Journal314 All Quotes

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# Augustine

*### City of God*

*-“...sent to set us an example of despising worldly things for the attainment of immortality...”*

“For there is an attractiveness in beautiful bodies, in gold and silver, and all things; and in bodily touch, sympathy hath much influence, and each other sense hath his proper object answerably tempered. Worldly honour hath also its grace, and the power of overcoming, and of mastery; whence springs also the thirst of revenge. But yet, to obtain all these, we may not depart from Thee, O Lord, nor decline from Thy law. The life also which here we live hath its own enchantment, through a certain proportion of its on towards these goods of the lowest order, the better and higher are forsaken,— Thou, our Lord God, Thy truth, and Thy law. For these lower things have their delights, but not like my God, who made all things; for in Him doth the righteous delight, and He is the joy of the upright in heartwn, and a correspondence with all things beautiful here below. Human friendship also is endeared with a sweet tie, by reason of the unity formed of many souls. Upon occasion of all these, and the like, is sin committed, while through an immoderate inclination.”

- “Suddenly every vain hope became worthless to me.” (Heidegger)

- “Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Moses, and David, were righteous, and all those commended by the mouth of God; but were judged unrighteous by silly men, judging out of man's judgment, and measuring by their own petty habits, the moral habits of the whole human race.”

- “...a thing that was formerly lawful may become, after a time, unlawful...”

- “At this grief my heart was utterly darkened; and whatever I beheld was death.”

- “...wretched is every soul bound by the friendship of perishable things.”

- “For I wondered that others, subject to death, did live, since he whom I loved, as if he should never die, was dead. and I wondered yet more that myself, who was to him a second self, could live, he being dead. Well said one of his friend, "Thou half of my soul"; for I felt that my soul and his soul were "one soul in two bodies": and therefore was my life a horror to me, because I would not live halved.”

- “If physical objects please you, praise God for them, but turn back your love to their creator.”

- “And finding that Thou maddest them, they give not themselves up to Thee, to preserve what Thou maddest, nor sacrifice to Thee what they have made themselves; nor slay their own soaring imaginations, as fowls of the air, nor their own diving curiosities (wherewith, like the fishes of the seal they wander over the unknown paths of the abyss), nor their own luxuriousness, as beasts of the field, that Thou, Lord, a consuming fire, mayest burn up those dead (mortal) cares of theirs, and re-create themselves immortally.”

- “...with joy I blushed at having so many years barked not against the Catholic faith, but against the fictions of carnal (fleshly) imaginations.”

- “...those passages in scripture...I could see that they were to be resolved by the mysteries of spiritual interpretation.” (me- In non-earthly descriptions and conceptions)

- “I panted after honours, gains, marriage; and thou mocked me. Let my soul cleave unto Thee, now that Thou hast freed it from that fast-sticking glue of death.”

- “How wretched was it! and Thou didst irritate the feeling of its wound, that forsaking all else, it might be converted unto Thee, who art above all, and without whom all things would be nothing; be converted, and be healed.”

- “...the joy of a faithful hope lieth incomparably beyond such vanity.”

- “Wherefore delay then to abandon worldly hopes, and give ourselves wholly to seek after God and the blessed life? But wait! Even those things are pleasant; they have some, and no small sweetness. We must not lightly abandon them, for it were a shame to return again to them.”

- “I was now in my thirtieth year, sticking in the same mire, greedy of enjoying things present (present goods), which passed away and wasted (distracted) my soul.”

- “...stuck so fast in the glue-pot of pleasure...”

- “...undertake a peaceful life, away from the crowds.”

- “...by inward stings you disturbed me so that I was impatient until you were made clear to my inward sight...my mind was made whole by the stinging salve of wholesome grief.”

- “And being admonished by these books to return into myself, I entered into my inward soul, guided by you.”

- “And I enquired what iniquity was, and found it to be substance, but the perversion of the will, turned aside from Thee, O God, the Supreme, towards these lower things, and casting out its bowels (inmost treasure), and puffed up outwardly (bloated with external good).”

- “And yet did I not press on to enjoy my God; but was borne up to Thee by Thy beauty, and soon borne down from Thee by mine own weight, sinking with sorrow into these inferior things. This weight was carnal custom.”

- “...for that the body which is corrupted presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things. And most certain I was, that Thy invisible works from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even Thy eternal power and Godhead.”

- “But having then read those books of the Platonists, and thence been taught to search for incorporeal truth, I saw Thy invisible things, understood by those things which are made; and though cast back, I perceived what that was which through the darkness of my mind I was hindered from contemplating, being assured "That Thou wert, and wert infinite, and yet not diffused in space, finite or infinite; and that Thou truly art Who art the same ever, in no part nor motion varying; and that all other things are from Thee, on this most sure ground alone, that they are."

- “"For it was not salvation that he taught in rhetoric (why, then, should he shrink from naming your name before the sheep of the flock), and yet that he had publicly professed: how much less then ought he, when pronouncing Thy word, to dread Thy meek flock, who, when delivering his own words, had not feared a mad multitude!”

- “...a perversion of the will, bent aside from you, god, the supreme substance, toward these lower things, casting away its inmost treasure and becoming bloated with external good.”

- “For the body which is corrupted presses down the soul, and the earthly dwelling weighs down the mind, which muses upon many things.”

- “Simplicianus congratulated me that I had not fallen upon the writings of other philosophers, which were full of fallacies and deceit, 'after the beggarly elements of this world', whereas in the Platonists, at every turn, the pathway led to belief in God and his Word.”

- “As they rambled, these first two came upon a certain cottage where lived some of thy servants, some of the “poor in spirit” (“of such is the Kingdom of Heaven”), where they found the book in which was written the life of Anthony! One of them began to read it, to marvel and to be inflamed by it. While reading, he meditated on embracing just such a life, giving up his worldly employment to seek thee alone...he was inwardly changed, as thou didst see, and the world dropped away from his mind ...Tell me, I beg you, what goal are we seeking in all these toils of ours? What is it that we desire? What is our motive in public service? Can our hopes in the court rise higher than to be ‘friends of the emperor’? But how frail, how beset with peril, is that pride! And with hearts inclining again toward earthly things, they returned to the palace. But the other two, setting their affections on heavenly things, remained in the cottage.”

- “And I had thought that I delayed from day to day in rejecting those worldly hopes and following thee alone because there did not appear anything certain by which I could direct my course.”

- “So also, when eternity attracts us from above, and the pleasure of earthly delight pulls us down from below, the soul does not will either the one or the other with all its force, but still it is the same soul that does not will this or that with a united will, and is therefore pulled apart with grievous perplexities, because for truth’s sake it prefers this, but for custom’s sake it does not lay that aside.”

- “And when this power of reason within me also found that it was changeable, it raised itself up to its own intellectual principle, and withdrew its thoughts from experience, abstracting itself from the contradictory throng of fantasms in order to seek for that light in which it was bathed. Then, without any doubting, it cried out that the unchangeable was better than the changeable. From this it follows that the mind somehow knew the unchangeable, for, unless it had known it in some fashion, it could have had no sure ground for preferring it to the changeable. And thus with the flash of a trembling glance, it arrived at that which is. And I saw thy invisibility [invisibilia tua] understood by means of the things that are made. But I was not able to sustain my gaze. My weakness was dashed back, and I lapsed again into my accustomed ways, carrying along with me nothing but a loving memory of my vision, and an appetite for what I had, as it were, smelled the odor of, but was not yet able to eat.”

- “Thus the thoughts by which I meditated upon thee were like the efforts of one who would awake, but being overpowered with sleepiness is soon asleep again.”

-Augustine's reading of the Bible during his experience- “Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof.”

- “Are there not many men who, out of a deeper pit of darkness than that of Victorinus, return to thee...”

- “The storm tosses the voyagers, threatens shipwreck, and everyone turns pale in the presence of death.”

- “how high art Thou in the highest, and how deep in the deepest! and Thou never departest, and we scarcely (with great difficulty) return to Thee.”

- “Thus did my two wills, one new, and the other old, one carnal, the other spiritual, struggle within me; and by their discord, undid (tore) my soul (apart).” (divided-self, double-mindedness)

- “...I hesitated to give up the world and serve you because my perception of the truth was uncertain. But still bound to the earth, I refused to be your soldier and was as much afraid of being freed from all entanglements as we ought to fear to be entangled.”

- “Thus with the baggage of the world...my musings on you were like the efforts of those who desire to awake...yet a man will usually defer shaking off his drowsiness when there is heavy lethargy in his limbs, and he is glad to sleep on even when his reason disapproves...”

- “For the law of sin is the tyranny of habit , by which the mind is drawn and held, even against its will.”

- “...I was so tightly held, and from the slavery of worldly business. With increasing anxiety I was going about my usual affairs, and daily sighing to you.

- “...he acted very discreetly, taking care not to become known to those persons who had great reputation in the world. Thus he avoided all distractions of the mind, and reserved as many hours as possible to pursue or read or listen to discussions about wisdom.”

- “...a certain cottage where lived some of your servants, some of the 'poor in spirit' (of such is the kingdom of heaven).”

- “Tell me, I pray thee, what would we attain by all these labors of ours? what aim we at? what serve we for? Can our hopes in court rise higher than to be the Emperor's favorites? and in this, what is there not brittle, and full of perils? and by how many perils arrive we at a greater peril? and when arrive we thither? But a friend of God, if I wish it, I become now at once." So spake he. And in pain with the travail of a new life, he turned his eyes again upon the book, and read on, and was changed inwardly, where Thou sawest, and his mind was stripped of the world, as soon appeared. For as he read, and rolled up and down the waves of his heart, he stormed at himself a while, then discerned, and determined on a better course; and now being Thine, said to his friend, "Now have I broken loose from those our hopes, and am resolved to serve God; and this, from this hour, in this place, I begin upon. If thou likest not to imitate me, oppose not." The other answered, he would cleave to him, to partake so glorious a reward, so glorious a service. Thus both being now Thine, were building the tower at the necessary cost, the forsaking all that they had, and following Thee.”

- “...so, with hearts lingering on the earth, went away to the palace. But the other two, fixing their heart on heaven, remained in the cottage. And both had affianced brides, who when they heard hereof, also dedicated their virginity unto God.”

- “But now, the more ardently I loved those whose healthful affections I heard of, that they had resigned themselves wholly to Thee to be cured, the more did I abhor myself, when compared with them. For many of my years (some twelve) had now run out with me since my nineteenth, when, upon the reading of Cicero's Hortensius, I was stirred to an earnest love of wisdom; and still I was deferring to reject mere earthly felicity (wisdom), and give myself to search out that, whereof not the finding only, but the very search, was to be preferred to the treasures and kingdoms of the world, though already found, and to the pleasures of the body, though spread around me at my will.”

- “And I had thought that I therefore deferred from day to day to reject the hopes of this world, and follow Thee only, because there did not appear aught certain, whither to direct my course.”

- “Thou saidst that for an uncertain truth thou likest not to cast off the baggage of vanity; now, it is certain, and yet that burden still oppresseth thee, while they who neither have so worn themselves out with seeking it, nor for often years and more have been thinking thereon, have had their shoulders lightened, and received wings to fly away.”

- “"What ails us?" I exclaim: "what is it? what heardest thou? The unlearned start up and take heaven by force, and we with our learning, and without heart, to, where we wallow in flesh and blood! Are we ashamed to follow, because others are gone before, and not ashamed not even to follow?"

- “I was mad for health, and dying for life.”

- “Thus I tore my hair out, struck my forehead, or, entwining my fingers, clasped my knee, these I did because I willed it...Yet I did not do that one thing which seemed to me infinitely more desirable.”

- “And why should it be? The mind commands the body, and the body obeys. The mind commands itself and is resisted.”

- “Thus also, when, above, eternity delights us (attracts us from above), and the pleasure of temporal good (earthly delight) holds us down below, it is the same soul which willeth not this or that with an entire will; and therefore is rent asunder with grievous perplexities, while out of truth it sets this first, but out of habit sets not that aside.”

- “For thou convertedst me unto Thyself, so that I sought neither wife, nor any hope of this world, standing in that rule of faith...”

## The City of God

On Socrates “For he saw that the causes of things were sought for by them,--which causes he believed to be ultimately reducible to nothing else than the will of the one true and supreme God,--and on this account he thought they could only be comprehended by a purified mind; and therefore that all diligence ought to be given to the purification of the life by good morals, in order that the mind, delivered from the depressing weight of lusts, might raise itself upward by its native vigor to eternal things, and might, with purified understanding, contemplate that nature which is incorporeal and unchangeable light, where live the causes of all created natures.”

- “Plato...perhaps entertain an idea of God as to admit that in Him are to be found the cause of existence, the ultimate reason for the understanding, and the end in reference to which the whole life is to be regulated.”

- “For if man has been so created as to attain, through that which is most excellent in him, to that which excels all things,--that is, to the one true and absolutely good God, without whom no nature exists, no doctrine instructs, no exercise profits,--let Him be sought in whom all things are secure to us, let Him be discovered in whom all truth becomes certain to us, let Him be loved in whom all becomes right to us.”

- “But that which is capable of more and less is mutable; whence able men, who have thought deeply on these things, have gathered that the first form is not to be found in those things whose form is changeable. Since, therefore, they saw that body and mind might be more or less beautiful in form, and that, if they wanted form, they could have no existence, they saw that there is some existence in which is the first form, unchangeable, and therefore not admitting of degrees of comparison, and in that they most rightly believed was the first principle of things which was not made, and by which all things were made.”

## 

## Miguel de Molinos

- speaking of the mystical experience, what I would call the Nihilistic experience: “It hast gotten the name of Hell (Seraphim Rose explained his Nihilism as “Hell” also) amongst mystic Divines, (because it seems impossible to be able to live a moment with so grievous a torment; so that with great reason it may be said, that he that suffers it, lives dying, and dying lives a lingering death).

-“The way to attain that high state of a Mind reformed, whereby a man immediately gets to the greatest Good, to our first Original, and to the highest Peace, is his Nothingness: Endeavour, O Soul, to be always buried in that misery. This Nothing, and this acknowledged Misery, is the means by which the Lord works wonders in thy Soul. Cloath thy self with this Nothing, and with this Misery, and see that this Misery and this Nothing be thy continual Food and Habitation, even to the casting down thy self low therein; and then I assure thee, that thou being in that manner, the Nothing, the Lord will be the Whole in thy Soul.”

-”The Soul that would be perfect, begins to mortifie its Passions; and when ‘tis advanced in that Exercise, it denies it self; then with the Divine Aid, it passes to the State of Nothing, where it despises, abhors and plunges it self upon the knowledge that it is nothing, that it can do nothing, and that it is worth nothing, Knowing that thou art nothing, that thou canst do nothing, and art worth just nothing, thou wilt quietly embrace passive drynesses, thou wilt endure horrible desolations; thou wilt undergo spiritual martyrdoms and inward torments. By means of this Nothing thou must die in thy self, many ways, at all times, and all hours, Keeping thy self in Nothing, thou wilt bar the door against every thing that is not God”.

-”If from the Chaos of Nothing, his Omnipotence has produced so many wonders (the Universal concepts that flow out of the Nothingness, the Nihilistic experience: non-movement/pacifism, Earthly renounciation, God as the final end, contemplation of God, a 'perfect' realm, our purpose, value, andx meaning (Other not Earthly) what will he do in thy Soul, created after his own Image and Likeness, if thou keepest constant quiet, and resigned, with a true knowledge of thy Nothing? Happy Soul, which, even when ‘ti disturbed, afflicted and disconsolated, keeps steady there within, without going forth to declare exteriour Comfort.”

- “Many Souls when they suffer these painful torments, are troubled, afflicted, and disquieted, it seeming to them, that they begin already in this life to suffer eternal punishments; and if by misfortune they go to an unexperienced Confessor, instead of comforting them, he leaves them in greater confusion and perplexities.”

- “That thou mayest not lose internal peace, it is necessary thou believe, that it is the

goodness of divine mercy, when thus it humbles, afflicts and trys thee; since by that means thy

Soul comes to have a deep knowledge of itself, reckoning it self the worst, most impious and

abominable of all Souls living, and hence with humility and lowliness it abhors it self.”

- “God loves not him who does most, who hears most, nor who shows greatest affection, but

who suffers most, if he pray with faith and reverence, believing that he is in the divine presence...”

- “But the happy Soul which is gotten to this holy hatred of it self, lives overwhelmed, drowned and swallowed up in the depth of its own Nothing.”

- So in the Beginning, when God intends after an extraordinary manner, to guide the Soul into the School of the divine and loving Notices of the internal Law, he makes it go with Darkness, and Dryness, that he may bring it near to himself, because the Divine Majesty knows very well, that it is not by the means of ones one Ratiocination, or Industry, that a Soul draws near to him, and understands the Divine Documents; but rather by silent and humble Resignation.”

- “The Senses are not capable of divine Blessings; hence if thou would be Happy and Wise; be Silent and Believe; Suffer and have Patience; be Confident and Walk on; it concerns thee far more to hold thy Peace, and to let thy self be guided by the hand of God, than to enjoy all the Goods of this World. And though it seem to thee, that thou does nothing at all, and art idle being so Dumb and Resigned; yet it is of infinite fruit.”

- “St. Bonaventure, teaches us not to form Conceptions of any thing, no not of God, because it is Imperfection to make Representations, Images, and Ideas, how subtle or ingenious soever, either of the Will, or of the Goodness, Trinity, and Unity; nay, of the Divine Presence it self...”

- “Thou'lt find a loathing of the things of the World, which by little and little tends to the stifling of the bad desires of thy past Life, and the production of other new ones of serving God.”

- “Think not that when thou art dry and darksom in the presence of God, with faith and silence, that thou do'st nothing, that thou losest time, and that thou are idle, because not to wait on God, according to the saying of St. Bernard (Tom.5.in Fract. de vit. solit.c.8.p. 90.), is the greatest idleness...”

- “It concerns thee only then, to prepare thine heart, like clean paper, wherein the divine wisdom may imprint characters to his own liking. O how great a work will it be for thy Soul to be whole hours together in Prayer, dumb, resigned, and humble, without acting, knowing, or desiring to understand any thing.”

- “Know, however, that thou art to be plunged in a bitter sea of sorrows, and of internal and external pains, which torment will pierce into the most inward part of thy Soul and Body.”

- “The invisible enemies will pursue thee with scruples, lascivious suggestions, and unclean thoughts, with incentives to impatience, pride, rage, cursing and blaspheming the Name of God, his Sacraments, and holy Mysteries. Thou'lt find a great lukewarmness, loathing, and wearisomness for the things of God; and obscurity and darkness in thy understanding; a faintness, Confusion and narrowness of heart; such a coldness and feebleness of the will to resist, that a straw will appear to thee a beam. Thy desertion will be so great, that thou'lt think there is no more a God for thee, and that thou are rendered incapable of entertaining a good desire: so that thou'lt continue shut up betwixt two walls, in constant streights and anguish, without any hopes of ever getting out of so dreadful an oppression.”

- “But fear not: all this is necessary for purging thy Soul, and making it know its own misery, and sensibly perceive the annihilation of all the passions, and disordinate appetites, wherewith it rejoyced it self.”

- “Our own nature is so base, proud and ambitious, and so full of its own appetites, its own judgements and opinions, that if temptations restrained it not, it would be undone without remedy. The Lord then seeing our Misery and perverse inclination, and thereby moved to compassion, suffers us to be assaulted by divers thoughts against the Faith, horrible temptations, and by violent and painful suggestions of impatience, pride, gluttony, luxury, rage, blasphemy, cursing, despair, and an infinite number of others, to the end we may know our selves and be humble. With these horrible temptations, that infinite goodness humbles our pride, giving us in them the most wholesome medicine.”

- “All our righteousness (as Isaiah saith) are as filthy rags, (Chap. 64. 6.) through the stains of vanity, conceitedness, and self-love. It is necessary they be purified with the fire of tribulation and temptation, that so they may be clean, pure, perfect and agreeable to the eyes of God.”

- “Many Souls when they suffer these painful torments, are troubled, afflicted, and disquieted, it seeming to them, that they begin already in this life to suffer eternal punishments; and if by misfortune they go to an unexperienced Confessor, instead of comforting them, he leaves them in greater confusion and perplexities.”

- “That thou mayest not lose internal peace, it is necessary thou believe, that it is the goodness of divine mercy, when thus it humbles, afflicts and trys thee; since by that means thy Soul comes to have a deep knowledge of itself, reckoning it self the worst, most impious and abominable of all Souls living, and hence with humility and lowliness it abhors it self.”

- “Internal Recollection is Faith, and Silence in the Presence of God.”

- “Here thou art to shut up the Senses, trusting God with all the care of thy Welfare, and minding nothing of the affairs this Life.”

- “No sooner wilt thou have given thy self up to thy Lord in this inward Way, but all Hell will conspire against thee, seeing one single Soul inwardly retired to its own Presence, makes greater War against the Enemy, than a thousand others that walk externally; because the Devil makes an infinite advantage of an internal Soul.”

- Chapter Nine (68, 69, 70 etc.)- “In the time of the recollection, Peace and Resignation of thy Soul, God will more esteem the various impertinent, troublesome and ugly thoughts that thou hast, than the good purposes, and high sentiments. Know that the effort, which thou thy self mayest make to resist Thoughts, is an impediment, and will leave thy Soul in greater anxitie. The best thing that is to be done, is sweetly to dispise them, to know thine own wretchedness, and peacefully make an Offering to God of the Trouble. Though thou canst not get rid of the anguish of Thoughts, hast no Light, Comfort, nor spiritual Sentiment: Yet be not afflicted, neither leave off recollection, because they are the Snares of the Enemy: Resign thy self at the time with Vigour, endure with Patience, and persevere in his Presence; for whil'st thou perseverest after that manner, thy Soul will be internally emproved. Doest thou believe that when thou comest away from Prayer dry, in the same manner as thou began it; that that was because of want of Preparation, and that hath done thee no good: That is a Fallacy: Because the fruit of true Prayer consists not in enjoying the Light, nor in having Knowledge of spiritual things, since these may be found in a speculative Intellect, without true Virtue and Perfection; it only consists in enduring with Patience, and persevering in Faith and Silence, believing that thou art in the Lord's Presence, turning to him thy Heart with tranquillity, and purity of Mind. So whilst thou perseversest in this manner, thou'lt have the only Preparation and disposition which at that time is necessary, and shalt reap infinite fruit. Nature her self, apparently, will torment thee, she being always an Enemy to the Spirit, which in depriving her of sensible Pleasures, remains Weak, Melancholy, and full of Irksomness, so that it feels a Hell in all Spiritual Exercises, particularly in that of Prayer, hence it grows extreamly impatient to be at an end of it, through the uneasiness of Thoughts, the lassitude of Body, importunate Sleep, and the not being able to curb the Senses, every one of which would for it own share, follow its own Pleasure. Happy art thou if thou canst persevere amidst this Martyrdom! These are called drynesses in Spirituals, but are very profitable, if they be embraced and suffered with Patience. Who so shall accustom himself to suffer them without repining, will from that labour draw vast advantage. It is certain, that in recollection the Devil frequently charges the Soul more fiercely with a Battalion of Thoughts, to discomfit the quiet of the Soul, and alienate it from that most sweet and secure internal Conversation, raising horrours, to the end it may leave it off, reducing it most commonly to such a state, as if it were lead forth to a most rigorous Torment.”

- “How many have begun this happy practice of Prayer, and Internal Recollection, and have left it off, pretending that they feel no pleasure, that they lose time, that their thoughts trouble them, and that that Prayer is not for them, whil'st they find not any sentiment of God, nor any ability to reason or discourse; whereas they might have believed, been silent, and had patience. All this is no more, but with ingratitude to hunt after sensible pleasures, suffering themselves to be transported with self-love, seeking themselves, and not God, because they cannot suffer a little pain and dryness, without reflecting on the infinite loss they sustain, whereas by the least act of reverence towards God, amidst dryness and sterility, they receive an eternal reward.”

- “The Lord told the venerable Mother Francesca Lopez of Valenza, and a religious of the third Order of St. Francis, three things of great light and consequence in order to internal recollection. In the first place, that a quarter of an hour of Prayer, with recollection of the senses and faculties, and with resignation and humility, does more good to the Soul than five days of penitential exercises, hair cloaths, disciplines, fastings, and sleeping on bare boards, because these are only mortifications of the body, and with recollection the Soul is purified.”

- “83. The more the Soul rejoices in sensible love, the less delight God has in it; on the contrary, the less the Soul rejoices in this sensible love, the more God delights in it.

- “I'll conclude this Chapter by undeceiving thee of the vulgar errour of those who say, that in7 this internal Recollection, or Prayer of Rest, the faculties operate not, and that the Soul is idle and wholly unactive. This is a manifest fallacy of those who have little experience, because although it operate not by means of the memory, nor by the second operation of the Intellect, which is the judgment, nor by the third, which is discourse or ratiocination, yet it operates by the first and chief operation of the intellect, which is simple apprehension, enlightened by holy Faith, and aided by the divine gifts of the holy Spirit.”

- “How happy and how well applied will thy Soul be, if retreating within it self, it there shrink into its own nothing, both in its Center and superior Part, without minding what it does; whether it recollect or not, whether it walk well or ill; if it operate or not, without heeding, thinking, or minding any sensible thing?”

- “O how few are the Souls, that attain to this perfect way of Praying, because they penetrate not enough into this internal recollection, and Mystical Silence, and because they strip not themselves of imperfect reflection, and sensible pleasure!”

- “though it seem to thee, that thou are diverted from it, by attending the daily occupations of thy Vocation, as Studying, Reading, Preaching, Eating, Drinking, doing Business, and the like; thou art mistaken; for the one destroys not the other, nor by so doing doest thou neglect to do the Will of God, nor to proceed in virtual Prayer, as St. Thomas says. 108. Because these occupations are not contrary to his Will, nor contrary to thy Resignation, it being certain, that God would have thee to Eat, Study, take Pains, do Business, &c. So that to perform these Exercises, which are conformed to his Will and Pleasure, thou departest not out of his Presence, nor from thine own Resignation.”

- “By not speaking, not desiring, and not thinking, one arrives at the true and perfect Mystical Silence, wherein God speaks with the Soul, communicates himself to it, and in the Abyss of its own Depth, teaches it the most perfect and exalted Wisdom.” (me- a quote that Underhill uses as well)

- “It is not enough for gaining this Treasure, to forsake the World, nor to renounce thine own Desires, and all things created; if thou wean not thy self from all Desires and Thoughts. Rest in this mystical Silence, and open the Door, that so God may communicate himself unto thee, unite with thee, and transform thee into himself.”

- End of Book One: “O Incarnate Seraphim, and Dei-fied Man! How well did'st thou know how to dive into that internal and mistical Silence, and to distinguish betwixt the outward and inward Man?”

- Book two: “This uses sometime to put on a garb of a disordinate Desire, of a vain complacency, of an industrious affection and proper esteem; all Enemies to the peace of the Soul. 15. It is never good to love thy Neighbour to the detriment of thine own spiritual good. To please God in purity, ought to be the only scope of thy Works; this ought to be thy only desire and thought...”

- “St. Paul (I Tim. 4.) recommended to us first the care of our own Souls, before that of our Neighbour. Take heed unto thy self, and unto thy Doctrine...continue in thy rest, disengaged, and wholly resigned up to the Divine will and pleasure. Don't think that in that condition thou art idle: He is busied enough, who is always ready waiting to perform the Will of God. Who takes heed to himself for God's sake, does every thing; because, one pure Act of internal Resignation, is more worth than a hundred thousand Exercises for ones own Will.”

- “Howsoever evident it may be to thee, that thy Soul is endowed with internal light and experience; the best thing still that thou canst do, is to keep quiet and resigned in thine own nothingness, until God call thee for the Good of Souls...”

- “how must it be without internal light? without due experience, which are gifts not communicated to all Souls; but to abstracted and resigned Souls, and to such as have advanced to perfect annihilation, by the way of terrible tribulation, and passive purgation. Be perswaded, O blessed Soul, that all works, which in this profession are not governed by a true zeal, springing from pure love, and a purged Soul, cloath the Soul with vanity, self-love, and spiritual pride.”

- “O how many self confident men by their own judgment and opinion, undertake this Ministry; and instead of pleasing God, emptying and abstracting their own Souls, (though they may do some good to their Neighbour) are filled with Earth, Straw, and Self-conceit! Be quiet and Resigned, renounce thy own Judgment and Desire, sink down into the Abyss of thy own Insufficiency and Nothingness; for there only thou'lt find God, the true Light, thy Happiness, and greatest Perfection.”

- “For Confession, there are some good; but for the Government of Spirits by the mystical Way, there are so few (says Father John Davila) that in a thousand, you shall possibly find one: St. Francis of Sales says, One among ten thousand: And the illuminated Thauler says, That in a hundred thousand, it was a hard thing to find one expert Master of Spirit. The reason is, because there are so few who dispose themselves to receive the mystical Science...”

- “The spiritual Director, which lives disinterested, longs more for the internal Solitude than the Employment of Souls: and if any spiritual Master is displeased when a Soul goes from him, and leaves him for another Guide, tis a clear sign, that he did not live disinterested, nor sought purely the Glory of God, but his own proper Esteem.”

- “It is of so great Efficacy, that it rejects worldly Honour, Self-conceit, Spiritual Ambition, the desire of Fame, a wish to be Great, a presumption of being the only Man, and thinking that he knows all things; it bids adieu to Friends, Friendship, Visits, Letters of Complement, Commerce of the Creature, Interest with Spiritual Children, Mastership, and Business; it turns away too much inclination to Confessor-ship, the Affection that is disorder'd in the Government of Souls, that makes a man think he is fitting for it; it moves Self-love, Authority, Presumption, treating of Profit, making a shew of the Letters which a man writes, shewing those writ by his Spiritual children, to make known what a great Workman he is...” (Ha!)

- “You ought to know that many Souls there are that deprive themselves of the infinite benefit of this precious Food, by judging that they are not sufficiently prepared, and that no less than an Angelical Purity is necessary for it. if thou hast a pure end, a true desire of doing the Will of God, without looking at sensible Devotion, or thine own Satisfaction, come with confidence, because thou art well disposed.”

- “The second Preparation in order to the interiour and spiritual Souls, must be to endeavor to live with greater Purity and Self-denial, with an universal taking ones self off from the World, with an inward Mortification and continual Retirement...”

- “If thou drawest near with humility, with a desire of doing the Divine Will, and with the leave of thy Confessor, thou mayst receive it every day, and every day thou wilt grow better and better” (me- this entire project may be a guide on how to think going into a trip, and the after effects of such a trip or experience)

- “Tis true, O Lord, that thou entrest into me a miserable creature, but true also it is, that thou at the same time remainest in thy glory and brightness, and in thy self...thou livest in the midst of thy brightness and magnificence, tho' thou art in my darkness and misery.”

- “how, O Lord, can a miserable creature receive an infinite Majesty? humble thy self, O my soul, to the very depth of nothing, confess thy unworthiness, look upon thy misery, and acknowledge the wonders of the Divine Love, which suffers it self to be mean in this incomprehensible Mystery, that it may be communicated and united with thee.”

- “O Soveraign Lord, keep back my heart strongly, that it may never more return to its imperfect liberty, but all annihilated may die to the world, and remain united with thee.”

- “Many have fallen into this Precipice, for want of subjecting their judgment to their spiritual Fathers; whilst they have imagined, that unless they give themselves up to rigid Penances, they never can be Saints, as if sanctity did only consist in them. They say, that he that sows little, reaps little; but they sow no other seed, with their indiscreet Penances, than Self-love, instead of rooting it up. 112. But the worst of these indiscreet Penances, is, that by the use of these dry and barren Severities, is begotten and naturalized a certain bitterness of heart towards themselves and their neighbours, which is a great stranger to the true Spirit: towards themselves, because they do not feel the sweetness of Christ's Yoke, the sweetness of Charity, but only the asperity of Penances; whereby their nature becomes imbitter'd; and hence it follows, that such men become exasperated with their Neighbours, to the marking and reproving much their faults, and holding of them for very defective, for the same reason that they see em go a less rigorous way than themselves: hence they grow proud with their exercises of Penance, seeing few that do after em, and thinking themselves better than other folks, whereupon they much fall in the account of their Vertues.” (Kempis, this is my issue)

- “When the Soul begins to retire from the World and Vice, it ought to tame the body with rigour, that it may be subject to the Spirit and follow the Law of God with ease; then it concerns you to manage the Weapons of Haircloth, Fasting and Discipline, to take from the flesh the roots of sin; but when the Soul enters into the way of the Spirit, imbracing internal mortification, corporal chastisements ought to be relaxed, because there is trouble enough in the Spirit: the heart is weakned, the breast suffers, the brain is weary, the whole Body grieved and disabled for the functions of the Soul.” (great, the way I want to live on both extremes)

Book Three- “they exercise themselves in a loving fear of God, and contempt of themselves, but with a true Hope in God, and Dis-confidence in themselves. The more they are humbled with true contempt and knowledge of themselves, the more they please God, and arrive at a singular respect and veneration in his Presence.”

- “Their continual Exercise is, to enter into themselves, in God, with quiet and silence; because there is his Center, Habitation and Delight. They make a greater account of this interiour Retirement, than of speaking of God; they retire into that interiour and secret Center of the Soul, to know God and receive his Divine Influence, with fear and loving reverence; if they go out, they go out only to know and despise themselves. 10. But know that few are the Souls which arrive at this happy State; because few there are that are willing to embrace contempt, and suffer themselves to be Refined and Purified; upon which account, although there are many that enter into this interiour Way, yet tis a rare thing for a Soul to go on, and not stick upon the entrance. The Lord said to a Soul, "This inward Way is tread by few; tis so high a Grace, that none deserves it; few walk in it, because tis no other than a Death of the senses; and few there be that are willing so to Die and be Annihilated; in which disposition this so soveraign a Gift is founded."

- “12. It is the saying of S. Bernard, That to serve God, is nothing else but to do Good and suffer Evil. He that would go to Perfection by the means of sweetness and consolation, is mistaken: You must desire no other Consolation from God, than to end your Life for his sake, in the state of true Obedience and Subjection. Christ our Lord's way was not that of Sweetness and Softness, nor did he invite us to any such, either by his words or Example, when he said, --He that will come after me, let him deny himself, and let him take up his Cross and follow me, (St. Matth. 24. 26.) The Soul that would be United to Christ, must be conformable to him, following him in the way of suffering.”

- “15. O what a great Happiness is it for a Soul to be subdued and subject! what great Riches is it to be Poor! what a mighty honour to be despised! what a height is it to be beaten down! what a comfort is it to be afflicted! what a credit of knowledge is it to be reputed Ignorant! and finally, what a Happiness of Happinesses is it to be Crucified with Christ!”

- “All the Knowledge and Union with God , arises from suffering, which is the truest proof of love.”

- “O blessed Soul, if thou knowest how to be constant and quiet in the Fire of Tribulation, and would'st but let thy self be washed with the bitter Waters of Affliction, how quickly would'st thou find thy self rich in heavenly Gifts...”

- 'Thou wilt find within thy self a passive dryness, darkness, anguish, contradictions, continual resistance, inward desertions, horrible desolations, continual and strong suggestions, and vehement temptations of the Enemy; finally, thou wilt see thy self so afflicted, that thou wilt not be able to lift up thy Heart, being full of sorrow and heaviness, nor do the least act of Faith, Hope or Charity. 31. Here thou wilt see thy self forlorn and subject to Passions of impatience, anger, rage, swearing, and disordered appetites, seeming to thy self the most miserable Creature, the greatest Sinner in the World, the most abhorred of God, deprived and stript of all Vertue, with a pain like that of Hell, seeing thy self afflicted and desolate, to think that thou hast altogether lost God.”

- “...surrounded by temptations, darkness, anguish, affliction, sorrows and rigid drowths, doth taste of Death every moment in its painful Torment and tremendous Desolation, without feeling the least comfort, with an affliction so great, that the pain of it seems nothing else but a Death prolonged, and a continual Martyrdom...” (I feel this way now. The deep, seemingly unending experience of despair, where not one thing brings you joy. Not a single thing. Surrounded by a nightmare)

- “If from the Chaos of Nothing, his Omnipotence has produced so many wonders, what will he do in thy Soul, created after his own Image and Likeness, if thou keepest constant quiet, and resigned, with a true knowledge of thy Nothing?”

- “...all the good consists in being silent, suffering and, holding patience with rest and resignation.”

- “Thy good luck consists not in injoying, but in suffering with quiet and resignation. St. Teresa appeared after her death to a certain Soul, and told it, that she had only been rewarded for her pain; but had not received one dram of reward for so many Extasies and Revelations and Comforts that she had here enjoyed in this World.”

- “Although this painful martyrdom of horrible desolation and passive purgation be so tremendous, that with reason it hast gotten the name of Hell amongst mystick Divines, (because it seems impossible to be able to live a moment with so grievous a torment; so that with great reason it may be said, that he that suffers it, lives dying, and dying lives a lingring death) yet know, that it is necessary to endure it, to arrive at the sweet, joyous and abundant riches of high contemplation and loving union: and there has been no holy Soul, which has not passed through this spiritual martyrdom and painful torment.”

- “Know that pure, perfect and essential Love consists in the Cross, in self-denial and resignation, in perfect humility, in poverty of spirit, and in a mean opinion of thy self.”

- “Many there be, who, however they have been dedicated to Prayer, yet have no relish of God; because in the end of their Prayers, they are neither mortified nor attend upon God any longer...”

- “To the simple and the mortified, the recreation of the senses is a sort of death: they never go to it, unless compelled by necessity and edification of their neighbours.”

- “There must be tribulation to make a man's life acceptable to God.”

- “When God crucifies in the inmost part of the Soul, no creature is able to comfort it...”

- “Those Souls are to be pitied, who cannot find in their hearts to believe, that Tribulation and Suffering is their greatest Blessing. They who are perfect ought always to be desirous of dying and suffering, being always in a state of death and suffering: vain is the man who doth not suffer...”

- “Undeceive thy self, and believe, that in order to thy Soul's being totally transformed with God, it is necessary for it to be lost and be denied in its life, sense, knowledge, and power; and to die living, and not living; dying, and not dying; suffering, and not suffering; resigning up, and not resigning up it self, without reflecting upon any thing. Perfection, in its followers, receives not its glories but by Fire and Martyrdom, Griefs, Torments, Punishments and Contempt, suffered and endured with gallantry and courage.”

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

- “If the Soul should not fall into some faults, it would never come to understand its own misery, though it hears men speak and reads spiritual Books; nor can it ever obtain precious peace, if it do not first know its own miserable weakness: because there the remedy is difficult, where there is no clear knowledge of the defect. God will suffer in thee sometimes one fault, sometimes another, that by this knowledge of thy self, seeing thee so often fallen, thou may'st believe that thou art a meer nothing...” (me- Kierkegaard says this)

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## 3. Tolstoy

- *“There was, he said, one infallible rule, and that was to have no care about the worldly life.”*

# *Confession*

- “I speak of men of our class, of men who are true to themselves, and not of those who make of religion a means of obtaining some temporal advantage. (These men are truly absolute unbelievers, for if faith be to them a means of obtaining any worldly end, it is most certainly no faith at all.)

- “He said that a man who lives according to his doctrine must be ready at any moment to endure violence from others, and, possibly, to die of hunger and cold. The doctrine of Jesus, which teaches us that we cannot possibly make life secure, but that we must be ready to die at any moment, is unquestionably preferable to the doctrine of the world, which obliges us to struggle for the security of existence. It is preferable because the impossibility of escaping death, and the impossibility of making life secure, is the same for the disciples of Jesus as it is for the disciples of the world; but, according to the doctrine of Jesus, life itself is not absorbed in the idle attempt to make existence secure.” (Tillich, Spong)

-”It might seem frightful to any one who does not realize the nothingness and absurdity of an isolated personal life, and who believes that he will never die. But I know that my life, considered in relation to my individual happiness, is, taken by itself, a stupendous farce, and that this meaningless existence will end in a stupid death.” (Vivekananda)

- “Seek among all these men, from beggar to millionaire, one who is contented with his lot, and you will not find one such in a thousand.”

-“When such an instance does occur, it is not inspired by a desire to make life more simple, but to amass money and make it more sure. Each strives continually to make the heavy burden of existence still more heavy, by giving himself up body and soul to the practice of the doctrine of the world. To-day we must buy an overcoat and galoches, to-morrow, a watch and chain; the next day we must install ourselves in an apartment with a sofa and a bronze lamp; then we must have carpets and velvet gowns; then a house, horses and carriages, paintings and decorations, and then—then we fall ill of overwork and die.”

-”The infinite depth repels and horrifies me; the infinite height attracts and satisfies me.”

-”I speak of men of our class, of men who are true to themselves, and not of those who make of religion a means of obtaining some temporal advantage. (These men are truly absolute unbelievers, for if faith be to them a means of obtaining any worldly end, it is most certainly no faith at all.)”

-”Every time I tried to express the longings of my heart for a truly virtuous life, I was met with contempt and derisive laughter; but directly I gave way to the lowest of my passions, I was praised and encouraged. I found ambition, love of power, love of gain, lechery, pride, anger, vengeance, held in high esteem. I gave way to these passions, and becoming like unto my elders, I felt that the place which I filled in the world satisfied those around me.”

-”Quite unconscious that we ourselves knew nothing, that to the simplest of all problems in life what is right, and what is wrong we had no answer, we all went on talking together without one to listen, at times abetting and praising one another on condition that we were abetted and praised in turn, and again turning upon each other in wrath in short, we reproduced the scenes in a madhouse.”

-”It is now clear to me that between ourselves and the inhabitants of a madhouse there was no difference; at the time I only vaguely suspected this, and, like all madmen, thought all were mad except myself.”

- “The new circumstances of a happy family life by which I was now surrounded completely led my mind away from the search after the meaning of life as a whole. My life was concentrated in my family, my wife, and children, and consequently in the care for increasing the means of supporting them.”

- “The questions seemed so foolish, so simple, so childish; but no sooner had I begun my attempt to decide them than I was convinced that they were neither childish nor silly, but were concerned with the deepest problems of life, and again that I was, think of them as I would, utterly unable to find an answer to them.”

- “Till I know the reasons for my own acts, I can do nothing, I cannot live.”

- “My life had come to a sudden stop. I was able to breathe, to eat, to drink, to sleep. I could not, indeed, help doing so; but there was no real life in me. I had not a single wish to strive for the fulfillment of what I could feel to be reasonable. If I wished for anything, I knew beforehand that, were I to satisfy the wish, nothing would come of it; I should still be dissatisfied. Had a fairy appeared and offered me all I desired, I should not have known what to say. If I seemed to have, at a given moment of excitement, not a wish, but a mood resulting from the tendencies of former wishes, at a calmer moment I knew that it was a delusion, that I really wished for nothing.”

-”The truth lay in this that life had no meaning for me. Every day of life, every step in it, brought me nearer the edge of a precipice, whence I saw clearly the final ruin before me. To stop, to go back, were alike impossible; nor could I shut my eyes so as not to see the suffering that alone awaited me, the death of all in me, even to annihilation. Thus I, a healthy and a happy man, was brought to feel that I could live no longer, that an irresistible force was dragging me down into the grave.”

- “...I hid away a cord, to avoid being tempted to hang myself by it to one of the pegs between the cupboards of my study, where I undressed alone every evening, and ceased carrying a gun because it offered too easy a way of getting rid of life. I knew not what I wanted; I was afraid of life; I shrank from it, and yet there was something I hoped far from it.”

- “standing like a fool with but one thing clear to me that there was nothing in life, that there never was anything, and never will be.”

- “I was only astonished that this had not occurred to me before, from premises which had so long been known. Illness and death would come (indeed they had come), if not to-day, then to-morrow, to those whom I loved, to myself, and nothing would remain but stench and worms. All my acts, whatever I did, would sooner or later be forgotten, and I myself be nowhere. Why, then, busy one's self with anything? How could men see this and live? It is possible to live only as long as life intoxicates us; as soon as we are sober again we see that it is all a delusion, and a stupid one! In this, indeed, there is nothing either ludicrous or amusing; it is only cruel and absurd.”

