

# RENSUM Recall App

2024/12/17

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## The Religious Experience of Nihilism

- The section from 'The [Religious Experience](#) of Nihilism' begins with quotes from [William James](#) and [Friedrich Nietzsche](#), highlighting the inherent sadness and [nihilism](#) that can result from a purely naturalistic or positivistic worldview.
- James notes that even with a healthy-minded approach to life, the underlying evil and mortality that exists in the world cannot be ignored, and will ultimately lead to a sense of despair.
- Nietzsche suggests that nihilism, as a denial of a truthful world, could be a divine way of thinking, and that philosophers may pay homage to ascetic ideals as a means of escaping the torture of existence.
- The author of the work acknowledges that their interpretation of nihilism may be at odds with mainstream philosophical definitions, and that they will be drawing heavily from the works of other thinkers, including Nietzsche, [Heidegger](#), and Pascal.
- The author quotes Heidegger, who notes that people often fail to hear the call of existence due to their own inability to listen, and instead cover up their failure with idle talk.
- Pascal is also quoted, highlighting the misery of a godless existence and the weakness of mind that can result from it.
- The author reflects on their own experience and approach to writing, noting that they are torn between confidence and humility, and that doubt is a constant presence in their work.
- The author acknowledges that their work may seem disjointed or contradictory at times, with differing tones and perspectives, but asserts that the experience from which it stems is real and authentic.
- The section concludes with a quote from an unknown source, describing the neurotic tendency to exhaust oneself in self-preoccupations and to take out one's problems on others, highlighting the complexities and challenges of human relationships.

## The Universality of Nihilism

- The author of the text emphasizes that the ideas expressed are not born from the personal experiences or worldly existence of the thinkers quoted, but rather from a universal experience that transcends individual backgrounds and perspectives.
- The author denies any claims of responsibility for the ideas presented, stating that no individual, including themselves, should be elevated to a pedestal, and that there is no finite authority emerging from the visions expressed.

- The text highlights the idea that there are no heroes or authorities in the context of [Nihilism](#), but rather a shared experience that is articulated by various thinkers from different backgrounds and perspectives.
- The author agrees with Freud's sentiment that most people are "trash" and that this is something that cannot be said aloud, emphasizing the importance of humility in the face of the Nihilistic experience.
- The purpose of quoting various thinkers, including Pascal, [Kierkegaard](#), [Cioran](#), [Vivekananda](#), Nietzsche, Buber, [Heidegger](#), and Tillich, is to show that they all describe the same universal experience of Nihilism, despite their unique language and perspectives.
- The author notes that the quotes are not meant to convey new information, but rather to illustrate the shared experience of Nihilism, and that their own words are not distinct from those of the thinkers quoted.
- The text concludes by emphasizing the idea that the experience of Nihilism is available to any human consciousness that is willing to participate, and that it is not limited to any particular individual or group.

## Independent Thinking and Shared Experience

- The author also quotes Cioran's statement that "existence is plagiarism," suggesting that all thoughts and ideas are ultimately interconnected and that there is no original thought.
- The text ends with a quote from an unnamed source, stating that they believe in thinking independently, but also acknowledging that they often agree with the ancient teachers, highlighting the tension between individual thought and the shared experience of [Nihilism](#).
- The text emphasizes the importance of independent research and self-discovery in understanding religion and philosophy, as stated by [Vivekananda](#), who encourages individuals to find their own light rather than simply following the teachings of others.
- The concept of 'scholarly' writing is questioned, suggesting that it can be restrictive and that authentic thinkers should not be proud of their work, but rather strive for depth and complexity, even if it means being incomprehensible to some.

## The Human Condition and the Search for Meaning

- The text highlights the importance of acknowledging the unknown and the mysteries of existence, citing questions such as "What am I?" and "What is the purpose of existence?" as fundamental and elementary sentiments that are often overlooked or dismissed.
- Quotes from [Cioran](#), Pascal, and Becker are used to illustrate the human condition, the search for meaning, and the ways in which people cope with the uncertainty and desperation of life, often through compulsive routines and distractions.
- The text explores the concept of [Nihilism](#), describing it as a paradoxical and nonrational philosophy that exists within contradiction, and suggesting that it may be the only universal claim, as it acknowledges the subjective nature of truth and the uncertainty of existence.
- The text also touches on the idea that Nihilism is both "[Nothing](#)" and "Everything," and that it cannot be reduced to a single definition or authority, but rather exists as a collection of suggestions and observations that are open to interpretation.

## Nihilism as Universal Truth

- The concept of Nihilism presented in this text is the only 'truth' that can be universally experienced by humans, as it is a confrontation that transcends subjective 'paths' or 'answers'.
- Any claims of knowledge beyond the experience of Nihilism are subjective and can be accepted or rejected at one's discretion, as there are infinitely many possible 'paths' or 'answers'.
- Heidegger's philosophy is referenced, suggesting that the dominance of "logic" within philosophy dissolves when confronted with the question of nothingness and being.
- [Heidegger](#) also notes that existence is pervaded by nihilating behavior, which is often suppressed, but can be felt in the form of dread that is always present, even if it is not always acknowledged.

## Despair and the Loss of the Eternal

- Kierkegaard's concept of despair is also discussed, highlighting the difference between true despair, which is the loss of the eternal, and the earthly despair that people often experience and mistakenly call true despair.
- The author of the text acknowledges that criticisms of their interpretation of [Nihilism](#) will likely be misdirected, as the experience of Nihilism is rare and critiques are often based on misunderstandings.
- The author claims to report their experiences without censorship, condemning all human thought and activity, and acknowledges that they may contradict themselves intentionally or unintentionally.
- The text emphasizes the importance of understanding Nihilism as a personal experience, rather than a philosophical concept that can be understood through logic or reason.

## The Messenger and the Message

- The author of the work acknowledges that their thoughts may be perceived as 'wrong' but finds solace in the company of notable thinkers like [Kierkegaard](#) and Theresa of Avila, who also expressed unconventional ideas.
- The author rejects the pursuit of approval or justification, instead embracing their role as a messenger rather than an author, and invites readers to disengage if they disagree.

## Confronting Uncomfortable Truths

- The text explores the concept of [Nihilism](#), which the author believes has been superficially addressed or dismissed by most people, and seeks to delve deeper into its mysteries.
- The author questions the human experience of existence, suggesting that people often distract themselves from the reality of life by chasing 'happiness' or 'contentment', which they view as signs of weakness.
- The author expresses a desire to confront uncomfortable truths and explore the depths of human existence, even if it means embracing madness or the possibility of suicide.
- The text critiques the lack of genuine philosophers in the world, suggesting that most people are unthinking robots who regurgitate preconceived notions rather than questioning the nature of existence.
- The author draws on quotes from thinkers like Theresa of Avila, [Tolstoy](#), and Tillich to illustrate the complexity and profundity of the questions they are attempting to address.
- The work is presented as a 'story' rather than an argument, and the author acknowledges that it will never be complete, as Nihilism is a concept that resists resolution or solution.

# Nihilism and the Question of Seriousness

- The author defends the seriousness of their exploration of [Nihilism](#), suggesting that it is a necessary and meaningful pursuit, even if it challenges conventional logic and comfort.
- The section begins with a reference to a person who died three days after being wounded, yet continued to sing songs of praise for [God](#), raising the question of whether one can take nihilism too seriously.
- The concept of nihilism is explored through quotes from various individuals, including Heisman, who acknowledges the contradiction in believing in disbelief, and [Unamuno](#), who shares a story about a friend who planned to spend his remaining days writing a book, only to realize the vanity of such pursuits.
- A prominent cosmologist is mentioned, who is driven by curiosity to pursue knowledge of the universe without questioning the value or purpose of this pursuit, illustrating a lack of self-awareness and introspection.
- Chesterton is quoted, describing how he attempted to create his own original heresy, only to discover that it was actually a reiteration of existing traditions, highlighting the challenges of true originality and the influence of established ideas.
- Luther criticizes someone for applying elegant sentiments in a childish and perverted manner, failing to consider the divine or the [transcendent](#) in their discussions.
- [Vivekananda](#) discusses a common approach to dealing with the difficulties of life, which involves ignoring or downplaying the negative aspects and focusing on the positive, but argues that this approach ultimately fails, as it is impossible to hide the truth and the problems will eventually resurface.
- The section concludes with a reference to a voice that guides humanity forward, even in times of despair and hopelessness, suggesting that there is a deeper, more profound reality that can provide meaning and purpose in life.

## The Abyssal Experience of Nihilism

- The concept of [nihilism](#) is explored through various philosophical perspectives, including those of [Heidegger](#), Vivekananda, Heisman, and [Cicero](#), highlighting the abyssal experience of nihilism and its implications on human existence.
- Heidegger's notion that the world's darkness, the destruction of the earth, and the reduction of human beings to a mass have made categories like pessimism and optimism obsolete is emphasized, underscoring the gravity of the situation.
- The importance of questioning the existence of important questions is stressed, as Heisman notes that the only serious question is whether there is anything to take seriously, and Cicero states that studying philosophy is preparation for death.
- Heidegger's idea that the strangeness of being can only be appreciated when the nothingness at the heart of existence is acknowledged is discussed, highlighting the role of wonder in sparking inquiry.
- The nothingness of the world is seen as a fundamental aspect of human experience, which is often obscured by distractions and diversions, and the question of how to live alongside this nothingness is posed.

## A Philosophy of Religion Based on Nothingness

- The possibility of constructing a philosophy of religion based on the nothingness of the world is explored, with [Cioran](#) noting that great conversions often arise from the sudden revelation of life's meaninglessness.
- The human tendency to philosophize is discussed, with the observation that even everyday people and analytic philosophers are engaged in this pursuit, albeit in different ways.
- The analytical tradition is criticized for dismissing the claims of [nihilism](#) as unanswerable or unworthy of concern, reducing ultimate questions to a clash of incomplete arguments.
- The limitations of human thought and the tendency to react to stimuli rather than think independently are highlighted, with the image of a person unable to think without a book between their fingers serving as a metaphor for this condition.

