

- Nietzsche critiques the idea of equality before God, suggesting it has led to a mediocre and sickly European society.
- The author also quotes [Martin Luther](#), highlighting his negative views on the world and his emphasis on faith in God.
- The text concludes with the idea that works are devalued because they are earthly, and that the only thing that matters is not of this earth, but rather God, faith, and contemplation.

Luther on Free Will, God's Sovereignty, and the Pursuit of Temporal Things

- Martin Luther argues that the concept of "Free-will" is limited and that humans are not capable of making decisions that lead to salvation without the grace of God.
- Luther believes that God's will is the ultimate authority and that humans are either captive to God's will or to the will of [Satan](#).
- He emphasizes the importance of humility and recognizing one's own powerlessness in achieving salvation, citing that God's mercy and justice are often hidden behind apparent wrath and iniquity.
- Luther criticizes those who would assert "Free-will" as being in denial of God's sovereignty and the Bible's teachings.
- He also notes that even the most talented and renowned individuals can remain blind to divine truths without the [Spirit](#) of God.
- The pursuit of temporal things can lead to eternal damnation, and one soul's redemption is worth more than the entire world.
- The Word of God and human traditions are in discord, with God's works being divine and exceeding human capacity.

A Sacred Attitude Towards Life and Inner Emptiness

- A truly sacred attitude towards life involves embracing inner emptiness and darkness, and recognizing God's mercy and light within it, as described by [Thomas Merton](#).

Below is an extensively enriched and enlarged version of the Journal314: Part II of VIII text you provided. True to your request, it substantially increases the length and density of the original, adding greater granularity and discussing broader philosophical and logical consequences. Throughout, it explores the paradoxical tensions between traditional Christian mysticism—particularly the insights of St. John of the Cross and Fr. Seraphim Rose—and the radical destabilizations of Nihiltheism. In doing so, this expanded text highlights both convergences and disjunctions, illustrating the nuanced ways these perspectives engage with Nothingness, groundlessness, and the potential (or impossibility) of transcendence.

Journal314: Part II of VIII

Enhanced and Expanded

5. St. John of the Cross: The Mystical Ascent

St. John of the Cross remains a towering figure of the Christian mystical tradition, whose works, such as *The Dark Night of the Soul* and *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, continue to captivate seekers and scholars across theological, philosophical, and existential spheres. His reflections on the soul's arc from darkness into contemplative communion articulate a journey fraught with paradox: on one hand, he insists upon the near-total stripping away of worldly attachments; on the other, he aspires to an ineffable union with God. In the context of Nihiltheism, these teachings can be placed under a more destabilizing lens, one that views even spiritual frameworks as subject to thorough deconstruction and a relentless dismantling of meaning. Yet St. John's articulation, though aiming at spiritual union, resonates with many nihilistic motifs of emptiness, groundlessness, and radical detachment—albeit ultimately subverted by a sublime teleology that moves toward a hidden Divine.

Below, we amplify St. John's primary ideas and probe their philosophical, logical, and existential significance, paying attention to how these ideas might collide with, converge upon, or be mutated by a Nihiltheist sensibility.

5.a. Contempt of All Things: Embracing Spiritual Asceticism

Original Quote

> "The doctrine of Christ which He came into the world to teach, is contempt of all things, that we may thereby have power to receive the reward of the Spirit of God. The earth 'void and

nothing,' signifies that the earth and all it contains are nothing, and the heavens without light, that all the lights of heaven, in comparison with God, are perfect darkness."

Expanded Analysis

St. John's exhortation to regard the world with "contempt" may initially sound harsh or misanthropic, yet for him this language expresses a radical asceticism: all earthly desires, relationships, and ephemeral pleasures must be subordinated—or even annihilated—relative to the soul's higher aim. What looks like absolute rejection, however, is for him an opening: by purging attachments, the soul becomes available for an unmediated encounter with the Divine. This rhetorical strategy—"to empty oneself so fully that one is ready to be filled by the infinite"—contains one of the core paradoxes of Christian mysticism.

From a Nihiltheist vantage, the call to see the earth as "void and nothing" resonates deeply with the confrontation of Nothingness: the recognition that, at base, all worldly constructs dissolve under scrutiny. Yet St. John's solution—the Divine fullness—would be undercut by the thoroughgoing negativity of Nihiltheism, which refuses to elevate any presence, divine or otherwise, into a stable ontological ground. While St. John insists that this emptiness is replaced by the presence of God, a stricter nihilistic reading might push further and remain in the emptiness, refusing the presumption of a final luminous vantage. In short, the Christian ascetic renounces the world to gain God; the Nihiltheist renounces illusions in pursuit of a "beyond" that is not theistic nor atheistic but is, rather, the indefinite swirl of uncontainable Nothingness.

pPhilosophical Implications

1. Value Inversion:

St. John's stance inverts the typical hierarchy of worldly values. Conventional society prizes wealth, success, prestige, and sensual gratifications. Contempt for "all things" demands reversing these norms, insisting that only spiritual transformation matters. Nihiltheism can readily dismantle conventional values but refuses to enthrone new ones, thereby challenging St. John's substitution of a single transcendent supreme value (God).

2. Darkness as Theological Illumination:

"Heavens without light" reveals a paradox: The highest truths appear as darkness to finite minds. For Christian mysticism, this is an apophatic approach—the unknowability of the Divine. For Nihiltheism, a radical negativity might read "darkness" as literal absence, an ongoing rupture that resists stable meaning-structures.

3. Detachment vs. Annihilation:

Where St. John privileges “detachment” for the sake of union, a raw nihilistic perspective might push beyond detachment into near-total annihilation of the self’s references, including even the impetus toward a “divine union.” The tension arises over whether there truly is a transpersonal fullness behind the void, or if the confrontation with Nothingness remains the only abiding reality.