- “no longer taste sweet to me. "My family," thought I; " but a family, a wife and children, are also human beings, and subject to the same conditions as myself; they must either be living in a lie, or they must see the terrible truth. Why should they live? Why should I love, care for, bring up, and watch over them? To bring them to the despair which fills myself, or to make dolts of them? As I love them, I cannot conceal from them the truth every step they take in knowledge leads them to it, and that truth is death.”

- “I could no longer take comfort from what I saw in the mirror that my position was a stupid and desperate one.”

- “...I was like a man lost in a wood, and who, terrified by the thought, rushes about trying to find a way out, and, though he knows each step can only lead him farther astray, cannot help running backwards and forwards.” (not a 'Stoic' attitude, nor a Vivekananda attitude, necessarily, but rather an embrace of the inevitable)

- “If we turn to those branches of knowledge in which men have tried to find a solution to the problem of life, to physiology, psychology, biology, sociology, we meet with a striking poverty of thought, with the greatest obscurity, with an utterly unjustifiable pretension to decide questions beyond their competence, and a constant contradiction of one thinker by another, and even by himself. If we turn to the branches of knowledge which are not concerned with the problem of life, but find an answer to their own particular scientific questions, we are lost in admiration of man's mental powers; but we know beforehand that we shall get no answer to our questions about life itself, for these branches of knowledge directly ignore all questions concerning it. Those who profess them say, "We cannot tell you what you are and why you live; such questions we do not study. But if you wish to know the laws of light, of chemical affinities, of the development of organisms; if you wish to know the laws that govern different bodies, their form, and relations to number and size; if you wish to know the laws of your own mind, we can give you clear, exact, and absolutely certain answers on every point.” (it really comes down to Mckenna's question of 'what is going on here?' and that 'no one knows what's going on here', Vivekananda said this first I just need to find where he said it)

- “I would strive to evolve a theory which should enable me to look upon my fancies as a law belonging to humanity. As soon, however, as the question of the meaning of life made itself clearly felt within me, my theoretical answer was for ever confuted.” (the finite/infinite distinction)

- It is no fable, but a living, undeniable truth, to be understood of all men. The former delusion of happiness in life which hid from me the horror of the dragon no longer deceives me.”

- “...I cannot conceal from them the truth every step they take in knowledge leads them to it, and that truth is death."

- “all those who had searched like myself had failed also, and come like me to the despairing conviction that the only absolute knowledge man can possess is this that life is without a meaning.”

- “"What is the meaning of my life? It has none. Or what will come of my life? Nothing. Or why does all that is exist, and why do I exist? Because it does exist."

- “'You are an accidentally combined lump of something.'” (Ha! These last two quotes are so funny)

- “wherever the philosopher does not overlook the great question of all, the answer is always the same the answer given by Socrates, Schopenhauer, Solomon, and Buddha.”

- “"We approach truth only in the proportion as we are farther from life," says Socrates, when preparing to die.”

- “What do we who love truth seek in life? In order to be free from the body and all the ills that accompany life in it. If so, then, how shall we not be glad of the approach of death? A wise man seeks death all his life, and death has no terrors for him...The only thing that remains to us is nothing.”

- “the whole of this material universe of ours, with all its suns and its milky-ways is nothing."

- “"The life of the body is evil and a lie, and so the annihilation of that life is a good for which we ought to wish," says Socrates.

- “Life is what it ought not to be; "an evil, and a passage from it into nothingness is the only good in life," says Schopenhauer. Everything in the world, both folly and wisdom, both riches and poverty, rejoicing and grief, all is vanity and worthless. Man dies and nothing is left of him, and this again is vanity, says Solomon. "To live, knowing that sufferings, illness, old age, and death are inevitable, is not possible; we must get rid of life, get rid of the possibility of living," says Buddha.”

- “I had come was not the result of my going astray, of any mental disorder, but, on the contrary, of my thinking rightly, of my being in agreement with the conclusions of the most powerful intellects among mankind.”

- “I could not be deceived. All was vanity. A misfortune to be born. Death was better than life, and life's burden must be got rid of.”

- “The dulness of their imagination enables these men to forget what destroyed the peace of Buddha, the inevitable sickness, old age, and death, which, if not to-day, then to-morrow, must be the end of all their pleasures.”

- “to accept life as described by Solomon and Schopenhauer, to know that it is a stupid and ridiculous joke, and yet live on, to wash, dress, dine, talk, and even write books. This position was painful and disgusting to me, but I remained in it.”

- “I now see that I did not kill myself because I had, in a confused sort of way, an inkling that my ideas were wrong.” (The experience of Nihilism is real. The only confusion would stem from a denial to accept the Nothingness of everything)

- “Why do all men live, when all men are able to die? Is it that I and Schopenhauer alone are wise enough to have understood the unmeaning emptiness and evil of life?"

- “I understood that the truth had been hidden from me, not so much because I had erred in my reasoning, as because I had led the exceptional life of an epicure bent on satisfying the lusts of the flesh.”

- “To live after God's Word, he must renounce all the pleasures of life, labour, be humble, endure, and be charitable to all men.”

- “Then I understood it all. I am in search of faith, the staff and strength of life, while these men seek the best means of fulfilling in the sight of men certain human obligations, and having to deal with earthly affairs they fulfill them as ordinary men ever do.”

- “All my reasoning could not induce me to act in accordance with my convictions i.e., to kill myself. I should not speak the truth, if I said that my reason alone brought me to the position in which I was. Reason had been at work, no doubt, but something else had worked too, something which I can only call an instinctive consciousness of life.” (recollection, inward, God, Nothingness, reason leads to Nothingness which is God, there is no 'faith' in the sense of believing without evidence, there is faith which is the embracing of the terrifying mystery of existence)

- “When I watched the restricted circle of those who were my equals in social position, I saw only people who did not understand the question, people who kept down their understanding of it by the excitement of life, people who understood it and put an end to life, and people who, understanding, lived on through weakness, in despair. And I saw no others.”

- “The answers given by science to the question were all 'Identity.'” (Vivekananda says he would rather kill himself than give up the metaphysics that lies as the ground behind scientific discoveries)

- “How dieth the wise man? As the fool.”

- “If a man lives, he believes in something. If he did not believe that there was something to live for, he would not live. If he does not see and understand the unreality of the finite, he believes in the finite; if he sees that unreality, he must believe in the infinite. Without faith there is no life. I then went back upon all the past stages of my mental state, and was terrified. It was now clear to me that for anyone to live it was necessary for him either to be ignorant of infinity or to accept an explanation of the meaning of life which should equalise the finite and the infinite. Such an explanation I had, but I had no need of it while I believed in the finite, and I began to apply to my explanation the tests of reason, and in the light of the latter all former explanations were shown to be worthless.”

- “(1) that the position assumed by Schopenhauer, Solomon, and myself, with all our wisdom, was a foolish one: we understand that life is an evil, and yet we live. This clearly is foolish, because if life is foolish, and I care so much for reason, life should be put an end to, and then there would be no one to deny it.” (this is important to the 'turning point' of Tolstoy 'leaving' renunciation behind, even after all the despair, meaninglessness, Nihilism, etc. It was too much for him, fair enough. It seems a spiritually induced suicide is the logical conclusion of the Nihilistic experience)

A Letter to a Hindu

- “Free your minds from those overgrown, mountainous imbecilities which hinder your recognition of it, and at once the truth will emerge from amid the pseudo-religious nonsense that has been smothering it: the indubitable, eternal truth inherent in man, which is one and the same in all the great religions of the world.”

Ok ex h but

My Religion

- “These chapters I read very often, each time with the same emotional ardor, as I came to the verses which exhort the hearer to turn the other cheek, to give up his cloak, to be at peace with all the world, to love his enemies,—but each time with the same disappointment. The divine words were not clear. They exhorted to a renunciation so absolute as to entirely stifle life as I understood it; to renounce everything, therefore, could not, it seemed to me, be essential to salvation.”

- “I saw that Jesus did not exhort us to turn the other cheek that we might endure suffering, but that his exhortation was, "Resist not evil," and that he afterward declared suffering to be the possible consequence of the practice of this maxim.”

- “In the Sermon on the Mount, as well as in many other places, Jesus represents his disciples, those who observe the rule of non-resistance to evil, as turning the other cheek, giving up their cloaks, persecuted, used despitefully, and in want. Everywhere Jesus says that he who taketh not up his cross, he who does not renounce worldly advantage, he who is not ready to bear all the consequences of the commandment, "Resist not evil," cannot become his disciple. To his disciples Jesus says, Choose to be poor; bear all things without resistance to evil, even though you thereby bring upon yourself persecution, suffering, and death. Prepared to suffer death rather than resist evil, he reproved the resentment of Peter, and died exhorting his followers not to resist and to remain always faithful to his doctrine. The early disciples observed this rule, and passed their lives in misery and persecution, without rendering evil for evil.”

- “The command, "Resist not evil," is the central point of Jesus' doctrine; it is not a mere verbal affirmation; it is a rule whose practice is obligatory. It is verily the key to the whole mystery...” (Nietzsche- AntiChrist)

- “What ought I to do? Again I must choose between the divine law and the human law.”

- “I felt that if I adopted the law of Jesus, I should be alone; I should pass many unhappy hours; I should be persecuted and afflicted as Jesus had said. But if I adopted the human law, everybody would approve; I should be in peace and safety, with all the resources of civilization at my command to put my conscience at ease.”

- “I now understood the words of Jesus: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil." Jesus' meaning is: "You have thought that you were acting in a reasonable manner in defending yourself by violence against evil, in tearing out an eye for an eye, by fighting against evil with criminal tribunals, guardians of the peace, armies; but I say unto you, Renounce violence; have nothing to do with violence; do harm to no one, not even to your enemy."

- “Believers profess that Christ as God, the second person of the Trinity, descended upon earth to teach men by his example how to live; they go through the most elaborate ceremonies for the consummation of the sacraments, the building of temples, the sending out of missionaries, the establishment of priesthoods, for parochial administration, for the performance of rituals; but they forget one little detail,—the practice of the commandments of Jesus.” (me- the similarities between Tolstoy and Nietzsche are incredible! The Nihilistic experience shaped both of their 'core' views)

- “We know perfectly well that the doctrine of Jesus is directed at and denounces all human errors, all tohu, all the empty idols that we try to except from the category of errors, by dubbing them "Church," "State," "Culture," "Science," "Art," "Civilization." But Jesus spoke precisely of all these, of these and all other tohu. Not only Jesus, but all the Hebrew prophets, John the Baptist, all the true sages of the world denounced the Church and State and culture and civilization of their times as sources of man's perdition.”

- “Do you say that the doctrine of Jesus, "Resist not evil," is vain? What, then, are we to think of the lives of those who are not filled with love and compassion for their kind,—of those who make ready for their fellow-men punishment at the stake, by the knout, the wheel, the rack, chains, compulsory labor, the gibbet, dungeons, prisons for women and children, the hecatombs of war, or bring about periodical revolutions; of those who carry these horrors into execution; of those who benefit by these calamities or prepare reprisals,—are not such lives vain?”

- “Jesus did not appeal to me as a prophet revealing the divine law, but as one who continued and amplified the absolute divine law which I already knew; for I had very definite and complex notions about God, the creator of the world and of man...”

- “I sought to imagine the results if, instead of extolling our social organization as it now is, with its theatres, its romances, its sumptuous methods for stimulating sensuous desires—if, instead of this, we taught our children by precept and by example, that the reading of lascivious romances and attendance at theatres and balls are the most vulgar of all distractions, and that there is nothing more grotesque and humiliating than to pass one's time in the collection and arrangement of personal finery to make of one's body an object of show.”

- “At first it seemed to me that all such persons had serious motives for denying the possibility of practising the doctrine of Jesus. But when I came to look into the source of their negation, I was convinced that the sceptics, in common with the believers, have a false conception of life; to them life is not what it is, but what they imagine it ought to be,—and this conception rests upon the same foundation as does that of the believers. It is true that the sceptics, who pretend to believe in nothing, believe not in God, or in Jesus, or in Adam; but they believe in a fundamental idea which is at the basis of their misconception,—in the rights of man to a life of happiness,—much more firmly than do the theologians.”

- “To understand what is meant by "saving" one's life, according to the doctrine of Jesus, we must first understand what the prophets, what Solomon, what Buddha, what all the wise men of the world have said about the personal life of man. But, as Pascal says, we cannot endure to think upon this theme, and so we carry always before us a screen to conceal the abyss of death, toward which we are constantly moving.”

- “If he had lived in our day, in Russia, he would have said: "Think you that those who perished in the circus at Berditchef or on the slopes of Koukouyef were sinners above all others? I tell you, No; but you, if you do not repent, if you do not arouse yourselves, if you do not find in your life that which is imperishable, you also shall perish. You are horrified by the death of those crushed by the tower, burned in the circus; but your death, equally as frightful and as inevitable, is here, before you. You are wrong to conceal it or to forget it; unlocked for, it is only more hideous."

- “It is in vain that we fly from danger, and guard our material life by all imaginable means; in spite of all, death is before us, if not in one way, then in another; if not by massacre, or the falling of a tower, then in our beds, amidst much greater suffering.”

- “Is it not the act of a madman to labor at what, under any circumstances, one can never finish? Death will always come before the edifice of worldly prosperity can be completed.”

- “Death threatens us every moment...Death awaits us at every moment.”

- “The principal difference between our conception of human life and that possessed by the Jews is, that while we believe that our mortal life, transmitted from generation to generation, is not the true life, but a fallen life, a life temporarily depraved,—the Jews, on the contrary, believed this life to be the true and supreme good, given to man on condition that he obey the will of God. From our point of view, the transmission of the fallen life from generation to generation is the transmission of a curse; from the Jewish point of view, it is the supreme good to which man can attain, on condition that he accomplish the will of God. It is precisely upon the Hebraic conception of life that Jesus founded his doctrine of the true or eternal life, which he contrasted with the personal and mortal life.”

- “Perhaps it is right to think that man, after this terrestrial life passed in the satisfaction of personal desires, will enter upon the possession of an eternal personal life in paradise, there to taste all imaginable enjoyments; but to believe that this is so, to endeavor to persuade ourselves that for our good actions we shall be recompensed with eternal felicity, and for our bad actions punished with eternal torments,—to believe this, does not aid us in understanding the doctrine of Jesus, but, on the contrary, takes away the principal foundation of that doctrine. The entire doctrine of Jesus inculcates renunciation of the personal, imaginary life, and a merging of this personal life in the universal life of humanity, in the life of the son of man. Now the doctrine of the individual immortality of the soul does not impel us to renounce the personal life; on the contrary, it affirms the continuance of individuality forever.” (me- Vivekananda, Tillich, Eckhart)

- “To live for self alone, for the animal life, is not reasonable. And so men, from their earliest existence, have sought for some reason for living aside from the gratification of their own desires; they live for their children, for their families, for their nation, for humanity, for all that does not die with the personal life.”

- “If there are any who doubt the life beyond the grave and salvation based upon redemption, no one can doubt the salvation of all men, and of each individual man, if they will accept the evidence of the destruction of the personal life, and follow the true way to safety by bringing their personal wills into harmony with the will of God. Let each man endowed with reason ask himself, What is life? and What is death? and let him try to give to life and death any other meaning than that revealed by Jesus, and he will find that any attempt to find in life a meaning not based upon the renunciation of self, the service of humanity, of the son of man, is utterly futile. It cannot be doubted that the personal life is condemned to destruction, and that a life conformable to the will of God alone gives the possibility of salvation. It is not much in comparison with the sublime belief in the future life!” (me- Same message as Upanishads, simply in Christian language)

- “Should I die in following the doctrine of Jesus? This question did not alarm me. It might seem frightful to any one who does not realize the nothingness and absurdity of an isolated personal life, and who believes that he will never die. But I know that my life, considered in relation to my

individual happiness, is, taken by itself, a stupendous farce, and that this meaningless existence will end in a stupid death. Knowing this, I have nothing to fear. I shall die as others die who do not observe the doctrine of Jesus; but my life and my death will have a meaning for myself and for others. My life and my death will have added something to the life and salvation of others, and this will be in accordance with the doctrine of Jesus.”

- “In vain they pray, and observe the sacraments, and give in charity, and build churches, and convert others; they cannot follow the example of Jesus because their acts are inspired by a faith based upon an entirely different doctrine from that which they confess.” (me- Upanishads, faith over works, quietism, stuck in Earthly thinking)

- (start of chapter 10) “We say, It is difficult to live according to the doctrine of Jesus! And why should it not be difficult, when by our organization of life we carefully hide from ourselves our true situation; when we endeavor to persuade ourselves that our situation is not at all what it is, but that it is something else?”

- “With us, all men live not only without truth, not only without the least desire to know truth, but with the firm conviction that, among all useless occupations, the most useless is the endeavor to find the truth that governs human life.” (me- Cobra at the door, falling from the empire state building, diligence, etc.)

- “But why is life so full of evil? Why so much wrong-doing? May I not abstain from taking part therein? Is it impossible to lighten this heavy load that weighs me down? The reply is that this is impossible, that the desire to live well and to help others to live well is only a temptation of pride; that one thing is possible,—to save one's soul for the future life.”

- “Our masters tell us that there are only two ways,—to believe in and obey the powers that be, to participate in the organized evil about us, or to forsake the world and take refuge in convent or monastery; to take part in the offices of the Church, doing nothing for men, and declaring the doctrine of Jesus impossible to practise, accepting the iniquity of life sanctioned by the Church, or to renounce life for what is equivalent to slow suicide.” (this is where I am, this is the big contradiction)

- “However surprising the belief that the doctrine of Jesus is excellent, but impossible of practice, there is a still more surprising tradition that he who wishes to practise this doctrine, not in word, but in deed, must retire from the world. This erroneous belief that it is better for a man to retire from the world than to expose himself to temptations, existed amongst the Hebrews of old, but is entirely foreign, not only to the spirit of Christianity, but to that of the Jewish religion.

- “We see enough of the frightful suffering endured by men in following the doctrine of the world, but in these times we hear nothing of suffering in behalf of the doctrine of Jesus. Thirty millions of men have perished in wars, fought in behalf of the doctrine of the world; thousands of millions of beings have perished, crushed by a social system organized on the principle of the doctrine of the world; but where, in our day, shall we find a million, a thousand, a dozen, or a single one, who has died a cruel death, or has even suffered from hunger and cold, in behalf of the doctrine of Jesus? This fear of suffering is only a puerile excuse that proves how little we really know of Jesus' doctrine. We not only do not follow it; we do not even take it seriously.”

- “Jesus tells us to take up the cross and follow him, to bear submissively the lot apportioned out to us. No one hears his words or follows his command. But let a man in a uniform decked out with gold lace, a man whose speciality is to kill his fellows, say, "Take, not your cross, but your knapsack and carbine, and march to suffering and certain death,"—and a mighty host is ready to receive his orders. Leaving parents, wives, and children, clad in grotesque costumes, subject to the will of the first comer of a higher rank, famished, benumbed, and exhausted by forced marches, they go, like a herd of cattle to the slaughter-house, not knowing where,—and yet these are not cattle, they are men.” (me- why aren't followers of God not seen this way? Why aren't monks or hermits given the status of armed forces and their killers?)

- “We believe that the happiness of our life is in power, and domination, and abundance of worldly goods. We are so habituated to this idea that we are alarmed at the sacrifices exacted by the doctrine of Jesus, which teaches that man's happiness does not depend upon fortune and power, and that the rich cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

- “We are so accustomed to believe in all we do for the so-called security of life (the organization of armies, the building of fortresses, the provisioning of troops), that our wardrobes, our systems of medical treatment, our furniture, and our money, all seem like real and stable pledges of our existence. We forget the fate of him who resolved to build greater storehouses to provide an abundance for many years: he died in a night. Everything that we do to make our existence secure is like the act of the ostrich, when she hides her head in the sand, and does not see that her destruction is near. But we are even more foolish than the ostrich.” (Vivekananda, Maya, he writes about the hare hiding his head in the ground from the hounds)

- “The doctrine of Jesus, which teaches us that we cannot possibly make life secure, but that we must be ready to die at any moment, is unquestionably preferable to the doctrine of the world, which obliges us to struggle for the security of existence. It is preferable because the impossibility of escaping death, and the impossibility of making life secure, is the same for the disciples of Jesus as it is for the disciples of the world; but, according to the doctrine of Jesus, life itself is not absorbed in the idle attempt to make existence secure.”

- “To be poor means not to live in cities, but in the country, not to be shut up in close rooms, but to labor out of doors, in the woods and fields, to have the delights of sunshine, of the open heavens, of the earth, of observing the habits of dumb animals; not to rack our brains with inventing dishes to stimulate an appetite, and not to endure the pangs of indigestion. To be poor is to be hungry three times a day, to sleep without passing hours tossing upon the pillow a victim of insomnia, to have children, and have them always with us, to do nothing that we do not wish to do (this is essential), and to have no fear for anything that may happen. The poor person will be ill and will suffer; he will die like the rest of the world; but his sufferings and his death will probably be less painful than those of the rich; and he will certainly live more happily. Poverty is one of the conditions of following the doctrine of Jesus, a condition indispensable to those who would enter into the kingdom of God and be happy.”

- “Believe, if you will, in paradise, in hell, in the pope, in the Church, in the sacraments, in the redemption; pray according to the dictates of your faith, attend upon your devotions, sing your hymns,—but all this will not prevent you from practising the five commandments given by Jesus for your welfare: Be not angry; Do not commit adultery; Take no oaths; Resist not evil; Do not make war.”

- “Jesus has shown me that the first temptation destructive of happiness is enmity toward men, anger against them. I cannot refuse to believe this, and so I cannot willingly remain at enmity with others. I cannot, as I could once, foster anger, be proud of it, fan into a flame, justify it, regarding myself as an intelligent and superior man and others as useless and foolish people. Now, when I give up to anger, I can only realize that I alone am guilty, and seek to make peace with those who have aught against me.” (me- transition from misanthropy possible? Maybe)

- “The temptation was in separating myself from my fellows, recognizing only a few of them as my equals, and regarding all the others as persons of no account (rekim) or as uncultivated animals (fools). I see now that this wilful separation from other men, this judgment of raca or fool passed upon others, was the principal source of my disagreements.” (me- Vivekananda and Tolstoy say this. I need to remedy my judgmental, angry attitude towards others)

- “I understand now that he alone is above others who is humble with others and makes himself the servant of all. I understand now why those that are great in the sight of men are an abomination to God, who has declared woe upon the rich and mighty and invoked blessedness upon the poor and humble. Now I understand this truth, I have faith in it, and this faith has transformed my perception of what is right and important, and what is wrong and despicable. Everything that once seemed to me right and important, such as honors, glory, civilization, wealth, the complications and refinements of existence, luxury, rich food, fine clothing, etiquette, have become for me wrong and despicable. Everything that formerly seemed to me wrong and despicable, such as rusticity, obscurity, poverty, austerity, simplicity of surroundings, of food, of clothing, of manners, all have now become right and important to me.”

- “Now, I can no longer give my support to anything that lifts me above or separates me from others.”

- “What once seemed to me right and important—riches, proprietary rights, the point of honor, the maintenance of personal dignity and personal privileges—have now become to me wrong and despicable. Labor for others, poverty, humility, the renunciation of property and of personal privileges, have become in my eyes right and important.”

- “I know now that the distinction I once made between my own people and those of other countries is destructive to my welfare...”

- “I understand now that true welfare is possible for me only on condition that I recognize my fellowship with the whole world. I believe this, and the belief has changed my estimate of what is right and wrong, important and despicable. What once seemed to me right and important—love of country, love for those of my own race, for the organization called the State, services rendered at the expense of the welfare of other men, military exploits—now seem to me detestable and pitiable. What once seemed to me shameful and wrong—renunciation of nationality, and the cultivation of cosmopolitanism—now seem to me right and important.”

- “I once thought that if a foreign invasion occurred, or even if evil-minded persons attacked me, and I did not defend myself, I should be robbed and beaten and tortured and killed with those whom I felt bound to protect, and this possibility troubled me. But this that once troubled me now seems desirable and in conformity with the truth. I know now that the foreign enemy and the malefactors or brigands are all men like myself; that, like myself, they love good and hate evil; that they live as I live, on the borders of death; and that, with me, they seek for salvation, and will find it in the doctrine of Jesus. The evil that they do to me will be evil to them, and so can be nothing but good for me. But if truth is unknown to them, and they do evil thinking that they do good, I, who know the truth, am bound to reveal it to them, and this I can do only by refusing to participate in evil, and thereby confessing the truth by my example.”

- “He must renounce war and do good to all men, whether they are foreigners or compatriots.”

## 4. GK Chesterton

-“The whole case for Christianity is that a man who is dependent upon the luxuries of this life is a corrupt man, spiritually corrupt, politically corrupt, financially corrupt.”

- “the main problem of this book. How can we contrive to be at once astonished at the world and yet at home in it? How can this queer cosmic town, with its many-legged citizens, with its monstrous and ancient lamps, how can this world give us at once the fascination of a strange town and the comfort and honour of being our own town?”

- “If a man says that extinction is better than existence or blank existence better than variety and adventure, then he is not one of the ordinary people to whom I am talking. If a man prefers nothing I can give him nothing. But nearly all people I have ever met in this western society in which I live would agree to the general proposition that we need this life of practical romance; the combination of something that is strange with something that is secure. We need so to view the world as to combine an idea of wonder and an idea of welcome. We need to be happy in this wonderland without once being merely comfortable.”

- “When I fancied that I stood alone I was really in the ridiculous position of being backed up by all Christendom. It may be, Heaven forgive me, that I did try to be original; but I only succeeded in inventing all by myself an inferior copy of the existing traditions of civilized religion. The man from the yacht thought he was the first to find England; I thought I was the first to find Europe. I did try to found a heresy of my own; and when I had put the last touches to it, I discovered that it was orthodoxy.” (The Kingdom of God is Within You, Universal experience, inward contemplation, etc.)

- “Thoroughly worldly people never understand even the world; they rely altogether on a few cynical maxims which are not true.”

-“Christianity could not at once be the black mask on a white world, and also the white mask on a black world. The state of the Christian could not be at once so comfortable that he was a coward to cling to it, and so uncomfortable that he was a fool to stand it.”

-“The main point of Christianity was this: that Nature is not our mother: Nature is our sister. We can be proud of her beauty, since we have the same father; but she has no authority over us; we have to admire, but not to imitate. This gives to the typically Christian pleasure in this earth a strange touch of lightness that is almost frivolity.”

- “If it be true (as it certainly is) that a man can feel exquisite happiness in skinning a cat, then the religious philosopher can only draw one of two deductions. He must either deny the existence of God, as all atheists do; or he must deny the present union between God and man, as all Christians do.”

- “...all modern thoughts and theories may be judged by whether they tend to make a man lose his wits.”

- “Imagination does not breed insanity. Exactly what does breed insanity is reason. Poets do not go mad; but chess-players do. Mathematicians go mad, and cashiers; but creative artists very seldom.” (me- Cantor, Godel, Boltzmann, etc.)

- “St. John the Evangelist saw many strange monsters in his vision, he saw no creature so wild as one of his own commentators. The general fact is simple. Poetry is sane because it floats easily in an infinite sea; reason seeks to cross the infinite sea, and so make it finite. The result is mental exhaustion...”

- “Every one who has had the misfortune to talk with people in the heart or on the edge of mental disorder, knows that their most sinister quality is a horrible clarity of detail; a connecting of one thing with another in a map more elaborate than a maze. If you argue with a madman, it is extremely probable that you will get the worst of it; for in many ways his mind moves all the quicker for not being delayed by the things that go with good judgment. He is not hampered by a sense of humour or by charity, or by the dumb certainties of experience. He is the more logical for losing certain sane affections. Indeed, the common phrase for insanity is in this respect a misleading one. The madman is not the man who has lost his reason. The madman is the man who has lost everything except his reason.”

- “The new scientific society definitely discourages men from thinking about death; it is a fact, but it is considered a morbid fact.”

- “Take first the more obvious case of materialism. As an explanation of the world, materialism has a sort of insane simplicity. It has just the quality of the madman's argument; we have at once the sense of it covering everything and the sense of it leaving everything out...His cosmos may be complete in every rivet and cog-wheel, but still his cosmos is smaller than our world. Somehow his scheme, like the lucid scheme of the madman, seems unconscious of the alien energies and the large indifference of the earth; it is not thinking of the real things of the earth, of fighting peoples or proud mothers, or first love or fear upon the sea. The earth is so very large, and the cosmos is so very small. The cosmos is about the smallest hole that a man can hide his head in.”

- “Now it is the charge against the main deductions of the materialist that, right or wrong, they gradually destroy his humanity; I do not mean only kindness, I mean hope, courage, poetry, initiative, all that is human. For instance, when materialism leads men to complete fatalism (as it generally does), it is quite idle to pretend that it is in any sense a liberating force.”

- “But it is a much more massive and important fact that he is not free to praise, to curse, to thank, to justify, to urge, to punish, to resist temptations, to incite mobs, to make New Year resolutions, to pardon sinners, to rebuke tyrants, or even to say "thank you" for the mustard.”

- “...the chief mark and element of insanity; we may say in summary that it is reason used without root, reason in the void.”

- “But the modern critics of religious authority are like men who should attack the police without ever having heard of burglars. For there is a great and possible peril to the human mind: a peril as practical as burglary. Against it religious authority was reared, rightly or wrongly, as a barrier. And against it something certainly must be reared as a barrier, if our race is to avoid ruin.”

- “It is idle to talk always of the alternative of reason and faith. Reason is itself a matter of faith. It is an act of faith to assert that our thoughts have any relation to reality at all. If you are merely a sceptic, you must sooner or later ask yourself the question, "Why should anything go right; even observation and deduction? Why should not good logic be as misleading as bad logic?”

- “Evolution is a good example of that modern intelligence which, if it destroys anything, destroys itself. Evolution is either an innocent scientific description of how certain earthly things came about; or, if it is anything more than this, it is an attack upon thought itself. If evolution destroys anything, it does not destroy religion but rationalism. If evolution simply means that a positive thing called an ape turned very slowly into a positive thing called a man, then it is stingless for the most orthodox; for a personal God might just as well do things slowly as quickly, especially if, like the Christian God, he were outside time. But if it means anything more, it means that there is no such thing as an ape to change, and no such thing as a man for him to change into. It means that there is no such thing as a thing. At best, there is only one thing, and that is a flux of everything and anything. This is an attack not upon the faith, but upon the mind; you cannot think if there are no things to think about.”

- “If the standard changes, how can there be improvement, which implies a standard? Nietzsche started a nonsensical idea that men had once sought as good what we now call evil; if it were so, we could not talk of surpassing or even falling short of them.”

- “I agree with the pragmatists that apparent objective truth is not the whole matter; that there is an authoritative need to believe the things that are necessary to the human mind. But I say that one of those necessities precisely is a belief in objective truth.”

- “As a politician, he will cry out that war is a waste of life, and then, as a philosopher, that all life is waste of time. A Russian pessimist will denounce a policeman for killing a peasant, and then prove by the highest philosophical principles that the peasant ought to have killed himself...The man of this school goes first to a political meeting, where he complains that savages are treated as if they were beasts; then he takes his hat and umbrella and goes on to a scientific meeting, where he proves that they practically are beasts…By rebelling against everything he has lost his right to rebel against anything.”

- “...the philosophies of Schopenhauer and Tolstoy, Nietzsche and Shaw, as clearly as an inevitable railway smash could be seen from a balloon. They are all on the road to the emptiness of the asylum. For madness may be defined as using mental activity so as to reach mental helplessness; and they have nearly reached it.”

- “It has the same strange method of the reverent sceptic. It discredits supernatural stories that have some foundation, simply by telling natural stories that have no foundation.”

- “Joan of Arc was not stuck at the cross-roads, either by rejecting all the paths like Tolstoy, or by accepting them all like Nietzsche. She chose a path, and went down it like a thunderbolt. Yet Joan, when I came to think of her, had in her all that was true either in Tolstoy or Nietzsche, all that was even tolerable in either of them. I thought of all that is noble in Tolstoy, the pleasure in plain things, especially in plain pity, the actualities of the earth, the reverence for the poor, the dignity of the bowed back. Joan of Arc had all that and with this great addition, that she endured poverty as well as admiring it; whereas Tolstoy is only a typical aristocrat trying to find out its secret. And then I thought of all that was brave and proud and pathetic in poor Nietzsche, and his mutiny against the emptiness and timidity of our time. I thought of his cry for the ecstatic equilibrium of danger, his hunger for the rush of great horses, his cry to arms. Well, Joan of Arc had all that, and again with this difference, that she did not praise fighting, but fought. We know that she was not afraid of an army, while Nietzsche, for all we know, was afraid of a cow. Tolstoy only praised the peasant; she was the peasant. Nietzsche only praised the warrior; she was the warrior.”

- “As if there were any inconsistency between having love for humanity and having hatred for inhumanity!”

- “The Laws of Nature...We must answer that it is magic. It is not a "law," for we do not understand its general formula. It is not a necessity, for though we can count on it happening practically, we have no right to say that it must always happen. It is no argument for unalterable law (as Huxley fancied) that we count on the ordinary course of things. We do not count on it; we bet on it...the ordinary scientific man is strictly a sentimentalist. He is a sentimentalist in this essential sense, that he is soaked and swept away by mere associations. He has so often seen birds fly and lay eggs that he feels as if there must be some dreamy, tender connection between the two ideas, whereas there is none.”

- (on scientific men) “This man walks about the streets and can see and appreciate everything; only he cannot remember who he is. Well, every man is that man in the story. Every man has forgotten who he is. One may understand the cosmos, but never the ego; the self is more distant than any star. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God; but thou shalt not know thyself. We are all under the same mental calamity; we have all forgotten our names. We have all forgotten what we really are.”

- “The really curious thing was this: that modern thought contradicted this basic creed of my boyhood on its two most essential doctrines. I have explained that the fairy tales founded in me two convictions; first, that this world is a wild and startling place, which might have been quite different, but which is quite delightful; second, that before this wildness and delight one may well be modest and submit to the queerest limitations of so queer a kindness.”

- “Can he hate it enough to change it, and yet love it enough to think it worth changing? Can he look up at its colossal good without once feeling acquiescence? Can he look up at its colossal evil without once feeling despair? Can he, in short, be at once not only a pessimist and an optimist, but a fanatical pessimist and a fanatical optimist? Is he enough of a pagan to die for the world, and enough of a Christian to die to it? In this combination, I maintain, it is the rational optimist who fails, the irrational optimist who succeeds. He is ready to smash the whole universe for the sake of itself.”

- “An imbecile habit has arisen in modern controversy of saying that such and such a creed can be held in one age but cannot be held in another. Some dogma, we are told, was credible in the twelfth century, but is not credible in the twentieth. You might as well say that a certain philosophy can be believed on Mondays, but cannot be believed on Tuesdays.” (me- Ha!)

- “I had often called myself an optimist, to avoid the too evident blasphemy of pessimism. But all the optimism of the age had been false and disheartening for this reason, that it had always been trying to prove that we fit in to the world. The Christian optimism is based on the fact that we do not fit in to the world. I had tried to be happy by telling myself that man is an animal, like any other which sought its meat from God. But now I really was happy, for I had learnt that man is a monstrosity. I had been right in feeling all things as odd, for I myself was at once worse and better than all things. The optimist's pleasure was prosaic, for it dwelt on the naturalness of everything; the Christian pleasure was poetic, for it dwelt on the unnaturalness of everything in the light of the supernatural.”

- “They did prove to me in Chapter I. (to my complete satisfaction) that Christianity was too pessimistic; and then, in Chapter II., they began to prove to me that it was a great deal too optimistic.”

- “He can only get away from death by continually stepping within an inch of it...He must not merely cling to life, for then he will be a coward, and will not escape. He must not merely wait for death, for then he will be a suicide, and will not escape. He must seek his life in a spirit of furious indifference to it; he must desire life like water and yet drink death like wine.”

- “Here again, in short, Christianity got over the difficulty of combining furious opposites, by keeping them both, and keeping them both furious. The Church was positive on both points. One can hardly think too little of one's self. One can hardly think too much of one's soul.”

- “St. Francis, in praising all good, could be a more shouting optimist than Walt Whitman. St. Jerome, in denouncing all evil, could paint the world blacker than Schopenhauer. Both passions were free because both were kept in their place. The optimist could pour out all the praise he liked on the gay music of the march, the golden trumpets, and the purple banners going into battle. But he must not call the fight needless. The pessimist might draw as darkly as he chose the sickening marches or the sanguine wounds. But he must not call the fight hopeless.”

- “The whole case for Christianity is that a man who is dependent upon the luxuries of this life is a corrupt man, spiritually corrupt, politically corrupt, financially corrupt.”

## 5. St. 6.John of the Cross

- “The doctrine of Christ which He came into the world to teach, is contempt of all things, that we may thereby have power to receive the reward of the Spirit of God. The earth ‘void and nothing,’ signifies that the earth and all it contains are nothing, and the heavens without light, that all the lights of heaven, in comparison with God, are perfect darkness.”

- “The whole creation (all wisdom, sweetness, goodness, liberty, riches, etc.), compared with the infinite Being of God, is nothing; and so the soul whose affections are set on created things is nothing, and even less than nothing before God, because love begets equality and likeness, and even inferiority to the object beloved. For he who does not withdraw himself from the things of the world, is not qualified to receive the Spirit of God in the pure transformation. There is nothing in the whole world to be compared with God; and, therefore, he who loves anything together with Him, wrongs Him. And if this be true, what does he do who loves anything more than God?”

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

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

- “The earth ‘void and nothing,’ signifies that the earth and all it contains are nothing, and the heavens without light, that all the lights of heaven, in comparison with God, are perfect darkness. Thus all created things, with the affections bestowed upon them, are nothing, because they are a hindrance, and the privation of our transformation in God, just as darkness is nothing, and less than nothing, being the absence of light. And as he who is in darkness comprehends not the light, so the soul whose affections are given to the creature shall never comprehend God. Until our soul is purged of these affections we shall not possess God in this life in the pure transformation of love, nor in the life to come in the beatific vision.”

- “The whole creation, compared with the infinite Being of God, is nothing; and so the soul whose affections are set on created things is nothing, and even less than nothing before God, because love begets equality and likeness, and even inferiority to the object beloved.”

- “All the grace and comeliness of creation, compared with the Grace of God, is supreme disgrace and supreme disfavour, and that soul, therefore, which is captivated by the grace and comeliness of created things is in the eyes of God in disfavour and disgrace, incapable of the infinite grace and beauty, for that which is ill-favoured is far removed from that which is infinitely gracious.”

- “All the goodness of the whole world together, in comparison with the infinite Goodness of God, is wickedness rather than goodness, for ‘ None is good but God alone,’ and that soul is, therefore, wicked before God, whose affections are set on the things of this world.”

- “All the sweetness and all the pleasures which all the things of this world furnish to the will are, in comparison with the sweetness and pleasure which is God, supreme pain, torment, and bitterness.”

- “All the riches and glory of the whole creation compared with the true riches, which is God, is supreme poverty and meanness, and he who sets his heart upon them is, in God’s sight, supremely poor and mean, and can never attain to the blessed estate of riches and glory, which is the transformation of the soul in God; for that which is mean and poor is infinitely distant from that which is supremely rich and glorious.”

- “the Divine Wisdom bewails men; namely, because they make themselves loathsome, mean, wretched and poor, through their love for that which is beautiful, rich, and noble in the eyes of the world.”

- “Here God addresses Himself to those who set their affections on the things of this world; He calls them little ones, because they make themselves little, like the object of their love. He bids them ‘understand subtlety,’ and ‘ take notice,’ because He is speaking of great things, and not of little things, such as they are.”

- “For though the things of this world may seem to men to be something, yet let them take notice, the things of God are more.”

- “This is applicable to every kind of affection to which we are liable in this life.”

- “It is, therefore, supreme ignorance for anyone to think that he can ever attain to the high estate of union with God before he casts away from him the desire of natural things, and of supernatural also, so far as it concerns self-love, because the distance between them and the state of perfection is the very greatest.”

- “The doctrine of Christ which He came into the world to teach, is contempt of all things, that we may thereby have power to receive the reward of the Spirit of God. For he who does not withdraw himself from the things of the world, is not qualified to receive the Spirit of God in the pure transformation.”

- “...while they seek spiritual food, are not content with God only, but intermingle therewith carnal and earthly satisfactions.” (I do this, divided-self)

- “Oh, would that spiritual persons knew how they are losing the good things of the Spirit, abundantly furnished, because they will not raise up their desires above trifles, and how they might have the sweetness of all things in the pure food of the Spirit if they would only forego them. But as they will not, so they shall not have such sweetness.”

- “This journey or ascent must therefore be a perpetual struggle with our desires to make them cease, and the more earnest we are the sooner shall we reach the summit. But until the desires cease we can never reach it, notwithstanding our many virtues, for virtue is not perfectly acquired before our souls are empty, detached, and purified from all desire.”

- “He, therefore, who will ascend to the mount of perfection, to build an altar there, whereon to offer unto God the sacrifice of pure love, praise, and adoration, must first of all perfectly fulfill” the three commandments of Jacob. He must cast away the strange gods, the earthly affections and attachments. He must purify himself from the impressions which the desires have made on the soul, in the obscure night of sense, denying them and doing penance for their past indulgence, and, in the third place, he must change his garments.”

- “This God himself will do during the observance of the first two commandments; He will change them from old into new, by infusing into the soul a new understanding of God in God, the human understanding being set aside, and a new love of God in God, the will being detached from its old desires and human satisfactions, by bringing the soul into a state of new knowledge and of deep delight, all other knowledge and old imaginings being castaway; and, finally, by causing that which is of the old man to cease, which is our natural aptitudes, and investing us with a new supernatural aptitude corresponding with the powers of the soul, so that all that is human in the action of the soul may become divine. This is the object gained in the estate of union, in which the soul is nothing else but an altar of God whereon the sacrifice of praise and love is offered, and where He alone dwells.”

- “It is the will of God that the soul should be empty of all created things, so that it may become a fitting altar of His Majesty.”

- “It is evident that the faith is a dark night to the soul, and it is thus that it gives it light; the more it darkens the soul the more does it enlighten it. It is by darkening that it gives light, according to the words of the prophet, ‘If you will not believe,’ that is, ‘ if you do not make yourselves blind you shall not understand’— that is, you shall have no light, the high and supernatural knowledge. The faith was foreshadowed by the cloud which divided Egyptians from the children of Israel at the entrance of the Red Sea. ‘ It was a dark cloud enlightening the night.’ How wonderful a cloud! — its darkness illumines the night.”

- “For man who is in darkness cannot be rightly enlightened except by darkness...”

- “The teaching set before us here then is, that the faith, which is obscure night, illumines the soul which is in darkness, according to the words of the Psalmist, ‘ Night shall be my light in my pleasures,’ that is, in the pleasures of pure contemplation and of union with God. The night of faith shall guide me. The soul, therefore, must be in darkness that it may have light, and be able to journey on the spiritual road.”

- “The Abyss of Faith”

- “I say, then, that the soul, to be rightly guided by faith to this estate, must be in darkness, not only as to that part thereof— the sensual and the inferior, of which I have already spoken— which regards temporal and created things, but also as to that part thereof, the rational and the superior, of which I am now speaking, which regards God and spiritual things.”

- “Greatly embarrassed, then, is the soul, on the road of the Divine union, when it leans at all on its own understanding, sense, imagination, judgment, will, or any other habits of its own, or anything peculiar to itself, not knowing how to release and detach itself therefrom.”

- “I mean ways of understanding, perceiving, or feeling, though it has all ways at the same time, as one who, possessing nothing, yet possesseth everything.”

- “This relates to the spiritual road: he who is in darkness, blind as to his own proper and natural light, shall see supernaturally, and he who shall rely on any light of his own, the greater will be his blindness, and the more he shall be hindered on the way to the divine union.”