## The Scholar and Original Thought

- The scholar, according to Nietzsche, has lost the instinct of self-defense and is no longer capable of original thought, instead relying on criticizing or affirming existing ideas and referencing other thinkers.
- The atheist philosopher's rejection of a 'god' is seen as intellectually superior, but they fail to provide a non-pragmatic ground for trusting human reason within a naturalistic worldview, and instead rely on reason without justification in an ultimately purposeless universe.
- The 'problem of evil' is cited as an example of this, where philosophers use inductive inferences to argue against God's existence, but fail to explain why reason should be valued over absurdity in a universe without a clear end or goal.

## True Religion and Hubris-Filled Theodicies

- [Vivekananda](#) notes that many people claim to be religious but lack true understanding, instead relying on intellectual assent and empty talk, and that true religion is not just about speaking well.
- On the other side, 'religious' philosophers are criticized for their hubris-filled 'theodicies' that attempt to defend their conception of [God](#) by diminishing the Other, and for failing to truly question their assumptions.
- [Heidegger](#) is quoted as saying that philosophy cannot directly bring about historical change, but rather is the concern of a few individuals who transform creatively and unsettle things.
- Heidegger also notes that true greatness does not consist in diminishing everything, but rather in embracing the complexity and richness of life.

## Nietzsche's Standpoint and Attack on Triumphant Ideas

- Nietzsche is quoted as saying that his principal experience has been to look at healthier concepts and values from the standpoint of the sick, and to look down upon the instincts of decadence from the standpoint of one who is self-reliant and rich in life.
- Nietzsche also describes his approach to philosophy as attacking triumphant ideas and standing alone against them, even if it means compromising himself.
- [Shestov](#) is quoted as saying that understanding has revealed that there is nowhere to flee from Nothingness, highlighting the existential crisis at the heart of human experience.

- The text concludes that philosophy is hanging itself due to its false interpretation of [the Socratic Method](#), which has been deformed by positivistic and scientific thinking, and that philosophers have exaggerated the importance of reason to the point of absurdity.

## The Socratic Method and the Limits of Reason

- The Socratic Method is questioned as to whether it is a tool for knowledge or a means to explore the mystery of human existence, and if it leads to skepticism and doubt when pursued honestly and fully.
- The analytic tradition of philosophy is criticized for being too distant from human existential conditions, eliminating direct experiences of human consciousness and giving philosophers a false sense of accomplishment.
- Philosophers are accused of being too proud to acknowledge their fear of death and the spiritual significance of illness, instead exhibiting a hypocritical serenity in their reflections on death.
- The concept of [Nihilism](#) is discussed, with "intellectual" notions of it being deemed stillborn, as no one truly understands the meaning of existence or the "Why?" behind it.
- Philosophers are criticized for building systems without a solid foundation, and for moving forward with self-assurance despite the lack of understanding of the human condition.

## The Tragic Problem of Philosophy

- The quote from [Unamuno](#) highlights the tragic problem of philosophy as reconciling intellectual necessities with the necessities of the heart and will, and questions whether all men face this contradiction squarely.
- Cioran's quote emphasizes the importance of the organic and existential thinker, who thinks due to a vital imbalance and is beyond science and art, and is capable of true seriousness.
- Huxley's quote notes that some people can live contentedly with a philosophy of meaninglessness, but often this is due to their engagement in meaningful and valuable activities such as art or science.
- Schopenhauer's quote is referenced, stating that philosophy can only interpret and explain what is given, and is an unending attempt to understand the mystery of being and the ground of all things.
- The overall tone of the text suggests that traditional philosophy is inadequate in addressing the human condition, and that a more existential and organic approach is necessary to truly understand the mystery of human existence.

## Philosophy and the Map of Consequences

- Philosophy, by its nature, lacks authoritative prescriptions and is concerned with the logical consequences of a proposition, regardless of its ontology or starting point.
- To contribute to the project of understanding [Nihilism](#), philosophy must derive an analysis or "map of consequences" grounded in direct human experience, which is the focus of this task.
- As [Vivekananda](#) notes, argument and reasoning are based on certain perceptions, and without these, there can be no argument, emphasizing the importance of experience in understanding Nihilism.
- The experience of Nihilism, characterized by boredom, anxiety, depression, ecstasy, despair, and other forms, is taken as a reality, and the goal is to discover whether there is a "message" or "constructive content" within it.
- As [Cioran](#) suggests, even if the experience of the void is an illusion, it is still worth exploring, as it attempts to make life and death endurable.



- The "truth" of Nihilism's consequences will be left to subjectivity, and the project will follow the sentiment of Heidegger, who states that Nihilism is where science and philosophy meet.

## Exploring Nihilism: Reductionism vs. Transcendence

- In exploring [Nihilism](#), one may choose a reductionist, materialist explanation or a [Transcendental](#) approach, with the former found in science and psychology, and the latter in religion or theology.
- The philosopher Heidegger's analysis of the human condition will be paramount in exploring Nihilism as a universal human experience, and his approach makes definitive distinctions to avoid added confusion.
- Heidegger's ontological analysis of conscience is prior to any description or classification of experiences of conscience and lies outside of biological or theological explanations, emphasizing the need to avoid exaggerating or making perverse claims about its outcome.
- The goal is to explore Nihilism without demanding any one authoritative interpretation or absolute vocabulary, allowing for a nuanced understanding of its constructive content and message.

## Transcendence and the Wholly-Other

- The concept of the "religious" experience is deemed too vague and often dragged down by pragmatism and self-concern, necessitating a redefinition or avoidance of the term in favor of the more neutral term "[Transcendence](#)."
- Transcendence refers to a feature of human experience that is not entirely deconstructive or naturalistic, and is suggestive of the Wholly-Other, without being associated with the supernatural or mystical connotations.
- The [Nihilistic](#) experience is claimed to hold a Transcendent interpretation, yet is equally founded within the dogmas of Naturalism, and is considered the ground of all Transcendent interpretations of human experience.

## Death, Nothingness, and the Limits of Theoretical Questions

- According to [Heidegger](#), death must be conceived in its full ontological essence before asking what may be after death, and the question of what lies beyond death may not be a possible theoretical question at all.
- Heidegger also emphasizes the importance of transforming human being into its openness, allowing for a genuine experience of the [nothing](#), and avoiding characterizations of the nothing that do not come from a corresponding experience.
- The Nihilistic experience is considered a perennial and universal experience that cannot be escaped, and any attempts to move past it or find completion within the world are seen as distractions from the reality of Nihilism.
- The finite is indefinitely separated from the Infinite, and all confusions, whether philosophical, naturalistic, or religious, stem from attempts to move past the [Nihilistic](#) experience.

## The Finite and the Infinite

- The worldly forms of religion, when taken as ends in themselves, are indistinguishable from a wholly materialist, naturalistic worldview, and the finite language of human beings cannot ever be in

complete grasp of the Other.

- Philosophers such as [Cioran](#) and Tillich are referenced, with Cioran noting that the void allows us to erode the idea of being, and Tillich arguing that philosophy must demythologize sacred stories and transform them into a philosophy of religion and finally into a philosophy without religion.
- The text concludes by emphasizing the importance of skepticism and recognizing the subjectivity of any "meaning" built upon a material, transitory structure, which will inevitably collapse as illusory.

## Ultimate Reality and the Experience of Nothingness

- The realization of the ultimate reality and the experience of Nothingness can lead to a [transcendence](#) of worldly concerns and the understanding that all things, including philosophies and doctrines, are finite and fleeting, as expressed by [Swami Vivekananda](#).
- Idolatrous faith, which elevates finite realities to the rank of ultimacy, can result in existential disappointment, a concept discussed by Tillich, highlighting the importance of recognizing the truly ultimate.
- The experience of Nothingness is a crucial aspect of [Nihilism](#), and those who have not undergone this experience may dismiss or misunderstand the concept, as illustrated by a [Taoist](#) saying that describes the reactions of the common people, intellectuals, and those who have experienced Nothingness.

## The 'It World' and Inauthentic Existence

- The "It world" described by Buber, where people live comfortably and are distracted by various stimulations, can prevent individuals from confronting the reality of death and the meaninglessness of existence.
- Heidegger's concept of the "they" refers to the way in which societal norms and expectations can regulate an individual's behavior and prevent them from confronting their own mortality, instead encouraging a tranquilized and inauthentic existence.
- [Heidegger](#) also describes the "downward plunge" of [Dasein](#), where individuals become trapped in inauthentic everydayness, which is often misinterpreted as a way of living concretely and authentically.

## The Primacy of Experience in Transcendent Thinking

- The direct experience of [Nihilism](#) is essential for [transcendent](#) thinking, as emphasized by [Swami Vivekananda](#), who notes that until one experiences the futility and meaninglessness of existence, they cannot truly believe in it.
- Nietzsche, often referred to as the "Nihilistic-Prophet," stresses the need to experience Nihilism in order to re-evaluate values and ideals, as it represents the ultimate logical conclusion of our great values and ideals.
- Tolstoy's words illustrate the absurdity and meaninglessness of an isolated personal life, highlighting the importance of recognizing one's own mortality and the impermanence of all things.

## Transformative Experiences of Nothingness

- The experience of Nothingness can be a transformative and profound experience, as expressed by [St. Augustine](#), who notes that suddenly all vain hopes became worthless to him.



- The concept of the primacy of experience is illustrated through an example provided by Tønnessen, where a [Russian](#) spy, despite knowing his fate, experiences a profound and terrifying insight upon being sentenced to death, demonstrating the integration of knowledge that cannot be taught in an ordinary sense.
- This experience is linked to the concept of [Nihilism](#), which is characterized by a hidden meaninglessness throughout all of the world's activities, and is rooted in the ontological basis of Nothingness.

## The Ontological Basis of Nothingness

- To understand the experience of Nihilism, it is necessary to establish the ontological basis of this Nothingness, which can be done in various forms, and will eventually allow for the development of a language of Nihilism.
- Tønnessen's depiction of the experience of Nihilism describes a person who, despite initially feeling a sense of integral selfhood and personal identity, is suddenly struck by the realization of the meaninglessness and impermanence of life, leading to feelings of dread, anguish, and ontological despair.
- This experience is marked by a sense of the uncanny, where "something is uncanny," but the nature of this "something" cannot be defined, and is characterized by a sense of indifference, where all things and the self sink into nothingness.
- The experience of [Nihilism](#) is further described as a "moving away of be-ing as a whole" that closes in on the individual, creating a sense of pressure and leaving [nothing](#) to hold onto.
- The example provided by Tønnessen highlights the idea that the experience of Nihilism is not just a philosophical concept, but a deeply personal and existential crisis that can arise from the realization of the meaninglessness and impermanence of life.