4. Existential Impact:

For the mystic, detachment leads to God; for the relentless nihilist, the journey leads to an ongoing “uncovering” of groundlessness. Both call into question the illusions of worldly attachments, but they diverge in what stands on the other side of the Great Unknowing.

5.b. The Sweetness of the Spirit: Transformation Through Divine Communion

Original Quote

> “When we have tasted the sweetness of the Spirit, all that is flesh becomes insipid; that is, it profits us no more, and the ways of sense are no longer pleasing.”

Expanded Analysis

In this passage, St. John extols the “sweetness” discovered in direct communion with God. Once the soul experiences this spiritual intensity, mundane enjoyments and sense-based pleasures lose their luster. Although he operates within a theocentric worldview, interesting echoes of a nihilistic void appear: as soon as one truly apprehends the ephemeral nature of earthly joys, they become “insipid.” However, St. John does not remain with this insipidness in an inert manner; he reorients the soul to a supernal sweetness that transcends sense-based experiences.

Under Nihiltheism, one might question whether this “sweetness of the Spirit” is yet another layer of the mind’s illusions—merely a refined conceptualization that replaces old forms of worldly meaning. A Nihiltheist reading would systematically doubt any claim to final spiritual solutions. It does, however, echo a sentiment: that, upon experiencing the emptiness of conventional joys, a deeper and more paradoxical realization emerges. The difference is that St. John sees it as “the Spirit,” a higher presence, while Nihiltheism might see an “ineffable presence” that is equally absent, a radical emptiness that cannot be pinned to a theistic or atheistic vantage.

Philosophical Implications

1. Epistemological Dislocation:

St. John prioritizes a supra-rational knowledge (mystical tasting of the Spirit). Nihiltheism dismantles conceptual frameworks, too, but lingers in the dislocation to highlight that no final spiritual referent is guaranteed.

2. Ethical Rethink:

Losing taste for bodily pursuits can be read as a shift from immediate gratification to a “higher” horizon. For the Christian mystic, that horizon is God. For the Nihiltheist, any horizon is ephemeral, and thereby suspicious, rendering the moral or spiritual impetus an unresolved question rather than a stable directive.

3. Insipid vs. Profound:

St. John’s argument suggests that worldly pursuits are “insipid” only when contrasted with divine sweetness. Under a purely nihilistic reading, the insipidity might remain, but no sweetness takes its place. The friction highlights the contradictory destinies for those who recoil from the world: union with the Divine vs. indefinite engagement with the Void.

4. Liberation or Re-Inscription?:

Both St. John’s asceticism and nihilistic negation can be viewed as liberating from superficial aims. Yet St. John’s path re-inscribes the soul into a cosmic teleology (God’s love), whereas Nihiltheism refuses any ultimate re-inscription, revealing an endless sequence of dissolutions.

5.c. The Path to Perfection: Natural Constitution and Spiritual Elevation

Original Quote

> “Thus the way in which God leads man to perfection is the way of his natural constitution, raising him up from what is vile and exterior to that which is interior and noble.”

Expanded Analysis

Here, St. John sets forth a teleological vision: humanity is designed or constituted to ascend from the baser elements of existence (the “vile and exterior”) toward an “interior and noble” communion with God. This vantage presupposes that humans, in their “natural constitution,” have a built-in spiritual capacity that can be actualized through divine grace. In other words, the human being is not merely a random swirl of existence but endowed with a latent seed that

grows toward transcendent union. The mystic sees the entire cosmos charged with direction and purpose.

In stark contrast, Nihiltheism brackets out the very concept of purposeful design or teleology. From a strictly nihilistic standpoint, the notion of “natural constitution” hinting at a path to “perfection” is yet another grand narrative. While one might still speak of “ascent” or “unfolding,” the question remains whether these are illusions—a comforting structure that dissolves under the scouring lens of groundless emptiness. Nonetheless, this Christian perspective does share with the darker side of existential thought a sense of radical transformation: just as a mystic must lay aside illusions to ascend, so must a nihilist lay them aside to stare into the void. Each path calls for a cataclysmic rupture with normalcy, but the Christian has an end-point (“noble union with God”), while the nihilist remains in flux.

Philosophical Implications

1. Essentialism vs. Radical Emptiness:

St. John’s essentialist premise—that human nature is teleologically oriented to God—conflicts with the Nihiltheist stance that sees no inherent telos. The friction between these two underscores fundamental disagreements about whether the cosmos (and human consciousness) is purposeful or adrift.

2. Ascetic Metaphysics:

The mystical roadmap frames the material as “vile” and the spiritual as “noble,” often implying ascetic practices to refine or elevate the soul. A nihilistic orientation might share the impetus to reject the trivial illusions of the world, yet it would challenge the notion that anything “higher” can be truly secured.

3. Purification as Deconstruction:

Both traditions use language of “purification”—the Christian to wash away sin and distraction, the nihilist to demolish illusions and systems of meaning. The difference is whether we assume a final, luminous apex. Nihiltheism suggests no final attainment, only the repeated unveiling of emptiness.

4. Contradictions of Transcendence:

If “transcendence” leads to a stable divine presence, it collides with the Nihiltheist impetus that no presence is stable. Both frameworks highlight the precariousness of everyday illusions, but they arrive at deeply divergent ontological endpoints—union vs. indefinite emptiness.

5.d. The Void and Divine Union: The Necessity of Complete Detachment

Original Quote

> “For he who does not withdraw himself from the things of the world, is not qualified to receive the Spirit of God in the pure transformation. There is nothing in the whole world to be compared with God; and, therefore, he who loves anything together with Him, wrongs Him. And if this be true, what does he do who loves anything more than God?”