- “And because no creature can, by any actions or capabilities of its own, attain to that which is God, the soul must be therefore detached from all created things, from all actions and capabilities of its own, that is from its own understanding, taste, and feeling, so that passing by everything which is unlike to, and not in conformity with God, it may attain to the receiving of His likeness, and resting upon nothing which is not His will, it may be so transformed in Him.”

- “...the more the soul cleaves to created things, relying on its own strength, by habit and inclination, the less it is disposed for this union, because it does not completely resign itself into the hands of God, that He may transform it supernaturally.”

- “...the fitting disposition for this union is, not that the soul should understand, taste, feel, or imagine anything on the subject of the nature of God, or any other thing whatever, but only that pureness and love which is perfect resignation, and complete detachment from all things for God alone.”

- “For though it be true that every soul, according to its measure, great or little, may attain to this union, yet all do not in an equal degree, but only as our Lord shall give unto each; as it is with the blessed in heaven, there some see God more perfectly than others, and yet all see Him and all are satisfied and happy, for each one is filled with the vision according to his merits, greater or less. Hence it comes to pass, that though souls in this life enjoy equal peace and tranquillity in their state of perfection, everyone being satisfied, nevertheless some of them may be more advanced than the rest, in a higher degree of union, and yet all equally satisfied according to their several dispositions, and the knowledge they have of God. But that soul which does not attain to that degree of purity corresponding with the light and vocation it has received from God, will never obtain true peace and contentment, because it has not attained to that detachment, and emptiness of its powers, which are requisite for this pure union.”

- “And though the intellect derives certainty from Faith, yet it does not derive clearness but rather obscurity. As to Hope, there is no doubt that it renders the memory empty, and brings darkness over it as to all surrounding objects, for hope is ever conversant with that which is not in possession, for if it were already possessed there would be no place for hope...”

- “Charity, too, in the same way empties the will of all things, for it compels us to love God above all, which we cannot do without withdrawing our affections from every object, to fix them wholly upon God. Christ our Lord hath said, ‘Every one of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth cannot be My disciple.’ Thus these virtues bring darkness over the soul, and empty it of all created things.”

- “Our Lord saith, ‘How narrow is the gate and strait is the way that leadeth to life; and few there are that find it.’ By this He teaches us that the soul that will enter in by the gate of Christ, which is the beginning of the road, must first of all constrain itself, and detach the will from the things of time and sense, loving God above them all. This refers to the night of the senses.

“He says also, ‘ Few there are that find it.’ Mark here the reason of this, which is that there are but few who understand how, and desire, to enter into this supreme detachment and emptiness of spirit.”

- Some consider any kind of retirement from the world, and any correction of excesses to be sufficient; others are content with a certain degree of virtue, persevere in prayer and practise mortification, but, they do not rise to this detachment, and poverty, or self-denial, or spiritual pureness— all these are one— which our Saviour here recommends, because they nourish and clothe their natural self with consolations, instead of detaching themselves therefrom, and denying themselves in all things for God. They think it enough to deny themselves in the things of this world, without annihilating themselves, and purging away all self-seeking in spiritual things. Hence it comes to pass, that when any of this solid devotion presents itself to them, which consists in the annihilation of all sweetness in God, in dryness, in distaste, in trouble, which is the real spiritual cross, and the nakedness of the spiritual poverty of Christ, they run away from it as from death itself. They seek only for delights, for sweet communications, and what, satisfactions in God, but this is not self-denial, nor detachment of spirit, but rather spiritual gluttony. They render themselves spiritually enemies of the cross of Christ, for true spirituality seeks for bitterness rather than sweetness in God, inclines to suffering more than to consolation, and to be in want of everything for God rather than to possess; to dryness and afflictions rather than to sweet communications, knowing well that this is to follow Christ and deny self, while the other course is perhaps nothing but to seek oneself in God, which is the very opposite of love. For to seek Self in God is to seek for comfort and refreshment from God. But to seek God in Himself is not only to be willingly deprived of this thing and of that for God, but to incline ourselves to will and choose for Christ’s sake whatever is most disagreeable, whether proceeding from God or from the world; this is to love God.”

- “This burden is the cross. For if we are determined to submit ourselves, and to carry the cross— this is nothing else but an earnest resolution to seek and endure it in everything for God— we shall find great refreshment and sweetness therein to enable us to travel along this road, thus detached from all things, desiring nothing. But if we cling to anything whatever, whether it come from God or from the world, we are not journeying in detachment and self-denial, and so we shall miss our way, and never be able to ascend the narrow path.”

- “...giving themselves up to suffer for Christ's sake, and annihilating themselves utterly. He who shall exercise himself herein, will then find all this and much more. And if he be deficient at all in this exercise, which is the sum and root of all virtue, all he may do will be but beating the air— utterly profitless, notwithstanding great meditations and communications. There is no progress but in the imitation of Christ...”

- “And when he shall have been brought to nothing, when his humility is perfect, then will take place the union of the soul and God, which is the highest and noblest estate attainable in this life.”

- “...the Psalmist saith of him, 'I am brought to nothing, and I knew not.'”

- “...I see that Jesus Christ is but little known by those who consider themselves His friends. These, loving themselves very much, seek in Him their own comfort and satisfaction, and not His sufferings and death for love of Him. I am now speaking of those who think themselves His friends, not of those who live at a great distance from Him ; men of learning and of dignity, and others who . live in the world, slaves of ambition and of honours— of these, we may say, they know not Christ...”

- “All that the intellect may comprehend; all that the will may be satisfied with; and all that the imagination may conceive, is most unlike unto God, and most disproportionate to Him.”

- “the intellect cannot be immediately directed in the way of God by any knowledge such as this, and that, if it is to draw near unto God, it must do so by not understanding rather than by seeking to understand; yea, rather it must be by making itself blind, covering itself with darkness, and not by opening its eyes, that it can attain to the Divine enlightening. Hence it is that Contemplation, by which God enlightens the intellect, is called Mystical Theology, that is, the secret Wisdom of God, because it is a secret even to the intellect which receives it. S. Dionysius calls it a ray of darkness.”

- “Aristotle says, that as the eyes of the bat are with regard to the sun, which wholly blinds them, so is our intellect with regard to the greater Light of God which is to us perfect darkness.”

- “there is nothing which can serve as a ladder whereby it may ascend unto God, who is so high. Yea, rather we must acknowledge that all and each of these things, if the intellect will use them as proximate means of union, will prove not only a hindrance, but the source of many errors and delusions, in the ascent of this mountain.”

- “And thus by this means alone, that is faith, God manifests Himself to the soul in the Divine light, which surpasses all understanding, and therefore the greater the faith of the soul the more is that soul united to God. This is the meaning of S. Paul when he said, ‘He that cometh to God must believe that He is.’ Such an one must walk by faith, with his understanding in darkness, and in the obscurity of faith only; for in this darkness God unites Himself to the intellect, being Himself hidden beneath it...”

- “the outward bodily senses of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching. With respect to these, spiritual men are occasionally liable to representations and objects, set before them in a supernatural way. They sometimes see the forms and figures of those of another life, Saints, or Angels good and evil, or certain extraordinary lights and brightness. They hear strange words, sometimes seeing those who utter them, and sometimes not. They have a sensible perception at times of most sweet odours, without knowing whence they proceed...Still, though the bodily senses may be thus affected in the way of God, we must never rely on these emotions, nor encourage them; yea, rather we must fly from them, without examining whether they be good or evil. For, inasmuch as they are exterior and in the body, there is the less certainty of their being from God. It is more natural that God should communicate Himself through the spirit...The bodily sense is as ignorant of spiritual things, as a beast of the field is of the things of reason.”

- “For, although these things communicate some spirituality, as is always the case when they proceed from God, yet it is much less than it would have been, had they been more spiritual and interior; and thus they become more easily and readily occasions of error, presumption, and vanity. As they are so palpable and so material they excite the senses greatly, and the soul is led to consider them the more important, the more they are felt. It runs after them and abandons the secure guidance of Faith, thinking that the light they give is a guide and means to that which it desires, union with God. Thus the soul, the more it makes of such things, the more it strays from the perfect way and means, that is, Faith.”

- “The spiritual man must therefore reject all these apprehensions, together with the corporeal satisfactions to which the exterior senses are liable...”

- “How sad it is to see men who, when the soul would be at peace in the repose of interior quiet, where God fills it with refreshment and peace, disturb it, draw it away to outward things, compel it to travel again along the road it had passed, and to abandon the goal...”

- “To these my counsel is— learn to abide with attention in loving waiting upon God in the state of quiet; give no heed to your imagination, nor to its operations, for now, as I have said, the powers of the soul are at rest, and are not exercised, except in the sweet and pure waiting of love.”

- “The soul, therefore, that will ascend to this perfect union with God, must be careful not to lean upon imaginary visions, forms, figures, and particular intelligible objects, for these things can never serve as proportionate or proximate means towards so great an end: yea, rather they are an obstacle in the way, and therefore to be guarded against and rejected.”

### The Dark Night of the Soul

- “There are other of these spiritual persons, again, who fall into another kind of spiritual wrath: this happens when they become irritated at the sins of others, and keep watch on those others with a sort of uneasy zeal. At times the impulse comes to them to reprove them angrily, and occasionally they go so far as to indulge it and set themselves up as masters of virtue. All this is contrary to spiritual meekness.” (me- Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Tolstoy, Seraphim, etc.)

- “they have lost their love of the things of the world and have gained some degree of spiritual strength in God; this has enabled them to some extent to refrain from creature desires, so that for God’s sake they are now able to suffer a light burden and a little aridity without turning back to a time which they found more pleasant.”

- “when they believe that the sun of Divine favour is shining most brightly upon them, God turns all this light of theirs into darkness, and shuts against them the door...And thus He leaves them so completely in the dark that they know not whither to go with their sensible imagination and meditation; for they cannot advance a step in meditation, as they were wont to do afore time, their inward senses being submerged in this night, and left with such dryness that not only do they experience no pleasure and consolation in the spiritual things and good exercises wherein they were wont to find their delights and pleasures, but instead, on the contrary, they find insipidity and bitterness in the said things. For, as I have said, God now sees that they have grown a little, and are becoming strong enough to lay aside their swaddling clothes and be taken from the gentle breast; so He sets them down from His arms and teaches them to walk on their own feet; which they feel to be very strange, for everything seems to be going wrong with them.”

- “The first is whether, when a soul finds no pleasure or consolation in the things of God, it also fails to find it in any thing created; for, as God sets the soul in this dark night to the end that He may quench and purge its sensual desire, He allows it not to find attraction or sweetness in anything whatsoever.”

- “The second sign whereby a man may believe himself to be experiencing the said purgation is that the memory is ordinarily centred upon God, with painful care and solicitude, thinking that it is not serving God, but is backsliding, because it finds itself without sweetness in the things of God.”

- “From all these it is freed when this night quenches within it all pleasures, whether from above or from below, and makes all meditation darkness to it, and grants it other innumerable blessings in the acquirement of the virtues, as we shall now show. For it will be a matter of great pleasure and great consolation, to one that journeys on this road, to see how that which seems to the soul so severe and adverse, and so contrary to spiritual pleasure, works in it so many blessings. These, as we say, are gained when the soul goes forth, as regards its affection and operation, by means of this night, from all created things, and when it journeys to eternal things, which is great happiness and good fortune: first, because of the great blessing which is in the quenching of the desire and affection with respect to all things; secondly, because they are very few that endure and persevere in entering by this strait gate and by the narrow way which leads to life, as says Our Saviour.”

- “The strait gate is this night of sense, and the soul detaches itself from sense and strips itself thereof that it may enter by this gate, and establishes itself in faith, which is a stranger to all sense, so that afterwards it may journey by the narrow way, which is the other night— that of the spirit— and this the soul afterwards enters in order in journey to God in pure faith, which is the means whereby the soul is united to God. By this road, since it is so narrow, dark and terrible (though there is no comparison between this night of sense and that other, in its darkness and trials, as we shall say later), they are far fewer that journey, but its benefits are far greater without comparison than those of this present night.”

- “This is the first and principal benefit caused by this arid and dark night of contemplation: the knowledge of oneself and of one’s misery.”

- “Wherefore the soul knows the truth that it knew not at first, concerning its own misery; for, at the time when it was clad as for a festival and found in God much pleasure, consolation and support, it was somewhat more satisfied and contented, since it thought itself to some extent to be serving God. It is true that such souls may not have this idea explicitly in their minds; but some suggestion of it at least is implanted in them by the satisfaction which they find in their pleasant experiences. But, now that the soul has put on its other and working attire— that of aridity and abandonment— and now that its first lights have turned into darkness, it possesses these lights more truly in this virtue of self-knowledge, which is so excellent and so necessary, considering itself now as nothing and experiencing no satisfaction in itself; for it sees that it does nothing of itself neither can do anything.”

- “It is that, in this dark night of the desire (to the end that the words of the Prophet may be fulfilled, namely: ‘Thy light shall shine in the darkness’), God will enlighten the soul, giving it knowledge, not only of its lowliness and wretchedness, as we have said, but likewise of the greatness and excellence of God. For, as well as quenching the desires and pleasures and attachments of sense, He cleanses and frees the understanding that it may understand the truth; for pleasure of sense and desire, even though it be for spiritual things, darkens and obstructs the spirit, and furthermore that straitness and aridity of sense enlightens and quickens the understanding, as says Isaias. Vexation makes us to understand how the soul that is empty and disencumbered, as is necessary for His Divine influence, is instructed supernaturally by God in His Divine wisdom, through this dark and arid night of contemplation, as we have said; and this instruction God gave not in those first sweetnesses and joys.”

- “It is a wondrous thing that David should say here that the means and the preparation for his knowledge of the glory of God were not the spiritual delights and the many pleasures which he had experienced, but the aridities and detachments of his sensual nature, which is here to be understood by the dry and desert land.”

- “So that the means to a knowledge of God and of oneself is this dark night with its aridities and voids, although it leads not to a knowledge of Him of the same plenitude and abundance that comes from the other night of the spirit, since this is only, as it were, the beginning of that other.”

- “It follows clearly, then, that, by walking in darkness, not only is the soul not lost, but it has even greatly gained, since it is here gaining the virtues.” (me- non-movement, quietism, earthly renunciation, awareness of the Other, Plato's Forms/Cave, etc. The 'Darkness' being the Nihilism of this world, Tillich saying that doubt shows true faith)

- “For in such a way does this dark night of contemplation absorb and immerse the soul in itself, and so near does it bring the soul to God, that it protects and delivers it from all that is not God. For this soul is now, as it were, undergoing a cure, in order that it may regain its health— its health being God Himself. His Majesty restricts it to a diet and abstinence from all things, and takes away its appetite for them all. It is like a sick man, who, if he is respected by those in his house, is carefully tended so that he may be cured; the air is not allowed to touch him, nor may he even enjoy the light, nor must he hear footsteps, nor yet the noise of those in the house; and he is given food that is very delicate, and even that only in great moderation— food that is nourishing rather than delectable.”

- “All these particularities (which are for the security and safekeeping of the soul) are caused by this dark contemplation, because it brings the soul nearer to God. For the nearer the soul approaches Him, the blacker is the darkness which it feels and the deeper is the obscurity which comes through its weakness; just as, the nearer a man approaches the sun, the greater are the darkness and the affliction caused him through the great splendour of the sun and through the weakness and impurity of his eyes. In the same way, so immense is the spiritual light of God, and so greatly does it transcend our natural understanding, that the nearer we approach it, the more it blinds and darkens us.”

- “For indeed, when this purgative contemplation is most severe, the soul feels very keenly the shadow of death and the lamentations of death and the pains of hell, which consist in its feeling itself to be without God, and chastised and cast out, and unworthy of Him; and it feels that He is wroth with it. All this is felt by the soul in this condition— yea, and more, for it believes that it is so with it for ever.”

- “The fourth kind of pain is caused in the soul by another excellence of this dark contemplation, which is its majesty and greatness, from which arises in the soul a consciousness of the other extreme which is in itself— namely, that of the deepest poverty and wretchedness: this is one of the chiefest pains that it suffers in this purgation. For it feels within itself a profound emptiness and impoverishment of three kinds of good, which are ordained for the pleasure of the soul which are the temporal, the natural and the spiritual; and finds itself set in the midst of the evils contrary to these, namely, miseries of imperfection, aridity and emptiness of the apprehensions of the faculties and abandonment of the spirit in darkness.”

- “All this God brings to pass by means of this dark contemplation; wherein the soul not only suffers

this emptiness and the suspension of these natural supports and perceptions, which is a most afflictive suffering (as if a man were suspended or held in the air so that he could not breathe), but likewise He is purging the soul, annihilating it, emptying it or consuming in it (even as fire consumes the mouldiness and the rust of metal) all the affections and imperfect habits which it has contracted in its whole life.”

- “Herein is described the grave suffering which the soul here endures in the purgation of the fire of this contemplation, for the Prophet says here that, in order for the rust of the affections which are within the soul to be purified and destroyed, it is needful that, in a certain manner, the soul itself should be annihilated and destroyed, since these passions and imperfections have become natural to it.”

- “...immersed in the realization of those evils wherein it sees its own miseries so clearly, that it thinks that, as its director observes not that which it sees and feels, he is speaking in this manner because he understands it not; and so, instead of comfort, it rather receives fresh affliction, since it believes that its director’s advice contains no remedy for its troubles. And, in truth, this is so; for, until the Lord shall have completely purged it after the manner that He wills, no means or remedy is of any service or profit for the relief of its affliction; the more so because the soul is as powerless in this case as one who has been imprisoned in a dark dungeon, and is bound hand and foot, and can neither move nor see, nor feel any favour whether from above or from below, until the spirit is humbled, softened and purified, and grows so keen and delicate and pure that it can become one with the Spirit of God, according to the degree of union of love which His mercy is pleased to grant it; in proportion to this the purgation is of greater or less severity and of greater or less duration.” (me- “No one can help me. I am scared that I know that they can't do anything for me. Even more terrifying: they may not even understand me. They are most likely not aware that they cannot help me.”) Chapter 7 second book

- “...it will last for some years, however severe it be; since the purgative process allows intervals of relief wherein, by the dispensation of God, this dark contemplation ceases to assail the soul in the form and manner of purgation, and assails it after an illuminative and a loving manner, wherein the soul, like one that has gone forth from this dungeon and imprisonment, and is brought into the recreation of spaciousness and liberty, feels and experiences great sweetness of peace and loving friendship with God, together with a ready abundance of spiritual communication.”

- “BUT there is another thing here that afflicts and distresses the soul greatly, which is that, as this dark night has hindered its faculties and affections in this way, it is unable to raise its affection or its mind to God, neither can it pray to Him, thinking, as Jeremias thought concerning himself, that God has set a cloud before it through which its prayer cannot pass.”

- “much less can it attend to other things and affairs which are temporal. Not only so, but it has likewise such distractions and times of such profound forgetfulness of the memory that frequent periods pass by without its knowing what it has been doing or thinking, or what it is that it is doing or is going to do, neither can it pay attention, although it desire to do so, to anything that occupies it.” (me- I always feel that my mind is empty. I feel that I do not know anything.”

- “All this, says Divine Scripture, took place by night, when Jacob slept, in order to express how secret is this road and ascent to God, and how different from that of man’s knowledge. This is very evident, since ordinarily that which is of the greatest profit in it— namely, to be ever losing oneself and becoming as nothing— is considered the worst thing possible; and that which is of least worth, which is for a soul to find consolation and sweetness (wherein it ordinarily loses rather than gains), is considered best.”

- “On this step the lover must see that which he loves, or die...”

- “As God is not comprehended under any form, or likeness, or particular conception, so the soul also, if it is to be united to Him, must not be under the power of any particular form or conception.” (symbolism, Tillich, Vivekananda)

6. Fr. Seraphim Rose

- “Everything in this life passes away — only God remains, only He is worth struggling towards. We have a choice: to follow the way of this world, of the society that surrounds us, and thereby find ourselves outside of God; or to choose the way of life, to choose God Who calls us and for Whom our heart is searching.”

- “And indeed the Christian is, in a certain sense--in an ultimate sense--a "Nihilist"; for to him, in the end, the world is nothing, and God is all. This is, of course, the precise opposite of the Nihilism we have examined here, where God is nothing and the world is all; that is a Nihilism that proceeds from the Abyss, and the Christian's is a "Nihilism" that proceeds from abundance. The true Nihilist places his faith in things that pass away and end in nothing; all "optimism" on this foundation is clearly futile. The Christian, renouncing such vanity places his faith in the one thing that will not pass away, the Kingdom of God.”

- “To him who lives in Christ, of course, many of the goods of this world may be given back, and he may enjoy them even while realizing their evanescence; but they are not needful, they are truly nothing to him. He who does not live in Christ, on the other hand, already lives in the Abyss, and not all the treasures of this world can ever fill his emptiness.”

- “Why do men learn through pain and suffering, and not through pleasure and happiness? Very simply, because pleasure and happiness accustom one to satisfaction with the things given in this world, whereas pain and suffering drive one to seek a more profound happiness beyond the limitations of this world.”

- “...if God is dead, if there is no immortality- then this world is all there is, and this world is absurd, this world is Hell.”

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

-“It is perhaps Nietzsche, that uncanny 'prophet' who knew everything about Nihilism except its ultimate meaning...”

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

- “The whole world, it almost seems, is divided into those who lead meaningless, futile lives without being aware of it, and those who, being aware of it, are driven to madness and suicide.”

- “The Nihilist, to be sure, is in some sense "sick," and his sickness is a testimony to the sickness of an age whose best--as well as worst--elements turn to Nihilism; but sickness is not cured, nor even properly diagnosed by "sympathy."

- “...all truth is empirical, all truth is relative. Either statement, of course, is a self-contradiction. The first statement is itself not empirical at all, but metaphysical; the second is itself an absolute statement.”

- “...the universality of faith, seeing it as underlying all human activity and knowledge; and we have seen that faith, if it is not to fall prey to subjective delusions, must be rooted in truth. It is therefore a legitimate, and indeed unavoidable question whether the first principles of the scientific faith--for example, the coherence and uniformity of nature, the transsubjectivity of human knowledge, the adequacy of reason to draw conclusions from observation--are founded in absolute truth; if they are not, they can be no more than unverifiable probabilities. The "pragmatic" position taken by many scientists and humanists who cannot be troubled to think about ultimate things--the position that these principles are no more than experimental hypotheses which collective experience finds reliable--is surely unsatisfactory; it may offer a psychological explanation of the faith these principles inspire, but since it does not establish the foundation of that faith in truth, it leaves the whole scientific edifice on shifting sands and provides no sure defense against the irrational winds that periodically attack it.”

- “This ultimate truth, whether it be conceived as the Christian God or simply as the ultimate coherence of things, is a metaphysical first principle, an absolute truth. But with the acknowledgment, logically unavoidable, of such a principle, the theory of the "relativity of truth" collapses, it itself being revealed as a self-contradictory absolute.”

- “No one today who prides himself on his "sophistication"--that is to say, very few in academic institutions, in government, in science, in humanist intellectual circles, no one who wishes or professes to be abreast of the "times"--does or can fully believe in absolute truth, or more particularly in Christian Truth. Yet the name of truth has been retained, as have been the names of those truths men once regarded as absolute, and few in any position of authority or influence would hesitate to use them, even when they are aware that their meanings have changed. Truth, in a word, has been "reinterpreted"; the old forms have been emptied and given a new, quasi-Nihilist content.”

- “The atheist arguments against such a god are as irrefutable as they are irrelevant; for such a god is, in fact, the same as no god at all. Uninterested in man, powerless to act in the world (except to inspire a worldly "optimism"), he is a god considerably weaker than the men who invented him. On such a foundation, needless to say, nothing secure can be built; and it is with good reason that Liberals, while usually professing belief in this deity, actually build their world-view upon the more obvious, though hardly more stable, foundation of Man. Nihilist atheism is the explicit formulation of what was already, not merely implicit, but actually present in a confused form, in Liberalism.”

- “In the Christian order all activity in this life is viewed and judged in the light of the life of the future world, the life beyond death which will have no end.”

- “Such a "heaven" is the fruit of a union of Christian terminology with ordinary worldliness, and it is convincing to no one who realizes that compromise in such ultimate matters is impossible; neither the true Orthodox Christian nor the consistent Nihilist is seduced by it.” (Tillich, Vivekananda)

- “If there is no immortality, the Liberal believes, one can still lead a civilized life; "if there is no immortality"-is the far profounder logic of Ivan Karamazov in Dostoyevsky's novel-"all things are lawful." Humanist stoicism is possible for certain individuals for a certain time: until, that is, the full implications of the denial of immortality strike home. The Liberal lives in a fool's paradise which must collapse before the truth of things. If death is, as the Liberal and Nihilist both believe, the extinction of the individual, then this world and everything in it-love, goodness, sanctity, everything-are as nothing, nothing man may do is of any ultimate consequence and the full horror of life is hidden from man only by the strength of their will to deceive themselves; and "all things are lawful," no otherworldly hope or fear restrains men from monstrous experiments and suicidal dreams. Nietzsche's words are the truth-and prophecy-of the new world that results from this view.”

- “Nihilist rule--whose most fitting name, as we shall see, is Anarchy---is government established by men, and directed solely to this world, government which has no higher aim than earthly happiness.” (me- contrast this with Tolstoy's views on “anarchy” sometime)

- “The Revolution, like the disbelief which has always accompanied it, cannot be stopped halfway; it is a force that, once awakened, will not rest until it ends in a totalitarian Kingdom of this world.”

- “If he is not concerned to found the political and social order upon Divine Truth, if he is indifferent to the reality of Heaven and Hell, if he conceives of God as a mere idea of a vague impersonal power, it is because he is more immediately interested in worldly ends, and because everything else is vague or abstract to him.”

- “The Liberal may be interested in culture, in learning, in business, or merely in comfort; but in every one of his pursuits the dimension of the absolute is simply absent. He is unable, or unwilling, to think in terms of ends, of ultimate things. The thirst for absolute truth has vanished; it has been swallowed up in worldliness.”

- “No one has rightly sought the truth who has not encountered at the end of this search-whether to accept or reject Him-our Lord, Jesus Christ, "the Way, the Truth, and the Life," Truth that stands against the world and is a reproach to all worldliness. The Liberal, who thinks his universe secure against this Truth, is the "rich man" of the parable, overburdened by his worldly interests and ideas, unwilling to give them up for the humility, poverty, and lowliness that are the marks of the genuine seeker after truth.” (Socrates)

- “It is corrupting, finally, simply to live and work in an atmosphere totally permeated by a false conception of truth, wherein Christian Truth is seen as irrelevant to the central academic concerns, wherein even those who still believe this Truth can only sporadically make their voices heard above the skepticism promoted by the academic system. The evil, of course, lies primarily in the system itself, which is founded upon untruth, and only incidentally in the many professors whom this system permits and encourages to preach it.”

- “This "Nihilist" (me- in quotes, ha! Agreed, this is not a True Nihilist, my ideas contrast with this “normal” definition of Nihilism) is the man who respects nothing, bows before no authority, accepts (so he thinks) nothing on faith, judges all in the light of a science taken as absolute and exclusive truth, rejects all idealism and abstraction in favor of the concrete and factual. He is the believer, in a word, in the "nothing-but, in the reduction of everything men have considered "higher," the things of the mind and spirit, to the lower or "basic": matter, sensation, the physical.”

- “As opposed to Liberal vagueness, the Realist world-view seems perfectly clear and straightforward. In place of agnosticism or an evasive deism, there is open atheism; in place of vague "higher values," naked materialism and self-interest.”

- “scientism" as opposed to legitimate science; for it must be understood that our remarks here are not directed against science itself, but against the improper exploitation of its standards and methods that is so common today.” (Vivekananda, Tolstoy, Underhill)

- “Is it correct to call such a philosophy Nihilism? More precisely, is it Nihilism in the sense in which we have defined that term? If truth is, in the highest sense, knowledge of the beginning and end of things, of the dimension of the absolute; and if Nihilism is the doctrine that there is no such truth; then it is clear that those who take scientific knowledge for the only truth, and deny what ties above it, are Nihilists in the exact sense of that term.”

- “All the pretended "humility" of Realist scholars and scientists, these men of little faith, cannot conceal the pride of their collective usurpation of the throne of God; they, in their smallness, think their painstaking "research" of more weight than Divine Revelation.”

- “We have failed properly to distinguish the second stage of Nihilism from its first. Most Liberals, too, accept science as exclusive truth; wherein does the Realist differ from them? The difference is not so much one of doctrine--Realism is in a sense merely disillusioned and systematized Liberalism--as one of emphasis and motivation. The Liberal is indifferent to absolute truth, an attitude resulting from excessive attachment to this world; with the Realist, on the other hand, indifference to truth becomes hostility, and mere attachment to the world becomes fanatical devotion to it.”

- “Nietzsche, most immediately, was rebelling against a Christianity that had been considerably diluted by Liberal humanism, a Christianity in which uncompromising love of and loyalty to absolute truth were rare if not entirely absent, a Christianity which had become no more than a moral idealism tinged with aesthetic sentiment.”

- “Both Christian and Realist are possessed of a love of truth, a will not to be deceived, a passion for getting to the root of things and finding their ultimate cause; both reject as unsatisfying any argument that does not refer to some absolute that itself needs no justification; both are the passionate enemies of the frivolity of a Liberalism that refuses to take ultimate things seriously and will not see human life as the solemn undertaking that it is.”

- “Mistaking Christianity for another form of idealism, he rejects it and becomes a fanatical devotee of the only reality that is obvious to the spiritually blind: this world. Now, much as it is possible to admire the earnestness of the devoted materialist and atheist, not even the greatest charity can induce us to recognize in him any longer the love of truth which, perhaps, first inspired him; he is the victim, rather, of a love of truth that has gone astray, become a disease, and ended in its own negation.”

- “The motives of the Realist are, in fact, not pure...he has an ulterior motive, because he places some other worldly value above truth.”

- “If the function of Liberalism was to obscure, with the smoke of "tolerance" and agnosticism, the higher truths concerning God and the spiritual life, the task of the Realism we have been examining has been to annihilate those truths...Logical Positivism.” (me- Liberals are the masses of ignorant people of the consequences, Realists are people who “follow” the Christian, yet are truly unaware of the consequences of their worldview and hence put forth Earthly/Worldly ideals in place of Other, Absolute...)

- “Typical of the Vitalist attitude in this regard is the lament of W. B. Yeats in his autobiography over "being deprived by Huxley and Tyndall, whom I detested, of the simpleminded religion of my childhood.…" (people want simple salvation, Tolstoy, Vivekananda, 'religion is just what they are already doing')

- “most of what passes for "spirituality" today is in fact a "new spirituality," a cancer born of Nihilism that attaches itself to healthy organisms to destroy them from within. This tactic is the precise opposite of the bold Realist attack upon truth and the spiritual life; but it is no less a Nihilist tactic, and a more advanced one. Intellectually, then, Vitalism presupposes a rejection of Christian Truth together with a certain pseudo-spiritual pretension.”

- “There are, of course, other less violent forms of the popular unrest. There is the passion for movement and speed, expressed especially in the veritable cult of the automobile (we have already noted this passion in Hitter); the universal appeal of television and cinema, whose most frequent function is to provide a few hours of escape from reality, both by their eclectic and "exciting" subject-matter and by the hypnotic effect of the media themselves; the increasingly primitive and savage character of popular music and of the perhaps more authentic expression of the contemporary soul, "jazz", the cult of physical prowess in sport, and the morbid worship of "youth.”

- “In such phenomena "activity" is clearly an escape--an escape from boredom, from meaninglessness, and most profoundly from the emptiness that takes possession of the heart that has abandoned God) Revealed Truth, and the morality and conscience dependent upon that Truth.”

- “Religious Vitalism appears also in the widespread cult of "awareness" and "realization." In a fairly restrained form this is present in the devotees of modern art and the "creative act" and "vision" that inspire this art. The indiscriminate quest for "enlightenment," as in those under the influence of Zen Buddhism, is a more extreme form of this cult; and the supposed "religious experience" stimulated by various drugs is, perhaps, its reductio ad absurdum.” (I disagree, these experiences may not 'be God', but they are steps [symbolism] on the latter to God)

- “We have delineated the most striking features of Vitalism and given some suggestion of its extent; but we have yet to define the term itself and expose its Nihilist character. Liberalism, as we have seen, undermined truth by indifference to it, retaining however the prestige of its name; and Realism attacked it in the name of a lesser, partial truth. Vitalism, as opposed to both of these, has no relation to truth whatever; it simply devotes its whole concern to something of an entirely different order.”

- “But perhaps most revealing of the infection of humanism by Vitalism is the strange axiom, romantic and skeptical at the same time, that the "love of truth" is never-ending because it can never be fulfilled, that the whole of life is a constant search for something there is no hope of finding, a constant movement that never can--nor should--know a place of rest. The sophisticated humanist can be very eloquent in describing this, the new first principle of scholarly and scientific research, as an acknowledgment of the "provisional" nature of all knowledge, as a reflection of the never-satisfied, ever-curious human mind, or as part of the mysterious process of "evolution" or "progress"; but the significance of the attitude is dear. It is the last attempt of the unbeliever to hide his abandonment of truth behind a cloud of noble rhetoric.”

- “Who wishes to be creative," said Nietzsche, "Must first destroy and smash accepted values." (Nihiltheism says you must smash accepted values, since they will all be incorrect! This is not utter destruction, it is a smashing of positive values and replacing them with negative notions of morality)

- “God is dead in the hearts of modern man: this is what the "death of God" means, and it is as true of the atheists and Satanists who rejoice in the fact, as it is of the unsophisticated multitudes in whom the sense of the spiritual reality has simply disappeared. Man has lost faith in God and in the Divine Truth that once sustained him; the apostasy to worldliness that has characterized the modern age since its beginning becomes, in Nietzsche, conscious of itself and finds words to express itself. "God is dead": that is to say, "we have lost our faith in God"; "there is no truth": that is to say, "we have become uncertain of everything divine and absolute."

- “In this abyss, this nothingness of the man who lives without truth, we come to the very heart of Nihilism.”

- “This "anxiety" and this "abyss" are precisely the nothingness out of which God has called each man into being, and back to which man seems to fall when he denies God, and in consequence, denies his own creation and his own being.”

- “Can this be?--an order founded upon nothing? Of course it cannot; it is self-contradiction, it is suicide.”

- No man, we have said often enough, lives without a god; who then--or what--is the god of the Nihilist? It is nihil, nothingness itself-not the nothingness of absence or non-existence, but of apostasy and denial; it is the "corpse" of the "dead God" which so weighs upon the Nihilist.”

- “For if nothingness be the center of the world, then the world, both in its essence and in every detail, is incoherent, it fails to hold together, it is absurd.”

- “We have killed him (God), you and I! We are all his murderers! But how have we done it? How were we able to drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the whole horizon? What did we do when we loosened this earth from its sun? Whither does it move now? Wither do we move? Away from all suns? Do we not dash on unceasingly? Backwards, sideways, forwards, in all directions? Is there still an above and below? Do we not stray, as through infinite nothingness? Does not empty space breathe upon us? Has it not become colder? Does not night come on continually, darker and darker.”

- “...everywhere men feverishly pursue the work of "progress"--for what reason they do not know, or only very dimly sense. In the free world it is perhaps a horror vacui that chiefly impels men into feverish activity that promises forgetfulness of the spiritual emptiness that attends all worldliness.”

- “In the Nihilist "new earth" all human energy is to be devoted to worldly concerns; the whole human environment and every object in it are to serve the cause of "production" and to remind men that their only happiness lies in this world; there is to be established, in fact, the absolute despotism of worldliness.”

- “Communist doctrine affirms...the systematized absurdity of a perfectly efficient machine that has no ultimate purpose.” (Ha!)

- “Nihilism is, most profoundly, a spiritual disorder, and it can be overcome only by spiritual means; and there has been no attempt whatever in the contemporary world to apply such means.” (this is why I feel a strange need to write or tell someone something. I am too dumb. I am not worth anything. I do not have anything to give. I am unworthy of anything. Your happiness is obviously the most important thing, not mine. Your life's work can be ignored, laughed at, mocked after your death. You spent your life for these reactions? You lived for what? Why are you living?)

Seeking the realization of Christian “ideals” in this world is idolatry; it is of the Antichrist -A Letter to Thomas Merton

- “I personally think that “total peace” is, at bottom, a utopian ideal; but the very fact that it seems practical today raises a profounder question.” (Earthly/Other distinction, the impossibility of 'helping' others, Vivekananda)

- “You speak of “Christian action,” “the Christian who manifests the truth of the Gospel in social action,” “not only in prayer and penance, but also in his political commitments and in all his social responsibilities.” Well, I certainly will say nothing against that; if Christian truth does not shine through in all that one does, to that extent one is failing to be a Christian, and if one is called to a political vocation, one’s action in that area too must be Christian. But, if I am not mistaken, your words imply something more than that; namely, that now more than ever before we need Christians working in the social and political sphere, to realize there the truth of the Gospel. But why, if Christ’s Kingdom is not of this world? Is there really a Christian “social message,” or is not that rather a result of the one Christian activity—working out one’s salvation with diligence? I by no means advocate a practice of Christianity in isolation; all Christianity—even that of the hermit—is a “social Christianity,” but that is only as context, not as end. The Church is in society because men are in society, but the end of the Church is the transformation of men, not society. It is a good thing if a society and government profess genuine Christianity, if its institutions are informed by Christianity, because an example is given thereby to the men who are a part of that society; but a Christian society is not an end in itself, but simply a result of the fact that Christian men live in society.”

- “When I feed my hungry brother, this is a Christian act and a preaching of the Kingdom that needs no words; it is done for the personal reason that my brother—he who stands before me at this moment—is hungry, and it is a Christian act because my brother is, in some sense, Christ. But if I generalize from this case and embark on a political crusade to abolish the “evil of hunger,” that is something entirely different; though individuals who participate in such a crusade may act in a perfectly Christian way, the whole project—and precisely because it is a “project,” a thing of human planning—has become wrapped in a kind of cloak of “idealism.” (Karma Yoga is needed)

- “...let me before I call it a Christian act—carefully ask myself whether its end is merely a lofty worldly ideal, or something greater.” (Vivekananda, Karma Yoga)

- “...there is nothing intrinsically evil about any of these “crusades,” and there are involved in them all quite sincere and fervent Christians who are really preaching the Gospel; but, as I say, there is a kind of cloak of “idealism” wrapped about them all, a cloak that seems to be drawing them into its own quite independent service.” (speaking of Charities and other 'actions')

- “...people both inside and outside these movements, both inside and outside the Church, is precisely to place emphasis upon the realization of outward ideals, thus obscuring inward truth...How many of those indeed, even Catholic and Orthodox, who are participating in the world of “social Christianity” today, do not believe that this is really a more “perfect” and even “inward” Christianity than a dogmatic, ascetic, and contemplative Christianity that doesn’t get such obvious 'results'?”

- “First and foremost I radically question the emphasis upon “action” itself, upon “projects” and “planning,” upon concern with the “social” and what man can do about it—all of which acts to the detriment of acceptance of the given, of what God gives us at this moment, as well as of allowing His will to be done, not ours.” (building hospitals and bridges? Ha!, says Vivekananda)

- “I think the central need of our time is not in the least different from what it has always been since Christ came; it lies, not in the area of “political commitments” and “social responsibilities,” but precisely in “prayer and penance” and fasting and preaching of the true Kingdom. The only “social responsibility” of a Christian is to live, wherever and with whomever he may be, the life of faith, for his own salvation and as an example to others. If, in so doing, we help to ameliorate or abolish a social evil, that is a good thing—but that is not our goal. If we become desperate when our life and our words fail to convert others to the true Kingdom, that comes from lack of faith. If we would live our faith more deeply, we would need to speak of it less.”

- “...a “new Christianity,” a Christianity that claims to be “inward,” but is entirely too concerned with outward result; a Christianity, even, that cannot really believe in “peace” and “brotherhood” unless it sees them generalized and universally applied, not in some seemingly remote “other world,” but “here and now...nothing done in Christ is done for oneself alone—but not enough for what? The answer to that, I think, is clear: for the transformation of the world, the definitive “realization” of Christianity in the social and political order...The Kingdom is not of this world; to think or hope that Christianity can be outwardly “successful” in the world is a denial of all that Christ and His prophets have said of the future of the Church. Christianity can be “successful” on one condition: that of renouncing (or conveniently forgetting) the true Kingdom and seeking to build up a Kingdom in the world. The “Earthly Kingdom” is precisely the goal of the modern mentality; the building of it is the meaning of the modern age. It is not Christian; as Christians, we know whose Kingdom it is. And what so greatly troubles me is that today Christians—Catholic and Orthodox alike—are themselves joining, often quite unaware of the fact, often with the best possible intentions, in the building of this new Babel...” (Ha! Not too many people use sarcasm)

- “Everywhere “prophets “—semi- or pseudo-Christians like Berdyaev and Tolstoy...” (I see this distinction with Tolstoy as well. as much as Tolstoy is like Rose and myself, I agree, he is too Worldly)

- “Above all, the Christian in the contemporary world must show his brothers that all the “problems of the age” are of no consequence beside the single central “problem of man”: death, and its answer, Christ. Despite what you have said about the “staleness” of Christianity to contemporary men, I think that Christians who speak of this problem, and in their lives show that they actually believe all that “superstition” about the “other world”—I think they have something “new” to say to contemporary man. It has been my own experience that serious young people are “tired” of Christianity precisely because they think it is an “idealism” that hypocritically doesn’t live up to its “ideals”; of course, they don’t believe in the other world either—but for all they know, neither do “Christians.”

- “Particularly all the involvement of Christians in the projects of social idealism, seems to me a way of saying: “You, the worldly, are right. Our Kingdom ‘not of this world’ is so distant and we can’t seem to get it across to you; so we will join you in building something we can actually see, something better than Christ and His Kingdom—a reign of peace, justice, brotherhood on earth.” This is a “new Christianity,” a refinement, it seems to me, of the Christianity of the “Grand Inquisitor” of Dostoyevsky.”

- “What is needed is not more busyness but a deeper penetration within. Not less fasting, but more; not more action, but prayer and penance. If Christians really lived the Christian hope and the full path of unification that looks to its fulfillment, instead of the easy compromise that most laymen today think sufficient—and doesn’t the “new Christianity” tell them that working for social ideals is really more important than following the Christian discipline?—; if Christians in their daily life were really on fire with love of God and zeal for His Kingdom not of this world—then everything else needful would follow of itself.”

## 7. Theresa of Avila

- “World of light. I tell you it was a piteous and a dreadful thing to see. I knew not where to hide myself, for that shining light, in which was no darkness at all, held the whole world within it, and all worlds. You will see that I could not flee from its presence. Oh that they could be made to see this who commit deeds of darkness!”

-“Oh, what a distress it is for my soul to have to return to hold commerce with this world after having had its conversation in heaven! To have to play a part in the sad farce of this earthly life!” -“God deliver me from this artificial and evil life!”

- “...people seem to have found their aim and end in life in this horrible prison-house...”

-“The best of created things disappoint and torment the soul...God alone satisfies the soul.”

- “All that such souls ever attain to and perform, all these things only make them more humble, and therefore more strong; more able to despise the things of this world...”

- “Augustine testifies that neither in the house, nor in the church, nor anywhere else, did he find God, till once he had found Him in himself. Nor had he need to go up to heaven, but only down into himself to find God.” (turn inward, Tolstoy, Vivekananda, Huxley, the Pessimists, Underhill)

- “You need not go to heaven to see God, or to regale yourself with God. Nor need you speak loud as if He were far away. Nor need you cry for wings like a dove so as to fly to Him. Settle yourself in solitude, and you will come upon God in yourself.” (pg 457 quotes from Solitude)

- “May His Divine Majesty vouchsafe to let us see and taste and understand something of this before He takes us out of this prison-house life, for it will be a magnificent comfort in the hour of death to know that we are on our way to be judged by Him whom we have loved above all things.”

- “O my Lord, why keepest Thou Thy servant in this miserable life so long, where all is such vexation, and disappointment, and manifold trouble?”