## Heidegger's 'No-Thing' and the Absence of Meaning

- The concept of Nihilism is explored through the idea of "no-thing" as described by [Heidegger](#), where dread reveals the absence of meaning and significance in the world.
- Heidegger explains that anxiety arises from the fact that environmental entities no longer have any involvement, and the world has sunk into insignificance, leaving only an empty and merciless presence.
- The experience of [Nihilism](#) can be expressed as a question, where one imagines the most meaningful aspect of their existence as being worthless and void of all meaning, evoking a sense of deconstructive-[terror](#) and a vanishing of any ground for existence.
- [William James](#) describes this experience as a state of negativity and deadness, where one is stripped of all emotions and left to confront the world as it exists, without any favorable or unfavorable commentary.
- Nihilism is a universal aspect of the human condition, but its extreme forms are rare, and the experience is typically received in piecemeal, making it difficult to fully comprehend.

## The Rarity of Dread and the Experience of No-Thing

- [Heidegger](#) notes that the original dread that arises from the experience of no-thing is rare, and most people exist and relate to being without this dread, instead getting lost in being and turning away from the no-thing.

- The rarity of the experience of agony is questioned by [Cioran](#), who wonders if the hypothesis is false and if a metaphysics of death is only possible by accepting death's [transcendental](#) nature.
- Ultimately, the experience of [Nihilism](#) is characterized by a sense of horror and dread that is not continually present, but rather a rare and intense experience that reveals the abyss of meaninglessness that lies at the heart of existence.

## The Overlooked Reality of Nihilism

- The concept of Nihilism is often overlooked or forgotten, with many people enduring life without questioning its value, as they are consumed by their own personalities and the busyness of the world.
- Even those who experience Nihilism deeply may feel a sense of suspicion that it is still not fully understood, and they may question the reality of Nihilism and the intuition that there is something lurking behind it.
- The path to understanding Nihilism is narrow and often obstructed, making it difficult for individuals to seek authenticity and participate with Nihilism, due to the "falling" nature of human beings being wrapped up in the world.
- The rarity of [Nihilism](#) and the tendency to drive it out or miss its message can be unbearable for those seeking authenticity, as they may feel a sense of double-mindedness or a divided self.

## Downplaying Significance and Avoiding Reality

- [Heidegger](#) notes that when anxiety subsides, people often downplay the significance of their experiences, saying "it was really [nothing](#)," which can be seen as a way of avoiding the reality of Nihilism.
- [Cioran](#) suggests that saints, rather than philosophers, may hold the key to understanding Nihilism, as they possess a deeper knowledge that comes from suffering and a connection to [God](#).

## The Absurd Perspective and the Absence of Values

- Nietzsche's concept of the "Absurd Valuation" refers to the moment when an individual's values and virtues become repulsive to them, and they question the meaning of their happiness, reason, and morality.
- The term "[Absurd Perspective](#)" is preferred, as it describes the paralyzing nature of [Nihilism](#) that arises from the absence of values, making all judgments and actions seem baseless and absurd.
- In a valueless universe, humans are forced to make value judgments, but without moral values, no non-arbitrary action can be made, leading to a sense of absurdity and the feeling that all possibilities are equivalent and meaningless.

## The Multiverse and the Illusion of Choice

- The concept of the multiverse, or "world-assemble," suggests that there are an infinite number of universes and, in theory, an infinite number of versions of an individual, leading to the idea that every possible decision will be made by one of these versions.
- This perspective renders subjective morality and meaning empty, as every choice becomes trivial and illusory, regardless of whether it is perceived as right or wrong based on intuition, feelings, or philosophical contemplation.

- The concept of free will and determinism becomes irrelevant in this context, as determinism is inherent in the multiverse theory, even if free will is granted in each individual universe.
- The "B" theory of time, which suggests that there is no temporal becoming and no privileged "now," further reinforces the idea that all moments in time, including birth and death, are equally real and that existence is equivalent to a static movie reel.
- Despite the potential for this perspective to lead to [nihilism](#), many humans continue to force subjective meaning onto their lives, denying the objective reality of the multiverse and the impermanence of human existence.

## The 'Small World' Understanding and the Horrors of Existence

- Human minds have not evolved to handle the vast expanse of time and the universe, leading to a "small world" understanding that shields individuals from the horrors of self-conscious existence and the impermanence of human civilization.
- The denial of nihilism and the proposal of meaning within the context of "deep time" is problematic, as most human existence has been erased without a trace, leaving behind only remnants in DNA and the occasional archaeological find.
- Quotes from [Thomas Ligotti](#), [Will Durant](#), and [Vivekananda](#) reinforce the idea that all civilizations and species will eventually become extinct, and that human knowledge and achievements are ultimately fleeting and impermanent.

## Nihilism and the Question of Meaning

- The concept of [nihilism](#) is explored, where life is seen as having no inherent meaning, and the idea of finding meaning in a seemingly meaningless world is questioned.
- Friedrich Nietzsche's quote highlights the absurdity of taking pride in one's descent, laboring together, or serving the common welfare when life ultimately has no meaning.
- The text argues that embracing nihilism may be a hubristic act, as it disregards the struggles and accomplishments of human existence, and that all actions and achievements will eventually be erased.
- The idea that humans still insist on finding meaning in their lives despite the inevitability of death and the transience of all things is seen as a form of neurotic justification.

## The Absurdity of Meaning in a Meaningless World

- The text references Leo Tolstoy's observation that death and the transitoriness of all things destroy the meaning of life, and that the significance of life cannot lie in personal existence.
- An illustration is used to demonstrate the absurdity of finding meaning in a meaningless situation, where two people are trapped in a tennis court with no ball, and one person insists on playing.
- The illustration raises questions about the nature of meaning and whether it can be invented or subjective, and how long such meaning would be sustainable.
- The text also references Martin Heidegger's concept of "genuine boredom," which occurs when one's whole world is boring, and how this reveals the underlying meaninglessness of existence.
- [Nihilism](#) is seen as taking away the "ball" from the game of life, leaving individuals to invent new games that eventually succumb to absurdity and boredom.
- The text concludes that one must experience the nothingness of the world directly in order to understand the true nature of existence and the futility of finding meaning in a seemingly meaningless world.

world.

## The Discomfort of Stillness and the Transcendental Yearning

- The human inability to sit alone in a room, as observed by Pascal, reveals a deep-seated discomfort with stillness and quiet contemplation, which in turn exposes feelings of nothingness, forlornness, and weakness.
- This inherent restlessness suggests that humans are driven by a [Transcendental](#) yearning or a search for something more, which is often translated into worldly activities rather than confronting the void or the Infinite.
- According to [Vivekananda](#) and [Tolstoy](#), people tend to avoid confronting the reality of their mortality and the impermanence of things, instead opting for optimism or distractions that provide a false sense of security.
- Tolstoy's realization of [Nihilism](#) is characterized by the awareness that everything is ultimately meaningless and will be forgotten, leading to a sense of absurdity and cruelty in the face of mortality.

## Nihilism, Despair, and the 'Other'

- The experience of Nihilism can lead to a sense of desperation, leaving individuals with limited options: madness, suicide, or the pursuit of something beyond the void, referred to as the "Other."
- The nature of the "Other" is unclear, and it is uncertain whether it is distinct from madness or suicide, or if it can lead to either of these outcomes.
- Fr. [Seraphim Rose](#) notes that [Christian](#) Nihilism, which posits that the world is [nothing](#) and [God](#) is all, is distinct from the Nihilism that proceeds from the Abyss, where God is nothing and the world is all.
- The philosopher [Cioran](#) describes the experience of being severed from life and confronting the nothingness of the world, leading to a questioning of whether there is anything beyond this void.
- The text concludes by pondering the mystery of how Nothingness can give rise to Something, highlighting the paradox at the heart of the human experience.

## A Godless World and the Search for Ultimate Reality

- The concept of [nihilism](#) is explored through various philosophical perspectives, including those of [Shestov](#), [Spong](#), [Sartre](#), and [Vivekananda](#), who all grapple with the idea of a godless world and the search for ultimate reality.
- Spong suggests that one must either find a new way to speak of and engage with [God](#) or accept living in a godless world, while Sartre claims that even if God existed, it would change [nothing](#).
- Vivekananda argues that practical life is a hypocritical and fraudulent existence, and that true religiosity begins with a deep dissatisfaction with the present state of things and a hatred for the patchwork of life.
- Heidegger's concept of "thrownness" is discussed, where [Dasein](#) (human existence) is always falling back into the world and is sucked into the turbulence of inauthenticity.
- [Heidegger](#) also notes that in everydayness, Dasein can undergo dull suffering and evade it by seeking new distractions, but can never extinguish it, and that the ontology of Dasein is always falling back upon the allurements of the ordinary understanding of Being.

## The Divided Self and the Disconnect Between Finite and Infinite

- The idea of a divided-self or double-mindedness is explored, where there is no escape from the disconnect between the finite and the Infinite, and that this disconnect has been intellectually accepted but shunned in action by most people.
- The concept of "original sin" is mentioned as a mythological language used to describe this disconnect, and that only a rare few have the stamina to renounce the world and accept that reality is an unreality.
- The text concludes by describing how people often return to their ordinary lives after experiencing despair, but are never the same, and may acquire some understanding of life by imitating others, but ultimately live a life that is not truly their own.

## The Divided Self: Worldliness and Despair

- The concept of the divided self is explored through various philosophical and theological perspectives, highlighting the inherent conflict between the natural and spiritual aspects of human existence.
- [Kierkegaard](#) notes that individuals may appear to be living a fulfilling life, yet lack a true sense of self, instead being driven by external factors and worldly desires, which he terms "worldliness."
- He also describes the phenomenon of thinkers creating grand systems and theories, yet failing to apply these principles to their own personal lives, instead living in a state of delusion.
- Kierkegaard defines despair as a state of double-mindedness, where an individual is torn between two conflicting wills, and notes that this can lead to a sense of disintegration and fragmentation.
- [St. Augustine](#) and [Cioran](#) also describe the experience of being torn between two opposing forces, with Augustine referencing the struggle between his carnal and spiritual wills.