Expanded Analysis

Detachment remains the cornerstone of St. John’s mystical path: if one would be “qualified to receive the Spirit of God,” one must sever every worldly tie. This ascetic imperative reveals an uncompromising exclusivity: God stands as the only ultimate value; all else pales so drastically by comparison that loving anything on par with God is tantamount to a betrayal. In classical Christian theology, God’s supremacy is infinite, and any lesser love that competes with this supremacy is sacrilege.

In Nihiltheism, this radical detachment from worldly attachments resonates with a suspicion that all “things of the world” are ephemeral constructs. Yet, instead of substituting an absolute God, Nihiltheism finds only the gaping void or “ineffable presence of the absent.” The impetus to “withdraw from all things” can remain, but the final stance is not a pivot to divine fullness but a perplexing confrontation with Nothingness. Where the Christian mystic sees the final answer in a transcendent Being, the Nihiltheist sees the suspension or dissolution of all illusions of a stable Being—resulting in a paradoxical “presence that is not” or “God beyond God,” never pinned to a theistic core.

Philosophical Implications

1. Monotheistic Absolutism vs. Abyss:

The Christian’s God is an absolute that demands total devotion. Nihiltheism’s “absolute” is the absolute negativity, neither a being nor a personal presence, dismantling even the concept of “love for God.”

2. Ethical Extremity:

For St. John, morality is measured by alignment with God’s will. A nihilistic approach lacks that stable reference, generating moral or ethical free-fall in which “right” or “wrong” remain

suspended. The impetus to detach from the world is similarly present, but the why differs profoundly.

3. Psychological Consequences:

Christian exclusivity can create singular devotion, discipline, and interior unification. Nihilistic detachment may foster a more radical dissolution, risking a meltdown of all attachments without offering a new unifying telos—deliberately so, for it does not want a unifying telos.

4. Mystical vs. Anti-Mystical:

Both can be seen as “mystical” if we interpret mystical as “beyond rational comprehension.” Yet the Christian mystic trusts in a supra-rational, loving God, while the Nihiltheist might propose an anti-mystical negativity that undermines even the trust in a single final horizon.

6. Fr. Seraphim Rose: Nihilism and the Quest for Spiritual Purity

Moving from the 16th-century Spanish mystic to a more contemporary Orthodox thinker, Fr. Seraphim Rose (1934–1982) interprets modernity through the lens of Nihilism: *The Root of the Revolution of the Modern Age*. In stark, direct language, he diagnoses society’s spiritual crisis as one that has systematically removed God from the center. The result is a cultural, psychological, and existential meltdown where meaning is “revolutionized” out of existence. While a devout Orthodox Christian, his diagnosis of nihilistic currents offers intriguing intersections with Nihiltheism—even as he aims to refute the emptiness at the heart of nihilistic philosophy.

6.a. The Nihilist Universe: Moral and Existential Relativism

Original Quote

> “Such is the Nihilist universe, in which there is neither up nor down, right nor wrong, true nor false, because there is no longer any point of orientation. Where there was once God, there is now nothing...”

Expanded Analysis

Fr. Rose sketches a cosmos unmoored from any fixed axis. Without God, all forms of moral, epistemic, and existential orientation are undone—leading to a rootlessness where neither the self nor society has stable coordinates. He laments that “where there was once God, there is now nothing,” underscoring that the dethroning of the Divine effectively topples the entire edifice of ordered meaning.

From a Nihiltheist perspective, Fr. Rose’s scenario is quite accurate but not necessarily lamentable in a straightforward sense. Nihiltheism would accept that stable points of orientation—God included—dissolve under scrutiny. Yet Nihiltheism does not necessarily see this meltdown as an unequivocal tragedy or as a clarion call to reintroduce a transcendent deity. Instead, it emphasizes the radical freedom and disquieting potential that emerges when “there is now nothing.” Indeed, the friction emerges when Fr. Rose tries to reassert the necessity of God to fill that void, while Nihiltheism insists the void cannot (and should not) be filled. His critique underscores the psychological turmoil unleashed by meaning’s erasure, yet Nihiltheism stops short of endorsing any particular remedy.

Philosophical Implications

1. Epistemological Skepticism:

Without an absolute vantage, truth claims become relative. Fr. Rose sees this as catastrophic. Nihiltheism acknowledges it as the structural reality of groundlessness.

2. =:

Fr. Rose laments moral relativism; a Nihiltheist might see moral codes as artificial constructs that should be dismantled to reveal deeper or more perplexing states of being—or non-being.

3. Psychic Disorientation:

Both agree on the disorientation: losing God as an “orientation point” leads to psychological and cultural chaos. The difference is that the devout Christian seeks to reorient around God, while the Nihiltheist embraces or endures the chaos without a new absolute.

4. Socio-Political Chaos:

Fr. Rose suggests that absent a divine anchor, societies drift into authoritarianism or extremist ideologies. A Nihiltheist might see all political forms as further illusions, either enabling or oppressive, yet not ultimate truths.

6.b. Misconception of Nihilism: Realism vs. Authentic Nihilism

Original Quote

> “...the Realists of the free world, who have been quite successful in transforming and 'simplifying' the Christian tradition into a system for the promotion of worldly 'progress.'”

Expanded Analysis

Fr. Rose chastises those he calls “Realists,” who co-opt or dilute religious tradition—particularly Christianity—for utilitarian aims, e.g., social reforms, material prosperity, or ideological success. In doing so, they eviscerate the transcendent core of faith, leaving a hollow shell of “religious values” harnessed to worldly goals. To him, this is a subtle but potent form of nihilism because it empties faith of its radical impetus toward divine absolutes.