- “Our Lord, my sisters, expects works. Therefore when you see any one sick, compassionate her as if she were yourself. Pity her. Fast that she may eat. Wake that she may sleep.” (Schopenhauer as taking the misery of the world onto oneself)

- “Let no one be affrighted or turned away from the life of virtue and religion by your gloom and morosity.”

- “It is indeed a very great misery to live on in this evil world where our enemies are ever at our gate, and where we can neither eat nor sleep in peace, but are compelled to have our armour on night and day. There is no rest here, nor happiness, nor will be till we are with the Everlastingly Blessed. As I write I am seized with terror, lest I should never escape this sinful life.”

- Teresa's conception of “humility” is extremely strict.

- “There is nothing in all the world wherewith to buy the shedding abroad of Thy love in our heart, but our heart’s love. If, however, we did what we could, not clinging with our hearts to anything whatsoever in this world, but having our treasure and our conversation in heaven, then this blessedness would soon be ours, as all Thy saints testify.”

- “At other times I find myself so arid that I am not able to form any distinct idea of God, nor can I put my soul into an attitude of prayer, though I am in the place of prayer, and though I feel that I know something of God. This mind of mine at such times is like a born fool or some idiot creature that nothing can bind down. I cannot command myself. I cannot properly say one Credo. At such times I laugh bitterly at myself, and see clearly my own natural misery.”

- “I reflect at such times on the great hurt our original sin has done us. For it is from our first fall that all this has come to us that we so wander from God, and are so often utterly incapable of God. But it is not so much Adam’s sin as my own that works in me all this alienation and inability and aridity. Methinks I love God; but my actions, and the endless imperfections I see in myself, cause me great fear, and deep and inconsolable distress.”

- “Those who pray with proper preparation: that is, with much meditation on the whole life and death of our Lord: on their own death: on the last day, or such like, our Lord will bring all such to the port of light.”

- “Prayer.—In prayer there would sometimes come upon me such a sense of the Presence of God that I seemed to be all engulfed in God. I think the learned call this mystical experience; at any rate, it so suspends the ordinary operations of the soul that she seems to be wholly taken out of herself.”

- “And the soul enjoys God without dialectically understanding just how she so enjoys Him. She burns with love without knowing what she has done to deserve or to prepare herself for such a rapture.”

- “Now this is the difference between natural and supernatural prayer: between mental and transcendental prayer. In ordinary prayer we more or less understand what we say and do. We think of Him to whom we speak; we think about ourselves and about our Surety and Mediator. In all this, by God’s help, we can do something, so to speak, of ourselves. But in pure supernatural and transcendental prayer, we do nothing at all. His Divine Majesty it is who does it all. He works in us at such elect seasons what far transcends and overtops all the powers and resources even of the renewed nature.” Sounds like the difference between cannabis and mushrooms.

- “At the same time, as a far-off means of attaining to supernatural prayer, it is necessary to put upon ourselves the acquiring of the great virtues, and especially, humility: we must give up and resign ourselves wholly and entirely unto God. Whoever will not attempt to do this, with all the grace of God, that man will never come within sight of the highest prayer.”

- “Let him account himself utterly and hopelessly unworthy of everything he possesses, both in nature and in grace. Let him shun advancement. Let him apply himself to daily mortification, not of the body so much as of the mind and the heart, and let him be more than content with the least thing that God allows him, for this is true humility.”

- “For it must never be thought that because a man has much suffering, therefore he cannot have prayed acceptably. His suffering is as incense set forth before God.”

- “And now I return most humbly to beseech your Reverence, that, if you mean to impart to any one these things that you have made me write concerning prayer, let them be imparted to spiritual persons, and to persons of real insight only. For, indeed, I have written for persons of exceptional experience and exceptional prudence only. What I have written, I fear, very few are capable of. But what am I, to speak thus about any but myself?”

- “This will seem to some a silly fiction.”

- “Oh, if we religious understood what harm we get from having so much to do with our

relatives, how we should shun them! do not see what pleasure they can give us, or how, quite apart from the harm they do us as touching our obligations to God, they can bring us any peace or tranquillity.”

- “I do not know how much of the world we really leave when we say that we are leaving everything for God's sake, if we do not withdraw ourselves from the chief thing of all -- namely, our kinsfolk.”

- “All the advice which the saints give us about fleeing from the world is, of course, good.

Believe me, then, attachment to our relatives is, as I have said, the thing which sticks to

us most closely and is hardest to get rid of.”

- “It will be a great help towards this if we keep constantly in our thoughts the vanity of all

things and the rapidity with which they pass away, so that we may withdraw our

affections from things which are so trivial and fix them upon what will never come to

an end.”

- “...it remains for us to become detached from our own selves and it is a hard thing to withdraw from ourselves and oppose ourselves, because we are very close to ourselves and love ourselves very dearly.”

- “he cares nothing if he loses everything, nor does he count this as loss.”

- “Some of us, however, seem to think that we embraced the religious life for no other reason than to keep ourselves alive and each nun does all she can to that end. Resolve, sisters, that it is to die for Christ, and not to practice self-indulgence for Christ, that you have come here.”

- “What sufferings they bore, what solitude, cold, [thirst] and hunger, what burning sun and heat! And yet they had no one to complain to except God. Do you suppose they were made of iron? No: they were as frail as we are.”

- “Try not to fear these and commit yourselves wholly to God, come what may. What does

it matter if we die? How many times have our bodies not mocked us? Should we not

occasionally mock them in our turn?”

- “I repeat that this consists mainly or entirely in our ceasing to care about ourselves and

our own pleasures, for the least that anyone who is beginning to serve the Lord truly

can offer Him is his life.”

- “How do we know but that ours will be so short that it may end only one hour or one moment

after the time of our resolving to render our entire service to God? This would be quite possible; and so we must not set store by anything that comes to an end, least of all by life, since not a day of it is secure.”

- “I do not mean, by "leaving" everything, entering the religious life, for there may be obstacles to this, and the soul that is perfect can be detached and humble anywhere. It will find detachment harder in the world, however, for worldly trappings will be a great impediment to it.”

- “...the very act of desiring honour robs us of it, especially in matters of precedence: there is no poison in the world which is so fatal to perfection.”

- “A discontented soul is like a person suffering from severe nausea, who rejects all food, however nice it may be; things which persons in good health delight in eating only cause her the greater loathing.” (I hate when I hear people laughing, when I am in a 'depressed' mood)

- “anyone who would be perfect, must flee a thousand leagues from such phrases as: "I had right on my side"; "They had no right to do this to me"; "The person who treated me like this was not right". God deliver us from such a false idea of right as that!...Do you think that it was right for our good Jesus to have to suffer so many insults, and that those who heaped them on Him?...Do you think you can ever possibly have to bear so much that you ought not to have to bear any more?”

- “...if she does not wish to suffer a hell on earth, and God grant there may not be another hell awaiting such a nun in the world to come.”

- “For the whole manner of life we are trying to live is making us, not only nuns, but hermits [like the holy Fathers our predecessors] and leading us to detachment from all things created.”

- “This house is another Heaven, if it be possible to have Heaven upon earth. Anyone whose sole pleasure lies in pleasing God and who cares nothing for her own pleasure will find our life a very good one; if she wants anything more, she will lose everything, for there is nothing more that she can have.”

- “For it is in this way that you will begin to gain freedom; soon you will not care if they speak ill or well of you; it will seem like someone else's business. It will be as if two persons are talking

in your presence and you are quite uninterested in what they are saying because you are not actually being addressed by them. So here: it becomes such a habit with us not to reply that it seems as if they are not addressing us at all. This may seem impossible to those of us who are

very sensitive and not capable of great mortification. It is indeed difficult at first, but I

know that, with the Lord's help, the gradual attainment of this freedom, and of renunciation and self-detachment, is quite possible.”

- “What a sight it would have been, daughters, to see this Sun by the side of the darkness, and what fear that wretched creature must have felt, though he would not have known why, since God did not allow Him to understand.”

- “Why, then, my sisters, do we not show Him love in so far as we can? Consider what a wonderful exchange it is if we give Him our love and receive His. Consider that He can do all things, and we can do nothing here below save as He enables us. And what is it that we do for Thee, O Lord, our Maker? We do hardly anything [at all] -- just make some poor weak resolution. And, if His Majesty is pleased that by doing a mere nothing we should win everything, let us not be so foolish as to fail to do it.”

- “God deliver us, sisters, from saying "We are not angels", or "We are not saints",

whenever we commit some imperfection. We may not be; but what a good thing it is for

us to reflect that we can be if we will only try and if God gives us His hand! Do not be

afraid that He will fail to do His part if we do not fail to do ours.”

- “Progress has nothing to do with enjoying the greatest number of consolations in prayer, or with raptures, visions or favours [often] given by the Lord, the value of which we cannot estimate until we reach the world to come.”

- “It is therefore a thirst which quenches nothing but desire for earthly things...”

- “We have an immeasurable longing for it, and, so far as is possible on earth, we stimulate this longing: sometimes this goes so far as to cause death. How happy is such a death!”

- “I really see no good in this world and its ways...”

The Interior Castle

- “Would it not be gross ignorance, my daughters, if, when a man was questioned about his name, or country, or parents, he could not answer? Stupid as this would be, it is unspeakably more foolish to care to learn nothing of our nature except that we possess bodies, and only to realize vaguely that we have souls, because people say so and it is a doctrine of faith. Rarely do we reflect upon what gifts our souls may possess...”

- “As far as I can understand, the gate by which to enter this castle is prayer and meditation.” (me- everyone keeps insisting on meditation!)

- “Nothing else, however elevated, perfects the soul which must never seek to forget its own nothingness.”

- “Although it is a great grace from God to practise self-examination, yet ‘too much is as bad as too little,’ as they say; believe me, by God’s help, we shall advance more by contemplating the

Divinity than by keeping our eyes fixed on ourselves, poor creatures of earth that we are.”

- “Such, it appears to me, is the soul which, though not in a state of mortal sin, is so worldly

and preoccupied with earthly riches, honours, and affairs, that as I said, even if it sincerely wishes to enter into itself and enjoy the beauties of the castle, it is prevented by these distractions and seems unable to overcome so many obstacles. It is most important to withdraw from all unnecessary cares and business, as far as compatible with the duties of one’s state of life, in order to enter the second mansion. This is so essential, that unless done immediately I think it impossible for any one ever to reach the principal room, or even to remain where he is without great risk of losing what is already gained; otherwise, although he is inside the castle, he will find it impossible to avoid being bitten some time or other by some of the very venomous creatures surrounding him.”

- “a nun has such a longing for penance as to feel no peace unless she is tormenting herself in some way.”

- “How unhappy it feels, not knowing whether to go forward or to return to the first mansion! On the other hand, reason shows it the delusion of overrating worldly things, while faith teaches what alone can satisfy its cravings. Memory reminds the soul how all earthly joys end, recalling the death of those who lived at ease; how some died suddenly and were soon forgotten, how others, once so prosperous, are now buried beneath the ground and men pass by the graves where they lie, the prey of worms, while the mind recalls many other such incidents.”

- “But, O my God, how the force of worldly habits and the example of others who practise them

ruin everything! Our faith is so dead that we trust less to its teaching than to what is visible, though, indeed, we see that worldly lives bring nothing but unhappiness.”

- “Enlighten it to see that its welfare consists in perseverance in the right way, and in the withdrawing from bad company. It is of the utmost importance for the beginner to associate with those who lead a spiritual life, and not only with those in the same mansion as herself, but with

others who have travelled farther into the castle, who will aid her greatly and draw her to join

them.”

- “‘Most happy she who suffers most if it be for Christ!”

- “I am wrong in saying ‘security,’ for there is no security in this life; understand that in such

cases I always imply: ‘If they do not cease to continue as they have begun.’ What misery to live in this world! We are like men whose enemies are at the door, who must not lay aside their arms, even while sleeping or eating, and are always in dread lest the foe should enter the fortress by some breach in the walls. How canst Thou wish us to prize such a wretched existence?”

- “Truly, my daughters, I feel such terror as I tell you this, that I know not how to write it, nor even

how to go on living, when I reflect upon it as I very often do.”

- “Yet do not suppose that our Lord has need of any works of ours; He only expels us to manifest our goodwill. It seems to us we have done everything by taking the religious habit of our own will, and renouncing worldly things and all our possessions for God.”

- “Still I must give you one warning: be not too confident because you are nuns and the daughters of such a Mother. David was very holy, yet you know what Solomon became. Therefore do not rely on your enclosure, on your penitential life, nor on your continual exercise of prayer and constant communion with God, nor trust in having left the world or in the idea that you hold its ways in horror. All this is good, but is not enough, as I have already said, to remove all fear; therefore meditate on this text and often recall it: 'Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord.'”

## 8. C. S. Lewis

“That is the terrible fix we are in. If the universe is not governed by an absolute goodness, then all our efforts are in the long run hopeless. But if it is, then we are making ourselves enemies to that goodness every day, and are not in the least likely to do any better tomorrow, and so our case is hopeless again. We cannot do without it. and we cannot do with it. God is the only comfort, He is also the supreme terror...”

-“Some people talk as if meeting the gaze of absolute goodness would be fun. They need to think

again.” “Goodness is either the great safety or the great danger.” (psychedelics, Smith, Huxley)

- “When you have realised that our position is nearly desperate you will begin to understand what the Christians are talking about.” “All I am doing is to ask people to face the facts—to understand the questions which Christianity claims to answer. And they are very terrifying facts. I wish it was possible to say something more agreeable. But I must say what I think true. Of course, I quite agree that the Christian religion is, in the long run, a thing of unspeakable comfort. But it does not begin in comfort; it begins in the dismay I have been describing, and it is no use at all trying to go on to that comfort without first going through that dismay.”

-“If H. ‘is not,’ then she never was. I mistook a cloud of atoms for a person. There aren’t, and never were, any people. Death only reveals the vacuity that was always there. What we call the living are simply those who have not yet been unmasked. All equally bankrupt, but some not yet declared.”

-“Reality, looked at steadily, is unbearable. And how or why did such a reality blossom (or fester) here and there into the terrible phenomenon called consciousness? Why did it produce things like us who can see it and, seeing it, recoil in loathing? Who (stranger still) want to see it and take pains to find it out, even when no need compels them and even though the sight of it makes an incurable ulcer in their hearts?”

-“Finally, if reality at its very root is so meaningless to us—or, putting it the other way round, if we are such total imbeciles—what is the point of trying to think either about God or about anything else?”

-“The agonies, the mad midnight moments, must, in the course of nature, die away. But what will follow? Just this apathy, this dead flatness?”

-“Does grief finally subside into boredom tinged by faint nausea?”

-“Well, take your choice. The tortures occur. If they are unnecessary, then there is no God or a bad one. If there is a good God, then these tortures are necessary.”

## 9. Kierkegaard

### Sickness Unto Death

- “And so it is also with the natural man, he is ignorant of what the dreadful truly is, yet he is not thereby exempted from shuddering; no, he shudders at that which is not the dreadful: he does not know the true God, but this is not the whole of it, he worships an idol as God.”

- “So then it is an infinite advantage to be able to despair; and yet it is not only the greatest misfortune and misery to be in despair; no, it is perdition.” (Seraphim, Smith, Huxley, etc. The experience is terrifying, i.e. 'hell' as the mystics or Molinos refer to it)

-“...man's life is wasted who lived on, so deceived by the joys of life or by its sorrows that he never became eternally and decisively conscious of himself as spirit, as self, or (what is the same thing) never became aware and in the deepest sense received an impression of the fact that there is a God, and that he, he himself, his self, exists before this God, which gain of infinity is never attained except through despair.”

- “So then it is an infinite advantage to be able to despair...” -“...one might say perhaps that there lives not one single man who after all is not to some extent in despair, in whose inmost parts there does not dwell a disquietude, a perturbation, a discord, an anxious dread of an unknown something, or of a something he does not even dare to make acquaintance with, dread of a possibility of life, or dread of himself At any rate there has lived no one and there lives no one outside of Christendom who is not in despair, and no one in Christendom, unless he be a true Christian, and if he is not quite that, he is somewhat in despair after all.”

-“The despair which is the passageway to faith is also by the aid of the eternal: by the aid of the eternal the self has courage to lose itself in order to gain itself.”

- “So it is that Christianity has taught the Christian to think dauntlessly of everything earthly and worldly, including death. It is almost as though the Christian must be puffed up because of this proud elevation above everything men commonly call misfortune, above that which men commonly call the greatest evil. But then in turn Christianity has discovered an evil which man as such does not know of; this misery is the sickness unto death. What the natural man considers horrible -- when he has in this wise enumerated everything and knows nothing more he can mention, this for the Christian is like a jest. Such is the relation between the natural man and the Christian; it is like the relation between a child and a man: what the child shudders at, the man regards as nothing. The child does not know what the dreadful is; this the man knows, and he shudders at it. The child's imperfection consists, first of all, in not knowing what the dreadful is; and then again, as an implication of this, in shuddering at that which is not dreadful. And so it is also with the natural man, he is ignorant of what the dreadful truly is, yet he is not thereby exempted from shuddering; no, he shudders at that which is not the dreadful: he does not know the true God, but this is not the whole of it, he worships an idol as God.”

- “The possibility of this sickness is man's advantage over the beast; to be sharply observant of this sickness constitutes the Christian's advantage over the natural man; to be healed of this sickness is the Christian's bliss...So then it is an infinite advantage to be able to despair...”

- “The concept of the sickness unto death must be understood, however, in a peculiar sense. Literally it means a sickness the end and outcome of which is death. Thus one speaks of a mortal sickness as synonymous with a sickness unto death. In this sense despair cannot be called the sickness unto death. But in the Christian understanding of it death itself is a transition unto life In view of this, there is from the Christian standpoint no earthly, bodily sickness unto death. For death is doubtless the last phase of the sickness, but death is not the last thing. If in the strictest sense we are to speak of a sickness unto death, it must be one in which the last thing is death, and death the last thing. And this precisely is despair.”

-“When death is the greatest danger, one hopes for life; but when one becomes acquainted with an even more dreadful danger, one hopes for death. So when the danger is so great that death has become one's hope, despair is the disconsolateness of not being able to die.” (Cioran, pg. 248, talks about wanting to die and feeling 'sorry' that he wants to die, the Abyss of all Abysses, the feeling of being trapped, maybe the most awful feeling I continually experience, Tillich on pg. 11 in Courage)

-“This view will doubtless seem to many a paradox, an exaggeration, and a gloomy and depressing view at that. Yet it is nothing of the sort. It is not gloomy; on the contrary, it seeks to throw light upon a subject which ordinarily is left in obscurity. It is not depressing; on the contrary it is uplifting, since it views every man in the aspect of the highest demand made upon him, that he be spirit.”

- “...so much is said about wasted lives – but only that man's life is wasted who lived on, so deceived by the joys of life or by its sorrows that he never became eternally and decisively conscious of himself as spirit, as self, or (what is the same thing) never became aware and in the deepest sense received an impression of the fact that there is a God, and that he, he himself, his self, exists before this God, which gain of infinity is never attained except through despair.”

- “No, to be in error or delusion is (quite un-Socratically) the thing they fear the least. One may behold amazing examples which illustrate this fact on a prodigious scale. A thinker erects an immense building, a system, a system which embraces the whole of existence and world-history etc. -- and if we contemplate his personal life, we discover to our astonishment this terrible and ludicrous fact, that he himself personally does not live in this immense high-vaulted palace, but in a barn alongside of it, or in a dog kennel, or at the most in the porter's lodge. If one were to take the liberty of calling his attention to this by a single word, he would be offended. For he has no fear of being under a delusion, if only he can get the system completed...by means of the delusion.” (Ha! Pascal)

- “...one would first have to despair completely, to despair out and out, and then the spirit-life might break through from the very bottom.”

- “But in spite of the fact that a man has become fantastic in this fashion, he may nevertheless (although most commonly it becomes manifest) be perfectly well able to live on, to be a man, as it seems, to occupy himself with temporal things, get married, beget children, win honor and esteem -- and perhaps no one notices that in a deeper sense he lacks a self. About such a thing as that not much fuss is made in the world; for a self is the thing the world is least apt to inquire about, and the thing of all things the most dangerous for a man to let people notice that he has it. The greatest danger, that of losing one's own self, may pass off as quietly as if it were nothing; every other loss, that of an arm, a leg, five dollars, a wife, etc., is sure to be noticed.”

- “And thus it is precisely with the despair of finitude. In spite of the fact that a man is in despair he can perfectly well live on in the temporal, in fact all the better for it; he may be praised by men, be honored and esteemed, and pursue all the aims of temporal life. What is called worldliness is made up of just such men, who (if one may use the expression) pawn themselves to the world. They use their talents, accumulate money, carry on worldly affairs, calculate shrewdly, etc., etc., are perhaps mentioned in history, but themselves they are not; spiritually understood, they have no self, no self for whose sake they could venture everything, no self before God -- however selfish they may be for all that.” (me- Vivekananda says that men who die without realizing their true Self, as Spirit, dies as a dog does)

- “Every human existence which is not conscious of itself as spirit, or conscious of itself before God as spirit, every human existence which is not thus grounded transparently in God but obscurely reposes or terminates in some abstract universality (state, nation, etc.), or in obscurity about itself takes its faculties merely as active powers, without in a deeper sense being conscious whence it has them, which regards itself as an inexplicable something which is to be understood from without -- every such existence, whatever it accomplishes, though it be the most amazing exploit, whatever it explains, though it were the whole of existence, however intensely it enjoys life aesthetically – every such existence is after all despair.”

- ““So then he despairs, that is to say, by a strangely preposterous attitude and a complete mystification with regard to himself, he calls this despair. But to despair is to lose the eternal -- and of this he does not speak, does not dream. The loss of the earthly as such is not the cause of despair, and yet it is of this he speaks, and he calls it despairing. What he says is in a certain sense true, only it is not true in the sense in which he understands it; he stands with his face inverted, and what he says must be understood inversely; he stands and points at that which is not a cause of despair, and he declares that he is in despair, and nevertheless it is quite true that despair is going on behind him without his knowing it. It is as if one were to stand with one's back toward the City Hall and the Court House, and pointing straight before him were to say, "There is the City Hall and the Court House." The man is right, there it is . . . if he turns around. It is not true, he is not in despair, and yet he is right when he says it. But he calls himself "in despair," he regards himself as dead, as a shadow of himself. But dead he is not; there is, if you will, life in the characterization. In case everything suddenly changes, everything in the outward circumstances, and the wish is fulfilled, then life enters into him again, immediacy rises again, and he begins to live as fit as a fiddle. But this is the only way immediacy knows how to fight, the one thing it knows how to do: to despair and swoon -- and yet it knows what despair is less than anything else. It despairs and swoons, and thereupon it lies quite still as if it were dead, like the childish play of "lying dead"; immediacy is like certain lower animals which have no other weapon or means of defense but to lie quite still and pretend they are dead.”

- “Meanwhile time passes. If outward help comes, then life returns to the despairer, he begins where he left off; he had no self, and a self he did not become, but he continues to live on with only the quality of immediacy. If outward help does not come, then in real life something else commonly occurs. Life comes back into him after all, but "he never will be himself again," so he says. He now acquires some little understanding of life, he learns to imitate the other men, noting how they manage to live, and so he too lives after a sort. In Christendom he too is a Christian, goes to church every Sunday, hears and understands the parson, yea, they understand one another; he dies; the parson introduces him into eternity for the price of $10 -- but a self he was not, and a self he did not become.” (distractions, worldly, diversions, 'this is not religion we see all around us', head held under water, going mad for God)

- “On the other hand, he often feels a need of solitude, which for him is a vital necessity -- sometimes like breathing, at other times like sleeping. The fact that he feels this vital necessity more than other men is also a sign that he has a deeper nature. Generally the need of solitude is a sign that there is spirit in a man after all, and it is a measure for what spirit there is. The purely twaddling inhuman and too-human men are to such a degree without feeling for the need of solitude that like a certain species of social birds (the so-called love birds) they promptly die if for an instant they have to be alone. As the little child must be put to sleep by a lullaby, so these men need the tranquilizing hum of society before they are able to eat, drink, sleep, pray, fall in love, etc. But in ancient times as well as in the Middle Ages people were aware of the need of solitude and had respect for what it signifies. In the constant sociability of our age people shudder at solitude to such a degree that they know no other use to put it to but (oh, admirable epigram!) as a punishment for criminals. But after all it is a fact that in our age it is a crime to have spirit, so it is natural that such people, the lovers of solitude, are included in the same class with criminals.”

- “So the despairing self is constantly building nothing but castles in the air, it fights only in the air. All these experimented virtues make a brilliant showing; for an instant they are enchanting like an oriental poem: such self-control, such firmness, such ataraxia, etc., border almost on the fabulous. Yes, they do to be sure; and also at the bottom of it all there is nothing. The self wants to enjoy the entire satisfaction of making itself into itself, of developing itself, of being itself; it wants to have the honor of this poetical, this masterly plan according to which it has understood itself. And yet in the last resort it is a riddle how it understands itself; just at the instant when it seems to be nearest to having the fabric finished it can arbitrarily resolve the whole thing into nothing.”

- “...the definition of faith, by which I steer my course in the whole of this work, as by a sure mariners' mark. Faith is: that the self in being itself and in willing to be itself is grounded transparently in God.”

- “And for the whole of Christianity it is one of the most decisive definitions that the opposite of sin is not virtue but faith.” (Morality is human and illusory. It is not 'good vs bad', it is Sin as Nihilism and Faith as living in the experience of Nihilism- almost Tillich verbatim. Non-movement, not concerned with actions, since morality is illusory. Same as Maya too. Sin is the consciousness of death, the absurd perspective, the Nihilistic experience, etc.)

- “There is so much said now about people being offended at Christianity because it is so dark and gloomy, offended at it because it is so severe, etc. It is now high time to explain that the real reason why man is offended at Christianity is because it is too high, because its goal is not man’s goal, because it would make of a man something so extraordinary that he is unable to get it into his head.” (Tolstoy, Vivekananda, simple salvation)

- “...man is invited to live on the most intimate terms with God! Furthermore, for this man’s sake God came to the world, let himself be born, suffers and dies; and this suffering God almost begs and entreats this man to accept the help which is offered him! Verily, if there is anything that would make a man lose his understanding, it is surely this! Whosoever has not the humble courage to dare to believe it, must be offended at it. But why is he offended? Because it is too high for him, because he cannot get it into his head, because in the face of it he cannot acquire frank-heartedness, and therefore must have it done away with, brought to naught and nonsense, for it is as though it would stifle him.”

- “The narrow-mindedness of the natural man cannot welcome for itself the extraordinary which God has intended for him; so he is offended.” (comfortable religion, simple salvation)

- “...they confine themselves to saying, "Such a thing I can’t get through my head, I let it alone. These are the skeptics.”

- “So if once in a while there lives a genius who goes a little bit beyond it, he is declared mad... by the wise. But Christianity takes a prodigious giant-stride beyond this ne quid nimis, a stride into the absurd -- there Christianity begins... and the offense.”

- “Precisely the concept by which Christianity distinguishes itself qualitatively and most decisively from paganism is the concept of sin, the doctrine of sin; and therefore Christianity also assumes quite consistently that neither paganism nor the natural man knows what sin is...What a dangerous objection therefore against Christianity if paganism had a definition of sin which Christianity must admit is correct! What determinant is it then that Socrates lacks in determining what sin is? It is will, defiant will.”

- “It is infinitely comic that a man, moved unto tears, so much moved that not only tears but sweat trickle from him, can sit and read, or hear, representations of self-denial, of the nobility of sacrificing one’s life for the truth -- and then the next instant -- one, two, three, slap-dash, almost with the tears still in his eyes -- is in full swing, in the sweat of his brow, with all his might and main, helping falsehood to conquer.” (Maya)

- “It is infinitely comic that a man can understand the whole truth about how wretched and petty this world is, etc. -that he can understand this, and then cannot recognize again what he understood; for almost in the same moment he himself goes off and takes part in the same pettiness and wretchedness, takes glory in it and receives glory from it, that is, accepts it.” (Maya)

- “O when one beholds a man who protests that he has entirely understood how Christ went about in the form of a lowly servant, poor, despised, and, as the Scripture says, spat upon -- when I see the same man so careful to betake himself thither where in a worldly sense it is good to be, and accommodate himself there in the utmost security, when I see him apprehensive of every puff of wind from right or left, as though his life depended upon it, and so blissful, so utterly blissful, so awfully glad -- yes, to make the thing complete, so awfully glad that he is able to thank God for it -- glad that he is held in honor by all men -- then I have often said to myself and by myself, "Socrates, Socrates, Socrates, can it be possible that this man has understood what he says he has understood?”

- “People think that the world needs a republic, and they think that it needs a new social order, and a new religion -- but it never occurs to anybody that what the world now needs, confused as it is by much knowing, is a Socrates.”

- “And so there live perhaps a great multitude of men who labor off and on to obscure their ethical and religious understanding which would lead them out into decisions and consequences which the lower nature does not love, extending meanwhile their aesthetic and metaphysical understanding, which ethically is a distraction.”

- “However, with all this we have not yet got any further than the Socratic position; for, as Socrates would say, if this comes about, then it only shows that such a man had not understood what is right. That is to say, the Greek spirit had not the courage to assert that a man knowingly does what is wrong, with knowledge of the right does what is wrong; so Socrates comes to its aid and says, When a man does wrong, he has not understood what is right.”

- “If only one can get it made manifest that all attempts at comprehending are self-contradictory, then the thing assumes the correct position, and then it becomes clear that it must be left to faith whether one will believe or not.”

- “So let others admire and extol him who claims to be able to comprehend Christianity -- I regard it as a plain ethical duty, which perhaps demands no little self-denial in such speculative times when all "the others" are busy about comprehending -- I regard it then as a plain duty to admit that one neither can nor shall comprehend it. Just this, however, is doubtless what the age, what Christendom, needs, namely, a little Socratic ignorance in relation to Christianity -- but I say emphatically Socratic ignorance. Let us never forget (yet after all how many are there that ever have known it or thought of it? ) -- let us never forget that the ignorance of Socrates was a kind of godly fear and divine worship, that his ignorance was the Greek rendering of the Jewish perception that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. Let us never forget that precisely out of reverence for the Deity he was ignorant, that, so far as a pagan could be, he kept watch as a judge on the border between God/ and man, watching out to see that the deep gulf of qualitative distinction be firmly fixed between them, between God/ and man, that God/ and man may not in a way, philosophice, poetice, etc., coalesce into one.” (me- this is all just an expression of the Perennial philosophy's incomprehensibility/Otherness compared to Human/Earthlyness that is put into Christian language in order to describe it! Exactly what Kierkegaard is raving against!)

- “For how does it come about that a man's life becomes so spiritless…? No, it is man’s own fault. No man is born with spiritlessness, and however many there be who in death bring with them this as the only acquisition of their lives -- this is not the fault of life. But it must be said, and as outspokenly as possible, that the so-called Christendom (in which after a sort all men are Christians in a way, so that there are just as many, precisely as many Christians as there are men ) -- it must be said that not only is it a wretched edition of Christianity, full of misprints disturbing to the sense, and of senseless omissions and additions, but that it has abusively taken Christianity’s name in vain.”

- “With regard to a poet people speak of his having a call; but as for becoming a priest, it seems enough to the generality of men (and that means of Christians) that one has taken an examination. And yet, alas, a true priest is even more rare than a true poet, and the word "call" originally was used in a religious sense.”

- “But how rare is the man who possesses continuity with respect to his consciousness of himself! Generally men are only momentarily conscious, conscious in the great decisions, but the daily things are not computed at all; such men are spirit (if this word may be applied to them) once a week for one hour -- of course that is a pretty bestial way of being spirit.”

- “Christianly sin is (and this has to be believed, it is indeed the paradox which no man can comprehend) -- sin is a position which out of itself develops a more and more positive [ponerende] continuity.” (the plenitude of Nothingness, no need to 'believe' on must experience)

- “We have even a proverb which says that to sin is human, but to remain in sin is devilish. But Christianly this proverb must be understood in a rather different sense. The merely desultory way of conceiving the case, which has regard only to the new sin and passes over the intermediate state, the interval between the particular sins, is just as superficial a way of conceiving it as it would be to assume that the railway train moved only when the locomotive puffed. No, this puffing and the onrush which succeeds it is really not the thing that has to be considered, but rather the even momentum with which the locomotive proceeds and which occasions the puffing. And so it is with sin. The state of remaining in sin is in the deepest sense sin, the particular sins are not the continuation of sin, but they are the expression for the continuation of sin; in the particular new sins the momentum of sin merely becomes more observable.”

- “Doubtless most men live with far too little consciousness of themselves to have a conception of what consistency is; that is to say, they do not exist qua spirit. Their lives (either with a certain childish and lovable naivete or in sheer banality) consist in some act or another, some occurrence, this or that; and then they do something good, then in turn something wrong, and then it begins all over again; now they are in despair, for an afternoon, perhaps for three weeks, but then they are jovial again, and then again they are a whole day in despair. They take a hand in the game of life as it were, but they never have the experience of staking all upon one throw, never attain the conception of an infinite self-consistency. Therefore among themselves their talk is always about the particular, particular deeds, particular sins.”

- “Only in the continuation of sin he is himself, only in that does he live and have an impression of himself. ‘What does this mean?' It means that the state of being in sin is that which, in the depth to which he has sunk, holds him together, impiously strengthening him by consistency; it is not the particular new sin which (crazy as it sounds to say it) helps him, but the particular new sin is merely the expression for the state of being in sin which properly is the sin.”

- “His selfish-self culminates in ambition.”

- “When the sinner despairs of the forgiveness of sins it is almost as if he were directly picking a quarrel with God, it sounds in fact like a rejoinder when he says, "No, there is not any forgiveness of sins, it is an impossibility"; this looks like a hand-to-hand scuffle.”

- “God is surely the word which occurs most frequently in daily speech and is absolutely the word to which one attaches the least meaning and uses most carelessly, because this poor revealed God (who was so imprudent and unwise as to become revealed instead of keeping Himself hidden as superior persons always do) has become a personage all too well known by the whole population, to whom one renders an exceedingly great service by going once in a while to church, where one is praised for it by the parson, who on God’s behalf thanks one for the honor of the visit, confers upon one the title of pious, and on the other hand taunts a bit those who never do God the honor of going to church.”

- “...the despairer thinks he himself is, and that is what he wills to be, therefore he wills to be himself, himself with his torment, in order with this torment to protest against the whole of existence. Whereas the weak despairer will not hear about what comfort eternity has for him, so neither will such a despairer hear about it, but for a different reason, namely, because this comfort would be the destruction of him as an objection against the whole of existence”

- “But the despairer, as he was depicted in the foregoing, did not observe what was happening behind him, so to speak; he thinks he is in despair over something earthly and constantly talks about what he is in despair over, and yet he is in despair about the eternal; for the fact that he ascribes such great value to the earthly, or, to carry the thought further, that he ascribes to something earthly such great value, or that he first transforms something earthly into everything earthly, and then ascribes to the earthly such great value, is precisely to despair about the eternal.” (me- New Atheism, myself?)

“So he despairs. His despair is that of weakness, a passive suffering of the self, in contrast to the despair of self-assertion; but, by the aid of relative self-reflection which he has, he makes an effort (which again distinguishes him from the purely immediate man) to defend his self. He understands that the thing of letting the self go is a pretty serious business after all, he is not so apoplectically muddled by the blow as the immediate man is, he understands by the aid of reflection that there is much he may lose without losing the self; he makes admissions, is capable of doing so -- and why? Because to a certain degree he has dissociated his self from external circumstances, because he has an obscure conception that there may even be something eternal in the self. But in vain he struggles thus; the difficulty he stumbled against demands a breach with immediacy as a whole, and for that he has not sufficient self-reflection or ethical reflection; he has no consciousness of a self which is gained by the infinite abstraction from everything outward, this naked, abstract self (in contrast to the clothed self of immediacy) which is the first form of the infinite self and the forward impulse in the whole process whereby a self infinitely accepts its actual self with all its difficulties and advantages.”

- “Despair over the earthly or over something earthly is the commonest sort of despair, especially in the second form of immediacy with a quantitative reflection. The more thoroughly reflected the despair is, the more rarely it occurs in the world. But this proves that most men have not become very deep even in despair; it by no means proves, however, that they are not in despair. There are very few men who live even only passably in the category of spirit; yea, there are not many even who merely make an attempt at this life, and most of those who do so, shy away. They have not learned to fear, they have not learned what "must" means, regardless, infinitely regardless of what it may be that comes to pass. Therefore they cannot endure what even to them seems a contradiction, and which as reflected from the world around them appears much more glaring, that to be concerned for one's own soul and to want to be spirit is a waste of time, yes, an inexcusable waste of time, which ought if possible to be punishable by law, at all events is punished by contempt and ridicule as a sort of treason against men, as a froward madness which crazily fills up time with nothing. Then there is a period in their lives (alas, their best period) when they begin after all to take the inward direction. They get about as far as the first difficulties, there they veer away; it seems to them as though this road were leading to a disconsolate desert...This despair, as I have said, is the commonest, it is so common that only thereby can one explain the rather common opinion in common intercourse that despair is something belonging to youth, which appears only in youthful years, but is not to be found in the settled man who has come to the age of maturity and the years of wisdom. This is a desperate error, or rather a desperate mistake, which overlooks (yes, and what is worse, it overlooks the fact that what it overlooks is pretty nearly the best thing that can be said of a man, since far worse often occurs) -- it overlooks the fact that the majority of men do never really manage in their whole life to be more than they were in childhood and youth, namely, immediacy with the addition of a little dose of self-reflection." (Tolstoy mentions that his first intuition regarding his existential concerns are that they are commonly referred to as “childish”)

- “On the contrary, one encounters grown men and women and aged persons who have as much childish illusion as any youth.”

- “man is spirit, not merely an animal, when one supposes that it might be such an easy matter to acquire faith and wisdom which come with the years as a matter of course, like teeth and a beard and such like.” (participation, head held under water)

“The despairer understands that it is weakness to take the earthly so much to heart, that it is weakness to despair. But then, instead of veering sharply away from despair to faith, humbling himself before God for his weakness, he is more deeply absorbed in despair and despairs over his weakness. Therewith the whole point of view is inverted, he becomes now more clearly conscious of his despair, recognizing that he is in despair about the eternal, he despairs over himself that he could be weak enough to ascribe to the earthly such great importance, which now becomes his despairing expression for the fact that he has lost the eternal and himself.” (Renunciation, great language)

- “He very seldom goes to church, because it seems to him that most parsons really don’t know what they are talking about.” (Ha! It's good to be born in a church, it is bad to die in one)

- “...such despair is rather rare. If it does not stay at that point, merely marking time, and if on the other hand there does not occur a radical change in the despairer so that he gets on the right path to faith, then such despair will either potentiate itself to a higher form and continue to be introversion, or it breaks through to the outside and demolishes the outward disguise under which the despairing man has been living in his incognito. In the latter case such a despairer will then plunge into life, perhaps into the distractions of great undertakings...”

- “If this introversion is absolutely maintained, omnibus numeris absoluta [perfect in every respect], then suicide will be the danger nearest to him. The common run of men have of course no presentiment of what such an introvert is capable of bearing; if they were to come to know it, they would be astonished. If on the other hand he talks to someone, if to one single man he opens his heart, he is in all probability strained to so high a tension, or so much let down, that suicide does not result from introversion. Such an introvert with one person privy to his thought is a whole tone milder than the absolute case. He probably will shun suicide. It may happen, however, that he falls into despair just for the fact that he has opened his heart to another; it may be that he thinks it would have been infinitely preferable to maintain silence rather than have anyone privy to his secret.” (Kierkegaard says he has no 'common language' with others)

- “And yet such a despairer, whose only wish is this most crazy of all transformations, loves to think that this change might be accomplished as easily as changing a coat.” (participation, Tolstoy, Vivekananda, simple salvation)

- ““The despairing man who is unconscious of being in despair is, in comparison with him who is conscious of it, merely a negative step further from the truth and from salvation...the despairing man who consciously remains in despair is further from salvation, since his despair is more intense. But unawareness is so far from removing despair, or of transforming despair into non-despair, that, on the contrary, it may be the most dangerous form of despair.”

- “Humanly speaking his destruction is the most certain of all things -- and the despair in his soul fights desperately to get leave to despair, to get, if you will, repose for despair, the consent of his whole personality to despair, so that he would curse nothing and nobody more fiercely than him who attempted (Or it may be the attempt) to prevent him from despairing, as the poet's poet.” (mystics are conquerors, asceticism)

- “This form of despair is hardly ever noticed in the world. Such a man, precisely by losing his self in this way, has gained perfectibility in adjusting himself to business, yea, in making a success in the world. Here there is no hindrance, no difficulty, occasioned by his self and his infinitization, he is ground smooth as a pebble, courant as a well-used coin. So far from being considered in despair, he is just what a man ought to be. In general the world has of course no understanding of what is truly dreadful. The despair which not only occasions no embarrassment but makes one's life easy and comfortable is naturally not regarded as despair.” (Ha! Heidegger- the illusion of living 'concretely')

- ““And, oh, when the hour-glass has run out, the hourglass of time, when the noise of worldliness is silenced, and the restless or the ineffectual busyness comes to an end, when everything is still about thee as it is in eternity -- whether thou wast man or woman, rich or poor, dependent or independent, fortunate or unfortunate, whether thou didst bear the splendor of the crown in a lofty station, or didst bear only the labor and heat of the day in an inconspicuous lot; whether thy name shall be remembered as long as the world stands (and so was remembered as long as the world stood), or without a name thou didst cohere as nameless with the countless multitude; whether the glory which surrounded thee surpassed all human description, or the judgment passed upon thee was the most severe and dishonoring human judgment can pass -- eternity asks of thee and of every individual among these million millions only one question, whether thou hast lived in despair or not, whether thou wast in despair in such a way that thou didst not know thou wast in despair, or in such a way that thou didst hiddenly carry this sickness in thine inward parts as thy gnawing secret, carry it under thy heart as the fruit of a sinful love, or in such a way that thou, a horror to others, didst rave in despair.”

- “Ah, so much is said about human want and misery -- I seek to understand it, I have also had some acquaintance with it at close range; so much is said about wasted lives -- but only that man's life is wasted who lived on, so deceived by the joys of life or by its sorrows that he never became eternally and decisively conscious of himself as spirit, as self, or (what is the same thing) never became aware and in the deepest sense received an impression of the fact that there is a God, and that he, he himself, his self, exists before this God, which gain of infinity is never attained except through despair.”

- ““The believer possesses the eternally certain antidote to despair, viz, possibility; for with God all things are possible every instant. This is the sound health of faith which resolves contradictions. The contradiction in this case is that, humanly speaking, destruction is certain, and that nevertheless there is possibility. Health consists essentially in being able to resolve contradictions. So it is bodily or physically: a draft is indifferently cold and warm, disparate qualities undialectically combined; but a healthy body resolves this contradiction and does not notice the draft. So it is also with faith.” (though Tillich says 'doubt' is part of faith, and Kierkegaard said he could never quite make the “leap” himself, I am not sure this sort of “faith” can be actualized, even if it is in fact true)

- ““The soulish-bodily synthesis in every man is planned with a view to being spirit, such is the building; but the man prefers to dwell in the cellar, that is, in the determinants of sensuousness. And not only does he prefer to dwell in the cellar; no, he loves that to such a degree that he becomes furious if anyone would propose to him to occupy the bel etage which stands empty at his disposition- for in fact he is dwelling in his own house.” (Earthly/Other)

- “Real life is far too multifarious to be portrayed by merely exhibiting such abstract contrasts as that between a despair which is completely unconscious, and one which is completely conscious of being such. Most frequently, no doubt, the condition of the despairing man, though characterized by multiform nuances, is that of a half obscurity about his own condition. He himself knows well enough in a way up to a certain point that he is in despair, he notices it in himself, as one notices in oneself that one is going about with an illness as yet unpronounced, but he will not quite admit what illness it is. At one moment it has almost become clear to him that he is in despair; but then at another moment it appears to him after all as though his indisposition might have another ground, as though it were the consequence of something external, something outside himself, and that if this were to be changed, he would not be in despair. Or perhaps by diversions, or in other ways, e.g., by work and busy occupations as means of distraction, he seeks by his own effort to preserve an obscurity about his condition, yet again in such a way that it does not become quite clear to him that he does it for this reason, that he does what he does in order to bring about obscurity. Or perhaps he even is conscious that he labors thus in order to sink the soul into obscurity, does this with a certain acuteness and shrew calculation, with psychological insight, but is not in a deeper sense clearly conscious of what he does, of how despairingly he labors etc.”