## Inner Beauty and Spiritual Growth

- Plato and James emphasize the importance of cultivating inner beauty and spiritual growth, with James arguing that natural good is insufficient and can even be a hindrance to true spiritual development.
- Buber and Molinos describe the tension between the spiritual and natural aspects of human existence, with Buber noting that even in moments of spiritual [transcendence](#), one may still feel a sense of disconnection and fragmentation upon returning to daily life.
- The concept of the divided self is seen as a fundamental aspect of the human condition, with individuals constantly pulled in opposing directions by their natural and transcendent natures.
- The text also touches on the idea that this divided self is not unique to any particular religious or philosophical tradition, but is rather a universal human experience, with references to various spiritual and philosophical perspectives, including [Christianity](#), [Judaism](#), [Hinduism](#), and [Nihilism](#).

## The Divided Consciousness and the Frustration of Guilt

- The human consciousness is divided, resulting in a never-ending frustration that leads to feelings of guilt, as individuals are unable to live up to the ideals of philosophy, theology, or religion and are pulled back into the world's depravity.
- According to [Heidegger](#), the concept of guilt is not about owing something to someone else or not meeting another's worldly expectations, but rather stems from the "always falling" condition, where individuals are dragged down by naturalism and fail to recognize their True-Self.
- In this existential sense, guilt is directed at oneself, and in Nihilism, others become insignificant, and the Original Self becomes the primary focus, eliminating the feeling of owing anyone or anything.

# The Transcendent Self and the Renunciation of the World

- The [Transcendent](#) side of the Self, which separates itself from the Natural side of man, becomes the fascination, leading to a renunciation of the world and a turning inward, as seen in the ideas of [Cioran](#), who suggests that the passion for the absurd is the only thing that can throw a demonic light on chaos when all current reasons no longer guide one's life.
- This inward focus is characterized by non-movement and a negative "morality," where individuals prioritize their own spiritual growth over material concerns, as emphasized by [Vivekananda](#), who warns against the materialism that can arise from prioritizing charity and practical religion.
- The idea of non-action and passivity vis-a-vis the world is also echoed in the words of Cioran, who states that to have faith, one must remain passive, and in the Tao Te Ching, which describes the sages as dealing with people as heaven and earth deal with all things, without benevolent intentions.
- Luther, paraphrasing [Jesus](#), also emphasizes the importance of despising the world, highlighting the contrast between this perspective and the instruction to prioritize worldly concerns.
- Ultimately, the text suggests that the divided nature of human consciousness leads to a sense of guilt and frustration, which can only be alleviated by turning inward and prioritizing the Transcendent side of the Self, rather than trying to live up to worldly expectations or ideals.

## Nihilism, Morality, and the Illusion of Progress

- The section discusses the concept of [nihilism](#) and its relation to human morality, action, and existence, citing various philosophers and thinkers, including [Seraphim Rose](#), [Vivekananda](#), Otto, [Taoism](#), Huxley, [Cioran](#), [Shestov](#), and [Kierkegaard](#).
- Seraphim Rose argues against "utopian" thinking and "doing good," emphasizing the importance of accepting the present moment and allowing God's will to be done, rather than trying to change the world through human action.
- Other thinkers, such as Vivekananda and Otto, also express a sense of futility and impermanence in human endeavors, suggesting that all good works and pleasures are ultimately meaningless.
- The section also critiques the idea of "positivity" as a form of escapism, arguing that it involves ignoring the true nature of existence and pretending that everything is fine when it is not.
- The "Pathetic person" is described as someone who tries to hold on to a sense of hope and optimism, but ultimately surrenders to the futility of existence, going through the motions of life with a forced smile.
- In contrast, the Nihilist is portrayed as someone who confronts the reality of existence head-on, acknowledging the meaninglessness and impermanence of human endeavors, and refusing to pretend that everything is fine when it is not.
- The section suggests that the Nihilist's approach is more honest and authentic, even if it is often misunderstood as a form of laziness or despair.
- The thinkers cited in the section, including [Cioran](#), [Shestov](#), and [Kierkegaard](#), all express a sense of disillusionment with human morality and the idea of progress, arguing that true freedom and happiness can only be achieved by abandoning the idea of a meaningful or purposeful existence.
- Overall, the section presents a bleak and pessimistic view of human existence, arguing that true wisdom and authenticity can only be achieved by confronting the reality of [nihilism](#) head-on.



## Inauthenticity and the Frozen Figure of Positivity

- The individual who engages in worldly activities, such as promoting progress and helping others, is still trapped in a state of inauthenticity, exemplified by the "frozen figure of positivity," and is unable to truly experience life.
- The negative appropriation of Nihilism occurs when a person is distracted by the illusions of worldly meaning, which infects all aspects of their existence, causing them to experience mundane actions as meaningful.
- This perspective assumes an intrinsic value to human existence, despite its finite and nonsensical nature, and disregards the horrific consequences of such a viewpoint.

## Confronting Nihilism and the World's Unreality

- The words of Kempus, "He is the truly wise man, who counteth all earthly things as dung," and Thomas Ligotti's statement, "As a threat to human continuance, [nihilism](#) is as dead as [God](#)," highlight the need to confront and participate with Nihilism, rather than fleeing from it.
- Participation with Nihilism is necessary to reveal its true nature, and this requires embracing the reality of the world's unreality, rather than hiding behind a facade of optimism or indifference.
- The quotes from Theresa of Avila, [Aldous Huxley](#), and [Emil Cioran](#) emphasize the misery and wretchedness of human existence, and the tendency to assign meaning and value to arbitrary aspects of life, while ignoring the overall meaninglessness of the world.
- The story of the fishwife, as told by [Vivekananda](#), illustrates how people are often distracted by the "fish smell" of worldly pleasures and are unable to see beyond them, highlighting the need to transcend these limitations and seek a deeper understanding of reality.

## The 'Fish Smell' of Worldly Pleasures and the Need for Transcendence

- The "soulish-bodily synthesis" in every person is designed to strive for spiritual growth, but many individuals prefer to dwell in the "cellar" of sensuousness, rather than seeking a higher level of existence.
- The concept of [Nihilism](#) is explored through various philosophical perspectives, including those of [Kierkegaard](#), Plato, [Taoism](#), Nagel, [Camus](#), [Heidegger](#), Spong, and Cioran, highlighting its destructive nature and the human tendency to avoid confronting it.

## Nihilism's Destructive Nature and Human Avoidance

- Kierkegaard notes that individuals often prefer to dwell in their own "cellar" of ignorance, rather than facing the reality of their existence, while Plato describes the corporeal element as "heavy and weighty" and a source of depression.
- The illusory nature of value judgments is emphasized, leading to the Absurd, which can only be confronted through actualization, rather than intellectualization or reasoning.
- Proposed "solutions" to the Absurd, such as irony or indifference, are deemed ineffective, as they distract from the true nature of Nihilism and fail to provide a genuine response.

- Humanist stoicism is seen as a temporary and ultimately futile attempt to cope with the implications of [Nihilism](#), as it relies on a willful deception about the nature of mortality and the meaninglessness of life.
- [Camus](#) describes the "absurd man" as one who accepts the universe in all its absurdity and draws strength from it, refusing to hope for a more meaningful existence.
- The majority of people retreat into superficial and selfish interpretations of religious languages, family relations, and worldly pleasures to avoid confronting the Authentic Self and the reality of Nihilism.
- [Heidegger](#) notes that this avoidance is rewarded with the illusion of "ascending" and "living concretely," while Spong observes that the fear of nothingness drives many forms of religion and the hysteria that ensues when theism is challenged.
- [Cioran](#) emphasizes the importance of confronting the agony of existence and the futility of seeking meaning in the end, rather than in the slow and revelatory process of living.
- Ultimately, Nihilism is seen as wholly destructive to the world, revealing the abyss of nothingness that lies beneath human existence.

## The Transparent World and the Ludicrous Pursuit of Meaning

- The individual who experiences [Nihilism](#) is unable to retreat back into the world of 'things' as they have become transparent and the world appears dead.
- According to Tønnessen, the human situation is one of being thrown into an indifferent world, and any attempt to justify or find meaning in this existence is bound to be ludicrous.
- Tønnessen uses the analogy of a person falling from the [Empire State Building](#) to describe the human situation, where individuals try to divert themselves from the reality of their desperate situation by focusing on petty, short-term goals.
- [Kierkegaard](#) notes that it is ironic that individuals can understand the truth about the wretchedness and pettiness of the world, yet still participate in it and take glory in it.
- [Vivekananda](#) uses the metaphor of trying to cover a carrion with roses to describe how individuals try to hide the ugliness of their lives with superficial coverings, but ultimately, the truth will be revealed.

## The Lack of Philosophical Inquiry in Science

- The mindset of many practicing scientists today is seen as an example of this lack of realization of [Transcendence](#), as they focus on the 'How?' of scientific descriptions without asking the deeper philosophical questions of 'Why?'.
- The Philosopher seeks to ask these deeper questions, such as why particles and molecules behave in certain ways, and why there is a rational structure to the world, but these questions are often shunned by mainstream scientific intellectuals.
- This lack of philosophical inquiry has led to the development of an 'optimistic' scientism that neglects the significance and meaning of the world.
- Nietzsche's statement emphasizes that a purely mechanical interpretation of the world would be an essentially meaningless world, highlighting the need for a more profound understanding of existence.

## The Limitations of a Scientific Approach

- The section critiques the notion of valuing experiences, such as music, based on their calculability and formulability, arguing that this approach fails to capture the essence of the experience, as illustrated by

Nietzsche's quote on the absurdity of scientifically estimating music.