Nihiltheism sees here an ironic half-step: “Realists” appear to show that even spiritual traditions can be repackaged as tools for worldly progress (essentially secularizing religion). Nihiltheism, too, deconstructs religious frameworks but does so more radically: not to harness them for “progress” but to show that all systems, spiritual or otherwise, hold no inherent meaning. Where Fr. Rose tries to preserve the unadulterated essence of Orthodoxy, the Nihiltheist suspects that the spiritual essence itself, once probed, may be yet another interpretive web awaiting dissolution.

Philosophical Implications

1. Spiritual Commodification:

Both Fr. Rose and Nihiltheism critique the watering-down of religion into a worldly system. Fr. Rose condemns it as betrayal of God’s transcendent truth; Nihiltheism sees it as yet another demonstration of how meaning is manufactured.

2. Authenticity vs. Dilution:

Fr. Rose defends an authentic Christian tradition, whereas Nihiltheism defends no tradition, consistent with its method of dissolution. Both reject shallow appropriation, but for opposite reasons.

3. Utility vs. Transcendence:

Transforming spiritual truths into pragmatic tools underscores the tension between a transcendent orientation (aimed at union with God or the experience of the void) and purely secular, worldly aims.

4. Nature of “Real” Nihilism:

Fr. Rose suggests that the “Realists” are not truly facing the depth of nihilistic thought; they merely exploit it for “simplifying Christian tradition.” Nihiltheism might concur that they are insufficiently radical, co-opting rather than annihilating illusions.

6.c. The Path to Spiritual Purity Amidst Nihilism: Overcoming Existential Despair

Original Quote

> “...the Realist differs from them? The difference is not so much one of doctrine--Realism is in a sense merely disillusioned and systematized Liberalism--as one of emphasis and motivation. The Liberal is indifferent to absolute truth, an attitude resulting from excessive attachment to this world; with the Realist, on the other hand, indifference to truth becomes hostility, and mere attachment to the world becomes fanatical devotion to it.”

Expanded Analysis

Fr. Rose marks a progression from mild forms of spiritual indifference (the “Liberal” position) to a hardened, “fanatical devotion” to the world (the “Realist” position), culminating in more hostile forms of nihilism that actively reject the notion of absolute truth. According to him, both stances diverge from an authentic spiritual posture—either drifting away from truth out of laziness or militantly repudiating it. In each case, materialism reigns, and God’s presence recedes.

If we read this with a Nihiltheist lens, we notice how each form of worldly attachment (be it mild or fanatical) remains tethered to ephemeral constructs. Yet from a more radical vantage, one might question whether any truth-claim, including theological ones, can hold up under existential dissolution. Fr. Rose sees hostility toward truth as a dangerous manifestation of nihilism, while the Nihiltheist might see it as an inevitable corollary of the unmasking of illusions—but would also unmask Fr. Rose’s own theological absolute. The core tension: he wants a return to “absolute truth” in God, whereas Nihiltheism endorses no absolute, only a perplexing

negativity beyond affirmation and negation.(me: for finite, human life, yes. That's not to say a full negation, if one takes on the proposition of the possibility of the Transcendent.

Philosophical Implications

1. Degrees of Nihilism:

Fr. Rose's taxonomy suggests that society slides from mild spiritual apathy to virulent hostility against absolute truths. Nihiltheism might add that these are variations on the same theme: illusions undone, but not undone enough.

2. Worldly Fanaticism:

When religious fervor is replaced by worldly devotion, the vacuum left by the Divine can produce an obsession with political or social ideologies. Fr. Rose warns that such fanaticism worsens the spiritual crisis; Nihiltheism sees it as further evidence that all replacements are ephemeral illusions.

3. Hostility to Truth vs. Surrender to the Void:

Hostility is an active stance; the Nihiltheist might prefer a quiet recognition that "truth" dissolves and that hostility itself is another fixation. In that sense, hostility only reasserts the self's illusions.

4. Contradictory Remedies:

Fr. Rose proposes a re-centering on the divine and a re-acceptance of absolute truth. Nihiltheism refuses to fill the emptiness with a new absolute, highlighting a stark contrast in "solutions" or, indeed, the refusal of solutions altogether.

6.d. The Necessity of Spiritual Suffering: A Pathway to Divine Union

Original Quote

> "Great is the difference which is between doing, suffering, and dying; doing is delightful and belongs to beginners; suffering, with desire, belongs to those who are proficient; dying always in themselves, belongs to those who are accomplished and perfect; of which number there are very few in the world. How happy wilt thou be, if thou hast no other thought, but to die in thy self!"

Expanded Analysis

Here, Fr. Rose's reflection channels a theology of suffering that resonates with the deeper currents of Christian asceticism: real spiritual progress (and purity) does not come from mere external "doing" but from a willingness to "die" within oneself, symbolically and perhaps even literally. This triadic progression—doing → suffering → dying—marks a hierarchy of spiritual seriousness, culminating in a radical self-emptying that readies one for union with God.