- ““But if no change occurs, he helps himself in another way. He swings away entirely from the inward direction which is the path he ought to have followed in order to become truly a self. The whole problem of the self in a deeper sense becomes a sort of blind door in the background of his soul behind which there is nothing. He accepts what in his language he calls his self, that is to say, whatever abilities, talents, etc. may have been given him; all this he accepts, yet with the outward direction toward what is called life, the real, the active life; he treats with great precaution the bit of self-reflection which he has in himself, he is afraid that this thing in the background might again emerge. So little by little he succeeds in forgetting it; in the course of years he finds it almost ludicrous, especially when he is in good company with other capable and active men who have a sense and capacity for real life. Charmant! He has now, as they say in romances, been happily married for a number of years, is an active and enterprising man, a father and a citizen, perhaps even a great man; at home in his own house the servants speak of him as "himself"; in the city he is among the honoratiores; his bearing suggests "respect of persons," or that he is to be respected as a person, to all appearance he is to be regarded as a person. In Christendom he is a Christian (quite in the same sense in which in paganism he would have been a pagan, and in England an Englishman), one of the cultured Christians. The question of immortality has often been in his mind, more than once he has asked the parson whether there really was such an immortality, whether one would really recognize oneself again -- which indeed must have for him a very singular interest, since he has no self.”

### Purity of Heart is to Will One Thing

- “Only the Eternal is always appropriate and always present, is always true. Only the Eternal applies to each human being, whatever his age may be. The changeable exists, and when its time has passed it is changed. Therefore any statement about it is subject to change. That which may be wisdom when spoken by an old man about past events may be folly in the mouth of a youth or of a grown man when spoken of the present.”

- “Oh, you sufferer, whoever you may be, will you then with doubleness of mind seek the relief that temporal existence can give, the relief that permits you to forget your suffering (yes, so you think) but rather that allows you to forget the Eternal!”

- “A man of prayer does not pore over learned books for he is the wise man “whose eyes are opened” — when he kneels down (Numbers 24: 16). In a word, then, there is a man whose mind remains piously ignorant of the multitude of things, for the Good is one thing.” (one must even renounce learning)

- “There is the change of the perishable nature when the sensual man must step aside, when dancing and the tumult of the whirling senses are over, when all becomes soberly quiet. That is the change of death.” (the experience of Nihilism)

- “No, like worldly contempt, worldly honor is a whirlpool, a play of confused forces, an illusory moment in the flux of opinions. It is a sense-deception, as when a swarm of insects at a distance seem to the eye like one body; a sense-deception, as when the noise of the many at a distance seems to the ear like a single voice.”

- “To will one thing, therefore, cannot mean to will that which only appears to be one thing. The fact is that the worldly goal is not one thing in its essence because it is unreal. Its so-called unity is actually nothing but emptiness which is hidden beneath the manyness. In the short-lived moment of delusion the worldly goal is therefore a multitude of things, and thus not one thing. So far is it from a state of being and remaining one thing, that in the next moment it changes itself into its opposite. Carried to its extreme limit, what is pleasure other than disgust? What is earthly honor at its dizzy pinnacle other than contempt for existence? What are riches, the highest superabundance of riches, other than poverty? For no matter how much all the earth’s gold hidden in covetousness may amount to, is it not infinitely less than the smallest mite hidden in the contentment of the poor! What is worldly omnipotence other than dependence? What slave in chains is as unfree as a tyrant! No, the worldly goal is not one thing. Diverse as it is, in life it is changed into its opposite, in death into nothing, in eternity into damnation: for the one who has willed this goal. Only the Good is one thing in its essence and the same in each of its expressions.”

- “Even if honor were unanimous it would still be meaningless, and the more so, the more thousands that create the unanimity...So is his life when he must grovel — in order to attain honor; when he must flatter his enemies — in order to attain honor; when he must woo the favor of those he despises — in order to attain honor; when he must betray the one whom he respects — in order to attain honor. For to attain honor means to despise oneself after one has attained the pinnacle of honor — and yet to tremble before any change. Change, yes, where does change rage more unchecked than here?”

- “Is not despair simply double-mindedness? For what is despairing other than to have two wills?...whether a man despaired because he got his will, or despaired because he did not get his will: each one in despairing has two wills, one that he fruitlessly tries wholly to follow and one that he fruitlessly tries wholly to avoid.” ('double-mindedness is James' 'divided self')

- “Only too soon personal experience and the experience of others teaches how far most men’s lives are from being what a man’s life ought to be. All have great moments. They see themselves in the magic mirror of possibility which hope holds before them while the wish flatters them. But they swiftly forget this sight in the daily round of things. Or perhaps they talk enthusiastic words, “for the tongue is a little member and boasteth great things.”( James 3: 5.) But talk takes the name of enthusiasm in vain by proclaiming loudly from the housetop what it should work out in silence. And in the midst of the trivial details of life these enthusiastic words are quickly forgotten. It is forgotten that such a thing was said of this man. It is forgotten that it was he himself who said it. Now and then, perhaps, memory wakens with horror, and remorse seems to promise new strength. But, alas, this, too, lasts only for a good-sized moment. All of them have intentions, plans, resolutions for life, yes, for eternity. But the intention soon loses its youthful strength and fades away. The resolution is not firmly grounded and is unable to withstand opposition. It totters before circumstances and is altered by them.”

- “It is said of a singer that by over-screeching he can crack his voice. In like fashion, such a man's nature by over-screeching itself and the voice of conscience, has cracked. It is said of a man who stands dizzily upon a high place, that all things run together before his eyes. Such a man has made himself giddy in the infinite, where those things which are forever separate run together into one thing, so that only the vast remains. It is this dryness and emptiness that always gives birth to giddiness.”

- “Alas, it is horrible to see a man rush toward his own destruction. It is horrible to see him dance on the rim of the abyss without any intimation of it. But this clarity about himself and about his own destruction is even more horrible. It is horrible to see a man seek comfort by hurling himself into the whirlpool of despair. But this coolness is still more horrible: that, in the anxiety of death, a man should not cry out for help, “I am going under, save me”; but that he should quietly choose to be a witness to his own destruction! Oh, most extreme vanity, not to wish to draw man’s eyes to himself by beauty, by riches, by ability, by power, by honor, but to wish to get his attention by his own destruction, by choosing to say of himself what at most pity in all sadness may venture to say of such a person at his grave, “Yet, some good went down with him.” Oh, horrible doubleness of mind in a man’s destruction, to wish to draw a sort of advantage out of the fact that the Good remains the only thing that a man has not willed.” (Ha!)

- “For at this point what the talk is concerned with is the life that most men lead: they desire the Good, and yet the world is still so filled with double-mindedness. Here, too, the speaker has his own life, his own frailties, his own share of doubleness of mind. Oh, that the talk might not seem to wish to judge or accuse others. For to wish to judge others instead of one’s self would also be double-mindedness.” (I, too, am caught up in the mess)

- “Oh, that the talk might repel the listeners from the speaker and attract them only to the Good!” (selflessness)

- “But if the world itself is not Good in its innermost being; if, as the Scripture says, it still “lieth in wickedness,”( I John 5: 19) or if it is far from being as one for whom it is a rare exception not to will the Good; if this be so, then earthly reward is of a doubtful character. And hence it is all the more likely that the world will reward what it takes for the Good, what to a certain degree resembles the Good...”

- “To will the Good for the sake of reward is double-mindedness. To will one thing is, therefore, to will the Good without considering the reward. In truth to will one thing is to will the Good, but not, therefore, to desire reward in the world. The reward can of course come without a man’s willing it. Even though it is in the outward realms, the reward may come from God. But when a man considers that all reward in the outer realm can become what the world’s reward always is — a temptation for him, then he must guard himself even against true reward just in order rightly to be able to will the Good. Oh, that he might not forget, that this, even such a desire to guard himself, may once more be a temptation to pride.” (Karma Yoga)

- “But here on earth, Good is often temporarily rewarded by ingratitude, by lack of appreciation, by poverty, by contempt, by many sufferings, and now and then by death.” (remember as this quote goes on, it seems 'out of context', not directly relating to my thoughts, or is this his sarcasm? I think sarcasm, but I'll re-read)

- “Then there was a type of double-mindedness that in a more powerful and active sort of inner coherence seemed to will the Good, but deceptively willed something else. It willed the Good for the sake of reward, out of fear of punishment, or as a form of self-assertion. But there was another kind of double-mindedness born of weakness, that is commonest of all among men, that versatile double-mindedness that wills the Good in a kind of sincerity, but only wills it 'to a certain degree.'” ('barriers to willing the One')

- “For the wish is the sufferer’s connection with a happier temporal existence (faith and hope are related to the Eternal through the will); and at the same time the wish is the sore spot where the suffering pains, the sore spot which the suffering continually touches...The wish is not the cure. This happens only by the action of the Eternal. The wish is, on the contrary, the life in suffering, the health in suffering. It is the perseverance in suffering, for it is as one thinker has said, “The comfort of temporal existence is a precarious affair. It lets the wound grow together, although it is not yet healed, and yet the physician knows that the cure depends upon keeping the wound open.” In the wish, the wound is kept open, in order that the Eternal may heal it. If the wound grows together, the wish is wiped out and then eternity cannot heal, then temporal existence has in truth bungled the illness.” (make sure to re-read this, maya, Vivekananda says this exactly in maya and freedom pg. 65 and in Unity in Diversity pg. 96, this is what Zapffe is talking about with his 'yearning' or 'transcedental yearning' as a 'proof' against 'progressive optimism', or Becker's mention of a yearning for the infinite, as Tillich's mention of such, Ligotti mentions this also)

- “Yet sad as it is with the wish, how joyful it is with hope! For there is a hope that is born and dies; a short-lived hope, that tomorrow is forgotten; a childish hope, that old age does not recognize; a hope that one dies away from. But then — in death, in death’s decision, a hope is born, that does not die in being born because it is born in death. By this hope the sufferer, under the pain of the wish, is committed to the Good. So it is with the hope in which the sufferer, as though from afar off, reaches out toward the Eternal.”

- “With faith it is still more joyful. For there is a faith that disappoints and vanishes; a faith that is lost and is repented of; there is a faith, which, when it droops is like death. But then — in death, in death’s decision a faith is won that does not disappoint, that is not repented of, that does not die; it seizes the Eternal and holds fast to it. By this faith, under the pain of the wish, the sufferer is committed to the Good. So it is with faith in which the sufferer draws the Eternal nearer to himself.”

- “But with love it is most joyous of all. For there is a love, that blazes up and is forgotten; there is a love that unites and divides — a love until death. But then — in death, in death’s decision, there is born a love that does not flame up, that is not equivocal, that is not — until death, but beyond death, a love that endures. In this love under the pain of the wish, the sufferer is committed to the Good. Oh, you sufferer, whoever you may be, will you then with doubleness of mind seek the relief that temporal existence can give, the relief that permits you to forget your suffering (yes, so you think) but rather that allows you to forget the Eternal! Will you in doubleness of mind despair, because all is lost (yes, so you think) yet with the Eternal all is to be won! Will you in doubleness of mind despair? Have you considered what it is to despair? Alas, it is to deny that God is love! Think that over properly, one who despairs abandons himself (yes, so you think); nay, he abandons God! Oh, weary not your soul with that which is passing and with momentary relief. Grieve not your spirit with forms of comfort which this world affords. Do not in suicidal fashion murder the wish; but rather win the highest by hope, by faith, by love — as the mightiest of all are able to do: commit yourself to the Good!” (holy shit)

- “Once again let us speak of the wish, and hence of sufferings.” (God is Nothingness, the wish to be with the Infinite)

- “...strengthened in double-mindedness.” (turning towards the worldly, away from the Eternal)

- “It is indeed one thing to move out into life with the wish when that which is wished for, continued to be work and a task. It is another thing to move out into life away from that wish.” (karma yoga)

- “But perhaps you answer, “‘ What does that mean, how shall I be able to emigrate, and what good would it do me to change my location? My lot is cast, everywhere on earth it would be just the same.” Of course, but let us understand one another; the journey of which we speak is not long, neither is the lot cast, unless you have already found the way out of your suffering: it is only a single step, a decisive step, and you, too, have emigrated, for the Eternal lies much nearer to you than any foreign country to the emigrant, and yet when you are there the change is infinitely greater. So then, go with God to God, continually take that one step more, that single step that even you, who cannot move a limb, are still able to take; that single step, that even the prisoner, who has lost his freedom, even the one in chains, whose feet are not free, is still able to take: and you are committed to the Good. Nobody, not even the greatest that has ever lived, can do more than you.”

- “...let us really be strict with ourselves in order that we may not venture to call ourselves sufferers, the first time anything goes against us; but let us be all the more tender with those who are in the strictest sense sufferers.”

- “But bear in mind: your sufferings might well be called useless, and that we men can certainly be tempted to speak of useless suffering as beyond the reach of comfort. But this is only human speech. In the language of eternity, the suffering that helped you to reach the highest is far from useless. Alas, it is only useless and unused when you will not let yourself be helped by it up to the highest.”

- “It is well not to turn away from the sight of suffering too soon. Let us properly dwell upon it, being convinced that for the deadly disease of “busyness” there is no medicine so specific as the pondering of the hard path of the true sufferer and as a fellow human being sharing with him in the common lot of suffering.”

- “Yes: wishes could be healed after a time, they could become a part of the past: but not the wish. There is a real distinction here, for there is a pain of the wish which sympathy can fix upon, but there is also a pain of the wish that eludes all scrutiny, that conceals itself and secretly follows through an entire life. Yes, it follows, but in the sense of privation. Yes, like a faithful companion this pain follows the sufferer throughout his whole life and keeps him company, but there is no sympathy in attendance.” (not earthly concerns about job, relationships, etc., but concerns for God, for Nothingness, for Nihilism, it feels as if this despair is thrown onto you)

- “But then there was one horse that was all alone. Now when this horse heard the call, when he saw that the herd was gathering in the evening, and he understood that they were about to hold a meeting, then he came running in the hope that he might learn something about life and its ways. He listened carefully to all that the elders had to say about how no horse should think himself fortunate until he is dead, how the horse of all creatures is most subject to the tragic changes of fate. And now the elder went over the many agonies: to suffer hunger and cold, to all but kill oneself through overwork, to be kicked by a cruel driver, to be abused by unskilled persons whom not a single step you take will satisfy, yet who blame and punish the horse for their own blunders, and then at last some winter, when old age has come on, to be driven out into the bare woods.” (church sermon?)

- “Oh, you sufferer, whoever you may be, if your suffering was not hidden because you wished to hide it (for then you can manage; your action calls for a different comment) but if it is because of misunderstandings then you, too, have gone among men, listened carefully to their explanations, sought out their instruction, taken part in their meeting. But each time you finished the book, and each time the conversation was over, and each time the “Amen” was pronounced: then was your spirit broken because your heart grew troubled as you sighed: “Oh, that such a thing was all that I suffered from!” Oh, but you are not wholly wanting in being understood, for even if you yourself may have done nothing to deserve it, you shall be bidden to the highest thing of all, and to the Most High Himself. Nor are you wholly without human sympathy. There is a common human concern that is called edification. It is not so common as those undertakings about which the crowd shouts and clamors, for each participant is in reality alone with himself, but yet in the highest and most inclusive sense, edification is a common human concern. The edifying contemplation finds no rest until it has come to understand you. Is not one sinner who repents more important to Heaven than ninety-nine righteous men( Luke 15: 7.) who have no need of repentance? So it is with you if you are one who truly suffers, your edifying contemplation is more important than the actions of ninety-nine busy ones who have no need of edification. Yes, even if you did not exist, the edifying contemplation finds no rest before it has also plumbed this sorrow. For woe to the edifying talk that wishes only to chat between man and man about all the different inconveniences in life but does not dare risk touching upon the more terrible sufferings: such a talk is without frankness and can but have a bad conscience if it poses under the name of “edifying.” The busy ones that neither toil nor are oppressed (Compare Matthew 11: 28.) but are just busy, think that they have escaped when’ they have contrived to avoid sufferings in this life; hence they do not wish to be disturbed either by hearing or thinking of that which is terrible. Yes, it is true that tibey have escaped. They have also escaped having any insight into life and have escaped into meaninglessness.” (incredible, how I feel about the current education system. 'bad conscience' seems to be used in the same way as Sartre's 'bad faith' since both are, it seems, to be about authenticity, doublemindedness is also the same conception as 'bad faith', until one has 'plumbed this sorrow' or the Nihilistic experience, not earthly concerns, but ultimate concerns, busy ones are the three day a year church goers, etc.)

- “As it is a comfort to seafarers to know that no matter on what strange water they may venture there are always pilots within call, so the edifying contemplation stands near the breakers and reefs of this life prepared by daily sight of terrible sufferings swiftly to render what little aid it can. Yet it cannot help in the way that a pilot helps the ship. The sufferer must help himself. But then neither shall he owe to this or to any other man what the seafarer owes to the pilot. Indeed if this sufferer like anyone else sincerely wills the Good, then he must be ready to suffer all. Then he is committed, not in that commitment by which he is exempted from suffering, but in that by which he remains intimately bound to God, in which he wills only one thing: namely, to suffer all, to be and to remain loyally committed to the Good — under the pain of the wish.”

- “My listener! Perhaps you are tired of so much talk about suffering — but an edifying talk never tires of it, no, a mother may sooner tire of nursing her sick child than the edifying talk of speaking of suffering. You are perhaps what is called a “happy one” whom talk of this kind tires. Yet surely you are not so happy as to wish to remain coldly ignorant of sufferings; on the contrary you aspire to this knowledge of suffering for your own sake in order that your education may be improved by its somber spectacle! Or perhaps you are a sufferer, who is wearied by talking of so many different kinds of suffering when yours is not even mentioned.” (no, you're describing things perfectly)

- “Oh, you sufferer, wherever you may be, wherever you hide from the sight of men in order to spare them from being reminded of the pitiable, oh, do not forget that you, too, can accomplish something. Do not let your life consume itself in a futile counting up of the worthless sufferings of8 the days and years. Do not forget that you can accomplish something. If some feigned sufferer wishes to throw himself upon others because of a slight adversity, this does not mean that he should be told as is sometimes done, that he can accomplish something for others. For one who is capable of accomplishing something for others is not regarded by the edifying contemplation as in the strictest sense a sufferer. Instead he would be harsh with him. Oh, you true sufferer, even though your very suffering cuts you off from any such service to others, you can still do — the highest thing of all. You can will to suffer all and thereby be committed to the Good.”

- “The sufferer must therefore be willing to suffer all. This means equally to be willing to do all: to bring it to a commitment, to be and to remain loyal to the Good in the commitment. While it is true that the pain of the wish is the sign that the suffering in a way continues; yet the healing also continues, as long as the sufferer remains firm in the commitment But there is a force that is momentarily powerful. It is cleverness. From cleverness and from the moment, or through it and from the moment, a man’s destruction is born — if it is a fact that a man’s salvation comes in the Eternal and by the Eternal. Now cleverness may be inwardly misused; for outwardly a true sufferer has little chance of misusing it. Cleverness in this inner realm is rich in evasions by which the time is put off and the decision is postponed. It will come to understand the decision only in an earthly and temporal sense. From its momentary standpoint, it has in view only a decision by which the suffering shall be brought to an end. But be assured, the Eternal does not heal in this fashion. The palsied man does not become whole, because he has been healed by the Eternal, nor the leper clean, nor the deformed made physically perfect. “But then it is a useless device, this help of the Eternal,” cleverness suggests, “and what is still worse, is this decision, where the sufferer dedicates himself to his suffering, which indeed makes his condition hopeless” — because the decision renounces the juggling hope of temporal existence. Where the Eternal does not come to heal such a sufferer, what happens, with the aid of cleverness, is about as follows: first, the sufferer lives for some years by an earthly hope; but when this is exhausted and the suffering still continues, then he becomes superstitious, his state of health alternates between drowsiness and burning excitement. As the suffering continues, there settles over him finally a dull despair, broken only rarely by an unnatural and terribly enfeebling intensity, as when the gambler hopes on and on that some day he will meet with luck. Alas, at length a man sees what cleverness and this earthly hope amount to! For to cleverness it seems so clever “that one should not foolishly give up an earthly hope for a possible mythical healing” — in order to win the Eternal. To cleverness it seems so cunning “that one would not decide to say farewell to the earth; indeed, one can never know what possibly could happen . . . and then one would regret” — that one had let himself be healed by the Eternal. The earthly hope and the heavenly hope grew up well together and played together in childhood like born equals, but the difference reveals itself in the decision. Yet, this hinders cleverness which steadily hinders the decision. Those who cling to life put off the time, have countless inventions whose genius is this: that one must not take life and his own sorrows too much to heart, that it was just possible, who can know that — etc.” (Ha! My family)

- “When the sufferer actually takes his suffering to heart, then he receives help from the Eternal toward his decision. Because to take one’s suffering to heart is to be weaned from the temporal order, and from cleverness and from excuses, and from clever men and women and from anecdotes about this and that, in order to find rest in the blessed trustworthiness of the Eternal. For the sufferer, it is as if one should liken him to a sick man who turns himself from side to side, and now at last discovers the position in which there is relief — even if the wish still pains. Even if it was only a trifle, one can never have taken something too much to heart, when in taking it so to heart he thereby wins the Eternal.” (I take things too seriously, huh? I wonder why just one person, Kierkegaard, saying this gives me a form of comfort, sounds similar to Pascal's Wager, the saint who lived through two execution attempts while singing of God the entire time)

- “But the sufferer who does not wish to be healed by the Eternal is double-minded. The double-mindedness in him is a disease that gnaws and gnaws and eats away the noblest powers; the injury is internal and infinitely more dangerous than being deformed and palsied. This double-minded one wishes to be healed and yet does not wish to be healed: eternally, he does not wish to be healed. But the temporal cure is uncertain, and the different stages in the scale of uncertainty are marked by increasing restlessness, in his double-mindedness. When the double-minded man comes to the final moment of his life, cleverness will still be sitting at his deathbed and explaining that one cannot know what might suddenly and unexpectedly happen. Under no circumstances should a messenger be sent after the clergyman, for cleverness is so afraid of the decision that it even regards the clergyman’s coming as a tacit decision, and indeed one can never know what suddenly and unexpectedly might happen. So the double-minded one dies, and now the survivors know for certain that the deceased was not cured of his long-standing suffering by any sudden and unexpected means. Alas, the Eternal is a riddle for the one who, m the clever sense of the moment, loves the world. Over and over again he thinks, what if some temporal help should suddenly appear, then I would be trapped, I, who by commitment to the Eternal had died to the temporal. He prefers to say, one still regards the temporal as the highest, one looks upon the Eternal as a kind of desperate “last resort.” Therefore, one objects to giving it the decision for as long as possible. And even if temporal help is the most absurd and unreasonable of all expectations, yet one would sooner whip up his superstitious imagination to hope for it than to lay hold on the Eternal. One is constantly afraid that he might live to regret it, and yet the Eternal, if one honestly lays hold on it, is the only thing, absolutely the only thing of which it may be said without reservation, it will never be regretted. But because of this fear that he should one day regret committing himself to the Eternal, a man deserves some day to be compelled to regret bitterly that he allowed the time to pass by.”

- “Oh, it is indeed a shallow cleverness (no matter how much it brags or how loquacious it may be) that stupidly cheats itself out of the highest consolation, getting along with a mediocre and even less than mediocre consolation and ending in inevitable remorse. Even if the sufferer is able to use his cleverness in such a way as to give his double-mindedness a little better public appearance than is depicted here, that in no way affects the real situation. If he uses cleverness to hinder commitment to the Eternal, he is. double-minded. He is, and he remains double-minded, even, if temporal help did come and he did revel in the cleverness by which he had managed his shrewd escape; yes, one should still believe that it was a calamity that he cleverly; managed to evade commitment to the Eternal. Commitment to the Eternal is the only true salvation.”

- “In relation to the sufferer, all double-mindedness has its ground in and is marked by the double-minded one’s unwillingness to let go of the things of this world. In the same way the double-minded talk that is from time to time addressed to the sufferer may be recognized by the fact that it puts its trust in the things of this world. It is only too often the case that the sufferer shrinks from receiving the highest comfort, and the speaker is ashamed to offer the highest consolation. Contrary to the truth, the consoling talk seeks to offer comfort by saying that the illness will soon be better — perhaps; and begs for some little patience. It coddles the sufferer a little, and says that by Sunday all will surely be going well. Yet why give a pauper, if we may for a moment compare the sufferer with a pauper, silver or even counterfeit coin when one has a rich supply of gold to offer him? For the Eternal’s comfort is pure gold. Let us remember the active one even though his suffering is always different from that of a real sufferer.”

- “Here there is no talk of having a little patience, and of things going well by Sunday; but here is found the Eternal’s victorious comfort, and these scourged Apostles have more than conquered. So, too, shall it be with the true sufferer. For when the Eternal heals, the wish continues to pain (for the Eternal does not remove the sufferer from time), but there is no whining, no temporary distraction, no deceitful evasion. One knows well enough that when the true sufferer has whined himself through time and by all kinds of imaginings has managed to pass away the time or to kill time: still eternity stands open to him. Alas, no, the true sufferer must also answer for the manner in which he has used his time, answer for whether or not he has used the earthly misery to allow himself eternally to be healed.”

- “But cleverness asserts, “still, one should never give up hope.” “You hypocrite,” answers the Eternal, “why do you speak so equivocally? You know well enough that there is a hope that should be put to death; that there is a lust and a desire and a longing that should be slain. Earthly hope should be put to death, for in just this way did man first come to be saved by the true hope.” Therefore the sufferer should never be willing to “accept deliverance” (Hebrews 11: 15) on this world’s terms.”

*The Sufferer's use of Cleverness-*

- “But the sufferer who sincerely wills the Good, uses this very cleverness to cut off evasions and hence to launch himself into the commitment and to escape the disillusionments of choosing the temporal way. He does not fear the mark of the commitment that, as it were, draws the suffering over him; for he knows that this mark is the breaking through of the Eternal. He knows that in the Commitment the nerve of the temporal order is being cut, even though pain continues in the wish. There is no doubt that what often makes a sufferer impatient is that he takes upon himself in advance the suffering of a whole lifetime and now quails before what would be lighter to bear if he were to take each day’s burden as it comes.”

- “The commitment should not Concentrate sufferings in this way. For the error is just this, that in spite of all his advance acceptance of suffering, the sufferer wins nothing that is eternal but only becomes terrified in a temporal sense. Because of the uncertainty of the temporal order, it is also true that over a period of many years a sufferer may talk himself out of the original impression of the commitment. And this is a calamity.” (Ha! I feel that I do this right now, maybe, by getting out into the world, pursuing girls)

- “The active one will do all for the Good, the sufferer will suffer all for the Good (karma/jnana). The similarity is that they both may be and remain committed to the Good. Only the direction in which they work is different, and this difference must not be understood as making them mutually exclusive. The active one works from without in order that the Good may conquer; even his suffering has significance from its bearing upon this goal. The true sufferer does everything inwardly (by being willing to suffer all) for the Good in order that it may conquer in him. Yet the Good must have conquered and must continue to conquer in the active one’s own heart, if he sincerely works for the Good outwardly. The true sufferer can always work for the Good outwardly by the power of example, and work effectually. For his life, just because so much is denied him, contains a great challenge to the many to whom much is given. His life when he is and remains committed to the Good, contains a severe judgment upon the many, who use in an inexcusable way the much that has been given them. Yes, even if the sufferer were denied this working by the power of example, even if he were cut off from all other men, he would still be sharing in mankind’s great common concern. On his lonely outpost he, too, would be defending a difficult pass by saving his own soul from all of the ensnaring difficulties of suffering. Although not a single man should see him, mankind feels with him, suffers with him, and conquers with him! For everywhere that the Good truly conquers, the victory is really as great whether the Good conquers in the many by means of one, or whether it conquers in a solitary forsaken one by his own efforts; in reality the victory is equally great. Oh, praised be the blessed justice of the Eternal!” (Vivekananda says the same thing)

- “Yet one thing still remains to be discussed before leaving the matter of sufferings: Can one be said to will suffering? Is not suffering something that one must be forced into against his will? If a man can be free of it, can he then will it, and if he is bound to it, can he be said to will it? If we would answer this question, let us first of all distinguish between what it is to will in the sense of inclination, and what it is to will in the noble sense of freedom. Yes, for many men it is almost an impossibility for them to unite freedom and suffering in the same thought. Hence, when they see a man of means who could spend his time easily and comfortably, when they see him straining himself as much as a scrupulous workman, exposing himself to many sufferings, choosing the burdensome way of a higher calling: they look upon him as either a fanatic or a lunatic. They all but complain that Providence has given all of these fortunate circumstances to someone that simply does not know how to make use of them. They think in their hearts even when they do not say it aloud, even when they do not consider how tragically they are betraying their own inner life: "We should have been there in his place, we should have really known how to enjoy that life." According to this, if one can be free of suffering it is either fanaticism or insanity to will it.”

- “To illustrate, is it not as when the courageous knight spurs his horse forward against some terrifying object? There is no tremor of fear in his eye because courage controls even the expression of the eye. Yet the knight and the horse illustrate the structure of courage. The knight is the courageous one, the horse is skittish. The horse and its skittishness answer to that which is low in a man and its skittishness is that which courage checks. In this way, courage voluntarily wills suffering. The courageous one has a treacherous opposition within himself that is in league with the opposition without. But just on that account, he is the courageous one, because in spite of it he voluntarily wills the suffering.” (Oh, hey, Tillich)

- “On the other hand (and this is what we must primarily consider, for we are speaking of the true sufferer), the sufferer can voluntarily accept that suffering which in one sense is forced upon him, in so far as he does not have it in his power to get rid of it. Can anyone but one who is free of suffering, say, "Put me in chains, I am not afraid"? Can even a prisoner say, "Of my own free will I accept my imprisonment" -- the very imprisonment which is already his condition? Here again the opinion of most men is that such a thing is impossible, and that therefore the condition of the sufferer is one of sighing despondency. But what then is patience? (The Danish word for "patience," Taalmod, contains the Danish word for "courage," Mod, and invites the discourse which follows. (Tr.) Is patience not precisely that courage which voluntarily accepts unavoidable suffering? The unavoidable is just the thing which will shatter courage. There is a treacherous opposition in the sufferer himself that is in league with the dread of inevitability, and together they wish to crush him. But in spite of this, patience submits to suffering and by just this submission finds itself free in the midst of unavoidable suffering. Thus patience, if one may put it in this way, performs an even greater miracle than courage. Courage voluntarily chooses suffering that may be avoided; but patience achieves freedom in unavoidable suffering. By his courage, the free one voluntarily lets himself be caught, but by his patience the prisoner effects his freedom.”

- “When a person of means voluntarily chooses the hard way, then he is called strange, "he who could be so well off without working and who could indulge his every desire for comfort." And when the victim of unavoidable suffering bears it patiently, one says of him, "to his shame, he is coerced, and he is making a virtue out of a necessity." Undeniably he is making a virtue out of a necessity, that is just the secret, that is certainly a most accurate designation for what he does. He makes a virtue out of necessity. He brings a determination of freedom out of that which is determined as necessity. And it is just there that the healing power of the decision for the Eternal resides: that the sufferer may voluntarily accept the compulsory suffering.”

- “And the talk went on to describe the true sufferer’s condition, because by looking at sufferings one may really learn what the highest is. Once again in regard to suffering, cleverness may be misused internally to seek ways of escape, but the Good man makes use of just this very cleverness against ways of escape, in order that he may be and remain committed to the Good, by being willing to suffer all, by accepting the enforced necessity of suffering.”

Chapter 6- Egocentric Service to the Good (God is always/already victorious, no need to think one can 'do good'. As Vivekananda says, the world is Maya, the world cannot be 'fixed', work only through selflessness, not with the ego-driven pride of 'helping others')

- “He does not will the Good for the sake of the reward. He wills that the Good shall triumph through him, that he shall be the instrument, he the chosen one. He does not desire to be rewarded by the world -- that he despises; nor by men -- that he looks down upon. And yet he does not wish to be an unprofitable servant.(Compare Luke 17:10.)”

- “Alas, men often enough confuse impatience with humble, obedient enthusiasm; impatience even lends itself to this confusion. When a man is active early and late "for the sake of the Good," storming about noisily and restlessly, hurling himself into time, as a sick man throws himself down upon his bed, throwing off all consideration for himself, as a sick man throws off his clothes, scornful of the world’s reward; when such a man makes a place among men, then the masses think what he himself imagines, that he is inspired. And yet he is at the other pole from that, for he is double-minded, and double-mindedness no more resembles inspiration than a whirlwind resembles the steadiness of the standing wind.” (non-movement)

- "Alas, why does time exist; if the Good eternally has always been victorious, why should it then creep slowly forward throughout the length of time or almost perish in time’s slowness? Why should it fight laboriously through that which makes time the longest, through uncertainty? Why should the solitary ‘individuals,’(See translator’s introduction.) who sincerely will the Good, be so scattered, so separated, that they can scarcely call out to one another, scarcely catch sight of one another? Why should time hang like a weight upon them? Why should separation involve them in delay, when it is so swiftly accomplished in eternity? Why was an immortal spirit placed in the world and in time, just as the fish is drawn up out of the water and cast upon the beach?" (this is why I want to 'connect' or 'call out' to Cioran, Kierkegaard, Vivekananda, Huxley, etc. combining East, West, psychedelic, time period, race, gender, etc. all together)

- “But this double-minded person is not so easily recognizable on earth. He does not will the Good for the sake of reward, for then he would have become obvious in his aspiration or in his despair. He does not will the Good out of fear of punishment, for then he would have become obvious in his cowardice, in his shunning of punishment, or in his despair, when he was not able to avoid it. No, he wishes to sacrifice all, he fears nothing, only he will not sacrifice himself in daily self-forgetfulness.0 This he fears to do.”

- “Such a double-minded person is perhaps hardly recognizable in this world, because his double-mindedness not evident inside the world. The world’s reward and punishment do not serve as informers against him; for he has overcome the world, even if by a higher deception. Hence his double-mindedness is first recognizable at the boundary where time and eternity touch upon each other. There it is clear and is always recognized by the all-knowing One. He will not be content with the blessed assurance which comforts beyond all measure: that eternally the Good has always been victorious; the blessed assurance which is a security that passeth all understanding; the blessed assurance that the unprofitable servant may have within himself at each moment, even when the time is the longest and he seems to have accomplished least of all, the blessed assurance which allows the unprofitable servant if he loses honor to speak more proudly than that royal word: All is lost save honor.”

- “The purely momentary, in the next moment, to say nothing of eternity, becomes nonsense and vanity: the fiery moment of lust (and what is so strong for the moment as lust!) is loathsome in memory; the fiery moment of anger, revenge, and passion whose gratification seems an irresistible impulse is horrible to remember. For the angry one, the vengeful one, the passionate one, thinks in the moment of passion that he revenges himself. But in the moment of remembrance, when the act of revenge comes back to him, he loathes himself, for he sees that precisely in that moment of revenge he lost himself. The purely momentary seems to be profitable. Yet in the next moment its deception becomes apparent and, eternally understood, calls for repentance. So it is with all things of the moment, and hence with the crowd’s opinion or with membership in the crowd in so far as this opinion and this membership is a thing of the moment.”

- “Alas, in men’s fear-ridden rushing together into a crowd (for why indeed does a man rush into a crowd except because he is afraid!) there, too, it is a mark of boldness not to be afraid, not even of God. And if someone notes that there is an individual outside the crowd who is really and truly afraid -- not of the crowd, but of God, he is sure to be the target of some ridicule. The ridicule is usually glossed over somewhat and it is said: a man should love God. Yes, to be sure, God knows that man’s highest consolation is that God is love and that man is permitted to love Him. But let us not become too forward, and foolishly, yes, blasphemously, dismiss the tradition of our fathers, established by God Himself: that really and truly a man should fear God. This fear is known to the man who is himself conscious of being an individual, and thereby is conscious of his eternal responsibility before God. For he knows, that even if he could with the help of evasions and excuses, get on well in this life, and even if he could by this shady path have gained the whole world, yet there is still a place in the next world where there is no more evasion than there is shade in the scorching desert.”

- “Do you live in such a way that this consciousness is able to secure the time and quiet and liberty of action to penetrate every relation of your life? This does not demand that you withdraw from life, from an honorable calling, from a happy domestic life. On the contrary, it is precisely that consciousness which will sustain and clarify and illuminate what you are to do in the relations of life. You should not withdraw and sit brooding over your eternal accounting. To do this is to deserve something further to account for. You will more and more readily find time to perform your duty and your task, while concern over your eternal responsibility will hinder you from being "busy" and busily having a hand in everything possible -- an activity that can best be called: time-wasting.” (karma, working selflessly, working with your mind always on the Good, everything other than the Good is 'time-wasting'- 'everything other…' covers quite a bit, huh? Ha!)

- “Yes, it is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting,(Ecclesiastes 7:2) for there one can learn, that after a hundred years, all is forgotten. Yes, to be sure, long ago the feast and the gallant brothers were forgotten, but truly the Eternal is not forgotten, not after a thousand years.”

- “Hence in the end it would seem as if that true eternal claim that demands purity of heart, by willing one thing, were done away with, as if it had been withdrawn from government, set away in retirement at such a distance from daily life that there simply could be no talk about it. For among the many-colored seething populace in the noise of the world from day to day and from year to year, there is no scrupulous check made as to whether a person wholly wills the Good if he has influence and might, runs a great business, is something in his own and in others’ eyes. "What fright-fully niggardly pettiness," one thinks, "to be so scrupulous!" One does not consider that there is any presumptuousness in what one has spoken. Nay, one drops the clever remark in passing and hurries on, while the remark also hurries on from mouth to mouth amid the many colored seething populace. And in the rush of life, in trade and commerce from morning to night, there is no such scruple about whether a person wholly wills the Good, just so that in his business he is keen, not to say a "thief," just so that he saves and piles up money, just so that he has a good reputation and by good fortune manages to avoid slander (for whether he actually is guilty or not is here of little importance, for neither he nor the world has time to look into that. Slander is merely a danger as an obstacle to his business). "To what purpose such a delay in the midst of busyness?" And in the world, it is always busy. Yes, it is entirely true that this is the way things look in the world, the way they seem in the world, and the way they must seem within the deceptive horizon of the temporal order. But in eternity it will make a tremendous difference whether a person was scrupulous or not.”

- “Is this not double-mindedness: to be in time without any contemplation, without any distinct thoughts, or to put it more exactly, to be within time deceived over and over again about having or having had an experience of contemplation!” (indeed)

- “Oh, that this talk, far from detaining anyone who sincerely wills the Good, or calling anyone away from fruitful activity, might cause a busy man to pause. For this press of busyness is like a charm. And it is sad to observe how its power swells, how it reaches out seeking always to lay hold of ever-younger victims so that childhood or youth are scarcely allowed the quiet and the retirement in which the Eternal may unfold a divine growth. And suppose that busyness in its haste should make a concession, believing even in its superficial wisdom that there is something beneficial in having a busy man on hand who now and then hurriedly proclaims that higher reflection on life about willing the Good in truth. Alas, is this, then, the true relationship? Are almost all to be excused from that which every man should do for himself? But then for the sake of completeness is someone in the midst of busyness to be delegated the task of setting forth that higher claim -- that higher claim, which, if by some means it could be satisfied, even if in feebleness and in imperfection, would command a man’s whole mind, his unrelenting industry, his best strength?”

### The Concept of Anxiety

- “In actuality, no one ever sank so deep that he could not sink deeper, and there may be one or many who sank deeper. But he who sank in possibility — his eye became dizzy, his eye became confused… Whoever is educated by possibility is exposed to danger, not that of getting into bad company and going astray in various ways as are those educated by the finite, but in danger of a fall, namely, suicide. If at the beginning of education he misunderstands the anxiety, so that it does not lead him to faith but away from faith, then he is lost. On the other hand, whoever is educated [by possibility] remains with anxiety; he does not permit himself to be deceived by its countless falsification and accurately remembers the past. Then the assaults of anxiety, even though they be terrifying, will not be such that he flees from them. For him, anxiety becomes a serving spirit that against its will leads him where he wishes to go.” (Anxiety is a school, educated by 'possibility' is simply the Absurd Persepctive: all actions equally each other, i.e. Nihilism)

- “Anxiety is freedom’s possibility; this anxiety alone is, through faith, absolutely formative, since it consumes all finite ends, discovers all their deceptions. And no Grand Inquisitor has such frightful torments in readiness as has anxiety, and no secret agent knows as cunningly how to attack the suspect in his weakest moment, or to make so seductive the trap in which he will be snared; and no discerning judge understands how to examine, yes, exanimate [exanimere: dishearten], 2 the accused as does anxiety, which never lets him go, not in diversion, not in noise, not at work, not by day, not by night.”

- “Anyone formed by anxiety is shaped by possibility, and only the person shaped by possibility is cultivated according to his infinitude.”

- “Possibility is therefore the most difficult of all categories. It is true that we often hear the opposite, that possibility is so light, while actuality is so heavy. But from whom do we hear such words? From a few wretches who do not know what possibility is, and who, when they were shown by actuality that they were good for nothing and always would be, had mendaciously spruced up a possibility that was then ever so fine, so enchanting, and this possibility was at bottom no more than a little youthful frivolity of which one should rather be ashamed. The possibility said to be so light is usually thought of as the possibility of happiness, good fortune, etc. But this, absolutely, is not possibility; it is a lying invention that human depravity has tricked up in order to have some reason to complain at life, and at Governance, 3 and an occasion to be self-important. No, in possibility all things are equally possible and anyone truly brought up by possibility has grasped the terrifying just as well as the smiling. So when a person like this graduates from the school of possibility, and knows better than a child knows its ABCs that absolutely nothing can be demanded of life, and that horror, perdition, and annihilation live next door to every human being, and when he has thoroughly learned that every anxiety for which he feels alarm can come upon him the very next instant, then he will give actuality another explanation. He will praise actuality, and even when it lies heavily upon him he will remember that it is still far, far lighter than possibility had been. Only in this way can possibility shape a person, because finiteness and the finite situations, in which every individual is assigned its place, whether they be small or commonplace or world historical, are only finitely formative: one can always talk them over, always get something a little else out of them, always bargain, always come a little out of their way, always keep oneself a little on the outside, always prevent oneself from learning something absolutely from them.” (this seems like such an obscure/creative/interesting/fun way to speak of 'renunciation from the worldly life', beyond good and evil, maya, )

- “But for an individual to be formed thus absolutely and infinitely by possibility, that individual must be honest toward possibility and have faith. By faith, I understand here what Hegel somewhere, characteristically and very rightly, calls the inner certainty that anticipates infinity. When the discoveries of possibility are honestly administered, possibility will discover all finitudes but idealize them in the shape of infinity, in anxiety overwhelm the individual, until the individual again overcomes them in the anticipation of faith. What I say here may to many seem obscure and foolish talk, since they pride themselves on never having been in anxiety. To this I would reply that one should certainly not be in anxiety about persons, about finitudes; only someone who passes through the anxiety of the possible is cultivated to have no anxiety, not because this person can escape the terrible things of life, but because these always become weak by comparison with those of possibility. If, on the other hand, the speaker maintains that the great thing about him is that he has never been in anxiety, I will gladly provide him with my explanation: that it comes from his being very spiritless.” (this sounds like Vivekananda, the Absurd Perspective is Kierkegaard's 'Possibility', when one sees the nothingness of this world, 'honestly administered', the Infinite of the Nothingness breaks through, turning inward and away from the world, world of sense)

- “By cheating possibility, which molds the individual, an individual never arrives at faith; the faith will be a finitude’s sagacity, just as that individual’s school was one of finitude.” (earthly/other) (Vivekananda says that a man will not come to religion until he has a great dissatisfaction with this world, for the patching up of this life, by avoiding the anxiety of the Nihilistic experience that reduces all finitude to nothing people stay childlike)

- “the individuality formed by possibility needs but one such story. That individual, in that very instant, is absolutely identified with that unfortunate. He knows no finite subterfuge whereby to escape. In him the anxiety of possibility now has its prey, until, saved, it must hand him over to faith. Nowhere else can he find rest, for every other resting place is only chatter, although in people’s eyes it is sagacity.”