- The passage also touches on the idea that scientific discoveries, particularly in neuroscience and genetics, have led to a growing understanding of human nature as being largely determined by neural wiring and heredity, rather than personal control, but this realization does not necessarily lead to feelings of horror or despair among scientists, as noted by [Ligotti](#).
- Several thinkers, including [Cioran](#), [Swami Vivekananda](#), and [Heidegger](#), are quoted as criticizing the limitations and potential dangers of a purely scientific approach to understanding the world, arguing that it can dull people's minds, diminish their metaphysical consciousness, and fail to provide a sense of purpose or meaning.
- Heidegger's critique of modern science is highlighted, as he argues that science has become a technical and practical matter of gaining information, rather than a means of awakening the spirit, and that it needs an awakening itself.

## The Limitations of Traditional Religion and the Importance of Philosophy

- The section also critiques traditional religious interpretations of the human condition, arguing that they often rely on ungrounded theological assumptions and provide simplistic answers to complex questions, rather than opening up the mystery of existence, as Heidegger suggests.
- Heidegger's thought is that religious languages, including [Christian](#) philosophy, are restrictive of the human experience and contain too many assumptions and answers that shun the mystery of existence, whereas philosophy, as the relentless pursuit of the "Why?", is needed to open up the mystery of Being.
- The passage concludes by noting that while all humans are idolaters, there are simpler, lower forms of idolatry that fail to confront the reality of [Nihilism](#), and that the despairing self is constantly building castles in the air, fighting only in the air.

## The Superficiality of Human Virtues and the Inevitability of Death

- The passage discusses the concept of nihilism and the human experience, citing philosophers such as [Kierkegaard](#) and [Cioran](#), who highlight the superficiality of human virtues and the inevitability of death.
- Kierkegaard notes that despite the self's attempts to create a sense of purpose and control, it ultimately resolves into [nothing](#), rendering its efforts meaningless.
- Cioran argues that philosophers often fail to confront the reality of death, instead using logical arguments to mask their inner fears and torments, and that true understanding can only be achieved through a deep, existential awareness of mortality.

## Contemplating Death and the Impermanence of Existence

- The passage also critiques the philosophical community for its lack of engagement with the concept of [nihilism](#), instead focusing on intellectualized and worldly perspectives that fail to grasp the underlying ontology of values.
- [Cioran](#) and other thinkers, including [Ligotti](#) and Merton, emphasize the importance of contemplating death and the impermanence of human existence in order to make truly spiritual decisions and

achieve a deeper understanding of life.

- The passage suggests that considering the perspective of death can provide a unique opportunity for objectivity, as the observer is no longer invested in their own [self-preservation](#) and can therefore approach questions with a greater degree of detachment and rigor.
- However, this perspective is often difficult for people to adopt, as it requires prioritizing objectivity over self-preservation, and most individuals are unwilling or unable to make this choice.

## Self-Preservation and the Limits of Rational Debate

- The issue of self-preservation and the human condition is often dismissed by the majority, including many scientists, as it is not considered a subject for rational debate and objective discussion, according to Heisman.
- Blaise Pascal's vivid description of the nightmare of existence, where reason is futile, is often reduced to a mathematical equation concerning probabilities, which misses the point of his argument.
- Pascal's Wager is not a casual decision based on calculations of finite losses and infinite gains, but rather a desperate attempt to find meaning in a seemingly meaningless existence, as evident from his own words, where all finitudes are considered lost.

## Pascal's Wager and the Nightmare of Existence

- Pascal's quote highlights the absurdity of finding joy in the expectation of [nothing](#) but hopeless misery and the ignorance of one's own existence, and how this state of being can lead to a carefree and fatalistic attitude towards life and death.
- The author argues that intellectuals who reduce Pascal's insights to a mathematical problem miss the environment in which the wager is presented, which is one of desperation and uncertainty.
- Similarly, Plato's [Allegory of the Cave](#) is often misunderstood as a mere myth with no direct correlation to reality, when in fact it is a powerful metaphor for the human condition and the limitations of knowledge.
- The author uses the analogy of a roller-coaster builder who has never ridden the roller-coaster to illustrate the limitations of knowledge and the impossibility of truly understanding an experience without directly experiencing it.
- The author suggests that a [Nihilistic](#) language is needed to further develop and understand the human condition, and that Pascal's Wager and Plato's Allegory of the Cave are essential texts in this regard.

## Plato's Cave and the Experience of Transcendence

- Many philosophers discuss Plato's Cave allegory as a mere myth, but their lack of direct experience with the [transcendent](#) reality it represents leads to ignorance and dogmatism in their understanding.
- The Cave allegory is not something to be simply believed in or taken as a metaphor, but rather it is an experience that can be encountered firsthand, revealing an uncanny world that challenges naturalistic interpretations.
- The experience of the transcendent reality is often accompanied by a feeling of "uncanniness," which is the opposite of the common human experience of feeling "at home" in the world.

## Cosmic Panic and the Human Condition

- Philosophers like [Zapffe](#) argue that humans' casual attitude towards life is counter to the fundamental human condition, which is characterized by a "feeling of cosmic panic" in the face of the unknown and the impermanence of all things.
- This feeling of cosmic panic is pivotal to the human mind, and fleeing from it without questioning its deeper meaning is also a common human tendency.
- The life-story of [Buddha](#) and the writings of [Kierkegaard](#) and Underhill illustrate the human tendency to be deluded by the impermanence of all things and the uncertainty of life.

## Unattainable Ideals and the Mystical Experience

- Various philosophers and thinkers, including Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, [Heidegger](#), and [Vivekananda](#), have proposed ideals of human existence that involve overcoming the limitations of human nature, but these ideals are ultimately unattainable.
- Mystical experiences, which are a foundational element of human experience, attempt to provide a reconciliation with the human situation, but are ultimately drowned out by the experience of [Nihilism](#), which is characterized by meaninglessness.
- As Tillich notes, the experience of meaninglessness is more radical than mysticism, highlighting the profound impact of Nihilism on human existence.

## Tillich's 'Courage' and the Experience of Nothingness

- The text questions the authenticity of Paul Tillich's emphasis on 'courage' in the face of Nihilism, suggesting that it may be a facade or an attempt to flee from the experience of Nothingness.
- Tillich's philosophy is built upon despair and meaninglessness, yet his emphasis on 'courage' seems to contradict this, leading to questions about whether he truly believes in his own words or is preaching a 'happy' message for the masses.
- The text references other philosophers, such as [Vivekananda](#), who share similar views on the nature of the world and the human experience, and quotes them to highlight the contradictions in Tillich's philosophy.
- Vivekananda's views on the world as a "horrible nightmare" and the need to escape it are cited as an example of the ultimate skepticism and doubt that is built into the syntax of [Nihilism](#).
- The text also references Pascal, [Cioran](#), and [Unamuno](#), who all express similar sentiments about the nature of faith, doubt, and the human experience, and suggests that true faith requires passion, anguish, and uncertainty.
- The question is raised about whether the masses of people truly want [God](#), or if they are simply fleeing from the experience of Nothingness, and whether Tillich's emphasis on 'courage' is a genuine attempt to address this or just a way to placate the masses.
- The text ultimately suggests that Nihilism is an inherent part of the human experience, and that even those who have experienced something mystical or [transcendent](#) are still subject to the ultimate skepticism and doubt that is built into the human situation.

## The Thirst for God and the Reality of Existence

- The pursuit of religion or spiritual enlightenment requires a deep-seated desire or thirst, as illustrated by a story from [Vivekananda](#), where a master teaches his disciple that true desire for God is akin to the desperate need for air when drowning.

- The concept of [nihilism](#) is explored through various philosophers, including Tillich, Tønnessen, [Shestov](#), Becker, [Kierkegaard](#), [Camus](#), and Nietzsche, who suggest that a full understanding of human existence can be overwhelming and potentially destructive.
- The idea that humans are inherently flawed and that true awareness of this condition can lead to madness or despair is a recurring theme, with quotes from Shestov, Becker, and Kierkegaard highlighting human cowardice in the face of mortality and the absurd.
- The absurdity of human existence is further emphasized by Camus, who notes that once one becomes aware of the absurd, they are forever bound to it.
- The tension between the desire for meaning and the reality of existence is also explored, with quotes from Nietzsche, Pascal, and [Cioran](#) highlighting the human need for goals and the tendency to will nothingness rather than accept the void.
- The distinction between the theoretician of faith and the believer is also discussed, with Cioran noting that the difference is as great as that between a psychiatrist and a psychotic.
- The concept of nihilism is distinguished from mental illness, with [Heidegger](#) noting that true anxiety is rare in a world dominated by superficiality and publicness.
- The rejection of the worldly is seen as a necessary step in understanding the experience of nothingness, but this position is also acknowledged as being difficult to comprehend.
- The quotes from various philosophers throughout the text serve to illustrate the complexities and challenges of grappling with the human condition, and the need for a deep and profound understanding of existence.

## Nihilism as a Spiritual Disorder

- The concept of [nihilism](#) is deeply rooted in the human condition, and its profound implications cannot be alleviated by psychotherapeutic means, as stated by St. [Seraphim Rose](#), who views nihilism as a spiritual disorder that can only be overcome by spiritual means.
- Ernest Becker's perspective on human existence highlights the inherent fear and trembling that comes with acknowledging the fragility of life and the powerlessness of individuals, making it challenging to offer comfort from a psychotherapeutic standpoint.
- Mitchell Heisman argues that nihilism is an incurable aspect of the human condition and that attempts to relate psychology or religion to it are futile, as they are inherently biased against considering the nihilistic perspective.

## The Incurability of Nihilism and Rational Self-Destruction

- Heisman also questions the possibility of living a philosophy of nihilism, where one reconciles meaninglessness with every thought and emotion, and whether this would lead to rational self-destruction, as evidenced by his own documented case of suicide.
- Heisman's two-thousand-page suicide note expresses his pursuit of a new language of [nihilism](#), characterized by honesty to the point of absurdity, and his desire to seek out truths that are deadly and destructive to himself, ultimately leading to rational self-annihilation.
- Underhill's perspective, a hundred years earlier, suggests that the true intellectualist, who concedes [nothing](#) to instinct or emotion, is obliged to adopt some form of skeptical philosophy, which may lead to a similar undertaking as Heisman's.



- The relationship between madness, suicide, and nihilism is explored, with questions raised about whether madness and suicide are necessary consequences of nihilism, and whether there is a difference between a worldly suicide and one resulting from nihilism.
- The distinction is made between a particular 'irrational' neurosis and [the terror](#) that comes from the insights of an experience of nihilism, highlighting the complexities of the human condition in the face of nihilism.