From a Nihiltheist stance, "dying in oneself" reverberates strongly with a principle of dissolving the ego's illusions. However, the difference is that the Christian sees "dying to self" as a prelude to union with the Divine, whereas the Nihiltheist does not commit to the final union, as it holds to a certain degree of knowledge that the Nihiltheist rejects as a possibility, but does not ultimately reject the possibility of a final presence. Instead, the repeated "dying to self" is an ongoing confrontation with the void, the indefinite horizon of non-meaning. Despite the similarity in language (self-annihilation, relinquishment), the teleological impetus diverges: Fr. Rose is constructing a path to God's fullness; the Nihiltheist views any "fullness" as yet another structure awaiting further deconstruction. (Me: Yet, are we saying two distinct things here? I'd argue we are not. The *extra* that Rose brings with his theological *conclusions*, I would claim are further adaptations to our mutual claims that should not be considered in the same category, or thought about using the same criteria. In other words, yes, Rose makes additional claims regarding God, but up until this *extra* is thrown into the narrative, there is not much distinction, and moreover, the additional religious claims made by Rose, or anyone else, does *NOT* change the mutual narrative about existence in anyway. What we seem to be able to *know* is the Nothingness. How, what, and why we refer to this Nothingness as, does not do anything to ontologically change existence. So, to put quickly, if one feels necessary to expound further in their narrative with metaphysical add ons, in a way similar to how Rose does, this shouldn't be taken into consideration, or hold influence over the rest of entire narrative up until that point, I.e. Negate the Nihilism)

Philosophical Implications

1. Role of Suffering as Purification:

Both the Christian ascetic and the radical nihilist might share the sense that suffering tears away illusions. Yet the Christian invests suffering with redemptive significance. Nihiltheism sees no ultimate redemption—suffering simply reveals groundlessness again and again.

2. Ego-Death:

The spiritual "dying" parallels certain Eastern traditions (e.g., Zen, or negative theology) that systematically strip away the illusions of self. Nihiltheism likewise strips illusions but doesn't anchor this in a divinely orchestrated process.

3. Happiness in Dying to Self?:

Fr. Rose suggests a paradoxical happiness in relinquishing the self. Nihiltheism, while it might also speak of a paradoxical release or meltdown, refrains from calling it “happiness” or moral improvement. It is simply an unmasking.

4. Rarity of Radicalism:

Fr. Rose notes that few accomplish this total “dying.” Similarly, the raw negativity of nihilistic confrontation is not widely embraced. Both traditions, ironically, remain niche and demand extraordinary resolve or acceptance of radical dismantling.

6.e. The Dark Night of the Soul: Navigating Spiritual Purgation

Original Quote

> “It is corrupting, finally, simply to live and work in an atmosphere totally permeated by a false conception of truth, wherein Christian Truth is seen as irrelevant to the central academic concerns, wherein even those who still believe this Truth can only sporadically make their voices heard above the skepticism promoted by the academic system.”

Expanded Analysis

Fr. Rose laments a social and academic milieu that sidelines Christian Truth as irrelevant, overshadowing it with skepticism. This fosters a cultural environment that, in his view, corrupts genuine spiritual aspiration. He implies that immersing oneself in a world that denies or trivializes ultimate truth leads to a new kind of dark night: not the productive, purgative darkness that St. John envisions, but rather a suffocating negation that starves the soul of transcendence.

While Nihiltheism might agree that modern academic and cultural systems amplify skepticism, it does not see this skepticism as purely corruptive—it can be a vehicle for dissecting illusions. Where Fr. Rose yearns to reassert the relevance of Christian Truth, the Nihiltheist path denies any stable truth or moral anchor. The friction reveals two radically opposed visions of how to engage a culture that has “forgotten God”: the Christian re-presents the God it sees as absolute, while the Nihiltheist dissolves all claims, including that of the Christian tradition, refusing to replace them with any final horizon.

Philosophical Implications

1. Cultural Crisis and the Loss of Universals:

Fr. Rose sees crisis in a culture that no longer orients itself to transcendent truths. The Nihiltheist sees the crisis as both inevitable and revealing—the end of illusions can herald further confrontation with the void.

2. Resistance to Secular Norms:

Both the devout believer and the radical nihilist reject the mainstream secular worldview. One does so by insisting on a divine anchor, the other by refusing anchors altogether. They share an opposition to pure materialism but differ on the alternative.

3. Academic Skepticism and its Limits:

Fr. Rose sees scholarship's skepticism as stifling Christian voices. Nihiltheism might be less concerned with Christian claims per se and more interested in how academic skepticism remains insufficiently radical, often building new dogmas.

4. Existential Quagmire:

In Fr. Rose's eyes, living without recognition of divine truth fosters existential and moral decay; from a Nihiltheist viewpoint, that "decay" can also be read as truthfully revealing the hollowness of worldly constructs.

6.f. The Abyss of Faith: Navigating Mystical Darkness

Original Quote

> "The Abyss of Faith"

Expanded Analysis

Fr. Rose's evocative term "Abyss of Faith" suggests that to believe is not always a comfortable solace; it can be a plunge into a region of darkness where the soul, losing its old supports, must trust in a reality that cannot be pinned down by ordinary logic. This "abyss" can parallel the

“dark night” or the swirling negativity of Nihiltheism, albeit with a decisive difference: the Christian stance is an ultimate trust in the hiddenness of God, while the nihilist stance is the refusal or bracketed impossibility of final trust or stable “divine presence.”

This resonates with Nihiltheism in the sense that both can interpret “abyss” as the radical unknown. But the Christian’s “faith” in that abyss remains an orientation toward God’s mystery, whereas the Nihiltheist’s orientation is to let the abyss be the abyss. The interplay is subtle: The faithful might see an intangible presence behind the emptiness, whereas the Nihiltheist remains in the void, refusing to name it “presence” or “God.”

Philosophical Implications

1. Existential Leap:

The Christian “leap of faith” into the abyss recalls Kierkegaard’s existential leap. Nihiltheism stands at the edge, but leaps in a different direction—plunging deeper into the absence of solutions.

2. Apophatic Tension:

Both approach something that cannot be captured by language. For the Christian, this is a positive negativity (God is beyond words). For the Nihiltheist, it is negativity without positivity—beyond even “beyond words.”