- “Anyone not wanting to sink in the wretchedness of the finite is obliged in the most profound sense to struggle with the infinite.” (this is very Christian)

- “With faith’s help, anxiety educates the individuality to rest in providence. So too in respect of guilt, which is the second thing anxiety discovers. Those who learn to know their guilt only from the finite are lost in the finite, and finitely the question of whether a person is guilty cannot be determined except in an external, juridical, most imperfect sense. The person who learns to know guilt only by analogy to judgments of the police court and the supreme court, never really understand that he is guilty, for if a person is guilty, the guilt is infinite. If such an individuality, who is formed only by finitude, fails to receive a verdict from the police or from public opinion pronouncing guilt, that individuality becomes something that is the most ridiculous and pitiful of all, a model of virtue that is little better than most people but not quite as good as the parson. What help should such a man need in life, when he can retire to a cabinet collection of examples almost before he dies? From finitude one can learn much, but not how to be anxious, except in a very mediocre and corrupting sense. Anyone who has truly learned how to be anxious, on the other hand, will tread as if in a dance when the anxieties of finitude strike up, and when finitude’s apprentices lose wit and courage. Life often deceives in this way.” (Heidegger took this almost word for word)

- “Whatever sin’s consistency, the fact that the phenomenon appears on a respectable scale is always the sign of a deeper nature. That it is seen fairly seldom in life, that is to say, that one has to be an observer to see it more often, is because it can be concealed and also often expelled insofar as one or another precautionary measure is used to abort this, the embryo of the highest life. You need only seek the advice of Tom, Dick, and Harry to become as most people are, and you will always be able to secure the judgment of a few respectable people that this is just what you are. The best proved way to escape spiritual trial is to become spiritless and the sooner the better. Everything, if only taken care of in time, takes care of itself. And as for spiritual trial, one can explain that there is no such thing, or that it can at most be considered a piquant poetical fiction. In days of old, the road to perfection was narrow and solitary, the journey down it always disturbed by aberrations, exposure to sin’s predatory attacks, and pursuit by the arrow of the past, which is as perilous as that of the Scythian hordes. 6 Now one travels to perfection in good company on the railroad and has arrived before one knows it.” (Ha! Participation, Tillich, Vivekananda, life is one, entire 'spiritual trail', there is no escaping the Nothingness of the world, there's no way to bridge the gap between the infinite and the finite, there is no 'happy ending' or 'getting along with life within finitude)

- “All that can truly disarm the sophism of repentance is faith, courage to believe that the state itself is a new sin, courage without anxiety to renounce anxiety, something of which only faith is capable; not that it therefore annihilates anxiety, but, eternally young itself, it extricates itself from anxiety’s moment of death.”

- “The way in which the phenomenon is usually described makes it clear that what they are talking about is the bondage of sin, the state that I know no better way of describing than by recalling a game in which two persons are concealed under one cloak as though there were only one, and the one speaks while the other gesticulates in a way that is quite arbitrary in relation to what is said. For this is how the beast has taken on human form and now constantly jeers at him with his gesticulations and byplay.” (the divided self, yeah?)

- “The demonic therefore first comes clearly in sight only when it is touched by the good, which now comes to its boundary from outside...Far from standing the sufferer in good stead, sympathy is sooner just a way of protecting one’s own egotism. Not daring in a deeper sense to think about such things, one saves oneself through sympathy.”

- “If the demonic is a fate, then it can happen to anyone. There is no denying this, even if in our cowardly age everything possible is done by way of diversions and the brass band of loud enterprises to keep lonely thoughts at bay, just as in the American forests wild beasts are kept off with torches, shouting, and the beating of cymbals. This is why today people learn so little about the highest spiritual trials but all the more about those cringing conflicts between man and man, and between man and woman, that a refined society- and soirée-life brings with it.”

- “There is little point in making the demonic into a spook one first shudders at but afterward ignores just because many centuries have gone since it was found in the world. This assumption is a great stupidity; for it has perhaps never been as widespread as in our times, only that nowadays it manifests itself particularly in the intellectual spheres.” (Ha! Tolstoy, Singer and others simply 'ignoring' or 'talking around' the skeptic/nihilist)

- “How unpleasantly affected such an individuality may be on hearing this quite simpleminded and plain talk of there being a God; demonstrating God’s existence is something with which one occupies oneself only occasionally, learnedly and metaphysically. But the thought of God will obtrude on every occasion. What is it that such an individuality lacks? Inwardness. Inwardness may also be lacking in the opposite direction. The so-called holy are often the objects of the world’s ridicule. They themselves explain this by saying that the world is evil. But that is not entirely true. If such a “holy” one is in an unfree relation to his holiness, that is, if he lacks inwardness, then he is, from a purely aesthetic point of view, simply comical. The world is in a way justified in laughing at him. If a bowlegged man wants to act as a dancing master but is unable to execute a single step, then he is comical. Similarly in the religious sphere. One may hear such a holy person as it were counting the beats to himself, just like someone who cannot dance but nevertheless knows enough to beat time though never lucky enough to get in step. Thus the “holy” one knows that the religious is absolutely commensurable, that it is not something belonging only to certain occasions and moments but something one can always have with one.”

- “When a man of rigid orthodoxy applies all his diligence and learning to proving that every word in the New Testament derives from the respective apostle, inwardness will disappear little by little, and he comes in the end to understand something quite other than what he wanted to understand. When a freethinker applies all his acumen to proving that the New Testament was not written until the second century, it is precisely inwardness he is afraid of, and for that reason he has to have the New Testament put in the same class with other books.” (this is the state of all the youtube debates on the existence of God, both sides are missing the point, they are both too worldly)

- “When the preacher says in Ecclesiastes that “all is vanity,”† earnestness is exactly what he has in mind.”

- “Whoever lives in daily, and yet solemn, communion with the thought that there is a God, could hardly wish himself to pervert this, or see it perverted, by patching together his own definition of what God is. So too with earnestness, which is so earnest a matter that even a definition of it is a frivolity. This is not something I say as though my thinking were obscure, or because I am afraid that one or another superwise speculator— who is as bullheaded in developing concepts as the mathematician is in the proof, and who says about everything what a certain mathematician said: So what does this prove?— should be suspicious of me, as though I didn’t really know what I was talking about. To my mind, what I say here proves much better than any conceptual development that I know in all earnestness what is being discussed.”

- “For having become truly earnest about that which is the object of earnestness, one may very well treat various things earnestly if one will, but the question is whether one first became earnest about the object of earnestness. This object is something every human being has, because it is himself, and anyone who has not become earnest about this but about something else, something great and noisy, that person, despite all his earnestness, is a joker, and even if he can deceive irony for a time, he will deo volente [God willing] still become comical, for irony is jealous of earnestness. He who, on the other hand, has become earnest at the right place will prove his soundness of mind precisely by being able to treat everything else just as sentimentally as jokingly, even if the spines of those serious-looking fools run cold when they see him joke about what made them so frightfully earnest.”

- “As soon as inwardness is lacking, the spirit is finitized. Inwardness is therefore eternity or the constituent of the eternal in the human being.” (same as Otto's 'moralizing' of the numinous, the 'natural'/'worldly' man is not able to grasp due to lack of the Nihilistic experience)

- “The eternal is discussed often enough in our time; it is accepted and rejected, and (considering the way in which this is done) the first shows lack of inwardness just as much as the second. But anyone who has not understood the eternal correctly, understood it altogether concretely, lacks inwardness and earnestness.” (today's debates between the 'religious' and the atheists, both lack inwardness, e.g. a misunderstanding of the 'moral argument')

- “But why are people in so terrible a hurry? If there is no eternity, the moment is just as long as if there were. But anxiety about the eternal makes the moment into an abstraction.— What is more, this denial of the eternal can express itself directly or indirectly in a great variety of ways, as mockery, as a prosaic intoxication with common sense, as busyness, as enthusiasm for the temporal, etc.”

- “Or eternity is metaphysically construed in such a way that the temporal becomes comically preserved in it. From a purely aesthetic-metaphysical point of view, the temporal is comical because it is a contradiction, and the comical always rests in that category. If eternity is conceived purely metaphysically, and one wants for some reason or other to include the temporal in it, then indeed it becomes quite comical that an eternal spirit retains the memory of several times having been in financial difficulties, etc.” (Ha!)

- “In life’s drolleries, its accidental circumstances, its odd nooks and crannies, the soul has not been essentially present. Hence all this vanishes except for that soul who was in this essentially, but for him it will hardly acquire comical significance. If one has reflected thoroughly upon the comical, studying it in practice, keeping one’s category constantly clear, it will readily be understood that the comical belongs of all things to the temporal, for that is where the contradiction is found. One cannot stop it, metaphysically and aesthetically, and prevent it from finally swallowing whole the temporal, which will happen to someone developed enough to use the comic but not mature enough to distinguish inter et inter [between one and the other]. In eternity, on the other hand, all contradiction is canceled, the temporal is permeated by and preserved in the eternal, but in it there is no trace of the comical.” (Earthly/Other distinction)

- “But eternity is not what people think earnestly about; they are anxious about it, and anxiety can hit on a hundred evasions.”

- “Through eating the fruit of knowledge there entered the differentia between good and evil, but also the sexual difference as a drive. How this happened no science can explain. Psychology comes closest and explains the last approximation, which is freedom’s showing-itself-for-itself in the anxiety of possibility, or in the nothing of possibility, or in the nothing of anxiety. If the object of anxiety is a something, we have no leap but a quantitative transition. The later individual has a “more” in relation to Adam, and again a more or less in relation to other individuals. But it remains true, regardless, that the object of anxiety is a nothing. If its object is something such that, when viewed essentially, that is, in terms of freedom, it signifies something, then we do not have a leap but a quantitative transition that confuses every concept.” (Tillich and Heidegger, I think Buber too)

- “...individual’s relation to its historical environment. The most dissimilar things may produce the same effect in this respect. Freedom’s possibility announces itself in anxiety. A reminder may now be enough to bring an individual to collapse in anxiety (remember that I speak as always only psychologically and never nullify the qualitative leap), and this despite the reminder naturally being intended to do just the opposite. Sight of the sinful may save one individual and ruin another. A joke may have the same effect as seriousness and vice versa. Speech and silence can both produce an effect that is the opposite of that intended. There are no limits in this respect. So here again one observes the correctness of the attribution that this is a quantitative more or less, for after all, the quantitative is precisely the infinite limit.” (madness, suicide, or God/all three)

- “To itself genius does not become significant in the most profound sense; its compass can extend no further than that of fate in relation to fortune, misfortune, esteem, honor, power, immortal fame, all of which are temporal terms. Every deeper dialectical characterization of anxiety is excluded. The ultimate would be to be considered guilty, so that anxiety is directed not toward guilt itself but toward its appearance, which is an attribute of honor. A state of the soul like this would lend itself nicely to poetic treatment. Such a state can happen to anyone, but the genius would straightaway grip it so deeply that he would be striving not with humanity but with the profoundest mysteries of human existence.”

- “It takes courage to understand that in spite of its splendor, glory, and significance, the existence of such a genius is sin, and one hardly comes to understand it before having learned to satisfy the hunger of the wishful soul. Yet that is how it is. That such an existence may be to some extent happy all the same proves nothing. One can certainly conceive one’s talent as a means of recreation and realize, in so doing, that not for a moment does it rise above the categories in which temporality rests. Only through a religious reflection can genius and talent be justified in the deepest sense.”

- “If such a genius had scorned the temporal as being immediate, and had turned toward himself and toward the divine, what a religious genius would have come of it! But what agonies would he also have had to endure. To follow one’s immediate traits is a relief in life, whether one is great or small; but the reward is also proportionate, whether one is great or small, and that person who is insufficiently mature spiritually to grasp that even immortal honor throughout all generations is merely a temporal attribute, that person who does not grasp that this, the striving for which keeps people’s souls sleepless with desire and craving, is something very imperfect compared with the immortality that is for every person, and that would rightly arouse the justifiable envy of all the world if it were reserved for one person— that person will not come far in his explanation of spirit and immortality.”

- “Every human life is religiously arranged. Wanting to deny this confuses everything and cancels the concepts of individuality, race, and immortality.”

- “One could wish that people employed their acuity at this point, for here lie very hard problems. To say that someone with a mind for intrigue ought to be a diplomat or a plain-clothes detective, that someone with a mimetic talent for the comical ought to be an actor, and that someone with no talent at all ought to be a stoker in the courthouse, is an extremely fatuous way of looking at life, or rather it is not a way of looking at it at all, for it merely states the obvious. But explaining how my religious existence comes into relation with, and expresses itself in, my outward existence, that is the task. But who in our time bothers to think of things like that, even though life has at present more than ever the appearance of a transitory and fleeting moment? But instead of learning from this how to grasp the eternal, in chasing the moment one learns only how to pester oneself, one’s neighbors, and the moment too, to death.”

- “There is no time to reflect how a religious existence pervades outward existence and interweaves it. Even if one does not pester with the hurry of despair, one still grabs hold of what is closest to hand. One may even become something great in the world. If then, on top of that, one attends church once in a while, then everything goes exceedingly well.” (Ha!)

- “This seems to suggest that for some individuals the religious is the absolute, for others not,\* and so “Goodnight!” to all meaning in life.”

- “What profound religious reflection would be required to stretch to such an outward task, for example, as that of becoming a comic actor?” (karma yoga, how to do fuse this divided self? One of my main issues)

- “Here again we have the question of repetition: To what extent can an individuality, having once begun religious reflection, succeed in returning to itself whole, to the letter in every particular? In the Middle Ages they broke off. Thus when an individuality was to take hold of himself, having lighted once more upon the fact, for example, that he possessed wit, a sense of comedy, etc., he annihilated all of this as something imperfect. Today, this is all too readily considered foolish, since if someone has wit and a sense of comedy he is a fortune’s Pamphilius; 12 what more could he wish? Such explanations contain, naturally, not the faintest presentiment of the problem, for as people nowadays are born more worldly wise than in older days, so too the greater number of them are born blind to the religious.”

- “Nevertheless, with regard to all this, one has to wait for individuals to come forward who, despite outward gifts, do not choose the broad way\* but rather the pain, the distress, and the anxiety in which they reflect religiously upon, and as though for a time lose, what it is surely only seductive to possess. Such a struggle is no doubt very exhausting, because there will be moments when they come close to regretting having started, and, yes, sorrowfully, perhaps sometimes almost to the point of despair, recall the smiling life that would have awaited them if they had followed the immediate urge of their talent. Yet, unquestionably, in the extreme dismay of distress, when it is as though all was lost because the way along which he would now push forward is impassable, and it is he himself who has cut off the smiling way of talent, the attentive person will hear a voice saying: Well done, my son! Just keep on, for he who loses all, gains all.”

- “The first thing he does is to turn toward himself. Just as the immediate genius has fate as the figure that follows him, so this one has guilt. In turning toward himself, he eo ipso turns toward God, and there is an established ceremonial rule that says that when the finite spirit would see God, then it must begin as guilty. In turning toward himself, he discovers guilt. The greater the genius, the more profoundly is guilt discovered. The fact that for the spiritless this should be folly is for me a delight and a joyful sign. The genius is not like most people, and is not content with being so. The reason is not that he disdains people; it is because primitively he has to do with himself, while other people and their explanations are of no help one way or the other.” (this has a lot in it)

- “...the purpose of language is to conceal thoughts, although not as effectively as empty talk does— which is to say, conceal the fact that one has none. (Ha!) In turning inward he discovers freedom. Fate he does not fear, for he takes up no outward task and for him freedom is his bliss; not freedom to do this or that in the world, to become king and emperor or someone touting tickets for the age, but freedom to know with himself that he is freedom.”

- “...guilt captures the religious genius, and this is the moment of culmination, the moment when he is greatest, not when the sight of his piety is like the festivity of a special holiday, but when, through himself, he sinks down before himself in the depth of sin-consciousness.”

## 10. Nietzsche

“What is your greatest experience? It is the hour of the great contempt. The hour in which even your happiness becomes repulsive to you, and even your reason and virtue. The hour when you say: "What good is my happiness! It is poverty and dirt and wretched contentment. But my happiness should justify existence itself! The hour when you say: "What good is my reason! does it long for knowledge as the lion for his food? It is poverty and dirt and wretched contentment!" The hour when you say: "What good are my virtues?! As yet they have not made me rage with passion. How weary I am of my good and evil! It is all poverty and dirt and wretched contentment!" (The Nihilistic Experience, renunciation)

- The Gay Science, 373- “A "scientific" interpretation of the world as you understand it might consequently still be one of the stupidest, that is to say, the most destitute of significance, of all possible world-interpretations:-I say this in confidence to my friends the Mechanists, who today like to hobnob with philosophers, and absolutely believe that mechanics is the teaching of the first and last laws upon which, as upon a ground-floor, all existence must be built. But an essentially mechanical world would be an essentially meaningless world! Supposing we valued the worth of a music with reference to how much it could be counted, calculated, or formulated -how absurd such a " scientific " estimate of music would be! What would one have apprehended, understood, or discerned in it! Nothing, absolutely nothing of what is really "music" in it!”

“We have invented happiness.”

-“Under certain circumstances, the appearance of the extremest form of Pessimism and actual Nihilism might be the sign of a process of incisive and most essential growth, and of mankind's transit into completely new conditions of existence. This is what I have understood.”

- “One simply lacks any reason for convincing oneself that there is a true world.” (try drugs) -“...because nihilism represents the ultimate logical conclusion of our great values and ideals— because we must experience nihilism (my emphasis) before we can find out what value these "values" really had.”

-“The feeling of valuelessness was reached with the realization that the overall character of existence may not be interpreted by means of the concept of "aim," the concept of "unity," or the concept of "truth." Existence has no goal or end...” (this is the experience that brings one to the Ground, Nothingness. Is this similar to Otto's “creatureliness”)

- “..value of the world according to categories that refer to a purely fictitious world. Final conclusion: All the values by means of which we have tried so far to reader the world estimable for ourselves and which then proved inapplicable and therefore devaluated the world— all these values are, psychologically considered, the results of certain perspectives of utility, designed to maintain and increase human constructs of domination— and they have been falsely projected into the essence of things. What we find here is still the hyperbolic naivete of man: positing himself as the meaning and measure of the value of things.”

-“The most extreme form of nihilism would be the view that every belief, every considering-something-true, is necessarily false because there simply is no true world. Thus: a perspective! An appearance whose origin lies in us (in so far as we continually need a narrower, abbreviated, simplified world). —That it is the measure of strength to what extent we can admit to ourselves, without perishing, the merely apparent character, the necessity of lies. To this extent, nihilism, as the denial of a truthful world, of being, might be a divine way of thinking.”

-“Those who have abandoned God cling that much more firmly to the faith in morality. (me- it's the   
“normal”, “everyday” people who have forgotten God, the Nihilist experiences God as the transvaluation of all Earthly Values) Every purely moral value system (that of Buddhism, for example) ends in nihilism: this to be expected in Europe. One still hopes to get along with a moralism without religious background: but that necessarily leads to nihilism.— In religion the constraint is lacking to consider ourselves as value-positing.” (Vivekananda speaks of 'rights' and 'justice' [in Karma Yoga] as being the lower, 'baby' ways of speaking about Truth and the Good, instead of in terms of selflessness)

-The ways of self-narcotization - Deep down: not knowing whither. Emptiness. Attempt to get over it by intoxication: intoxication as music; intoxication as cruelty in the tragic enjoyment of the destruction of the noblest', intoxication as blind enthusiasm for single human beings or ages (as hatred, etc.).— Attempt to work blindly as an instrument of science: opening one's eyes to the many small enjoyments; e.g., also in the quest of knowledge (modesty toward oneself); resignation to generalizing about oneself, a pathos; mysticism, the voluptuous enjoyment of eternal emptiness; art "for its own sake" (" le fait") and "pure knowledge" as narcotic states of disgust with oneself; some kind or other of continual work, or of some stupid little fanaticism...”

-“The philosophical nihilist is convinced that all that happens is meaningless and in vain; and that there ought not to be anything meaningless and in vain. But whence this: there ought not to be? From where does one get this "meaning," this standard?— At bottom, the nihilist thinks that the sight of such a bleak, useless existence makes a philosopher feel dissatisfied, bleak, desperate. Such an insight goes against our finer sensibilities as philosophers. It amounts to the absurd valuation: to have any right to be, the character of existence would have to give the philosopher pleasure.— Now it is easy to see that pleasure and displeasure can only be means in the course of events: the question remains whether we are at all able to see the "meaning," the "aim," whether the question of meaninglessness or its opposite is not insoluble for us.”

-“It was morality that protected life against despair and the leap into nothing.”, Does it make sense to conceive a god 'beyond good and evil'?” (once morality disintegrates, we are left with the Absurd Perspective, i.e. anything goes. Morality is human, God is beyond morality games)

-”man is something that is to be surpassed.” (his interpretation was 'naturalistic' and Earthly to the fullest, rather than complete renunciation of this world and complete submission to the Other.)

- “We have killed him (God), you and I! We are all his murderers! But how have we done it? How were we able to drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the whole horizon? What did we do when we loosened this earth from its sun? Whither does it move now? Wither do we move? Away from all suns? Do we not dash on unceasingly? Backwards, sideways, forwards, in all directions? Is there still an above and below? Do we not stray, as through infinite nothingness? Does not empty space breathe upon us? Has it not become colder? Does not night come on continually, darker and darker?”

-“A Dangerous Resolution.-The Christian resolution to find the world ugly and bad, has made the world ugly and bad.”

- “First, I attack only things that are triumphant-if necessary I wait until they become triumphant. Secondly, I attack only those things against which I find no allies, against which I stand alone-against which I compromise nobody but myself. ... I have not yet taken one single step before the public eye, which did not compromise me: that is my criterion of a proper mode of action.”

- “Would you listen to the words spoken by Zarathustra concerning deliverance from loathing? Did my very loathing forge me wings and the strength to scent fountains afar off? Verily to the loftiest heights did I need to fly, to find once more the spring of joyfulness. And yet must I learn to draw near you more humbly. Far too eagerly does my heart jump to meet you.”

- “Of actual religious difficulties, for instance, I have no experience.”

- “Suffering it was, and impotence - that created all afterworlds; and the brief madness of bliss, which is experienced only by those who suffer most deeply.”

- “Even in your folly and despising you each serve your self, you despisers of the body. I tell you, your very self wants to die, and turns away from life.”

### The Gay Science

- “And as far as my long illness is concerned, am I not infinitely more indebted to it than to my health? I owe to it a higher health, one such that it grows stronger than everything that it does not destroy. I also owe to it my philosophy... Only great pain is the final liberator of the spirit, as the teacher of great suspicion, which makes an X out of every U, a true, correct X, i.e., the ante-penultimate letter... It is only great pain, that long slow pain by which we are burned as if with green wood, which takes its time, that forces us philosophers to descend into our final depth, to rid ourselves of all trust, all good-nature, veiling, gentleness, and averageness, in which we have previously perhaps placed our humanity.”

- “I doubt that such pain 'improves' us but I know that it deepens us.”

- “Everyone looks at you with strange eyes, and continues to make use of his scales, calling this good and that bad ; and no one blushes for shame when you remark that these weights are not the full amount,-there is also no indignation against you ; perhaps they laugh at your doubt. I mean to say that the greater number of people do not find it contemptible to believe this or that, and live according to it, without having been previously aware of the ultimate and surest reasons for and against it, and without even giving themselves any trouble about such reasons afterwards,-the most gifted men and the noblest women still belong to this " greater number.”

- “He really supposed that in language he possessed a knowledge of the cosmos. The language builder was not so modest as to believe that he was only giving names to things. On the contrary he thought he embodied the highest wisdom concerning things in [mere] words; and, in truth, language is the first movement in all strivings for wisdom.”

- “The Everyday Christian.—If Christianity, with its allegations of an avenging God, universal sinfulness, choice of grace, and the danger of eternal damnation, were true, it would be an indication of weakness of mind and character not to be a priest or an apostle or a hermit, and toil for one's own salvation. It would be irrational to lose sight of one's eternal well being in comparison with temporary advantage: Assuming these dogmas to be generally believed, the every day Christian is a pitiable figure, a man who really cannot count as far as three, and who, for the rest, just because of his intellectual incapacity, does not deserve to be as hard punished as Christianity promises he shall be.”

- “Christianity as Antiquity.—When on a Sunday morning we hear the old bells ringing, we ask ourselves: Is it possible? All this for a Jew crucified two thousand years ago who said he was God's son? The proof of such an assertion is lacking.—Certainly, the Christian religion constitutes in our time a protruding bit of antiquity from very remote ages and that its assertions are still generally believed—although men have become so keen in the scrutiny of claims—constitutes the oldest relic of this inheritance. A god who begets children by a mortal woman; a sage who demands that no more work be done, that no more justice be administered but that the signs of the approaching end of the world be heeded; a system of justice that accepts an innocent as a vicarious sacrifice in the place of the guilty; a person who bids his disciples drink his blood; prayers for miracles; sins against a god expiated upon a god; fear of a hereafter to which death is the portal; the figure of the cross as a symbol in an age that no longer knows the purpose and the ignominy of the cross—how ghostly all these things flit before us out of the grave of their primitive antiquity! Is one to believe that such things can still be believed?” (half of this is Nihilism, half is ritual/symbolism)

- “Religious wars only result, when human reason generally has been refined by the subtle disputes of sects ; so that even the populace becomes punctilious and regards trifles as important, actually thinking it possible that the " eternal salvation of the soul" may depend upon minute distinctions of concepts.”

### The Antichrist

- “my argument is that all the values on which mankind now fixes its highest aspirations are decadence-values.”

- “My contention is that all the highest values of humanity have been emptied of this will--that the values of decadence, of nihilism, now prevail under the holiest names. (nihilism (materialism/naturalism) not Nihilism that I speak of, I would agree with Nietzsche here)

- “Of course, one doesn't say "extinction": one says "the other world," or "God," or "the true life," or Nirvana, salvation, blessedness.... This innocent rhetoric, from the realm of religious-ethical balderdash, appears a good deal less innocent when one reflects upon the tendency that it conceals beneath sublime words: the tendency to destroy life.”

- “Let us not under-estimate this fact: that we ourselves, we free spirits, are already a "transvaluation of all values," a visualized declaration of war and victory against all the old concepts of "true" and "not true." The most valuable intuitions are the last to be attained; the most valuable of all are those which determine methods. All the methods, all the principles of the scientific spirit of today, were the targets for thousands of years of the most profound contempt; if a man inclined to them he was excluded from the society of "decent" people--he passed as "an enemy of God," as a scoffer at the truth, as one "possessed."

“We have unlearned something. We have become more modest in every way. We no longer derive man from the "spirit," from the "god-head"; we have dropped him back among the beasts. We regard him as the strongest of the beasts because he is the craftiest; one of the results thereof is his intellectuality. On the other hand, we guard ourselves against a conceit which would assert itself even here: that man is the great second thought in the process of organic evolution. He is, in truth, anything but the crown of creation: beside him stand many other animals, all at similar stages of development... And even when we say that we say a bit too much, for man, relatively speaking, is the most botched of all the animals and the sickliest, and he has wandered the most dangerously from his instincts--though for all that, to be sure, he remains the most interesting!”

-“Formerly it was thought that man's consciousness, his "spirit," offered evidence of his high origin, his divinity. That he might be perfected, he was advised, tortoise-like, to draw his senses in, to have no traffic with earthly things, to shuffle off his mortal coil--then only the important part of him, the "pure spirit," would remain. Here again we have thought out the thing better: to us consciousness, or "the spirit," appears as a symptom of a relative imperfection of the organism, as an experiment, a groping, a misunderstanding, as an affliction which uses up nervous force unnecessarily--we deny that anything can be done perfectly so long as it is done consciously. The "pure spirit" is a piece of pure stupidity: take away the nervous system and the senses, the so-called "mortal shell," and the rest is miscalculation--that is all!”

- “an imaginary teleology (the "kingdom of God," "the last judgment," "eternal life").--This purely fictitious world, greatly to its disadvantage, is to be differentiated from the world of dreams; the later at least reflects reality, whereas the former falsifies it, cheapens it and denies it. Once the concept of "nature" had been opposed to the concept of "God," the word "natural" necessarily took on the meaning of "abominable"--the whole of that fictitious world has its sources in hatred of the natural (--the real!--), and is no more than evidence of a profound uneasiness in the presence of reality. . . . This explains everything. Who alone has any reason for living his way out of reality? The man who suffers under it. But to suffer from reality one must be a botched reality. . . . The preponderance of pains over pleasures is the cause of this fictitious morality and religion: but such a preponderance also supplies the formula for decadence...”

- “In him it does honour to the conditions which enable it to survive, to its virtues--it projects its joy in itself, its feeling of power, into a being to whom one may offer thanks...Religion, within these limits, is a form of gratitude. A man is grateful for his own existence...”

- “But the castration, against all nature, of such a god, making him a god of goodness alone, would be contrary to human inclination. Mankind has just as much need for an evil god as for a good god; it doesn't have to thank mere tolerance and humanitarianism for its own existence.. . . What would be the value of a god who knew nothing of anger, revenge, envy, scorn, cunning, violence? who had perhaps never experienced the rapturous ardeurs of victory and of destruction? No one would understand such a god: why should anyone want him?”

- “The Christian concept of a god--the god as the patron of the sick, the god as a spinner of cobwebs, the god as a spirit--is one of the most corrupt concepts that has ever been set up in the world: it probably touches low-water mark in the ebbing evolution of the god-type. God degenerated into the contradiction of life. Instead of being its transfiguration and eternal Yea! In him war is declared on life, on nature, on the will to live! God becomes the formula for every slander upon the "here and now," and for every lie about the "beyond"! In him nothingness is deified, and the will to nothingness is made holy!” (he seems upset about it here, other times he seems like he praises Nothing, although I believe Vivekananda would agree with this)

- “I allude to Buddhism. Both are to be reckoned among the nihilistic religions--they are both decadence religions--but they are separated from each other in a very remarkable way. For the fact that he is able to compare them at all the critic of Christianity is indebted to the scholars of India.--Buddhism is a hundred times as realistic as Christianity--it is part of its living heritage that it is able to face problems objectively and coolly; it is the product of long centuries of philosophical speculation. The concept, "god," was already disposed of before it appeared. Buddhism is the only genuinely positive religion to be encountered in history, and this applies even to its epistemology (which is a strict phenomenalism) --It does not speak of a "struggle with sin," but, yielding to reality, of the "struggle with suffering." Sharply differentiating itself from Christianity, it puts the self-deception that lies in moral concepts behind it; it is, in my phrase, beyond good and evil.”

- “The two physiological facts upon which it grounds itself and upon which it bestows its chief attention are: first, an excessive sensitiveness to sensation, which manifests itself as a refined susceptibility to pain, and secondly, an extraordinary spirituality, a too protracted concern with concepts and logical procedures, under the influence of which the instinct of personality has yielded to a notion of the "impersonal." (--Both of these states will be familiar to a few of my readers, the objectivists, by experience, as they are to me). These physiological states produced a depression, and Buddha tried to combat it by hygienic measures. Against it he prescribed a life in the open, a life of travel; moderation in eating and a careful selection of foods; caution in the use of intoxicants; the same caution in arousing any of the passions that foster a bilious habit and heat the blood; finally, no worry, either on one's own account or on account of others. He encourages ideas that make for either quiet contentment or good cheer--he finds means to combat ideas of other sorts. He understands good, the state of goodness, as something which promotes health. Prayer is not included, and neither is asceticism. There is no categorical imperative nor any disciplines, even within the walls of a monastery (--it is always possible to leave--). These things would have been simply means of increasing the excessive sensitiveness above mentioned. For the same reason he does not advocate any conflict with unbelievers; his teaching is antagonistic to nothing so much as to revenge, aversion, ressentiment (--"enmity never brings an end to enmity": the moving refrain of all Buddhism. . .) And in all this he was right, for it is precisely these passions which, in view of his main regiminal purpose, are unhealthful. The mental fatigue that he observes, already plainly displayed in too much "objectivity" (that is, in the individual's loss of interest in himself, in loss of balance and of "egoism"), he combats by strong efforts to lead even the spiritual interests back to the ego. In Buddha's teaching egoism is a duty.”

- “...when faith is thus exalted above everything else, it necessarily follows that reason, knowledge and patient inquiry have to be discredited: the road to the truth becomes a forbidden road.--Hope, in its stronger forms, is a great deal more powerful stimulants to life than any sort of realized joy can ever be. Man must be sustained in suffering by a hope so high that no conflict with actuality can dash it--so high, indeed, that no fulfillment can satisfy it: a hope reaching out beyond this world.” (Kierkegaard)

- “--The Jews are the most remarkable people in the history of the world, for when they were confronted with the question, to be or not to be, they chose, with perfectly unearthly deliberation, to be at any price: this price involved a radical falsification of all nature, of all naturalness, of all reality, of the whole inner world, as well as of the outer. They put themselves against all those conditions under which, until now, a people had been able to live, or had even been permitted to live; out of themselves they evolved an idea which stood in direct opposition to natural conditions--one by one they distorted religion, civilization, morality, history and psychology until each became a contradiction of its natural significance.”

- “In order to be able to say Nay to everything representing an ascending evolution of life--that is, to well-being, to power, to beauty, to self-approval--the instincts of resentment, here become downright genius, had to invent another world in which the acceptance of life appeared as the most evil and abominable thing imaginable.” (here he seems to dislike renunciation, although renunciation is a 'doctrine' of Nihilism)

- “To the sort of men who reach out for power under Judaism and Christianity,--that is to say, to the priestly class-decadence is no more than a means to an end. Men of this sort have a vital interest in making mankind sick, and in confusing the values of "good" and "bad," "true" and "false" in a manner that is not only dangerous to life, but also slanders it.”

- “The public notion of this god now becomes merely a weapon in the hands of clerical agitators, who interpret all happiness as a reward and all unhappiness as a punishment for obedience or disobedience to him, for "sin": that most fraudulent of all imaginable interpretations, whereby a "moral order of the world" is set up, and the fundamental concepts, "cause" and "effect," are stood on their heads. Once natural causation has been swept out of the world by doctrines of reward and punishment some sort of unnatural causation becomes necessary: and all other varieties of the denial of nature follow it. A god who demands--in place of a god who helps, who gives counsel, who is at bottom merely a name for every happy inspiration of courage and self-reliance. . . Morality is no longer a reflection of the conditions which make for the sound life and development of the people; it is no longer the primary life-instinct; instead it has become abstract and in opposition to life--a fundamental perversion of the fancy, an "evil eye" on all things.”

- “What is Jewish, what is Christian morality? Chance robbed of its innocence; unhappiness polluted with the idea of "sin"; well-being represented as a danger, as a "temptation"; a physiological disorder produced by the canker worm of conscience...”

- “And the philosophers support the church: the lie about a "moral order of the world" runs through the whole of philosophy, even the newest. What is the meaning of a "moral order of the world"? That there is a thing called the will of God which, once and for all time, determines what man ought to do and what he ought not to do; that the worth of a people, or of an individual thereof, is to be measured by the extent to which they or he obey this will of God; that the destinies of a people or of an individual are controlled by this will of God, which rewards or punishes according to the degree of obedience manifested.--In place of all that pitiable lie reality has this to say: the priest, a parasitical variety of man who can exist only at the cost of every sound view of life, takes the name of God in vain: he calls that state of human society in which he himself determines the value of all things "the kingdom of God"; he calls the means whereby that state of affairs is attained "the will of God"; with cold-blooded cynicism he estimates all peoples, all ages and all individuals by the extent of their subservience or opposition to the power of the priestly order.”

- “Christianity actually denies the church.”

- “What the Gospels make instinctive is precisely the reverse of all heroic struggle, of all taste for conflict: the very incapacity for resistance is here converted into something moral: ("resist not evil !"--the most profound sentence in the Gospels, perhaps the true key to them), to wit, the blessedness of peace, of gentleness, the inability to be an enemy. (me- Tolstoy, Vivekananda)

- “The true life, the life eternal has been found--it is not merely promised, it is here, it is in you; it is the life that lies in love free from all retreats and exclusions, from all keeping of distances. Everyone is the child of God – Jesus claims nothing for himself alone – as the child of God each man is the equal of every other man...Imagine making Jesus a hero! (me- Vivekananda) And what a tremendous misunderstanding appears in the word "genius"! Our whole conception of the "spiritual," the whole conception of our civilization, could have had no meaning in the world that Jesus lived in. In the strict sense of the physiologist, a quite different word ought to be used here...We all know that there is a morbid sensibility of the tactile nerves which causes those suffering from it to recoil from every touch, and from every effort to grasp a solid object. Brought to its logical conclusion, such a physiological habit becomes an instinctive hatred of all reality, a flight into the "intangible," into the "incomprehensible"; a distaste for all formulae, for all conceptions of time and space, for everything established--customs, institutions, the church--; a feeling of being at home in a world in which no sort of reality survives, a merely "inner" world, a "true" world, an "eternal" world..."The Kingdom of God is within you".” (me- Tolstoy, Vivekananda)

- “The instinctive hatred of reality: the consequence of an extreme susceptibility to pain and irritation – so great that merely to be "touched" becomes unendurable, for every sensation is too profound.”

- “Meanwhile, there is a contradiction between the peaceful preacher of the mount, the sea-shore and the fields, who appears like a new Buddha on a soil very unlike India's, and the aggressive fanatic, the mortal enemy of theologians and ecclesiastics...”

- “What the "glad tidings" tell us is simply that there are no more contradictions; the kingdom of heaven belongs to children; the faith that is voiced here is no more an embattled faith--it is at hand, it has been from the beginning, it is a sort of recrudescent childishness of the spirit. The physiologists, at all events, are familiar with such a delayed and incomplete puberty in the living organism, the result of degeneration. A faith of this sort is not furious, it does not denounce, it does not defend itself: it does not come with "the sword"--it does not realize how it will one day set man against man. It does not manifest itself either by miracles, or by rewards and promises, or by "scriptures": it is itself, first and last, its own miracle, its own reward, its own promise, its own "kingdom of God." This faith does not formulate itself--it simply lives, and so guards itself against formulae.” (me- this sounds like Perennial/Huxley)

- “To be sure, the accident of environment, of educational background gives prominence to concepts of a certain sort: in primitive Christianity one finds only concepts of a Judaeo--Semitic character (--that of eating and drinking at the last supper belongs to this category--an idea which, like everything else Jewish, has been badly mauled by the church). But let us be careful not to see in all this anything more than symbolical language, semantics an opportunity to speak in parables. It is only on the theory that no work is to be taken literally that this anti-realist is able to speak at all. Set down among Hindus he would have made use of the concepts of Sankhya, and among Chinese he would have employed those of Lao-tse --and in neither case would it have made any difference to him.--With a little freedom in the use of words, one might actually call Jesus a "free spirit" --he cares nothing for what is established: the word killeth, a whatever is established killeth. 'The idea of "life" as an experience, as he alone conceives it, stands opposed to his mind to every sort of word, formula, law, belief and dogma. He speaks only of inner things: "life" or "truth" or "light" is his word for the innermost--in his sight everything else, the whole of reality, all nature, even language, has significance only as sign, as allegory. --Here it is of paramount importance to be led into no error by the temptations lying in Christian, or rather ecclesiastical prejudices: such a symbolism par excellence stands outside all religion, all notions of worship, all history, all natural science, all worldly experience, all knowledge, all politics, all psychology, all books, all art--his "wisdom" is precisely a pure ignorance of all such things. He has never heard of culture; he doesn't have to make war on it--he doesn't even deny it. . . The same thing may be said of the state, of the whole bourgeoise social order, of labour, of war--he has no ground for denying" the world," for he knows nothing of the ecclesiastical concept of "the world"

- “The results of such a point of view project themselves into a new way of life, the special evangelical way of life. It is not a "belief" that marks off the Christian; he is distinguished by a different mode of action; he acts differently. He offers no resistance, either by word or in his heart, to those who stand against him. He draws no distinction between strangers and countrymen, Jews and Gentiles ("neighbour," of course, means fellow-believer, Jew). He is angry with no one, and he despises no one. He neither appeals to the courts of justice nor heeds their mandates ("Swear not at all") . He never under any circumstances divorces his wife, even when he has proofs of her infidelity.” (me- did Tolstoy just rip off Nietzsche's interpretation? Or did he expand upon it? Or did he simply “clarify” the message?)

- “The life of the Saviour was simply a carrying out of this way of life--and so was his death. . . He no longer needed any formula or ritual in his relations with God--not even prayer. He had rejected the whole of the Jewish doctrine of repentance and atonement; he knew that it was only by a way of life that one could feel one's self "divine," "blessed," "evangelical," a "child of God."Not by "repentance,"not by "prayer and forgiveness" is the way to God: only the Gospel way leads to God--it is itself "God!"--What the Gospels abolished was the Judaism in the concepts of "sin," "forgiveness of sin," "faith," "salvation through faith"--the whole ecclesiastical dogma of the Jews was denied by the 'glad tidings.'”

- “If I understand anything at all about this great symbolist, it is this: that he regarded only subjective realities as realities, as "truths"--that he saw everything else, everything natural, temporal, spatial and historical, merely as signs, as materials for parables. The concept of "the Son of God" does not connote a concrete person in history, an isolated and definite individual, but an "eternal" fact, a psychological symbol set free from the concept of time. The same thing is true, and in the highest sense, of the God of this typical symbolist, of the "kingdom of God," and of the "sonship of God." Nothing could he more un-Christian than the crude ecclesiastical notions of God as a person, of a "kingdom of God" that is to come, of a "kingdom of heaven" beyond, and of a "son of God" as the second person of the Trinity. All this--if I may be forgiven the phrase--is like thrusting one's fist into the eye (and what an eye!) of the Gospels: a disrespect for symbols amounting to world-historical cynicism.” (me- Ha! What a prediction! Spong, Tillich, Vivekananda, Huxley, they are all fighting against the 'disrespect for symbols amounting to world-historical cynicism')

- “the word "Son" expresses entrance into the feeling that there is a general transformation of all things (beatitude), and "Father" expresses that feeling itself--the sensation of eternity and of perfection.--I am ashamed to remind you of what the church has made of this symbolism: has it not set an Amphitryon story at the threshold of the Christian "faith"? And a dogma of "immaculate conception" for good measure? . . --And thereby it has robbed conception of its immaculateness-- The "kingdom of heaven" is a state of the heart--not something to come "beyond the world" or "after death." The whole idea of natural death is absent from the Gospels: death is not a bridge, not a passing; it is absent because it belongs to a quite different, a merely apparent world, useful only as a symbol. The "hour of death" is not a Christian idea--"hours," time, the physical life and its crises have no existence for the bearer of "glad tidings." . . . The "kingdom of God" is not something that men wait for: it had no yesterday and no day after tomorrow, it is not going to come at a "millennium"--it is an experience of the heart, it is everywhere and it is nowhere...”

- “This "bearer of glad tidings" died as he lived and taught--not to "save mankind," but to show mankind how to live. It was a way of life that he bequeathed to man: his demeanour before the judges, before the officers, before his accusers--his demeanour on the cross. He does not resist; he does not defend his rights; he makes no effort to ward off the most extreme penalty—more, he invites it. . . And he prays, suffers and loves with those, in those, who do him evil . . . Not to defend one's self, not to show anger, not to lay blames. . . On the contrary, to submit even to the Evil One--to love him...”