## Nihilism, Faith, and the Escape from Horror

- The concept of [nihilism](#) can only be escaped through the exercise of faith, but the notion of faith is complex and open to interpretation, as seen in the differing views of thinkers like Heisman and Underhill.
- Heisman's interpretation of nihilism lacks a [transcendent](#) aspect, instead focusing on a naturalistic view, whereas Underhill's perspective incorporates the idea of faith as a means to move beyond the nothingness of the world.
- Kierkegaard's definition of faith as "the opposite of sin" highlights the idea that faith is not about virtue, but rather about experiencing something beyond the nothingness of the world.
- Heisman's writings, particularly in his expansive suicide note, reveal sentiments similar to those expressed by saints and religiously-minded individuals, but without the framework of a religious language.
- Despite expressing a desire to move beyond a strictly naturalistic viewpoint, Heisman was unable to do so, and his language remained grounded in a naturalistic interpretation of nihilism.

## Heisman's Naturalistic Nihilism and the Evolutionary Basis of God

- A quote from Heisman suggests that he discovered an evolutionary basis for [God](#) through radical disbelief, but this idea is not about finding comfort or an answer to the problem of [nihilism](#), but rather about grounding God within nihilism itself.
- The question arises as to whether a language that encompasses both Heisman's and the saints' perspectives could have allowed Heisman to live a different life, and whether a nihilistic language necessarily entails suicide.
- The text emphasizes that Heisman's actions should not be judged, and the focus is on exploring the complexities of nihilism and the role of faith in escaping its horrors.

## Authentic Suicide and the Death of the World

- The concept of authentic suicide is explored in relation to nihilism, questioning whether the act of taking one's life can be considered authentic when driven by a loss of worldly distractions versus a profound understanding of the nothingness of the world.
- The distinction is made between individuals who are slaves to the world and those who have experienced [nihilism](#), with the former often fleeing into suicide as a relief from their suffering, while the latter may see suicide as a logical conclusion to their existence.
- The idea is posed that if one has not experienced the death of the world, they can potentially be brought back from the brink of suicide, but if the world has indeed died for them, there may be [nothing](#) to return to, rendering the effort to save them futile.

## A Nihilistic Language of Transcendence and the Divine Release

- The development of a nihilistic language of [transcendence](#) is questioned, with some arguing that it may not be worth the effort, and that the nihilistic suicide may be the optimal decision, as it is not a fleeing from the world, but rather a release into the divine.
- The philosopher [Peter Zapffe](#) is quoted, stating that saving suicidal individuals is based on a misapprehension of the nature of existence, and that in some cases, suicide can be seen as a natural death of spiritual causes.
- The complexity of the issue is highlighted through the example of the 9/11 jumpers, whose actions may not be considered traditional suicides, and the distinction is made between worldly, ego-driven suicides and those that are driven by a desire for transcendence.
- The philosopher [Søren Kierkegaard](#) is referenced, discussing the concept of the "sickness unto death," which is a spiritual despair that is beyond the understanding of the natural man, and is only truly comprehensible to the [Christian](#).

## The Sickness Unto Death and the Meaninglessness of Worldly Distractions

- The idea is presented that those who have experienced the nothingness of the world may lose interest in worldly activities and distractions, and instead seek to surround themselves with the experience of meaninglessness, as it is a more authentic reflection of their reality.
- The text uses the metaphor of people carrying buckets of water from a river to a campground to describe how individuals cope with the inevitability of death and the meaninglessness of life, with some people being more aware of their condition than others.
- Those who are aware of the holes in their bucket, representing the impermanence of life, may try to hold on to life through distractions such as work, wealth, family, and hobbies, but ultimately, all the water will be lost, and all meaning will fade away.

## The Logic of Life vs. The Logic of Suicide

- The text references philosophers such as [Kierkegaard](#), [Cioran](#), and Tillich, who describe the experience of despair and the desire for death as a result of confronting the abyss of nothingness.
- There is a dichotomy between the logic of life and the logic of suicide, with the latter being incomprehensible to those who have not experienced the nothingness of existence.
- The majority of people follow the logic of life and feel at home in the world, whereas those who have been brought to nothingness cannot argue away the meaning imposed on life by others.
- The text also references the philosopher [Zapffe](#), who argues that phenomena such as depression and fear of life may not be signs of a pathological state, but rather messages from a deeper sense of life that is at odds with the biological drive to survive.
- The text concludes by suggesting that reason leads to skepticism, skepticism to despair, and despair to [nihilism](#), which opens up the possibility of experiencing the "Other," a terrifyingly strange and divine experience of meaninglessness.

## Nihilism, Madness, and the 'Other'

- The fear of madness is seen as a hindrance to exploring this experience, but the text also suggests that embracing madness could be a realization of an ideal or a never-ending adventure into the unknown.
- The section discusses the concept of nihilism and its effects on individuals who embark on a spiritual journey, citing philosophers and writers such as [Kierkegaard](#), Plato, [St. Francis de Sales](#), [Cioran](#), Underhill, Nietzsche, and Tillich.

## The Spiritual Journey and the Judgment of Others

- According to Kierkegaard, an individual who pursues a spiritual path may be viewed as a hypocrite by others, and the higher they ascend, the more appalling the hypocrisy may seem.
- Plato describes such an individual as being "possessed by [god](#)" and detached from worldly concerns, but perceived as mad by ordinary people.
- St. Francis de Sales warns that those who take on a devout life will face mockery, misrepresentation, and criticism from worldly friends, who may attribute their change to hypocrisy or bigotry.
- He also notes that people who engage in frivolous activities like playing chess or cards all night are not criticized, but those who dedicate time to meditation or spiritual practices are seen as abnormal.

## Superficiality, Emptiness, and the Catalyst of Nihilism

- The section highlights the superficiality of an unthinking life, where people prioritize fleeting pleasures over meaningful experiences and ignore the suffering of others.
- Cioran's quotes emphasize the [emptiness](#) and boredom that can lead to self-destruction, but also suggest that [nihilism](#) can be a catalyst for finding something meaningful.
- The section concludes by referencing the concept of "[Transcendent](#) Nothingness" and the experience of encountering the void, which can be both terrifying and fascinating.
- The quotes from Underhill, Nietzsche, and Tillich touch on the idea that the human experience is marked by a capacity for mental anguish and a lack of reason to believe in a true world, and that the ultimate reality may transcend all possible experience.

## Transcendent Nothingness and the Break from Ordinary Reality

- The concept of Nihilism is described by various philosophers, including Tillich, Otto, [Shestov](#), [Cioran](#), and [Swami Rama](#), as an experience that breaks into ordinary reality, evoking feelings of nothingness and the sublime.
- [Nihilism](#) is characterized as having both a Naturalistic and a Transcendent component, with the latter being less explored and experienced, and is often reduced to naturalism.
- The [Transcendent](#) aspect of Nihilism is described as an experience that goes beyond the boundaries of the world, allowing for a confrontation with the "Other" and a sense of the divine.
- Philosophers like Cioran and Tozer suggest that this Transcendent experience requires a renunciation of worldly distractions and a pursuit of the Nothingness, leading to a "clearing of the path" and a possibility of transfiguration.
- The Naturalistic interpretation of Nihilism is seen as incomplete, providing only a "diminished" version of the experience, whereas the Transcendent aspect offers a "fuller" experience that is rarely explored or experienced.

## Nihilism and Naturalism: A Question of Reduction

- The relationship between [Nihilism](#) and naturalism is questioned, with some arguing that Nihilism is not necessarily reducible to naturalism, but rather has characteristics that separate it from and go beyond naturalism.
- The possibility of empirical data supporting the [Transcendent](#) aspect of Nihilism is raised, but the nature of this experience is seen as difficult to capture, with some philosophers, like Nietzsche, questioning the existence of a "true world".
- The text suggests that the Nihilistic experience is, in part, "mystical", allowing for an "opening up" of the Other and a sense of the divine, but this aspect is often overlooked in favor of the Naturalistic interpretation.

## The Mystical Aspect of Nihilism and the 'Opening Up' of the Other

- The [mystical experience](#) is characterized by the eradication of the ego, where the worldly 'I' is erased, yet something that resembles a 'you' remains, and there is a meeting with a 'bigger something'.
- [Nihilism](#) in its fully Transcendent forms can be described as an Augmented version of experiencing the [Nothing](#) of the world, which is similar to the mystical experience.
- The Augmented form of Nihilism is a true 'opening up' of the [Transcendent](#), and it coincides with what is normally labeled as 'mystical', where there is a close similarity to the 'two-sided' experiences of Nihilism as Augmented and as Naturalistic.
- The external appearance of Augmented Nihilism is an encounter with the Other, while the naturalistic aspect of Nihilism is a message coming from within the world, and although they differ in pure experience, they are not in conflict with each other.

## Mysticism, Quiet, and the Active Embrace of Nothingness

- According to [Cioran](#), mysticism does not derive from a softening of the instincts, but rather from a strong and active engagement, as seen in the example of the [German](#) mystics who were conquerors.
- True "Quiet" is a means, not an end, and is actively embraced, not passively endured, as stated by Underhill, and it is a phase in the self's growth in contemplation.
- Suffering can be seen as a catalyst for spiritual growth, as stated by Underhill, who refers to it as the "gymnastic of eternity" and the "terrible initiative caress of [God](#)".
- The Augmented aspect of the [Nihilistic](#) experience is often hidden due to a lack of participation or pursued confrontation with the Other, and many people have misconceptions about it due to a lack of personal experience.

## The Hidden Aspect of Augmented Nihilism

- According to Tillich, in order to achieve a [mystical experience](#), one must empty themselves of all finite contents of their ordinary life and surrender all preliminary concerns for the sake of the ultimate concern.
- Training and practice, such as meditation and contemplation, can change the structure of our spiritual experiences, as stated by the example of [Bach](#) fugues, which can become more enjoyable and meaningful with training.
- Particular practices that have traditionally been associated with spirituality, such as studying and writing poetry, creating a counterpoint melody, or mathematical reasoning, can evoke feelings of

beauty and significance, but they may not be the only way to experience a deeper connection with the unknown.