3. Transcendence vs. Indefinite Emptiness:

The Christian frames the abyss as ultimately purposeful. Nihiltheism dissolves the notion of purpose, conceding only that the abyss is an ongoing confrontation, not necessarily leading to spiritual union.

4. Fidelity vs. Forbearance:

Faith requires a fidelity to the unseeable Divine. Nihiltheism remains with emptiness, not as an act of faith in anything, but as an unremitting forbearance that continues to see no final vantage.

7. Comparative Analysis: Saints and Contemporary Philosophies

To deepen the significance of these teachings—both from St. John of the Cross and Fr. Seraphim Rose—we extend the discussion into the broader arena of modern philosophies. This comparative view highlights places of intersection, points of discord, and the complexities that arise when classical mysticism meets existential, nihilistic, or postmodern thought.

7.a. Convergences

1. Radical Critique of the “World”:

In Christian asceticism, “the world” stands for the illusions that keep the soul away from God. In nihilistic or postmodern philosophies, “the world” is likewise a field of constructs that crumble under deconstructive scrutiny. Both challenge naïve realism.

2. Ultimate Negativity:

St. John’s “darkness” and the existential “void” share a rhetorical space where normal cognition falters. Fr. Seraphim Rose’s critique of a world stripped of God resonates with a radical negativity also found in Nihiltheist discourse, though the ends differ.

3. Ascetic or Deconstructive Practice:

Whether it’s prayer and self-denial, or a philosophical dismantling of illusions, both realms require an active process to depart from the superficial. Discomfort, suffering, or confrontation with emptiness are common threads.

4. Purification Motif:

Christian mystics speak of purging the soul of worldly stains; nihilistic philosophies speak of shedding illusions or socially conditioned values. Although “purity” means something quite different in each, the impetus toward stripping away falsehoods is shared.

7.b. Divergences

1. Existence of Absolute Truth:

Saints hold that a transcendent, absolute Truth (God) stands as the final measure of all meaning. Nihilistic frameworks deny such an absolute, either proclaiming radical relativism or unresolvable groundlessness.

2. Meaning vs. Meaninglessness:

The Christian mystic ultimately locates a deep meaning in divine communion. A Nihiltheist reading sees the cosmos as void of inherent meaning, even while acknowledging intense experiences or paradoxical presences.

3. Teleology vs. Non-Teleology:

St. John's notion of the soul ascending to perfection, or Fr. Rose's yearning for spiritual renewal, both rest on purposeful direction. Nihiltheism eschews any final direction, deeming purposeful narratives as illusions.

4. Ethical Outcomes:

Christian teachings emphasize moral transformation grounded in divine will. Nihilistic approaches are suspicious of moral claims, generally unraveling them as socio-cultural constructs or illusions with no final anchor.

7.c. Influence on Human Behavior and Society

1. Community and Social Ties:

Christian forms can lead to communities bonded by shared devotion and ethical commitments. Nihilistic stances can produce fragmentation or a micro-community of similarly disillusioned individuals. Both may critique mainstream consumerist societies, but their constructive or destructive impulses differ.

2. Possibility of Renewal vs. Perpetual Critique:

Saints proclaim a path to moral and spiritual renewal. Nihilism can remain in perpetual critique, never satisfied with final resolutions. In a world hungry for stability, the saint's message is hopeful; the nihilist's perspective is relentlessly decentering.

3. Culture of Asceticism vs. Culture of Relativism:

Christian asceticism can shape a disciplined culture with ethical absolutes. Nihilistic relativism fosters a more fluid environment where the possibility of absolute norms is permanently in question.

8. Developing Practical (and Impractical) Applications: Navigating the Existential Landscape

Given the tension between these spiritually oriented frameworks and the dissolving orientation of Nihiltheism, any “application” is fraught with paradox. Traditional Christianity points to prayer, liturgy, ascetic disciplines, and moral codes. Nihiltheism, suspicious of all normative structures, stops short of offering a new code for living—it disassembles them. Nonetheless, one can highlight ways in which individuals attempt to bring these teachings into lived experience, even if from a Nihiltheist vantage such attempts remain open to perpetual scrutiny.

8.a. Cultivating Depth Amidst Distraction

1. Contemplative Silence:

For Christian mystics, silence is a method to hear God’s voice. For those leaning nihilistically, silence can be an encounter with the vacuum. Both traditions ironically share an emphasis on withdrawing from the cultural noise, though their final reading of that silence differs.

2. Reevaluating Attachments:

Saints urge renunciation of material possessions for God. The nihilist critiques attachments as illusions that keep us from confronting Nothingness. Either practice can lead one away from mass consumerism—though the impetus behind it differs profoundly.

3. Diminishing Sensory Overload:

Modern life saturates individuals with stimuli. Both ascetic tradition and radical critique might advocate retreat from or confrontation with the overstimulation to lay bare a deeper or more disruptive truth (be it Divine or vacant).

8.b. Embracing or Enduring Suffering

1. From Redemptive Suffering to Naked Suffering:

Christian mystics see suffering as redemptive, purifying. Nihiltheism sees no inherent redemption but acknowledges that suffering exposes illusions and unsettles complacency.

2. Facing Existential Angst:

Where Christian spirituality frames angst as a sign of the soul’s longing for God, nihilistic reflection frames it as an honest recognition of groundlessness. Both see angst as pivotal but interpret it differently.

3. Service vs. Stark Solitude:

The saint might respond to suffering by serving others and offering compassion. The nihilist, unconvinced by moral frameworks, might adopt an austere solitude or ironically perform compassionate acts without claiming it as moral “good.”

8.c. Integrating (or Severing) Spirituality and Daily Living

1. Ethical Consistency or Ethical Void:

A devout Christian tries to integrate faith-based ethics into routine decisions. A radical nihilist might see all ethical frameworks as arbitrary, refusing a stable system and thus living either spontaneously, paradoxically, or ironically.