- “--We free spirits – we are the first to have the necessary prerequisite to understanding what nineteen centuries have misunderstood--that instinct and passion for integrity which makes war upon the "holy lie" even more than upon all other lies...Mankind was unspeakably far from our benevolent and cautious neutrality, from that discipline of the spirit which alone makes possible the solution of such strange and subtle things: what men always sought, with shameless egoism, was their own advantage therein; they created the church out of denial of the Gospels...Whoever sought for signs of an ironical divinity's hand in the great drama of existence would find no small indication thereof in the stupendous question-mark that is called Christianity. That mankind should be on its knees before the very antithesis of what was the origin, the meaning and the law of the Gospels--that in the concept of the "church" the very things should be pronounced holy that the "bearer of glad tidings" regards as beneath him and behind him--it would be impossible to surpass this as a grand example of world-historical irony.”

- “--Our age is proud of its historical sense: how, then, could it delude itself into believing that the crude fable of the wonder-worker and Saviour constituted the beginnings of Christianity--and that everything spiritual and symbolical in it only came later? Quite to the contrary, the whole history of Christianity--from the death on the cross onward--is the history of a progressively clumsier misunderstanding of an original symbolism...A sickly barbarism finally lifts itself to power as the church--the church, that incarnation of deadly hostility to all honesty, to all loftiness of soul, to all discipline of the spirit, to all spontaneous and kindly humanity.--Christian values--noble values: it is only we, we free spirits, who have re-established this greatest of all antitheses in values!”

- “A prince at the head of his armies, magnificent as the expression of the egoism and arrogance of his people--and yet acknowledging, without any shame, that he is a Christian! .. . Whom, then, does Christianity deny? what does it call "the world"? To be a soldier, to be a judge, to be a patriot; to defend one's self; to be careful of one's honour; to desire one's own advantage; to be proud . . . every act of everyday, every instinct, every valuation that shows itself in a deed, is now anti-Christian: what a monster of falsehood the modern man must be to call himself nevertheless, and without shame, a Christian!”

- “There are days when I am visited by a feeling blacker than the blackest melancholy--contempt of man. Let me leave no doubt as to what I despise, whom I despise: it is the man of today, the man with whom I am unhappily contemporaneous. The man of today--I am suffocated by his foul breath! Toward the past, like all who understand, I am full of tolerance, which is to say, generous self-control: with gloomy caution I pass through whole millenniums of this mad house of a world, call it "Christianity," "Christian faith" or the "Christian church," as you will--I take care not to hold mankind responsible for its lunacies. But my feeling changes and breaks out irresistibly the moment I enter modern times, our times. Our age knows better. .. What was formerly merely sickly now becomes indecent – it is indecent to be a Christian today. And here my disgust begins.--I look about me: not a word survives of what was once called "truth"; we can no longer bear to hear a priest pronounce the word. Even a man who makes the most modest pretensions to integrity must know that a theologian, a priest, a pope of today not only errs when he speaks, but actually lies--and that he no longer escapes blame for his lie through "innocence" or "ignorance." The priest knows, as everyone knows, that there is no longer any "God," or any "sinner," or any "Saviour"--that "free will" and the "moral order of the world" are lies--: serious reflection, the profound self-conquest of the spirit, allow no man to pretend that he does not know it.” (me- same message as Vedanta, Vivekananda- section 6744)

- “The very word "Christianity" is a misunderstanding--at bottom there was only one Christian, and he died on the cross. The "Gospels" died on the cross. What, from that moment onward, was called the "Gospels" was the very reverse of what he had lived: "bad tidings," a Dysangelium.14It is an error amounting to nonsensicality to see in "faith," and particularly in faith in salvation through Christ, the distinguishing mark of the Christian: only the Christian way of life, the life lived by him who died on the cross, is Christian.”

- “In fact, there are no Christians. The "Christian"--he who for two thousand years has passed as a Christian--is simply a psychological self-delusion. Closely examined, it appears that, despite all his "faith," he has been ruled only by his instincts--and what instincts!”

- “"Who put him to death? who was his natural enemy?"--this question flashed like a lightning-stroke. Answer: dominant Judaism, its ruling class. From that moment, one found one's self in revolt against the established order, and began to understand Jesus as in revolt against the established order. Until then this militant, this nay-saying, nay-doing element in his character had been lacking; what is more, he had appeared to present its opposite. Obviously, the little community had not understood what was precisely the most important thing of all: the example offered by this way of dying, the freedom from and superiority to every feeling of ressentiment--a plain indication of how little he was understood at all! All that Jesus could hope to accomplish by his death, in itself, was to offer the strongest possible proof, or example, of his teachings in the most public manner. But his disciples were very far from forgiving his death--though to have done so would have accorded with the Gospels in the highest degree; and neither were they prepared to offer themselves, with gentle and serene calmness of heart, for a similar death. . . . On the contrary, it was precisely the most unevangelical of feelings, revenge, that now possessed them.”

- “the "kingdom of God" is to come, with judgment upon his enemies...But in all this there was a wholesale misunderstanding: imagine the "kingdom of God" as a last act, as a mere promise!” (me- Ha! Vedanta)

- “And from that time onward an absurd problem offered itself: "how could God allow it!" To which the deranged reason of the little community formulated an answer that was terrifying in its absurdity: God gave his son as a sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins. At once there was an end of the gospels! Sacrifice for sin, and in its most obnoxious and barbarous form: sacrifice of the innocent for the sins of the guilty! What appalling paganism !--Jesus himself had done away with the very concept of "guilt," he denied that there was any gulf fixed between God and man; he lived this unity between God and man...”

- “From this time forward the type of the Saviour was corrupted, bit by bit, by the doctrine of judgment and of the second coming, the doctrine of death as a sacrifice, the doctrine of the resurrection, by means of which the entire concept of "blessedness," the whole and only reality of the gospels, is juggled away--in favour of a state of existence after death!”

- “Buddhism promises nothing, but actually fulfills; Christianity promises everything, but fulfills nothing.”

- “The life, the example, the teaching, the death of Christ, the meaning and the law of the whole gospels--nothing was left of all this after that counterfeiter in hatred had reduced it to his uses. Surely not reality; surely not historical truth!”

- “When the centre of gravity of life is placed, not in life itself, but in "the beyond"--in nothingness--then one has taken away its centre of gravity altogether. The vast lie of personal immortality destroys all reason, all natural instinct--henceforth, everything in the instincts that is beneficial, that fosters life and that safeguards the future is a cause of suspicion. So to live that life no longer has any meaning: this is now the "meaning" of life. . .. Why be public-spirited? Why take any pride in descent and forefathers? Why labour together, trust one another, or concern one's self about the common welfare, and try to serve it? . . . Merely so many "temptations," so many strayings from the "straight path."--"One thing only is necessary". . . That every man, because he has an "immortal soul," is as good as every other man; that in an infinite universe of things the "salvation" of every individual may lay claim to eternal importance; that insignificant bigots and the three-fourths insane may assume that the laws of nature are constantly suspended in their behalf--it is impossible to lavish too much contempt upon such a magnification of every sort of selfishness to infinity, to insolence. And yet Christianity has to thank precisely this miserable flattery of personal vanity for its triumph--it was thus that it lured all the botched, the dissatisfied, the fallen upon evil days, the whole refuse and off-scouring of humanity to its side. The "salvation of the soul"--in plain English: "the world revolves around me." (me- Kierkegaardian, Tolstoyian)

- “Christianity is a revolt of all creatures that creep on the ground against everything that is lofty: the gospel of the "lowly" lowers.”

- “...they say 'judge not,' and then they condemn to hell whoever stands in their way.”

- “.We others, who have the courage for health and likewise for contempt,--we may well despise a religion that teaches misunderstanding of the body! that refuses to rid itself of the superstition about the soul! that makes a "virtue" of insufficient nourishment! that combats health as a sort of enemy, devil, temptation! that persuades itself that it is possible to carry about a "perfect soul" in a cadaver of a body, and that, to this end, had to devise for itself a new concept of "perfection," a pale, sickly, idiotically ecstatic state of existence, so-called "holiness"--a holiness that is itself merely a series of symptoms of an impoverished, enervated and incurably disordered body!”

- However small our piety, if we ever encountered a god who always cured us of a cold in the head at just the right time, or got us into our carriage at the very instant heavy rain began to fall, he would seem so absurd a god that he'd have to be abolished even if he existed. God as a domestic servant, as a letter carrier, as an almanac--man--at bottom, he is' a mere name for the stupidest sort of chance.”

- “The martyrs have damaged the truth...Even to this day the crude fact of persecution is enough to give an honourable name to the most empty sort of sectarianism.--But why? Is the worth of a cause altered by the fact that someone had laid down his life for it?”

- “Do not let yourself be deceived: great intellects are sceptical. Zarathustra is a sceptic. The strength, the freedom which proceed from intellectual power, from a superabundance of intellectual power, manifest themselves as scepticism. Men of fixed convictions do not count when it comes to determining what is fundamental in values and lack of values. Men of convictions are prisoners. They do not see far enough, they do not see what is below them: whereas a man who would talk to any purpose about value and non-value must be able to see five hundred convictions beneath him--and behind him. . . . A mind that aspires to great things, and that wills the means thereto, is necessarily sceptical. Freedom from any sort of conviction belongs to strength, and to an independent point of view.”

- “To know the limits of reason- that alone is genuine philosophy.”

- “--The "law," the "will of God," the "holy book," and "inspiration"--all these things are merely words for the conditions under which the priest comes to power and with which he maintains his power,--these concepts are to be found at the bottom of all priestly organizations, and of all priestly or priestly-philosophical schemes of governments. The "holy lie"--common alike to Confucius, to the Code of Manu, to Mohammed and to the Christian church--is not even wanting in Plato. "Truth is here": this means, no matter where it is heard, the priest lies.” (me- Earthly constructions of “religion” or “God”)

- “The superior caste--I call it the fewest--has, as the most perfect, the privileges of the few: it stands for happiness, for beauty, for everything good upon earth. Only the most intellectual of men have any right to beauty, to the beautiful; only in them can goodness escape being weakness. Pulchrum est paucorum hominum:30 goodness is a privilege. Nothing could be more unbecoming to them than uncouth manners or a pessimistic look, or an eye that sees ugliness--or indignation against the general aspect of things. Indignation is the privilege of the Chandala; so is pessimism.”

- “This was his revelation at Damascus: he grasped the fact that he needed the belief in immortality in order to rob "the world" of its value, that the concept of "hell" would master Rome--that the notion of a "beyond" is the death of life. Nihilist and Christian: they rhyme in German, and they do more than rhyme.” (me- Eugene Seraphim was correct: Nietzsche didn't understand his own, complex, view of Nihilism. He misinterpreted his Nihilism into Naturalism and a “revolt” of sorts, rather than a complete reduction of the Earthly with a “drowning” into the Other, e.g. Tolstoy, Perennial, Mystics, etc. Or he just can't deal with everyone around him and their “shallow” interpretation of religion)

- “The Christian church has left nothing untouched by its depravity; it has turned every value into worthlessness, and every truth into a lie, and every integrity into baseness of soul.” (me- of course, when there is “no reason to believe in the Divine”, i.e. under Naturalism)

### Thus Spoke Zarathustra

- “Yes, a dying for many has here been devised, which glorifies itself as life: truly, a hearty service to all preachers of death! The state, I call it, where all are poison-drinkers, the good and the bad: the state, where all lose themselves, the good and the bad: the state, where the slow suicide of all- is called "life." Just see these superfluous ones! They steal the works of the inventors and the treasures of the wise. Culture, they call their theft- and everything becomes sickness and trouble to them! Just see these superfluous ones! Sick are they always; they vomit their bile and call it a newspaper. They devour one another, and cannot even digest themselves. Just see these superfluous ones! Wealth they acquire and become poorer thereby. Power they seek for, and above all, the lever of power, much money- these impotent ones! See them clamber, these nimble apes! They clamber over one another, and thus scuffle into the mud and the abyss. Towards the throne they all strive: it is their madness- as if happiness sat on the throne! Often sits filth on the throne. - and often also the throne on filth. Madmen they all seem to me, and clambering apes, and too eager. Badly smells their idol to me, the cold monster: badly they all smell to me, these idolaters.”

- “Truly, he who possesses little is so much the less possessed: praised be a little poverty!”

- “Around the inventors of new values revolves the world: - invisibly it revolves. But around the actors revolve the people and the glory: such is the course of things.”

- “Values did man only assign to things in order to maintain himself - he created only the significance of things, a human significance! Therefore, calls he himself "man," that is, the valuator.”

- “A thousand goals have there been thus far, for a thousand peoples have there been. Only the fetter for the thousand necks is still lacking; there is lacking the one goal. As yet humanity has not a goal. But pray tell me, my brothers, if the goal of humanity be still lacking, is there not also still lacking- humanity itself?”

- “He who seeks may easily get lost himself. All isolation is wrong": so say the herd. And long did you belong to the herd. The voice of the herd will still echo in you. And when you say, "I have no longer a conscience in common with you," then will it be a plaint and a pain.”

- “One day will you see no longer your loftiness, and see too closely your lowliness; your sublimity itself will frighten you as a phantom. you will one day cry: "All is false!”

Human All Too Human-

“Perhaps it will follow from all this that one should form no judgments whatever; if one could but merely live without having to form estimates, without aversion and without partiality!...We are primordially illogical and hence unjust beings and can recognise this fact: this is one of the greatest and most baffling discords of existence.”

- “Now, the great majority of mankind endure life without any great protest, and believe, to this extent, in the value of existence, but that is because each individual decides and determines alone, and never comes out of his own personality like these exceptions: everything outside of the personal has no existence for them or at the utmost is observed as but a faint shadow.”

- “Consequently the value of life for the generality of mankind consists simply in the fact that the individual attaches more importance to himself than he does to the world. The great lack of imagination from which he suffers is responsible for his inability to enter into the feelings of beings other than himself, and hence his sympathy with their fate and suffering is of the slightest possible description. On the other hand, whosoever really could sympathise, necessarily doubts the value of life; were it possible for him to sum up and to feel in himself the total consciousness of mankind, he would collapse with a malediction against existence,—for mankind is, in the mass, without a goal, and hence man cannot find, in the contemplation of his whole course, anything to serve him as a mainstay and a comfort, but rather a reason to despair. If he looks beyond the things that immediately engage him to the final aimlessness of humanity, his own conduct assumes in his eyes the character of a frittering away. To feel oneself, however, as humanity (not alone as an individual) frittered away exactly as we see the stray leaves frittered away by nature, is a feeling transcending all feeling. But who is capable of it?”

- “A question seems to weigh upon our tongue and yet will not put itself into words: whether one can knowingly remain in the domain of the untruthful? or, if one must, whether, then, death would not be preferable? For there is no longer any ought (Sollen), morality; so far as it is involved "ought," is, through our point of view, as utterly annihilated as religion. Our knowledge can permit only pleasure and pain, benefit and injury, to subsist as motives. But how can these motives be distinguished from the desire for truth? Even they rest upon error (in so far, as already stated, partiality and dislike and their very inaccurate estimates palpably modify our pleasure and our pain). The whole of human life is deeply involved in untruth.”

- “A man would live, at last, both among men and unto himself, as in the natural state, without praise, reproach, competition, feasting one's eyes, as if it were a play, upon much that formerly inspired dread.”

- “Suicide in such a case is a quite natural and due proceeding that ought to command respect as a triumph of reason: and did in fact command respect during the times of the masters of Greek philosophy and the bravest Roman patriots, who usually died by their own hand. Eagerness, on the other hand, to keep alive from day to day with the anxious counsel of physicians, without capacity to attain any nearer to one's ideal of life, is far less worthy of respect.”

- “Interpretation. -All the visions, fears, exhaustions and delights of the saint are well known symptoms of sickness, which in him, owing to deep rooted religious and psychological delusions, are explained quite differently, that is not as symptoms of sickness.—So, too, perhaps, the demon of Socrates was nothing but a malady of the ear that he explained, in view of his predominant moral theory, in a manner different from what would be thought rational to-day.”

- “This condition would not be found so bitter if the individual but compared himself freely with other men: for then he would have no reason to be discontented with himself in particular as he is merely bearing his share of the general burden of human discontent and incompleteness. But he compares himself with a being who alone must be capable of the conduct that is called unegoistic and of an enduring consciousness of unselfish motive, with God.”

- “We cannot possibly feel for others, as the expression goes; we feel only for ourselves. The assertion sounds hard, but it is not, if rightly understood. A man loves neither his father nor his mother nor his wife nor his child, but simply the feelings which they inspire.” (me- Naturalism or Nihiltheism here? Both?)

- “Thus will the philosopher embrace the dogmas of asceticism, humility, sanctity, in the light of which his own image appears in its most hideous aspect. This crushing of self, this mockery of one's own nature, this spernere se sperni out of which religions have made so much is in reality but a very high development of vanity. The whole ethic of the sermon on the mount belongs in this category: man has a true delight in mastering himself through exaggerated pretensions or excessive expedients and later deifying this tyrannically exacting something within him. In every scheme of ascetic ethics, man prays to one part of himself as if it were god and hence it is necessary for him to treat the rest of himself as devil.”

- “In all pessimistic religions the act of procreation is looked upon as evil in itself.”

- “The Christian pessimists of practice, had, as stated, a direct interest in the prevalence of an opposite belief. They needed in the loneliness and the spiritual wilderness of their lives an ever living enemy, and a universally known enemy through whose conquest they might appear to the unsanctified as utterly incomprehensible and half unnatural beings.”

Ecce Homo

- “If you should require a formula for a destiny of this kind that has taken human form, you will find it in my Zarathustra. " And he who would be a creator in good and evil-verily, he must first be a destroyer, and break values into pieces. " Thus the greatest evil belongs unto the greatest good: but this is the creative good." I am by far the most terrible man that has ever existed ; but this does not alter the fact that I shall become the most beneficent.”

- “The condition of the existence of the good is falsehood: or, otherwise expressed, the refusal at any price to see how reality is actually constituted. The refusal to see that this reality is not so constituted as always to be stimulating beneficent instincts, and still less, so as to suffer at all moments the intrusion of ignorant and good-natured hands. To consider distress of all kinds as an objection, as something which must be done away with, is the greatest nonsense on earth; generally speaking, it is nonsense of the most disastrous sort, fatal in its stupidity- almost as mad as the will to abolish bad weather, out of pity for the poor, so to speak. In the great economy of the whole universe, the terrors of reality (in the passions, in the desires, in the will to power) are incalculably more necessary than that form of petty happiness which is called " goodness "; it is even needful to practise leniency in order so much as to allow the latter a place at all, seeing that it is based upon a falsification of the instincts.”

- “Zarathustra allows of no doubt here; he says that it was precisely the knowledge of the good, of the " best," which inspired his absolute horror of men.” (me- this is something Huxley, Augustine, or Luther would say. Nietzsche is simply, seemingly knowingly, describing “sin”)

- “" You higher men, on whom my gaze now falls, this is the doubt that you wake in my breast, and this is my secret laughter: methinks you would call my overman-the devil! So strange are you in your souls to all that is great, that the overman would be terrible in your eyes for his goodness." It is from this passage, and from no other, that you must set out to understand the goal to which Zarathustra aspires-the kind of man that he conceives sees reality as it is; he is strong enough for this-he is not estranged or far removed from it, he is that reality himself, in his own nature can be found all the terrible and questionable character of reality: only thus can man have greatness.” (me- but how does one see the world? My Nihiltheism? Dawkins' “joyful universe”? This sounds like Vivekananda)

- “My danger is the loathing of mankind.”

- “The man who unmasks morality has also unmasked the worth-lessness of the values in which men either believe or have believed ; he no longer sees anything to be revered in the most venerable man-even in the types of men that have been pronounced holy; all he can see in them is the most fatal kind of abortions...”

- “In this domain I am a master to my backbone-I know both sides, for I am both sides.” (me- Theism/Naturalism, Earthly/Other, etc.)

- “The perfect lucidity and cheerfulness, the intellectual exuberance even, that this work reflects, coincides, in my case, not only with the most profound physiological weakness, but also with an excess of suffering. In the midst of the agony of a headache which lasted three days, accompanied by violent nausea, I was possessed of most singular dialectical clearness, and in absolutely cold blood I then thought out things, for which, in my more healthy moments, I am not enough of a climber, not sufficiently subtle, not sufficiently cold.”

- “To look upon healthier concepts and values from the standpoint of the sick, and conversely to look down upon the secret work of the instincts of decadence from the standpoint of him who is laden and self-reliant with the richness of life-this has been my longest exercise, my principal experience. If in anything at all, it was in this that I became a master.”

- “I sentenced myself to absolute solitude, and to a severance from all those conditions in life to which I had grown accustomed ; my discipline of myself, and my refusal to allow myself to be pampered, to be tended hand and foot, and to be doctored-all this betrays the absolute certainty of my instincts respecting what at that time was most needful to me.”

- “An intrinsically morbid nature cannot become healthy. On the other hand, to an intrinsically sound nature, illness may even constitute a powerful stimulus to life, to a surplus of life. It is in this light that I now regard the long period of illness that I endured: it seemed as if I had discovered life afresh, my own self included.”

- “I tasted all good things and even trifles in a way in which it was not easy for others to taste them- out of my Will to Health and to Life I made my philosophy. . . . For this should be thoroughly understood; it was during those years in which my vitality reached its lowest point that I ceased from being a pessimist: the instinct of self-recovery forbade my holding to a philosophy of poverty and desperation.”

- “First, I attack only things that are triumphant-if necessary I wait until they become triumphant. Secondly, I attack only those things against which I find no allies, against which I stand alone-against which I compromise nobody but myself...I have not yet taken one single step before the public eye, which did not compromise me: that is my criterion of a proper mode of action.” (me- a unique way to describe an effect of the Nihilistic experience)

- “I would die in unclean surroundings,-I swim, bathe, and splash about, as it were, incessantly in water, in any kind of perfectly transparent and shining element. That is why my relations with my fellows try my patience to no small extent; my humanity does not consist in the fact that I understand the feelings of my fellows, but that I can endure to understand...My humanity is a perpetual process of self-mastery. But I need solitude...is to say, recovery, return to myself, the breathing of free, crisp, bracing air.”

- “Did my very loathing forge me wings and the strength to scent fountains afar off? Verily to the loftiest heights did I need to fly, to find once more the spring of joyfulness.”

- “God," " the immortality of the soul," "salvation,"a "beyond"-to all these notions, even as a child, I never paid any attention whatsoever, nor did I waste any time upon them,-maybe I was never naif enough for that ?-I am quite unacquainted with atheism as a result, and still less as an event in my life.: in me it is inborn, instinctive. I am too inquisitive, too incredulous, too high spirited, to be satisfied with such a palpably clumsy solution of things. God is a too palpably clumsy solution of things ; a solution which shows a lack of delicacy towards us thinkers-at bottom He is really no more than a coarse and rude prohibition of us: you shall not think!” (me- great example of Nietzsche saying in plain language that he rejects the Earthly conception of the “religious life”)

- “If a man wish to get rid of a feeling of insufferable oppression, he has to take to hashish.” (me- an escape? Yes, but where is the escape to? The escape to is the most important)

- “When he has not a book between his fingers he cannot think. When he thinks, he responds to a stimulus (a thought he has read),-finally all he does is to react. The scholar exhausts his whole strength in saying either " yes " or " no " to matter which has already been thought out, or in criticising it-he is no longer capable of thought on his own account. ... In him the instinct of self-defence has decayed, otherwise he would defend himself against books. The scholar is a decadent. With my own eyes I have seen gifted, richly endowed, and free-spirited natures already " read to ruins" at thirty, and mere wax vestas that have to be rubbed before they can give off any sparks -or " thoughts." To set to early in the morning, at the break of day, in all the fullness and dawn of one's strength, and to read a book-this I call positively vicious!” (The Kingdom of God is Within You)

- “When on one occasion Dr. Heinrich von Stein honestly complained that he could not understand a word of my Zarathustra, I said to him that this was just as it should be: to have understood six sentences in that book-that is to say, to have lived them-raises a man to a higher level among mortals than " modern" men can attain…Thanks to a little trick of destiny, every sentence in these criticisms seemed, with a consistency that I could but admire, to be an inverted truth. In fact it was most remarkable that all one had to do was to " transvalue all values," in order to hit the nail on the head with regard to me, instead of striking my head with the nail. ... I am more particularly anxious therefore to discover an explanation. After all, no one can draw more out of things, books included, than he already knows. A man has no ears for that to which experience has given him no access. To take an extreme case, suppose a book contains simply incidents which lie quite outside the range of general or even rare experience-suppose it to be the first language to express a whole series of experiences. In this case nothing it contains will really be heard at all, and, thanks to an acoustic delusion, people will believe that where nothing is heard there is nothing to hear...This, at least, has been my usual experience, and proves, if you will, the originality of my experience.” (me- “Original”? No. Rare? Yes.)

- “Not only the poverty of a man's soul and its stuffy air excludes all intercourse with them, but also, and to a much greater degree, cowardice, uncleanliness, and secret intestinal re-vengefulness ; a word from my lips suffices to make the colour of all evil instincts rush into a face...Those who will have nothing to do with the contents of my books, as for instance my so-called friends, assume an "impersonal" tone concerning them: they wish me luck, and congratulate me for having produced another work ; they also declare that my writings show progress, because they exhale a more cheerful spirit.” (Ha!)

On the Genealogy of Morals

- “The hypnotic sensation of nothingness, the peace of deepest sleep, anaesthesia in short - that is what passes with the sufferers and the absolutely depressed for, in truth, their supreme good, their value of values ; that is what must be treasured by them as something positive, be felt by them as the essence of the Positive (according to the same logic of the feelings, nothingness is in all pessimistic religions called God).”

“The alleviation consists in the attention of the sufferer being absolutely diverted from suffering, in the incessant monopoly of the consciousness by action, so that consequently there is little room left for suffering - for narrow is it, this chamber of human consciousness! Mechanical activity and its corollaries, such as absolute regularity, punctilious unreasoning obedience, the chronic routine of life, the complete occupation of time, a certain liberty to be impersonal, nay, a training in "impersonality," self-forgetfulness, "incuria sui [no care for oneself]" - with what thoroughness and expert subtlety have all these methods been exploited by the ascetic priest in his war with pain!”

- “The ascetic ideal simply means this: that something was lacking, that a tremendous void encircled man - he did not know how to justify himself, to explain himself, to affirm himself, he suffered from the problem of his own meaning. He suffered also in other ways, he was in the main a diseased animal ; but his problem was not suffering itself, but the lack of an answer to that crying question, "To what purpose do we suffer?" Man, the bravest animal and the one most inured to suffering, does not repudiate suffering in itself: he wills it, he even seeks it out, provided that he is shown a meaning for it, a purpose of suffering. Not suffering, but the senselessness of suffering was the curse which till then lay spread over humanity - and the ascetic ideal gave it a meaning!”

- “It is absolutely impossible to disguise what in point of fact is made clear by every complete will that has taken its direction from the ascetic ideal: this hate of the human, and even more of the animal, and more still of the material, this horror of the senses, of reason itself, this fear of happiness and beauty, this desire to get right away from all illusion, change, growth, death, wishing and even desiring - all this means - let us have the courage to grasp it - a will for Nothingness, a will opposed to life, a repudiation of the most fundamental conditions of life, but it is and remains a will! - and to say at the end that which I said at the beginning - man will wish Nothingness rather than not wish at all.”

- “...the Schopenhauerian theory in majorem musicae gloriam [for the greater glory of music] - that is to say, by means of the sovereignty of music, as Schopenhauer understood it; music abstracted from and opposed to all the other arts, music as the independent art-in-itself, not like the other arts, affording reflections of the phenomenal world, but rather the language of the will itself, speaking straight out of the "abyss" as its most personal, original, and direct manifestation.” (Bach)

- “It is a shame to be happy; there is too much misery!" But there could not possibly be a greater and more fatal misunderstanding than that of the happy, the fit, the strong in body and soul, beginning in this way to doubt their right to happiness. Away with this "perverse world"! Away with this shameful soddenness of sentiment! Preventing the sick making the healthy sick - for that is what such a soddenness comes to - this ought to be our supreme object in the world - but for this it is above all essential that the healthy should remain separated from the sick, that they should even guard themselves from the look of the sick, that they should not even associate with the sick.”

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Beyond Good and Evil

- “It has gradually become clear to me what every great philosophy up till now has consisted of—namely, the confession of its originator, and a species of involuntary and unconscious auto-biography; and moreover that the moral (or immoral) purpose in every philosophy has constituted the true vital germ out of which the entire plant has always grown. Indeed, to understand how the abstrusest metaphysical assertions of a philosopher have been arrived at, it is always well (and wise) to first ask oneself: "What morality do they (or does he) aim at?"

- “The distance, and as it were the space around man, grows with the strength of his intellectual vision and insight: his world becomes profounder; new stars, new enigmas, and notions are ever coming into view. Perhaps everything on which the intellectual eye has exercised its acuteness and profundity has just been an occasion for its exercise, something of a game, something for children and childish minds. Perhaps the most solemn conceptions that have caused the most fighting and suffering, the conceptions "God" and "sin," will one day seem to us of no more importance than a child's plaything or a child's pain seems to an old man;--and perhaps another plaything and another pain will then be necessary once more for "the old man"--always childish enough, an eternal child!”

- “Among those, for instance, who presently live in Germany apart from religion, I find "free-thinkers" of many different kinds and origin, but above all a majority of those whose laboriousness from generation to generation has dissolved the religious instincts, so that they hardly know any more what purpose religions serve and only note their existence in the world with a kind of dull astonishment. They feel themselves already fully occupied, these good people, either with their business affairs or their pleasures, not to speak of the "Fatherland," and the newspapers, and their ‘family obligations;’ it seems that they do not have any time left for religion: and above all, it remains unclear to them whether it is a question of a new business or a new pleasure - for it is impossible, they say, that one should go to church only to spoil one's good mood.”

- “Whoever has seen deeply into the world has doubtless divined what wisdom there is in the fact that men are superficial. It is their preservative instinct which teaches them to be flighty, lightsome, and false. Here and there one finds a passionate and exaggerated adoration of "pure forms" in philosophers as well as in artists: it is not to be doubted that whoever has NEED of the cult of the superficial to that extent, has at one time or another made an unlucky dive BENEATH it. Perhaps there is even an order of rank with respect to those burnt children, the born artists who find the enjoyment of life only in trying to FALSIFY its image (as if taking wearisome revenge on it), one might guess to what degree life has disgusted them, by the extent to which they wish to see its image falsified, attenuated, ultrified, and deified,—one might reckon the homines religiosi among the artists, as their HIGHEST rank. It is the profound, suspicious fear of an incurable pessimism which compels whole centuries to fasten their teeth into a religious interpretation of existence: the fear of the instinct which divines that truth might be attained TOO soon, before man has become strong enough, hard enough, artist enough....”

- “man:—SUCH men, with their "equality before God," have hitherto swayed the destiny of Europe; until at last a dwarfed, almost ludicrous species has been produced, a gregarious animal, something obliging, sickly, mediocre, the European of the present day.” (directly against a Vivekananda type)

- “The vanity of others is only counter to our taste when it is counter to our vanity.”

- “Insanity in individuals is something rare—but in groups, parties, nations, and epochs it is the rule.”

- “The thought of suicide is a great consolation: by means of it one gets successfully through many a bad night.” (Cioran)

- “He who fights with monsters should be careful lest he thereby become a monster. And if thou gaze long into an abyss, the abyss will also gaze into thee.”

## 11. Martin Luther

“God forbid! Even if God were to offer me paradise in order that I might last forty more years in this life, I wouldn't want it. I'd rather hire a hangman to knock my head off. That's how bad the world is now. It's full of nothing but devils, so that one can't with anything better than a blessed end and to get away. Nor do I bother with physicians.” (Ha! This is from 'Table Talk')

Works are not condemned, but devalued because they are Earthly. The only thing that maters is not of this earth, is not of this Kingdom, God, faith in God, contemplation, non-movement, pacifism, renouncement of the Earthly for the Other, etc.

-“The more Christian a man is, the more evils, sufferings, and deaths he must endure...” -“Therefore the moment you begin to have faith you learn that all things in you are altogether blameworthy, sinful, and damnable...” this is why prayer, rituals, ceremonies are not to be fought over, they are not to be “risen up” higher than what they are meant to be, they are meant to be a way to appreciate/possibly experience the Other. (me- he put everything on Jesus, he wasn't a pluralist. He didn't have access to the diverse/similar opinions of the divine in a truly “open-minded” way.)

-Bondage of the Will – (me- Luther has to 'diminish' free will since anything to do with free will is necessarily Earthly, and God, or the Other, is not only valuable, but the Ground of all Value. He pushes a rejection of self, for some form of unity between the Self and God)

-“Therefore, it is not irreligious, curious, or superfluous, but essentially wholesome and necessary, for a Christian to know, whether or not the will does any thing in those things which pertain unto Salvation. Nay, let me tell you, this is the very hinge upon which our discussion turns. It is the very heart of our subject. For our object is this: to inquire what "Free-will" can do, in what it is passive, and how it stands with reference to the grace of God. If we know nothing of these things, we shall know nothing whatever of Christian matters, and shall be far behind all People upon the earth. He that does not feel this, let him confess that he is no Christian. And he that despises and laughs at it, let him know that he is the Christian's greatest enemy. For, if I know not how much I can do myself, how far my ability extends, and what I can do God-wards; I shall be equally uncertain and ignorant how much God is to do, how far His ability is to extend, and what He is to do toward me: whereas it is "God that worketh all in all." (1 Cor. Xii. 6.) -“THIS, therefore, is also essentially necessary and wholesome for Christians to know: That God foreknows nothing by contingency, but that He foresees, purposes, and does all things according to His immutable, eternal, and infallible will. By this thunderbolt, "Free-will" is thrown prostrate, and utterly dashed to pieces. Those, therefore, who would assert "Free-will," must either deny this thunderbolt, or pretend not to see it, or push it from them.”

-“Unless we are to suppose that if I should at any time be taken and cast into a prison or a sink, (which has happened to many saints,) I could not there call upon God, or believe that He was present with me, until I should come into some ornamented church. If you teach us that we are thus to trifle concerning God, and if you are thus offended at the places of His essential presence, by and by you will not even allow that He dwells with us in Heaven.”

-”For, by the grace of God, I am not so great a fool or madman, as to have desired to sustain and defend this cause so long, with so much fortitude and so much firmness, (which you call obstinacy) in the face of so many dangers of my life, so much hatred, so many traps laid for me; in a word, in the face of the fury of men and devils—I have not done this for money, for that I neither have nor desire; nor for vain-glory, for that, if I wished, I could not obtain in a world so enraged against me, nor for the life for my body, for that cannot be made sure of for an hour.—Do you think, then, that you only have a heart that is moved by these tumults? Yet, I am not made of stone, nor was I born from the Marpesian rocks. But since it cannot be otherwise, I choose rather to be battered in temporal tumult, happy in the grace of God, for God's word's sake, which is to be maintained with a mind incorrupt and invincible, than to be ground to powder in eternal tumult, under the wrath of God and torments intolerable! May Christ grant, what I desire and hope, that your heart may not be such—but certainly your words imply, that, with Epicurus, you consider the Word of God and a future life, to be mere fables. For, in your instructions, you would have us, for the sake of the Popes, the heads, and the peace of the community, to put off, upon an occasion, and depart from the all-certain word of God: whereas, if we put off that, we put off God, faith, salvation and all Christianity together. How far different from this is the instruction of Christ: that, we should rather despise the whole world!”

-“As though He had said, multitude, height, wealth, power, wisdom, righteousness, and whatever is great in the world, sets itself against the word of God.”

-“But now the Gospel is come, men begin to impute unto it, that the world is evil. Whereas, the truth is, that by the good Gospel, it is more manifest how evil it was, while, without the Gospel, it did all its works in darkness.”

-“First, God has promised certainly His grace to the humbled: that is, to the self-deploring and despairing. But a man cannot be thoroughly humbled, until he comes to know that his salvation is utterly beyond his own powers, counsel, endeavours, will, and works, and absolutely depending on the will, counsel, pleasure, and work of another, that is, of God only.”

-“Thus, when God makes alive, He does it by killing; when He justifies, He does it by bringing in guilty: when He exalts to Heaven, He does it by bringing down to hell: as the Scripture saith, "The Lord killeth and maketh alive, He bringeth down to the grave and raiseth up, " (I Sam. ii. 6.); concerning which, there is no need that I should here speak more at large, for those who read my writings, are well acquainted with these things. Thus He conceals His eternal mercy and loving-kindness behind His eternal wrath: His righteousness, behind apparent iniquity.”

-“This is the highest degree of faith—to believe that He is merciful, who saves so few and damns so many; to believe Him just, who according to His own will, makes us necessarily damnable, that He may seem, as Erasmus says, 'to delight in the torments of the miserable, and to be an object of hatred rather than of love.' If, therefore, I could by any means comprehend how that same God can be merciful and just, who carries the appearance of so much wrath and iniquity, there would be no need of faith.”

-“You make the power of "Free-will" to be—'that certain small degree of power, which, without the grace of God, is utterly ineffective.' Do you not acknowledge this?—Now then, I ask and demand of you, if the grace of God be wanting, or, if it be taken away from that certain small degree of power, what can it do of itself? 'It is ineffective (you say) and can do nothing of good...without the grace of God, it is ineffective.” Great Earthly/Other distinction/conclusion- But, if we do not like to leave out this term altogether, (which would be most safe, and also most religious) we may, nevertheless, with a good conscience teach, that it be used so far as to allow man a "Free-will," not in respect of those which are above him, but in respect only of those things which are below him: that is, he may be allowed to know, that he has, as to his goods and possessions the right of using, acting, and omitting, according to his "Free-will;" although, at the same time, that same "Free-will" is overruled by the Free-will of God alone, just as He pleases: but that, God-ward, or in things which pertain unto salvation or damnation, he has no "Free-will," but is a captive, slave, and servant, either to the will of God, or to the will of Satan.”

-“What is this else but saying, that "Free-will," or the human heart, is so bound by the power of Satan, that, unless it be quickened up in a wonderful way by the Spirit of God, it cannot of itself see or hear those things which strike against the eyes and ears so manifestly, as to be as it were palpable by the hand? So great is the misery and blindness of the human race!”

-“...how it could be that the Jews were not won over by the works and words of Christ, which were evidently incontrovertible and undeniable, satisfied themselves from that place of the Scripture, where it is shewn, that man, left to himself, seeing seeth not, and hearing heareth not. And what can be more monstrous! "The light (saith Christ) shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not." (John i. 5.) Who could believe this? Who hath heard the like—that the light should shine in darkness, and yet, the darkness still remain darkness, and not be enlightened!”

-“Wherefore, it is no wonder in divine things, that through so many ages, men renowned for talent remained blind. It might have been a wonder in human things, but in divine things, it would rather have been a wonder if there had been one here and there that did not remain blind: that they all remained utterly blind alike, is no wonder at all. For what is the whole human race together, without the Spirit, but the kingdom of the devil (as I have said) and a confused chaos of darkness?”, “For in this way, I will make it appear, that a stone, or a log of wood has "Freewill," because it can go upwards and downwards; although, by its own power, it can go only downwards, but can go upwards only by the help of another. And, as I said before, by meaning at the same time the thing itself, and also something else which may be joined with it or added to it, I will say, consistently with the use of all words and languages—all men are no man, and all things are nothing!”, “...an ungodly man, like Satan his prince, is wholly turned to self and to his own. He does not seek God, nor care for the things of God: he seeks his own riches, and glory, and works, and wisdom, and power, and sovereignty in everything, and wants to enjoy it in peace...He condemns those desires of glory, wealth, wisdom, righteousness of one's own, and all the things in which the world trusts.”

- “As though He had said, multitude, height, wealth, power, wisdom, righteousness, and whatever is great in the world, sets itself against the word of God.”

- “But how much better is it to lose the whole world, than to lose God the Creator of the world, who can create innumerable worlds again, and is better than infinite worlds? For what are temporal things when compared with eternal? This leprosy of temporal things, therefore, is rather to be borne, than that every soul should be destroyed and eternally damned, and the world kept in peace, and preserved from these tumults, by their blood and perdition: whereas, one soul cannot be redeemed with the price of the whole world!”

- You certainly have command of elegant and excellent similitudes, and sentiments: but, when you are engaged in sacred discussions, you apply them childishly, nay, pervertedly: for you crawl upon the ground, and enter in thought into nothing above what is human. Whereas, those things which God works, are neither puerile, civil, nor human, but divine; and they exceed human capacity.”

- “Therefore, the Word of God, and the traditions of men, are opposed to each other with implacable discord; no less so, than God Himself and Satan; who each destroy the works and overthrow the doctrines of the other, as regal kings each destroying the kingdom of the other.”

## 12. Thomas Merton

“The truly sacred attitude toward life is in no sense an escape from the sense of nothingness that assails us when we are left alone with ourselves. On the contrary, it penetrates into that darkness and that nothingness, realizing that the mercy of God has transformed our nothingness into His temple and believing that in our darkness His light has hidden itself. Hence the sacred attitude is one which does not recoil from our own inner emptiness, but rather penetrates it with awe and reverence, and with the awareness of mystery. This is a most important discovery in, the interior life.”

Spiritual Direction and Meditation

- “A contemplative is not one who takes his prayer seriously, but one who takes God seriously, who is famished for truth, who seeks to live in generous simplicity, in the spirit.” (me- true humility is isolation with God)

- “Meditation is for those who are not satisfied with a merely objective and conceptual knowledge about life, about God— about ultimate realities. They want to enter into an intimate contact with truth itself, with God. They want to experience the deepest realities of life by living them. Meditation is the means to that end.”

- “a person would be wasting his time if he thought reasoning alone could satisfy the need of his soul for spiritual meditation. Meditation is not merely a matter of “thinking things out,” even if that leads to a good ethical resolution. Meditation is more than mere practical thinking.”

- “This is especially true in our own time when the intellectual and moral flabbiness of a materialistic society has robbed man’s nature of its spiritual energy and tone. Nevertheless, the necessity for discipline does not imply the obligation for all men to follow one identical and rigid system.”

-”If our mental vision of God and of the way to God tends to lose its sharp outlines in the “cloud of unknowing,” there should never be any real confusion as to the object we are seeking: union with God.”

- “Here is the principle. All the members of the Mystical Body of Christ have, in actual fact, the divine life of Christ within them and are “mystically” identified with Him in a broad sense of the word...The identification which we seek to effect in mental prayer is therefore a conscious realization of the union that is already truly effected between our souls and God by grace.” (me- Vivekananda)

- “This is a grace which, though quite normal in the spiritual life, is not shared by all. But even those who do not have this particular attraction ought to realize that the function of their mental prayer is to bring them somehow into conscious communion with the God who is the source of their natural and supernatural life and the principle of all the good that is in them.”

- “In order to meditate, I have to withdraw my mind from all that prevents me from attending to God present in my heart. This is impossible unless I recollect my senses. But it is almost useless to try to recollect myself at the moment of prayer if I have allowed my senses and imagination to run wild all the rest of the day. Consequently the desire to practice meditation implies the effort to preserve moderate recollection throughout the day. It means living in an atmosphere of faith and with occasional moments of prayer and attention to God. The world in which we live today presents a tantalizing problem to anyone who wants to acquire habits of recollection. The price of true recollection is a firm resolve to take no wilful interest in anything that is not useful or necessary to our interior life. The world we live in assails us on every side with useless appeals to emotion and to sense appetite. Radios, newspapers, movies, television, billboards, neon-signs surround us with a perpetual incitement to pour out our money and our vital energies in futile transitory satisfactions. The more we buy the more they urge us to buy. But the more they advertise the less we get. And yet, the more they advertise the more we buy. Eventually all will consist in the noise that is made and there will be no satisfaction left in the world except that of vain hopes and anticipations that can never be fulfilled. I say this in order to show that very much of what we read in magazines or newspapers or see and hear in movies or elsewhere, is completely useless from every point of view. The first thing I must do if I want to practice meditation is to develop a strong resistance to the futile appeals which modern society makes to my five senses. Hence I will have to mortify my desires. I do not speak here of extraordinary ascetic practices; merely of self-denial required to live by the standards of reason and of the Gospels. In present-day America, such self-denial is apt to require heroism. In practice it may mean giving up many or most of the luxuries which I have come to regard as necessities, at least until I have acquired sufficient self-control to use these things without being enslaved by them.”