## Psychedelics, Augmented Nihilism, and the Encounter with the Other

- The author suggests that the psychedelic journey, specifically with psilocybin, can provide a more direct and intense experience of the abyss of existence, which can disrupt one's worldview and lead to a confrontation with the "Other".
- This experience, referred to as "Augmented [Nihilism](#)", can be overwhelming and terrifying, leading to a strong motivation to move past it and find ways to cover up the feeling of nothingness, often by throwing oneself into worldly activities.
- However, this attempt to move past the experience can lead to confusion and discord, as finite human language is insufficient to describe the "Wholly-Other" and can only provide symbolic representations.

## The Limitations of Language and the Indescribable Other

- The author quotes [Martin Buber](#), stating that any experience, no matter how spiritual, can only yield an "It", highlighting the limitations of language in describing the Other.
- The author shares a personal experience of encountering the Other, describing it as a timeless, ultimate unity that felt like being "at home" and infinitely satisfied, but also acknowledges the fear and paralysis that can come with the experience.
- The author raises questions about what happens when one meets the Other but is still not convinced, or still does not know what to do, and whether one can hold onto any delusions or symbols that attempt to describe the experience.
- The author suggests that concrete symbols of [Transcendence](#) are dead, and that the experience of the Other cannot be easily dismissed as an illusion or a trick of the mind.
- The author notes that the experience of the Other can be described as more real than the mundane, everyday world, and that the "true" illusion becomes what is commonly considered the "real" or "only" world.
- The author quotes [Aldous Huxley](#), stating that mescaline can open up the way to contemplation, but shuts the door on action and the will to action, highlighting the tension between the experience of the Other and the demands of the everyday world.

## Nihilism, the Dissolution of the Ego, and the Confrontation with the Infinite

- The experience of [nihilism](#) involves a dissolution of the ego, where the worldly self concerned with security, money, and relationships dissipates, allowing for a confrontation with the infinite and the wholly Other.
- This confrontation requires a renunciation of the ego and worldly desires, which can be facilitated by experiencing the [Nothing](#) of the world, a state of pure consciousness that is One with all existence.
- The [Buddhist](#) concept of Emptiness is described as [Absolute Emptiness](#), transcending all forms of mutual relationship, subject and object, birth and death, and is characterized as a zero full of infinite possibilities.

- The preparation for this confrontation begins with renouncing worldly attachments and embracing the Nothing of the world, allowing for a clearer experience of the Other.

## Unity, Pure Consciousness, and the True Self

- The dissolution of the 'I' brings forth a feeling of Unity, a pure consciousness that is One with all existence, and is described as a state of being no one, yet being everyone, and being no self, yet being the true Self.
- This state is also described as being [nothing](#), yet being everything, and is associated with the freedom to manifest [God](#) through one's own uniqueness.

## The Self-Life as Enemy and the Terrifying Bliss of the Other

- The self-life, or ego, is seen as an enemy that must be overcome, as it is characterized by possessiveness and a desire for gain and profit.
- The experience of confronting the infinite and the wholly Other is described as a terrifying bliss, a state of panic that can be unrecognizable, and is not something that can be easily put into words.
- The experience is not a meeting with another object within the world, but a confrontation with Existence itself, and is described as a Hellish confrontation with the Other.
- Quotes from various authors, including Huxley, [Suzuki](#), Keating, Tozer, [Cioran](#), and C.S., are used to illustrate the nature of this experience and the importance of renouncing the ego and worldly attachments.

## The Terror, Horror, and Desolation of Nihilism

- The experience of [nihilism](#) is characterized by a profound sense of [terror](#), horror, and desolation, as described by various philosophers and mystics, including Lewis, Otto, [Tolstoy](#), and Molinos, who liken it to a spiritual martyrdom and a journey through [Hell](#).
- Mysticism is said to revolve around the passion for ecstasy and a horror of the void, with the soul being ripe for a long-term and fecund [emptiness](#) after rejecting the world, as described by Molinos and Cioran.
- To guide oneself through this confrontation with nihilism, music, particularly abstract and wordless music, is recommended as a suitable medium, with its ability to dispense with the natural-self and facilitate a connection with the Other.

## Music as a Guide Through Nihilism and the Divine Nature of Bach

- The music of [Bach](#), specifically his organ works, is highlighted as a prime example of this, with its God-like tones and expression of meditations on death, allowing the listener to experience the Other and the ultimate order.
- The disintegration of the self and the world can be a necessary step in this journey, as described by Huxley, who notes that it can have its advantages, but also poses a great danger of not being able to return from the chaos.
- The [Schopenhauerian](#) theory of music, as described by Nietzsche, views music as the language of the will itself, speaking directly from the abyss, and Bach's music is seen as a medium of heavenly transfiguration, generating divinity and providing a sense of the existence of [God](#).



- Cioran's quotes emphasize the divine nature of Bach's music, comparing it to Handel's, and suggesting that listening to Bach's music is a way to experience the existence of God, with Bach's music being the only valid proof of God's existence.

## Music as Technology and the Counter to Materialism

- The text also touches on the idea that music can be seen as a form of emotional technology, allowing individuals to control their behavior intelligently, as suggested by the idea that humans are emotion machines.
- The concept of materialism is explored, where emotions are seen as products of material processes, and art can be viewed as a form of technology, with music being a counter to the tendency to view everything as material or technology.
- Heisman describes how listening to music, particularly [German](#) music by composers such as Wagner and [Bach](#), serves as a form of technology that counters his own material self-consistency and tendency towards self-decomposition, with Bach providing a holistic-mind order that makes up for the [nihilistic](#) lack of ground within himself.

## Plato's Beauty, the Divided-Self, and the Need for a New Language

- Plato's description of the experience of beauty and the soul's reaction to it is seen as relevant to the concept of Augmented Nihilism, where the soul is pierced and maddened by the recollection of beauty, and is oppressed by the strangeness of its condition, leading to a state of madness and desire.
- Plato also describes the divided-self and the human tendency to flee into a world of constant distraction, which is seen as relevant to the contemporary human condition, where individuals are given over to pleasure and pursue it in violation of nature.
- The Nihilist experience is characterized by the inability to turn to the dead world of distractions, and the need to develop a new language to address the [Nothing](#), with the world's religions and philosophy providing some help but ultimately being insufficient.
- [Aldous Huxley](#) is quoted as saying that the ultimate Reality is not clearly apprehended except by those who have made themselves loving, pure in heart, and poor in spirit, highlighting the need for a new kind of theology that is based on personal experience and spiritual transformation.
- The text concludes by suggesting that philosophy and conceptual thinking can help pave the way for a better understanding of the ineffable, but ultimately, there is no new knowledge gained, and the individual must renounce their values and show true humility in the face of the Nothing, leading to a Quietist contemplative existence.

## The Psychedelic Experience and the Meaninglessness of the World

- The psychedelic experience often leads to a [mystical experience](#) that confirms the meaninglessness of the world, a concept closely related to [Nihilism](#).
- According to [Buddha](#), this experience can be achieved through a state of abstraction, where one perceives a feeling of empty release and eventually an apprehension of [emptiness](#), leading to boundless knowledge and the departure of the idea of 'I'.
- Attempting to confine this experience within a worldly religion or system can be seen as fleeing from Nihilism, and instead, one must accept the utter mystery behind it as something too powerful to be confined in the finite.

# The Transcendent Experience of Nothingness and the Mystical Confirmation

- The [Transcendent](#) experience of Nihilism involves encountering Nothingness, which is described by [Pseudo-Dionysius](#) as the Cause of all things, yet itself is [nothing](#), and by Huxley as the Nothing of oneself.
- Huxley's experience of the Nothing of oneself is characterized by a sense of triviality and shoddiness, and a realization that one's personal self is connected to human pretensions and is worth nothing.
- This experience is confirmed by mystics separated by time, space, and culture, such as St. Molinos, who describes the importance of embracing one's own Nothingness and dying to oneself in order to experience spiritual growth.

## Mystical Experiences and the Limits of Human Language

- Within mystical experiences, human rationality is no longer a concern, and there are things that are brought forth that cannot be described or fully comprehended by human language.
- The experience of [Nihilism](#) is not about belief or developing a system, but rather about accepting the infinite and the mystery that lies beyond human understanding.
- The experience of nihilism is subjective and must be dealt with on an individual level, as expressed by the phrase "In life, man proposes, [God](#) disposes" by Huxley.

## The Subjective Nature of Nihilism and the Horror of Infinity

- The [mystical experience](#), as described by Smith, is "strange, weird, uncanny, significant, and terrifying beyond belief," and is not comparable to anything in the physical world.
- Huxley's psychedelic experience revealed the "horror of infinity," which evoked a fear of being overwhelmed and disintegrating under the pressure of reality, highlighting the incompatibility between human egotism and divine purity.
- This fear is a common theme in the literature of religious experience, where individuals are confronted with the *Mysterium tremendum*, or the overwhelming and terrifying aspect of the divine.

## Rationality vs. Experience in Understanding Nihilism

- [Ligotti](#) suggests that philosophers and theologians often miss the mark by prioritizing rationality over direct experience, leading to stagnation and frustration in their pursuit of understanding.
- Huxley questions how many philosophers, theologians, and educators have had the curiosity to explore beyond rationality, implying that few have done so.
- The mystical-type experiences mentioned are not unique or special, but rather can be induced in anyone willing to undertake the task with proper psychological preparation and setting.
- These experiences can be achieved without years of traditional religious practices, and can be interpreted in various ways, including naturalistic or veritical perspectives.
- The author's personal experience with psychedelics confirms the philosophy of [nihilism](#), but acknowledges that this does not prove anything, and that one is ultimately left with the "[Nothing](#) of the world" upon returning to their normal state of consciousness.

## The Tension Between Spiritual and Mundane

- The section explores the concept of nihilism and its relationship with the human experience, citing various philosophers and thinkers, including Theresa, [Martin Buber](#), [Ernest Becker](#), [Martin Heidegger](#), and others.
- Theresa expresses the distress of returning to the world after experiencing a higher level of consciousness, highlighting the tension between the spiritual and the mundane.
- Buber notes that genuine contemplation is fleeting, and the world's complexity and ambiguity can lead to a loss of actuality, as the "You" becomes an "It" among objects.
- Becker poses questions about how to reconcile spirituality with human passion and the need for self-reliance, emphasizing the ambiguity and complexity of the human condition.