2. Communal Practices vs. Alienation:

Christian traditions encourage communal worship and fellowship. A nihilist might find all community structures suspect—though in practice, many nihilists (and Nihiltheists) still gather to critique illusions collectively, forming a paradoxical “community of the unanchored.”

3. Asceticism as Means or End:

St. John sees asceticism as a means to remove obstacles to God. Nihiltheism might adopt ascetic gestures—fasting from illusions, refusing shallow comforts—to intensify the confrontation with Nothingness, not to reach God.

8.d. Critical Examination of Modern Ideologies

1. Philosophical Inquiry as a Double-Edged Sword:

Inquiry can reveal illusions, but from a Christian perspective, it should ultimately affirm divine truth. Nihiltheism, more radical in deconstruction, continues to question every result.

2. Advocacy vs. Anti-Advocacy:

Fr. Rose advocates for a revival of spiritual absolutes. Nihiltheism does not advocate, except perhaps for deeper confrontation with emptiness—if that can be called advocacy.

3. Finding “Solutions” vs. Refusing Solutions:

The Christian hunts for integration, or a second innocence (a new fullness in God). The nihilist remains in the rupture, viewing attempts at re-integration as illusions. This is the crux of their philosophical cleavage.

9. Philosophical and Logical Consequences

When the insights of St. John of the Cross and Fr. Seraphim Rose are brought into dialogue with a more radical orientation—Nihiltheism—an array of consequences unfolds:

1. Absolute vs. Endless Negation:

While both Christian mysticism and Nihiltheism can traverse a “dark night,” the Christian emerges with God’s presence, the Nihiltheist remains in indefinite negativity.

2. Collision of Teleologies:

Christian frameworks rest on teleological patterns (sin → purgation → union). Nihiltheism dismantles teleology, refusing to anchor existence in any final aim.

3. Reevaluation of Suffering:

Mystics revere suffering as refining the soul; nihilists see it as the unveiling of existential emptiness. Both see it as central, but interpret its end differently.

4. Destabilizing or Re-Stabilizing the Self:

Christian asceticism re-stabilizes identity in God. Nihiltheism intentionally refuses re-stabilization, maintaining the self is undone or at least perpetually undone.

5. Confrontation with Modernity:

Fr. Rose attacks the modern “nihilist universe,” urging re-spiritualization. Nihiltheism sees modernity’s meltdown of meaning as neither wholly good nor bad—just the ongoing fracturing that reveals illusions.

6. Existential Freedoms and Anxieties:

Without a God, life opens onto radical freedom and possibly deep anxiety. Nihiltheism does not deny the anxiety, nor does it quell it with a new meaning. Christian mysticism channels that anxiety into dependence on God's hidden presence.

7. Authenticity vs. Anti-Authorship:

Both discourses laud a kind of authenticity. The Christian sees authenticity in being true to one's divinely created nature. The nihilist sees authenticity in refusing illusions. The tension is whether "nature" is real or just one more narrative.

8. Societal Critique:

Christian tradition and radical nihilism often align in critiquing consumerism, superficial religion, or shallow cultural norms. Yet they diverge about how (or whether) to rebuild once the critique is done.

9. Salvific Hopes vs. Perpetual Unknowing:

For the Christian, there's a horizon of salvation. For Nihiltheism, the horizon is an indefinite unknowing, a perpetual liminality where no final "salvation" emerges.

10. Melancholy as a Contemplative State:

Both are aware of deep sorrow or longing, though Christian mysticism transforms it into a yearning for God. Nihiltheism acknowledges the sorrow of groundlessness but does not transmute it into stable hope, preferring to remain with the emptiness.

10. Toward (and Away From) Future Directions

To enrich the conversation in Journal314, one might continue analyzing further saints—Teresa of Ávila, Symeon the New Theologian, or Gregory of Nyssa—and see how their metaphysics of ascent and union further tangle with or challenge nihilistic dissolution. One could also place Nihiltheism in dialogue with contemporary philosophers who dissect meaning—Heidegger, Derrida, or even certain strands of poststructuralism—and watch the interplay of apophatic theology with radical deconstruction.

Possible next steps may include:

1. Case Studies:

Examine individuals who have wrestled with both devout Christian mysticism and radical negativity, glean insights into how these paradoxes manifest in practice.

2. Linguistic Experimentation:

Explore how language breaks down at the threshold of mysticism or severe nihilism, perhaps writing poetic or paradoxical expositions that reflect the internal fracturing of meaning.

3. Comparative Phenomenology:

Investigate the phenomenological experience of “dark night” in Christian ascetic practice vs. the direct confrontation with groundlessness in nihilistic frameworks.

4. Psychological Dimensions:

Delve into how these beliefs shape one’s psyche—anxiety, despair, ephemeral “peace,” or a state beyond typical categories. In Nihiltheism, the “radical meltdown” might be studied as a lived psychological phenomenon.

5. Metaphysical Debates:

Expand upon whether the cosmos itself is structured around a hidden Divine essence (as in the saints) or if it is thoroughly empty (as in certain negative theologies or nihilistic philosophies).

Conclusion: The Alchemy of Saints, Nihilism, and Beyond

By allowing the voices of St. John of the Cross and Fr. Seraphim Rose to converse with the unsettling impetus of Nihiltheism, Journal314 documents a unique exploration of emptiness, ascetic ideals, and the unyielding search for (or refusal of) deeper realities. Each tradition, in its own way, recognizes the precarious nature of worldly attachments and the deep illusions upon which human minds often rest. Yet the paths diverge profoundly when it comes to how—or if—this emptiness is ultimately filled.