## The Limitations of Language and the Unknowability of Nihilism

- The section also touches on the idea of the "dialectical silence" and the "symbolic resonance of nothingness," suggesting that language and thought can be inadequate in capturing the essence of [nihilism](#).
- Heidegger's concept of "Being-towards-death" is mentioned, raising questions about the authenticity of human existence and the possibility of confronting the unknown.
- The section concludes by acknowledging the limitations of language and thought in understanding nihilism, with Underhill's self-criticism highlighting the uncertainty and unknowability of the world.
- The idea of expressing the experience of nihilism in simple terms, such as "all worldly endeavors are futile," is rejected as a cliché, and instead, the section emphasizes the need for a more nuanced and authentic approach to understanding nihilism.
- The thinkers mentioned in the section, including [Heidegger](#), [Cioran](#), and Spong, all contribute to the discussion of nihilism and its implications for human existence, highlighting the complexity and ambiguity of the topic.
- The section ultimately raises more questions than it answers, leaving the reader with a sense of uncertainty and the need for further exploration and contemplation.

## The Inexpressible Message of Nihilism and the Need for a New Language

- The discussion of [Nihilism](#) often misses the deeper message and experience, which cannot be fully captured by words, making it challenging to develop a language that conveys its essence.
- St. Therese of Lisieux's experience of Nihilism within a [Christian](#) structure highlights the difficulty of expressing the experience, leaving one to wonder if those who have experienced Nihilism are left to a Quietist silence.
- However, it is argued that an honest answer to this question is yes, but this does not mean that the discussion should stop, as there is still a need to develop a language that breaks through the limitations of current understandings.

## Suicide as Confrontation and the Affirmative Substance of Nihilism

- The experience of Nihilism is not equivalent to renouncing the world or committing suicide, but rather it involves using suicide as a means to confront the [Nothing](#), at least for a particular span of time.

- The concept of an "affirmative substance" within the experience of [Nihilism](#), as described by [Cioran](#), suggests that there is a positive expression of nothingness that can be found, which can be seen as a starting point for mysticism.
- A language of Nihilism should reflect the need to confront the [Transcendental](#) yearning as a true confrontation, rather than trying to replace it with something else, and should provide a more adequate account of the Transcendence of and within human experience.

## Nihiltheism: A Grounding for the Human Experience of Nihilism

- The development of a new language of Nihilism, which is not strictly based on myth, tradition, or empirical facts, is necessary to navigate the complexities of Nihilism, and the term "Nihiltheism" is suggested as a possible grounding for this genre of human experience.
- This language should be symbolic, self-critical, and open to re-interpretation, and should not be taken as complete or literal, but rather as a means to explore the human condition.
- The groundwork for a language of [Nihilism](#) can be found in Heidegger's comprehensive language about the human condition as described in [Being and Time](#), which provides a foundation for further development.
- The concepts of [Martin Heidegger](#), such as anxiety, moments of vision, and authenticity, provide a foundation for interpreting the Nihilistic experience in a non-naturalistic yet grounded manner.
- Heidegger's analysis of the human condition avoids being labeled as 'atheistic' or 'theistic', instead focusing on the subjective experience of the individual, which can be seen as an introductory 'map' for understanding the human situation.
- This 'map' does not guarantee a direct path to understanding the 'Other', and the possible interpretations of the Nihilistic experience may vary immensely, leaving some aspects of the 'Other' in obscurity.

## Heidegger's 'Being-Towards-Death' and the Foundation of a Nihilistic Language

- Heidegger's concept of 'Being-Towards-Death' is a key aspect of his analysis, involving anxiety, a call of conscience, and a moment of vision that pushes the individual to strive for resoluteness and discover their True-Self.
- 'Being-Towards-Death' can be seen as a foundation for developing a language of [Nihilism](#), as it lends itself to understanding the human condition in a way that is not necessarily tied to 'atheistic' or 'theistic' perspectives.
- The ideas of [Heidegger](#) and [Thomas Merton](#), a [Trappist](#) monk, show similarities in their rejection of outward-seeking for meaning and their emphasis on embracing the inner [emptiness](#) and nothingness of human existence.
- Merton's use of the word 'God' does not necessarily create a distinction between his 'theism' and Heidegger's 'atheism', as both thinkers seem to be pointing to a deeper, more mysterious aspect of human existence.
- A Nihilistic language would aim to reconcile such superficial disparities and provide a framework for understanding the human condition in a way that is not limited by traditional 'atheistic' or 'theistic' labels.

# The Fantastical Nature of 'Being-Towards-Death' and the True-Self

- Heidegger's concept of 'Being-Towards-Death' is considered 'fantastical,' and it raises questions about how to proceed with an existence that is characterized by meaninglessness and the constant threat of annihilation.
- The concept of a 'True-Self' must be interpreted in a way that avoids naturalistic and worldly explanations, as well as traditional conceptions of '[God](#),' which [Heidegger](#) considers too preemptive and hindered by assumptions that do not leave open the mystery of the 'Why.'
- Heidegger's ontological analysis of conscience is prior to any description or classification of experiences of conscience and lies outside of biological explanations and theological exegesis.
- The interpretation of 'The Call' as both from oneself and beyond oneself should not be reduced to a person or a power, such as God, nor should it be explained away biologically, as both explanations pass over the phenomenal findings too hastily.

## A Language of Terror and the Confrontation with Existence

- A new language is needed to bring one 'face to face' with the nightmare of existence, rather than rescuing one from the Nothingness, and this language must be grounded in the experience of [the terror](#) of existence.
- The unending questioning of 'why?' opens up something that is not wholly natural, yet must still be experienced and discussed within the world, and even the [mystical experience](#) does not defeat Naturalism.
- The ultimately empty structure of Naturalism must be experienced as a ladder into [Transcendence](#), not as an obstacle to be overcome, and one must not cling to optimism or worldly idols, which are distractions from the reality of [Nihilism](#).

## Optimism as Idolatry and the Illusion of Comfort

- Optimism is seen as a form of idolatry and a turning away from Nihilism, and the fanaticism of thought that brews in the fear of Nihilism is only an illusion of comfort, as there is no embracing or participation in the Nothingness.
- Worldly religions are fundamentally fanatical in nature due to their turning away from Nihilism, and the fear of Nihilism is often manifested in cultural and religious forms.
- The strain of thought in American culture, characterized by 'optimism' and 'prosperity churches,' is seen as a form of idolatry and a distraction from the reality of Nihilism.

## Christian Nihilism vs. The Nihilism of the Abyss

- Seraphim Rose's perspective on nihilism is highlighted, where he states that a [Christian](#), in an ultimate sense, can be considered a "[Nihilist](#)" as they believe the world is [nothing](#) and [God](#) is all, which is the opposite of the nihilism that proceeds from the Abyss and places faith in things that pass away.
- This concept is contrasted with the mindset of many practicing scientists today, who, despite being able to describe reality through physical laws, fail to ask philosophical questions about why these descriptions are the way they are, and instead stop at a formal description of reality.

## The Unthinking Scientism and the Lack of Philosophical Inquiry

- The Philosopher seeks to understand the underlying reasons for the patterns and structures observed in the physical world, questioning why seemingly mindless particles and molecules act in certain ways, and why there is a "building" process found within these things.
- This lack of philosophical inquiry is criticized as "unthinking" and has led to the development of an "optimistic" scientism that neglects deeper questions about existence.
- A similar criticism is made against traditional religious interpretations of the human condition, which often rely on theological assumptions not grounded in human experience, and instead provide "answers" or "rational defenses" that close off the mystery of existence.
- Heidegger's thought is referenced, which argues that religious languages, including "[Christian](#) philosophy," are restrictive of the human experience of the Other and contain too many assumptions that shun the mystery of existence.
- Philosophy, with its relentless questioning, is seen as necessary to open up the mystery of Being, rather than closing it off, and to avoid turning the Other into the worldly through reason or myth, which is considered a form of idolatry.

## Anxiety and the Insignificance of the World

- The concept of anxiety is discussed, where the threatening does not come from what is ready-to-hand or present-at-hand, but rather from the fact that neither of these "says" anything any longer, and the world has sunk into insignificance, revealing a world in which entities can be freed only in the character of having no involvement.
- The concept of the "present-at-hand" is encountered in a way that strips it of any involvement, revealing its [emptiness](#) and mercilessness, which is a fundamental aspect of the experience of [nihilism](#).
- Anxiety plays a crucial role in disclosing the insignificance of the world, making it impossible to project oneself onto a potentiality-for-Being that is founded upon one's objects of concern, and instead, reveals the nullity of these concerns.
- The object of anxiety is completely indefinite, leaving it factually undecided which entity within-the-world is threatening, and ultimately, rendering entities within-the-world irrelevant.
- The insignificance of the world, as disclosed by anxiety, does not signify the absence of the world but rather highlights the worldhood of the world, which is all that remains significant in the face of the insignificance of entities within-the-world.

## Profound Boredom and the Question of Being

- In a state of profound boredom, the question of the existence of beings arises, and the stubborn ordinariness of beings lays open a wasteland where it makes no difference whether beings are or are not, prompting the question "Why are there beings at all instead of [nothing](#)?"
- Dread, as a fundamental aspect of human existence, makes being as a whole untenable, and its presence is often suppressed, but it continues to tremble in existence, even in those who are busy or apprehensive.
- The original dread that is disclosed in the experience of [nihilism](#) is a manifestation of the permanent and obscured presence of no-thing, which is the basis of the beholdenness of existence to no-thing, and this beholdenness is the surmounting of being as a whole, or [transcendence](#).

## Dread, No-Thing, and the Transcendence of Being



- Human existence is characterized by a fundamental difference between getting a grasp of the whole of be-ing in itself, which is impossible in principle, and finding oneself in the midst of be-ing as a whole, which happens all the time in our existence, even in the midst of everyday comings and goings.
- Profound boredom, as a state of existence, reveals be-ing as a whole, pulling things, others, and oneself into it with remarkable indifference, and it is in this state that the unity of be-ing as a whole is overcome, even if only in the shadows.