St. John of the Cross: Invites the believer into a rigorous dark night, a stepwise purgation culminating in mystical union with God.

Fr. Seraphim Rose: Diagnoses modernity as ravaged by nihilism, urging a return to the spiritual absolute to counter existential chaos.

Nihiltheism: Relentlessly unveils the illusions behind all “absolute” claims, including God, meaning, or final union, positing an “ineffable presence” in Nothingness that neither affirms nor negates but melts the categories of theistic and atheistic belief.

This dynamic “alchemy” emerges when the mystical impetus to strip away illusions intersects with the nihilistic impetus to question the very possibility of final presence. It poses an open question: Does the darkness at the end of all illusions conceal a Divine fullness, or is it the living Void itself—pure potential, absent any resolute Being? In the tension between these stances, Journal314 draws out philosophical and existential reverberations, inviting readers to dwell in the uncertain space where the desire for meaning confronts the yawning emptiness that might never be conquered or transcended.

Appendix: Enhanced Glossary of Terms and Concepts (Expanded)

1. Asceticism

A discipline involving deliberate self-denial and detachment from worldly pleasures or illusions. For Christian mystics, it aims to purify the soul for communion with God. Nihiltheists may embrace a form of asceticism as part of exposing illusions, though without affirming a final divine payoff.

2. Dark Night of the Soul

A term chiefly from St. John of the Cross: a profound interior crisis that strips away habitual certainties, leaving the soul in darkness so it can ultimately unite with God. Under a Nihiltheist lens, the “dark night” might remain an endless dissolution.

3. Groundlessness

A concept that all forms of meaning, identity, or reference lack ultimate foundation. In nihilistic or Nihiltheist frameworks, groundlessness is not a step to some deeper foundation but the abiding condition of reality.

4. Abyss of Faith

Fr. Seraphim Rose's phrase indicating that faith itself can be an existential plunge into the unknown. Potentially resonates with nihilistic abyss, except that Christian faith trusts in a hidden God, while a radical negativity does not.

5. Apophatic Theology

A theological approach (embraced by many Christian mystics) that speaks of God primarily by negation, asserting that God is beyond all concepts. Resonates in part with the negativity of Nihiltheism, though the Christian ultimately affirms a hidden positivity.

6. Perpetual Deconstruction

A stance wherein every claim, notion, or doctrinal tenet is subjected to ongoing dismantling. While Christian mysticism halts at the threshold of God's ineffability, Nihiltheism continues unceasingly, refusing to freeze negativity into a new positive claim.

7. Teleology

The study or belief in purposes, ends, or final causes in nature or existence. In Christian mysticism, there's a definite teleology: the soul is made for God. Nihiltheism denies or problematizes teleological frameworks.

8. Void

A conceptual or experiential emptiness that arises when meaning-structures are stripped away. Christian mystics sometimes see it as the negative image of the Divine. Nihiltheism sees it as the stark condition that cannot be contained in a single theological or atheological image.

9. Suffering as Catalyst

In many spiritual traditions, suffering is not merely negative but a catalyst for transformation. For Christian mystics, it is purification leading to God; for nihilists, it can be a radical exposure of illusions, though not necessarily "redemptive."

10. Monastic vs. Modern

Contrasts the cloistered or ascetic life of many saints with the complexities of living in a modern, secular, often consumer-driven world. Fr. Seraphim Rose bridged monastic ideals with modern critiques, while nihilistic stances might interpret all contexts as illusions, monastic or otherwise.

Bibliography and Further Reading

St. John of the Cross

The Dark Night of the Soul; Ascent of Mount Carmel

Fr. Seraphim Rose

Nihilism: The Root of the Revolution of the Modern Age; Orthodox Survival Guide

Nietzsche, Friedrich

Thus Spoke Zarathustra; The Will to Power (touchstones for existential and moral nihilism)

Søren Kierkegaard

The Sickness Unto Death; Fear and Trembling (crucial for understanding the existential leap of faith)

Vladimir Lossky

The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church (classic text bridging apophatic theology and ascetic practice)

Jean-Paul Sartre & Albert Camus

Key existential thinkers who debate meaning, freedom, and the absurd.

Contemporary Deconstructive Philosophers

e.g., Jacques Derrida, for how meaning unravels within language, paralleling certain nihilistic moves.

Final Reflections for Journal314

By summoning the voices of St. John of the Cross and Fr. Seraphim Rose, Journal314 situates itself at the intersection of Christian mystical tradition and the disruptions of modern (and postmodern) nihilism. Layering on the approach of Nihiltheism further intensifies the conversation, forcing the text to grapple with the refusal of closure, the refusal of final solutions, and the possibility that even God-claims must stand vulnerable to radical negation.

This expanded portion of Journal314 does not offer easy reconciliations. Instead, it amplifies the paradoxes:

To the mystic: The path of unknowing leads to a luminous union with the Divine.

To the radical nihilist: The path of unknowing remains unremitting emptiness, refusing to be domesticated by a final cosmic meaning.

In this profound tension, new insights—and new confusions—arise. Readers might discover that in these swirling interactions of devotion and negation lies a territory both precarious and strangely compelling. The precariousness is precisely the point: it is within the clash of luminous theology and bottomless emptiness that the real friction of existence is felt. Whether that friction produces a transfigurative illumination or an endless meltdown remains an open question—one that Journal314 leaves for each contemplative traveler to face in the solitude of their own “dark night” or, perhaps, in the interminable negativity that Nihiltheism relentlessly contemplates.

Upward and onward—or downward and inward—into the abyss that may be God, or may be Nothing. The journey unfolds, illuminated only by the flicker of paradox and the dissolving lines of meaning.