- “...God is infinitely above us, although He is within us and is the principle of our being.”

- “We have to enter into our meditation with a realization of our spiritual poverty, our complete lack of the things we seek, and of our abject nothingness in the sight of the infinite God.”

- “The Fathers of the Church saw that every one of us is more or less like the Prodigal, starving in a distant land, far from our Father’s House. This is the common condition of mankind exiled from God and from Paradise by an inordinate preoccupation with perishing things and by a constant inclination to self-gratification and sin.”

- “The saints are, as a matter of fact, much more keenly aware of the gulf between themselves and God than are those who live always on the periphery of sin.”

- “Habitual self-complacency is almost always a sign of spiritual stagnation. The complacent no longer feel in themselves any real indigence, any urgent need for God. Their meditations are comfortable, reassuring and inconclusive. Their mental prayer quickly degenerates into day-dreaming, distractions or plain undisguised sleep. For this reason trials and temptations can prove to be a real blessing in the life of prayer, simply because they force us to pray. It is when we begin to find out our need for God that we first learn how to make a real meditation.” (me- Cobra is at the door, head is held underwater/'I want air')

- “It is usually better to remain quiet, to be still. But there is no reason why one should not also meditate walking up and down in a garden. In short, there is an almost infinite variety of places and positions that can be adopted in mental prayer. They are all accidental. The most important thing is to seek silence, tranquillity, recollection and peace.”

- “Without making any distinction between fruitful and sterile leisure, these busy-bodies condemn all desire for leisure as a sin. They believe that a man who is not always on the move is wasting precious time.”

- “We cannot give ourselves to spiritual things if we are always swept off our feet by a multitude of external activities. Business is not the supreme virtue, and sanctity is not measured by the amount of work we accomplish. Perfection is found in the purity of our love for God, and this pure love is a delicate plant that grows best where there is plenty of time for it to mature.”

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- “St. Therese of Lisieux wisely reminds us that “God has no need of our works: He has need of our love.” The ideal of the contemplative life is not, however, the exclusion of all work. On the contrary, total inactivity would stultify the interior life just as much as too much activity. The true contemplative is one who has discovered the art of finding leisure even in the midst of his work, by working with such a spirit of detachment and recollection that even his work is a prayer.”

- “Compunction is simply an awareness of our indigence and coldness and of our need for God. It implies faith, sorrow, humility and above all hope in the mercy of God. For the man without compunction, prayer is a cold formality in which he remains centered on himself. For the man who has a sense of compunction, prayer is a living act which brings him face to face with God in an I-Thou relationship which is not imaginary but real, spiritual and personal; and the basis of this reality is our sense of our need for God, united with faith in His love for us.”

- “a concentration of the interior life on one objective, union with God. We have remarked that this objective is usually obscure to our experience. The desire for God becomes more intense and more continual, and at the same time our knowledge of Him, rising above precise and definite concepts, becomes “dark” and even confused. Hence the anguish of the mystic who seeks God in the night of pure faith, above the level of human ideas, knowing Him not by light but by darkness.”

- “Meditation makes use of definite theological and philosophical ideas of God. It deals with ideas and principles which, when the soul is enlightened by faith and moved to action by charity, bear fruit in deep supernatural convictions.”

- “...the real function of meditation is to enable us to realize and to actualize in our own experience the fundamental truths of our faith. But there are other subjects for meditation. Our own life, our own experience, our own duties and difficulties, naturally enter into our meditations. Actually, a lot of “distractions” would vanish if we realized that we are not bound at all times to ignore the practical problems of our life when we are at prayer. On the contrary, sometimes these problems actually ought to be the subject of meditation. After all, we have to meditate on our vocation, on our response to God’s will in our regard, on our charity towards other people, on our fidelity to grace. This enters into our meditations on Christ and His life; for He desires and intends to live in us. The Christ-life has, as its most important aspect for each of us, His actual presence and activity in our own lives. Meditation that ignores this truth easily tends to be aimless and confused.”

- “In order to understand even the trivial events of our own lives, we need to create a religious perspective in which to view everything that happens. This perspective demands first of all that we frequently renew the realization of the fact that we must die and that our life must pass through the inexorable light of judgment. One who never thinks of the hour of his death cannot make really spiritual decisions during his life. He will never be anything more than a short-sighted opportunist whose decisions will have no lasting value.”

- “All the ancient philosophies and all the higher forms of religious thought have made use of parables and simple imaginative figures to convey the deepest truths, and nowhere is this more true than in the Bible. Here God has revealed to us His mysteries with a graphic simplicity and concreteness which makes them accessible to every race and century. (me- Tillich)

## 13. Meister Eckhart

-“Only he knows God who recognizes that all creatures are nothingness.”

- “The second means of attraction which he used is Emptiness...Jesus Christ made Himself empty that he might wisely draw all things to Himself.”

-“To be full of things is to be empty of God. To be empty of things is to be full of God.” -“Therefore deadly sin is a breach of nature, a death of the soul, a disquiet of the heart, a weakening of power, a blindness of the sense, a sorrow of the spirit, a death of grace, a death of virtue, a death of good works, an aberration of the spirit, a fellowship with the devil, an expulsion of Christianity, a dungeon of hell, a banquet of hell, an eternity of hell.”

-“Deadly sin is also a disquiet of the heart, for everything rests nowhere except in its own proper place; and the proper resting-place of the soul is nowhere except in God as St Augustine saith...” -”All that is created is nothing, all far from and foreign to the soul.”

-“The man who abides in God's love must be dead to himself and all created things, and regard himself as a mere unit among a thousand million. Such a man must renounce himself and all the world.”

- The man who is wholly sanctified is so drawn towards the Eternal, that no transitory thing may move him, no corporeal thing affect him, no earthly thing attract him.”

- “Now the question arises what is sanctification, since it has so lofty a rank. Thou shouldest know that real sanctification consists in this that the spirit remain as immovable and unaffected by all impact of love or hate, joy or sorrow, honour or shame, as a huge mountain is unstirred by a gentle breeze. This immovable sanctification causes man to attain the nearest likeness to God that he is capable of. God's very essence consists of His immovable sanctity...”

- “The chief agent in this is grace, because grace draws men from the transitory and purifies them from the earthly. And thou shouldest know that to be empty of all creature's love is to be full of God, and to be full of creature-love is to be empty of God.”

- “God has remained from everlasting in immovable sanctity, and still remains so. When He created heaven and earth and all creatures, His sanctity was as little affected thereby as though He had created nothing. I say further: God's sanctity is as little affected by men's good works and prayers, as though they had accomplished none, and He is by those means no more favourably inclined towards men than if they ceased praying and working.”

- “Here, thou shouldest know that in every man are two kinds of men, the outer and the inner man. Every man, who loves God, only uses his outer senses so far as is absolutely necessary; he takes care that they do not drag him down to the level of the beasts, as they do some who might rather he termed beasts than men. The soul of the spiritual man whom God moves to love Him with all his powers concentrates all its forces on the inner man. Therefore He saith, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." Now, there are some who waste the powers of the soul for the use of the outer man; these are they who turn all their thoughts and desires towards transitory things, and know nothing of the inner life. But a good man sometimes deprives his outer man of all power that it may have a higher object, while sensualists deprive the inner man of all power to use it for the outer man.”

- “"What is the object of this immovable sanctity?" I answer, "Nothing"

- “For this we may take the following illustration: if we bake in one oven three loaves of barley-bread, of rye-bread, and of wheat, we shall find the same heat of the oven affects them differently; when one is well-baked, another will be still raw, and another yet more raw. That is not due to the heat, but to the variety of the materials. Similarly God works in all hearts not alike but in proportion as He finds them prepared and susceptible. If the heart is to be ready for the highest, it must he vacant of all other things. If I wish to write on a white tablet, whatever else is written on the tablet, however noble its purport, is a hindrance to me. If I am to write, I must wipe the tablet clean of everything, and the tablet is most suitable for my purpose when it is blank. Similarly, if God is to write on my heart, everything else must come out of it till it is really sanctified. Only so can God work His highest will, and so the sanctified heart has no outward object at all.”

- “The question arises: But what then does the sanctified heart pray for? I answer that when truly sanctified, it prays for nothing, for whosoever prays asks God to give him some good, or to take some evil from him. But the sanctified heart desires nothing, and contains nothing that it wishes to be freed from. Therefore it is free of all want except that it wants to be like God. St Dionysius commenting on the text, "Know ye not that all run, but one receiveth the prize?" says "this running is nothing else than a turning away from all creatures and being united to the Uncreated."

- “St Augustine says. "the strong attraction of the soul to the Divine reduces everything to nothingness: on earth this attraction is manifested as sanctification. When this process has reached its culminating point, knowledge becomes ignorance, desire indifference and light darkness.”

- “No bodily and fleshly delight can ever take place with out spiritual loss, for the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.”

- “The quickest means to bring us to perfection is suffering; none enjoy everlasting blessedness more than those who share with Christ the bitterest pangs. Nothing is sharper than suffering, nothing is sweeter than to have suffered. The surest foundation in which this perfection may rest is humility; whatever here crawls in the deepest abjectness, that the Spirit lifts to the very heights of God, for love brings suffering and suffering brings love.”

- “Ways of living are many; one lives thus, and another thus; but whosoever will reach the highest life, let him in a few words hear the conclusion of the whole matter: keep thyself clear of all men, keep thyself from all imaginations that crowd upon the mind, free thyself from all that is contingent, entangling, and cumbersome and direct thy mind always to gazing upon God in thy heart with a steadfast look that never wavers: as for other spiritual exercises--fasting, watching and prayer--direct them all to this one end, and practice them so far as they may be helpful thereto, so wilt thou win to perfection.”

- “The aim of man is not outward holiness by works, but life in God, yet this last expresses itself in works of love.”

- “The moral task of man is a process of spiritualization. All creatures are go-betweens, and we are placed in time that by diligence in spiritual business we may grow liker and nearer to God. The aim of man is beyond the temporal--in the serene region of the everlasting Present.”

- “The merely temporal life in itself is a negation of real being, because it depends on itself and not on the deepest foundation of life; therefore also natural love is cramped finite and defective.”

- “The love of the Cross must swallow up our personal grief.”

- “...he who sorrows most is the noblest...Sorrow is the root of all virtue.”

- “This passage from nothingness to real being, this quitting of oneself is a birth accompanied by pain, for by it natural love is excluded. All grief except grief for sin comes from love of the world.”

- “The right fear is the fear of losing God.”

- “God brings forth His Son in thee, whether thou likest it or not, whether thou sleepest or wakest; God worketh His own will. That man is unaware of it, is man's fault, for his taste is so spoilt by feeding on earthly things that he cannot relish God's love.” (Kierkegaard)

- “He is the end of all creation. This end is concealed in the darkness of the everlasting Godhead, and is unknown, and never was known, and never will be known. God Himself remains unknown; the light of the everlasting Father shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.”

- “Three things hinder us from hearing the everlasting Word. The first is fleshliness, the second is distraction, the third is the illusion of time. If a man could get free of these, he would dwell in eternity, and in the spirit, and in solitude, and in the desert, and there would hear the everlasting word. Our Lord saith: 'No man can hear My word nor my teaching without renouncing himself.'

- “God is equally near in all creatures.”

- “To serve God with fear is good; to serve Him out of love is better; but to fear and love Him together is best of all.”

- “He knows God rightly who knows Him everywhere.”

- “Therefore, if the soul is to know God, it must know Him outside time and place, since God is neither in this or that, but One and above them. If the soul is to see God, it must look at nothing in time; for while the soul is occupied with time or place or any image of the kind, it cannot recognize God.”

- “God is always ready, but we are very unready.”

## 14. Plato /Socrates

- Allegory of the Cave: “And now look again, and see what will naturally follow if the prisoners are released and disabused of their error. At first, when any of them is liberated and compelled suddenly to stand up and turn his neck round and walk and look towards the light, he will suffer sharp pains; the glare will distress him, and he will be unable to see the realities of which in his former state he had seen the shadows; and then conceive some one saying to him, that what he saw before was an illusion, but that now, when he is approaching nearer to being and his eye is turned towards more real existence, he has a clearer vision,— what will be his reply? And you may further imagine that his instructor is pointing to the objects as they pass and requiring him to name them,— will he not be perplexed? Will he not fancy that the shadows which he formerly saw are truer than the objects which are now shown to him?…And if he is compelled to look straight at the light, will he not have a pain in his eyes which will make him turn away to take refuge in the objects of vision which he can see, and which he will conceive to be in reality clearer than the things which are now being shown to him?...And if there were a contest, and he had to compete in measuring the shadows with the prisoners who had never moved out of the den, while his sight was still weak, and before his eyes had become steady (and the time which would be needed to acquire this new habit of sight might be very considerable), would he not be ridiculous? Men would say of him that up he went and down he came without his eyes; and that it was better not even to think of ascending; and if any one tried to loose another and lead him up to the light, let them only catch the offender, and they would put him to death.

- “This entire allegory, I said, you may now append, dear Glaucon, to the previous argument; the prison-house is the world of sight, the light of the fire is the sun, and you will not misapprehend me if you interpret the journey upwards to be the ascent of the soul into the intellectual world according to my poor belief, which, at your desire, I have expressed— whether rightly or wrongly God knows. But, whether true or false, my opinion is that in the world of knowledge the idea of good appears last of all, and is seen only with an effort; and, when seen, is also inferred to be the universal author of all things beautiful and right, parent of light and of the lord of light in this visible world, and the immediate source of reason and truth in the intellectual; and that this is the power upon which he who would act rationally either in public or private.” (Simple Salvation, participation is needed)

- “Moreover, I said, you must not wonder that those who attain to this beatific vision are unwilling to descend to human affairs; for their souls are ever hastening into the upper world where they desire to dwell; which desire of theirs is very natural, if our allegory may be trusted.”

-“...in the world of knowledge the idea of good appears last of all, and is seen only with an effort; and, when seen, is also inferred to be the universal author of all things beautiful and right, parent of light and of the lord of light in this visible world, and the immediate source of reason and truth in the intellectual; and that this is the power upon which he who would act rationally either in public or private life must have his eye fixed.”

- “And is there anything surprising in one who passes from divine contemplations to the evil state of man, misbehaving himself in a ridiculous manner; if, while his eyes are blinking and before he has become accustomed to the surrounding darkness, he is compelled to fight in courts of law, or in other places, about the images or the shadows of images of justice, and is endeavouring to meet the conceptions of those who have never yet seen absolute justice?”

- “Any one who has common sense will remember that the bewilderments of the eyes are of two kinds, and arise from two causes, either from coming out of the light or from going into the light, which is true of the mind's eye, quite as much as of the bodily eye; and he who remembers this when he sees any one whose vision is perplexed and weak, will not be too ready to laugh; he will first ask whether that soul of man has come out of the brighter life, and is unable to see because unaccustomed to the dark, or having turned from darkness to the day is dazzled by excess of light. And he will count the one happy in his condition and state of being, and he will pity the other; or, if he have a mind to laugh at the soul which comes from below into the light, there will be more reason in this than in the laugh which greets him who returns from above out of the light into the den.”

-“...our argument shows that the power and capacity of learning exists in the soul already...” (Like Luther, Tolstoy, Jesus 'holy spirit', etc)

- “But what if there had been a circumcision of such natures in the days of their youth; and they had been severed from those sensual pleasures, such as eating and drinking, which, like leaden weights, were attached to them at their birth, and which drag them down and turn the vision of their souls upon the things that are below— if, I say, they had been released from these impediments and turned in the opposite direction, the very same faculty in them would have seen the truth as keenly as they see what their eyes are turned to now.”

- “And the only life which looks down upon the life of political ambition is that of true philosophy. Do you know of any other?”

- “...the turning round of a soul passing from a day which is little better than night to the true day of being, that is, the ascent from below, which we affirm to be true philosophy?”

- “But the simple truth is, O Athenians, that I have nothing to do with physical speculations.”

- “When I began to talk with him, I could not help thinking that he was not really wise, although he was thought wise by many, and still wiser by himself; and thereupon I tried to explain to him that he thought himself wise, but was not really wise; and the consequence was that he hated me, and his enmity was shared by several who were present and heard me. So I left him, saying to myself, as I went away: Well, although I do not suppose that either of us knows anything really beautiful and good, I am better off than he is,—for he knows nothing, and thinks that he knows; I neither know nor think that I know. In this latter particular, then, I seem to have slightly the advantage of him. Then I went to another who had still higher pretensions to wisdom, and my conclusion was exactly the same. Whereupon I made another enemy of him, and of many others besides him.”

- “Then I went to one man after another, being not unconscious of the enmity which I provoked, and I lamented and feared this: but necessity was laid upon me,—the word of God, I thought, ought to be considered first.” (This is my fear. I am too 'abrasive')

- “I found that the men most in repute were all but the most foolish; and that others less esteemed were really wiser and better.”

- “Then I knew that not by wisdom do poets write poetry, but by a sort of genius and inspiration; they are like diviners or soothsayers who also say many fine things, but do not understand the meaning of them.”

- “At last I went to the artisans. I was conscious that I knew nothing at all, as I may say, and I was sure that they knew many fine things; and here I was not mistaken, for they did know many things of which I was ignorant, and in this they certainly were wiser than I was. But I observed that even the good artisans fell into the same error as the poets;—because they were good workmen they thought that they also knew all sorts of high matters, and this defect in them overshadowed their wisdom...”

- “This inquisition has led to my having many enemies of the worst and most dangerous kind, and has given occasion also to many calumnies. And I am called wise, for my hearers always imagine that I myself possess the wisdom which I find wanting in others: but the truth is, O men of Athens, that God only is wise; and by his answer he intends to show that the wisdom of men is worth little or nothing; he is not speaking of Socrates, he is only using my name by way of illustration, as if he said, He, O men, is the wisest, who, like Socrates, knows that his wisdom is in truth worth nothing.”

- “they repeat the ready-made charges which are used against all philosophers about teaching things up in the clouds and under the earth, and having no gods, and making the worse appear the better cause; for they do not like to confess that their pretense of knowledge has been detected—which is the truth...”

- “And are you not ashamed, Socrates, of a course of life which is likely to bring you to an untimely end? To him I may fairly answer: There you are mistaken: a man who is good for anything ought not to calculate the chance of living or dying; he ought only to consider whether in doing anything he is doing right or wrong—acting the part of a good man or of a bad.”

- “...the philosopher's mission of searching into myself and other men, I were to desert my post through fear of death, or any other fear; that would indeed be strange, and I might justly be arraigned in court for denying the existence of the gods, if I disobeyed the oracle because I was afraid of death, fancying that I was wise when I was not wise. For the fear of death is indeed the pretence of wisdom, and not real wisdom, being a pretence of knowing the unknown; and no one knows whether death, which men in their fear apprehend to be the greatest evil, may not be the greatest good.”

- “...are you not ashamed of heaping up the greatest amount of money and honour and reputation, and caring so little about wisdom and truth and the greatest improvement of the soul, which you never regard or heed at all? And if the person with whom I am arguing, says: Yes, but I do care; then I do not leave him or let him go at once; but I proceed to interrogate and examine and cross-examine him, and if I think that he has no virtue in him, but only says that he has, I reproach him with undervaluing the greater, and overvaluing the less.”

- “For I do nothing but go about persuading you all, old and young alike, not to take thought for your persons or your properties, but first and chiefly to care about the greatest improvement of the soul. I tell you that virtue is not given by money, but that from virtue comes money and every other good of man, public as well as private. This is my teaching, and if this is the doctrine which corrupts the youth, I am a mischievous person. But if any one says that this is not my teaching, he is speaking an untruth.”

- “What return shall be made to the man who has never had the wit to be idle during his whole life; but has been careless of what the many care for—wealth, and family interests, and military offices, and speaking in the assembly, and magistracies, and plots, and parties.”

- “For if I tell you that to do as you say would be a disobedience to the God, and therefore that I cannot hold my tongue, you will not believe that I am serious; and if I say again that daily to discourse about virtue, and of those other things about which you hear me examining myself and others, is the greatest good of man, and that the unexamined life is not worth living, you are still less likely to believe me.”

- “Let us reflect in another way, and we shall see that there is great reason to hope that death is a good; for one of two things—either death is a state of nothingness and utter unconsciousness, or, as men say, there is a change and migration of the soul from this world to another.”

- “What infinite delight would there be in conversing with them and asking them questions! In another world they do not put a man to death for asking questions: assuredly not. For besides being happier than we are, they will be immortal, if what is said is true. Wherefore, O judges, be of good cheer about death, and know of a certainty, that no evil can happen to a good man, either in life or after death.”

- “Still I have a favour to ask of them. When my sons are grown up, I would ask you, O my friends, to punish them; and I would have you trouble them, as I have troubled you, if they seem to care about riches, or anything, more than about virtue; or if they pretend to be something when they are really nothing,—then reprove them, as I have reproved you, for not caring about that for which they ought to care, and thinking that they are something when they are really nothing. And if you do this, both I and my sons will have received justice at your hands.”

Phaedo

- “...I desire to prove to you that the real philosopher has reason to be of good cheer when he is about to die, and that after death he may hope to obtain the greatest good in the other world...For I deem that the true votary of philosophy is likely to be misunderstood by other men; they do not perceive that he is always pursuing death and dying; and if this be so, and he has had the desire of death all his life long, why when his time comes should he repine at that which he has been always pursuing and desiring?

- “Ought the philosopher to care about the pleasures—if they are to be called pleasures—of eating and drinking? Certainly not, answered Simmias. And what about the pleasures of love—should he care for them? By no means. And will he think much of the other ways of indulging the body, for example, the acquisition of costly raiment, or sandals, or other adornments of the body? Instead of caring about them, does he not rather despise anything more than nature needs? What do you say? I should say that the true philosopher would despise them. Would you not say that he is entirely concerned with the soul and not with the body? He would like, as far as he can, to get away from the body and to turn to the soul. Quite true. In matters of this sort philosophers, above all other men, may be observed in every sort of way to dissever the soul from the communion of the body...the rest of the world are of opinion that to him who has no sense of pleasure and no part in bodily pleasure, life is not worth having; and that he who is indifferent about them is as good as dead.”

- “And he attains to the purest knowledge of them who goes to each with the mind alone, not introducing or intruding in the act of thought sight or any other sense together with reason, but with the very light of the mind in her own clearness searches into the very truth of each; he who has got rid, as far as he can, of eyes and ears and, so to speak, of the whole body, these being in his opinion distracting elements which when they infect the soul hinder her from acquiring truth and knowledge—who, if not he, is likely to attain the knowledge of true being?”

- “Whence come wars, and fightings, and factions? whence but from the body and the lusts of the body? wars are occasioned by the love of money, and money has to be acquired for the sake and in the service of the body; and by reason of all these impediments we have no time to give to philosophy; and, last and worst of all, even if we are at leisure and betake ourselves to some speculation, the body is always breaking in upon us, causing turmoil and confusion in our enquiries, and so amazing us that we are prevented from seeing the truth.”

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- “And, as I was saying at first, there would be a ridiculous contradiction in men studying to live as nearly as they can in a state of death, and yet repining when it comes upon them.”

- “And when you see a man who is repining at the approach of death, is not his reluctance a sufficient proof that he is not a lover of wisdom, but a lover of the body, and probably at the same time a lover of either money or power, or both?”

- “The founders of the mysteries would appear to have had a real meaning, and were not talking nonsense when they intimated in a figure long ago that he who passes unsanctified and uninitiated into the world below will lie in a slough, but that he who arrives there after initiation and purification will dwell with the gods.”

- “From the senses then is derived the knowledge that all sensible things aim at an absolute equality of which they fall short? Yes. Then before we began to see or hear or perceive in any way, we must have had a knowledge of absolute equality, or we could not have referred to that standard the equals which are derived from the senses?—for to that they all aspire, and of that they fall short.” (me- Descartes says this. Aquinas also says this in his 'fourth way'. How do we criticize something for being “deficient” if we have no prior conception of “absolute” or “perfection”?)

- “But the soul which has been polluted, and is impure at the time of her departure, and is the companion and servant of the body always, and is in love with and fascinated by the body and by the desires and pleasures of the body, until she is led to believe that the truth only exists in a bodily form, which a man may touch and see and taste, and use for the purposes of his lusts,—the soul, I mean, accustomed to hate and fear and avoid the intellectual principle, which to the bodily eye is dark and invisible, and can be attained only by philosophy;—do you suppose that such a soul will depart pure and unalloyed? Impossible, he replied. She is held fast by the corporeal, which the continual association and constant care of the body have wrought into her nature. Very true. And this corporeal element, my friend, is heavy and weighty and earthy, and is that element of sight by which a soul is depressed and dragged down again into the visible world...”

- “No one who has not studied philosophy and who is not entirely pure at the time of his departure is allowed to enter the company of the Gods, but the lover of knowledge only.”

- “...the true votaries of philosophy abstain from all fleshly lusts, and hold out against them and refuse to give themselves up to them...”

- “The lovers of knowledge are conscious that the soul was simply fastened and glued to the body—until philosophy received her, she could only view real existence through the bars of a prison, not in and through herself; she was wallowing in the mire of every sort of ignorance; and by reason of lust had become the principal accomplice in her own captivity. This was her original state; and then, as I was saying, and as the lovers of knowledge are well aware, philosophy, seeing how terrible was her confinement, of which she was to herself the cause, received and gently comforted her and sought to release her, pointing out that the eye and the ear and the other senses are full of deception, and persuading her to retire from them, and abstain from all but the necessary use of them, and be gathered up and collected into herself, bidding her trust in herself and her own pure apprehension of pure existence, and to mistrust whatever comes to her through other channels and is subject to variation; for such things are visible and tangible, but what she sees in her own nature is intelligible and invisible. And the soul of the true philosopher thinks that she ought not to resist this deliverance, and therefore abstains from pleasures and desires and pains and fears, as far as she is able...”

- “The evil is that when the feeling of pleasure or pain is most intense, every soul of man imagines the objects of this intense feeling to be then plainest and truest: but this is not so, they are really the things of sight...Why, because each pleasure and pain is a sort of nail which nails and rivets the soul to the body, until she becomes like the body, and believes that to be true which the body affirms to be true; and from agreeing with the body and having the same delights she is obliged to have the same habits and haunts, and is not likely ever to be pure at her departure to the world below, but is always infected by the body; and so she sinks into another body and there germinates and grows, and has therefore no part in the communion of the divine and pure and simple.”

- “Nor am I any longer satisfied that I understand the reason why one or anything else is either generated or destroyed or is at all...”

- “it can be beautiful only in as far as it partakes of absolute beauty—and I should say the same of everything.”

- “Those too who have been pre-eminent for holiness of life are released from this earthly prison, and go to their pure home which is above, and dwell in the purer earth; and of these, such as have duly purified themselves with philosophy live henceforth altogether without the body, in mansions fairer still which may not be described, and of which the time would fail me to tell.”

- “The venture is a glorious one, and he ought to comfort himself with words like these, which is the reason why I lengthen out the tale. Wherefore, I say, let a man be of good cheer about his soul, who having cast away the pleasures and ornaments of the body as alien to him and working harm rather than good, has sought after the pleasures of knowledge; and has arrayed the soul, not in some foreign attire, but in her own proper jewels, temperance, and justice, and courage, and nobility, and truth—in these adorned she is ready to go on her journey to the world below, when her hour comes.”

Phaedrus

- “I 230 am still unable, as the Delphic inscription orders, to know myself; and it really seems

to me ridiculous to look into other things before I have understood that. This is why I do not concern

myself with them. [ accept what is generally believed, and, as I was just saying, I look not into them

but into my own self.”

- “He stands outside human concerns and draws close to the divine; ordinary people think he

is disturbed and rebuke him for this, unaware that he is possessed by god...he would like to fly away, but he cannot; he is like a bird fluttering and looking upward and careless of the world below; and he is therefore thought to be mad.”

- “Few only retain an adequate remembrance of them; and they, when they behold here any image of that other world, are rapt in amazement, but they are ignorant of what this rapture means, because they do not clearly perceive. For there is no light of justice or temperance or any of the higher ideas which are precious to souls in the earthly copies of them: they are seen through a glass dimly; and there are few who, going to the images, behold in them the realities, and these only with difficulty.” (a psychedelic/psylocibin journey, what a great description)

- “But this is the privilege of beauty, that being the loveliest she is also the most palpable to sight. Now he who is not newly initiated or who has become corrupted, does not easily rise out of this world to the sight of true beauty in the other; he looks only at her earthly namesake, and instead of being awed at the sight of her, he is given over to pleasure, and like a brutish beast he rushes on to enjoy and beget; he consorts with wantonness, and is not afraid or ashamed of pursuing pleasure in violation of nature.”

- “...the entire soul is pierced and maddened and pained, and at the recollection of beauty is again delighted. And from both of them together the soul is oppressed at the strangeness of her condition, and is in a great strait and excitement, and in her madness can neither sleep by night nor abide in her place by day. And wherever she thinks that she will behold the beautiful one, thither in her desire she runs. And when she has seen him, and bathed herself in the waters of beauty, her constraint is loosened, and she is refreshed, and has no more pangs and pains; and this is the sweetest of all pleasures at the time, and is the reason why the soul of the lover will never forsake his beautiful one, whom he esteems above all; he has forgotten mother and brethren and companions, and he thinks nothing of the neglect and loss of his property; the rules and proprieties of life, on which he formerly prided himself, he now despises, and is ready to sleep like a servant, wherever he is allowed, as near as he can to his desired one, who is the object of his worship, and the physician who can alone assuage the greatness of his pain.” (great to find this in Plato in such a roundabout way, after all the other readings; coming back to the ground of western philosophy and finding the same message in the ground of Eastern philosophies)

- “...when he sees the beautiful one he is ready to die of fear. And from that time forward the soul of the lover follows the beloved in modesty and holy fear.” (Plato is mentioning pride and the importance of humility)  
- “For what should a man live if not for the pleasures of discourse? Surely not for the sake of bodily pleasures, which almost always have previous pain as a condition of them, and therefore are rightly called slavish.”

- “the speaker who knows the truth may, without any serious purpose, steal away the hearts of his hearers. This piece of good-fortune I attribute to the local deities; and perhaps, the prophets of the Muses who are singing over our heads may have imparted their inspiration to me. For I do not imagine that I have any rhetorical art of my own.” (From nothing, Nothing comes, Socrates' humility is always present)

- “And in this instance, you who are the father of letters, from a paternal love of your own children have been led to attribute to them a quality which they cannot have; for this discovery of yours will create forgetfulness in the learners' souls, because they will not use their memories; they will trust to the external written characters and not remember of themselves. The specific which you have discovered is an aid not to memory, but to reminiscence, and you give your disciples not truth, but only the semblance of truth; they will be hearers of many things and will have learned nothing; they will appear to be omniscient and will generally know nothing; they will be tiresome company, having the show of wisdom without the reality. “ (Kierkegaard and forgetting that we are a Self, Jeopardy, KOGWY, most or maybe all 'intellectuals')

- “There was a tradition in the temple of Dodona that oaks first gave prophetic utterances. The men of old, unlike in their simplicity to young philosophy, deemed that if they heard the truth even from "oak or rock," it was enough for them; whereas you seem to consider not whether a thing is or is not true, but who the speaker is and from what country the tale comes.” (which is why a 21 year old can seem 'older' or more 'aware' than a 70 year old)

- “...whether private man or statesman, proposes laws and so becomes the author of a political treatise, fancying that there is any great certainty and clearness in his performance, the fact of his so writing is only a disgrace to him, whatever men may say. For not to know the nature of justice and injustice, and good and evil, and not to be able to distinguish the dream from the reality, cannot in truth be otherwise than disgraceful to him, even though he have the applause of the whole world...”

- “...he who thinks that in the written word there is necessarily much which is not serious, and that neither poetry nor prose, spoken or written, is of any great value, if, like the compositions of the rhapsodes, they are only recited in order to be believed, and not with any view to criticism or instruction; and who thinks that even the best of writings are but a reminiscence of what we know, and that only in principles of justice and goodness and nobility taught and communicated orally for the sake of instruction and graven in the soul...”

- “...give me beauty in the inward soul; and may the outward and inward man be at one.” (divided self, Tolstoy, Vivekananda, Kierkegaard, etc.)

## 15. William Lane Craig-

### The Absurdity of Life without God

## 16. Bertrand Russell

- “And from the monsters, as the play unfolded itself, Man was born, with the power of thought, the knowledge of good and evil, and the cruel thirst for worship. And Man saw that all is passing in this mad, monstrous world, that all is struggling to snatch, at any cost, a few brief moments of life before Death’s inexorable decree.”

- “And Man said: ‘There is a hidden purpose, could we but fathom it, and the purpose is good; for we must reverence something, and in the visible world there is nothing worthy of reverence.’”

- “But gradually, as morality grows bolder, the claim of the ideal world begins to be felt; and worship, if it is not to cease, must be given to gods of another kind than those created by the savage. Some, though they feel the demands of the ideal, will still consciously reject them, still urging that naked Power is worthy of worship. Such is the attitude inculcated in God’s answer to Job out of the whirlwind: the divine power and knowledge are paraded, but of the divine goodness there is no hint. Such also is the attitude of those who, in our own day, base their morality upon the struggle for survival, maintaining that the survivors are necessarily the fittest. But others, not content with an answer so repugnant to the moral sense, will adopt the position which we have become accustomed to regard as specially religious, maintaining that, in some hidden manner, the world of fact is really harmonious with the world of ideals. Thus Man creates God, all-powerful and all-good, the mystic unity of what is and what should be.”

- “Let us admit that, in the world we know there are many things that would be better otherwise, and that the ideals to which we do and must adhere are not realized in the realm of matter.”

- “Let us preserve our respect for truth, for beauty, for the ideal of perfection which life does not permit us to attain, though none of these things meet with the approval of the unconscious universe. If Power is bad, as it seems to be, let us reject it from our hearts. In this lies Man’s true freedom: in determination to worship only the God created by our own love of the good, to respect only the heaven which inspires the insight of our best moments. In action, in desire, we must submit perpetually to the tyranny of outside forces; but in thought, in aspiration, we are free, free from our fellowmen, free from the petty planet on which our bodies impotently crawl, free even, while we live, from the tyranny of death. Let us learn, then, that energy of faith which enables us to live constantly in the vision of the good; and let us descend, in action, into the world of fact, with that vision always before us.”

- “Freedom comes only to those who no longer ask of life that it shall yield them any of those personal goods that are subject to the mutations of Time.”

- “Yet, by death, by illness, by poverty, or by the voice of duty, we must learn, each one of us, that the world was not made for us, and that, however beautiful may be the things we crave for, Fate may nevertheless forbid them.”

- “Except for those rare spirits that are born without sin, there is a cavern of darkness to be traversed before that temple can be entered. The gate of the cavern is despair, and its floor is paved with the gravestones of abandoned hopes. There Self must die; there the eagerness, the greed of untamed desire must be slain, for only so can the soul be freed from the empire of Fate. But out of the cavern the Gate of Renunciation leads again to the daylight of wisdom, by whose radiance a new insight, a new joy, a new tenderness, shine forth to gladden the pilgrim’s heart.”

- “In the spectacle of Death, in the endurance of intolerable pain, and in the irrevocableness of a vanished past, there is a sacredness, an overpowering awe, a feeling of the vastness, the depth, the inexhaustible mystery of existence, in which, as by some strange marriage of pain, the sufferer is bound to the world by bonds of sorrow. In these moments of insight, we lose all eagerness of temporary desire, all struggling and striving for petty ends, all care for the little trivial things that, to a superficial view, make up the common life of day by day; we see, surrounding the narrow raft illumined by the flickering light of human comradeship, the dark ocean on whose rolling waves we toss for a brief hour; from the great night without, a chill blast breaks in upon our refuge; all the loneliness of humanity amid hostile forces is concentrated upon the individual soul, which must struggle alone, with what of courage it can command, against the whole weight of a universe that cares nothing for its hopes and fears.”

- “To take into the inmost shrine of the soul the irresistible forces whose puppets we seem to be—Death and change, the irrevocableness of the past, and the powerlessness of man before the blind hurry of the universe from vanity to vanity—to feel these things and know them is to conquer them.”

- “To abandon the struggle for private happiness, to expel all eagerness of temporary desire, to burn with passion for eternal things—this is emancipation, and this is the free man’s worship. And this liberation is effected by a contemplation of Fate; for Fate itself is subdued by the mind which leaves nothing to be purged by the purifying fire of Time.”

- “Brief and powerless is Man’s life; on him and all his race the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and dark. Blind to good and evil, reckless of destruction, omnipotent matter rolls on its relentless way; for Man, condemned to-day to lose his dearest, to-morrow himself to pass through the gate of darkness...”

-“Such, in outline, but even more purposeless, more void of meaning, is the world which Science presents for our belief. Amid such a world, if anywhere, our ideals henceforward must find a home. That Man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all

the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of Man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built.”

Mysticism and Logic

- “...most of them were less anxious to understand the world of science and daily life than to convict it of unreality in the interests of a super-sensible "real" world. It is in this way that logic has been pursued by those of the great philosophers who were mystics. But since they usually took for granted the supposed insight of the mystic emotion, their logical doctrines were presented with a certain dryness, and were believed by their disciples to be quite independent of the sudden illumination from which they sprang.” (Symbolism, the direct experience drove them to these conclusions/the 'unreality' of the world does not conflict with science since 'most' mystically inclined thinkers take 'illusion' to be the world's transitory nature rather than as 'not really existing', therefore science still stands as a description or model of the transitory world)

- “It is difficult to give a logically tenable account of this position without recognizing that good and evil are subjective, that what is good is merely that towards which we have one kind of feeling, and what is evil is merely that towards which we have another kind of feeling. In our active life, where we have to exercise choice, and to prefer this to that of two possible acts, it is necessary to have a distinction of good and evil, or at least of better and worse. But this distinction, like everything pertaining to action, belongs to what mysticism regards as the world of illusion, if only because it is essentially concerned with time.”

- “We are thus brought back to our seeming paradox, that a philosophy which does not seek to impose upon the world its own conceptions of good and evil is not only more likely to achieve truth, but is also the outcome of a higher ethical standpoint than one which, like evolutionism and most traditional systems, is perpetually appraising the universe and seeking to find in it an embodiment of present ideals. In religion, and in every deeply serious view of the world and of human destiny, there is an element of submission, a realisation of the limits of human power, which is somewhat lacking in the modern world, with its quick material successes and its insolent belief in the boundless possibilities of progress. "He that loveth his life shall lose it"; and there is danger lest, through a too confident love of life, life itself should lose much of what gives it its highest worth. The submission which religion inculcates in action is essentially the same in spirit as that which science teaches in thought; and the ethical neutrality by which its victories have been achieved is the outcome of that submission.” (renunciation)

- “In Plato, the same twofold impulse exists, though the mystic impulse is distinctly the stronger of the two, and secures ultimate victory whenever the conflict is sharp. His description of the cave is the classical statement of belief in a knowledge and reality truer and more real than that of the senses...”

- “...the greatest men who have been philosophers have felt the need both of science and of mysticism: the attempt to harmonise the two was what made their life, and what always must, for all its arduous uncertainty, make philosophy, to some minds, a greater thing than either science or religion.”

- “After Socrates has explained that there is an idea of the good, but not of such things as hair and mud and dirt, Parmenides advises him "not to despise even the meanest things," and this advice shows the genuine scientific temper.” (except this is not the temper of most scientists today; this is originally the temper of the saint. The scientist would just be following in the saints footsteps)

- “Reality, he says, is uncreated, indestructible, unchanging, indivisible; it is "immovable in the bonds of mighty chains, without beginning and without end; since coming into being and passing away have been driven afar, and true belief has cast them away."

- “This is the negative side of the mystic's initiation: the doubt concerning common knowledge, preparing the way for the reception of what seems a higher wisdom.”

- “I believe, however, that the elimination of ethical considerations from philosophy is both scientifically necessary and—though this may seem a paradox—an ethical advance. Both these contentions must be briefly defended. The hope of satisfaction to our more human desires—the hope of demonstrating that the world has this or that desirable ethical characteristic—is not one which, so far as I can see, a scientific philosophy can do anything whatever to satisfy. The difference between a good world and a bad one is a difference in the particular characteristics of the particular things that exist in these worlds: it is not a sufficiently abstract difference to come within the province of philosophy.”

- “A truly scientific philosophy will be more humble, more piecemeal, more arduous, offering less glitter of outward mirage to flatter fallacious hopes, but more indifferent to fate, and more capable of accepting the world without the tyrannous imposition of our human and temporary demands.”

## 17. Albert Camus

- “A man who has become conscious of the absurd is forever bound to it.”

-”It happens that the stage sets collapse. Rising, streetcar, four hours in the office or the factory, meal, streetcar, four hours of work, meal, sleep, and Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday and Saturday according to the same rhythm—this path is easily followed most of the time. But one day the "why" arises and everything begins in that weariness tinged with amazement. "Begins"—this is important. Weariness comes at the end of the acts of a mechanical life, but at the same time it inaugurates the impulse of consciousness. It awakens consciousness and provokes what follows. What follows is the gradual return into the chain or it is the definitive awakening. At the end of the awakening comes, in time, the consequence: suicide or recovery. In itself weariness has something sickening about it. Here, I must conclude that it is good.”

- “Yet a day comes when a man notices or says that he is thirty. Thus he asserts his youth.

But simultaneously he situates himself in relation to time. He takes his place in it. He admits that he stands at a certain point on a curve that he acknowledges having to travel to its end. He belongs to time, and by the horror that seizes him, he recognizes his worst enemy. Tomorrow, he was longing for tomorrow, whereas everything in him ought to reject it. That revolt of the flesh is the absurd.”

- “Men, too, secrete the inhuman. At certain moments of lucidity, the mechanical aspect of their

gestures, their meaningless pantomime makes silly everything that surrounds them. A man is talking on the telephone behind a glass partition; you cannot hear him, but you see his

incomprehensible dumb show: you wonder why he is alive.”

- “We must despair of ever reconstructing the familiar, calm surface which would give us peace of heart. After so many centuries of inquiries, so many abdications among thinkers, we are well aware that this is true for all our knowledge.”

- “Let us pause here. If I hold to be true that absurdity that determines my relationship with life, if I become thoroughly imbued with that sentiment that seizes me in face of the world's

scenes, with that lucidity imposed on me by the pursuit of a science, I must sacrifice everything to these certainties and I must see them squarely to be able to maintain them. Above all, I must adapt my behavior to them and pursue them in all their consequences. I am speaking here of decency. But I want to know beforehand if thought can live in those deserts.”

- “Does not the failure reveal, beyond any possible explanation and interpretation, not the absence but the existence of transcendence?" That existence which, suddenly and through a blind act of human confidence, explains everything, he defines as "the unthinkable unity of the

general and the particular." Thus the absurd becomes god (in the broadest meaning of this

word) and that inability to understand becomes the existence that illuminates everything. Nothing logically prepares this reasoning. I can call it a leap.”

- “For him (Kierkegaard), too, antinomy and paradox become criteria of the religious. Thus, the very thing that led to despair of the meaning and depth of this life now gives it its truth and its clarity.”

- “Nothing more profound, for example, than Kierkegaard's view according to which despair is not a fact but a state: the very state of sin. For sin is what alienates from God. The absurd, which

is the metaphysical state of the conscious man, does not lead to God.”

- “Kierkegaard may shout in warning: "If man had no eternal consciousness, if, at the bottom of everything, there were merely a wild, seething force producing everything, both large and trifling, in the storm of dark passions, if the bottomless void that nothing can fill underlay all things, what would life be but despair?" This cry is not likely to stop the absurd man.

Seeking what is true is not seeking what is desirable. If in order to elude the anxious question: "What would life be?" one must, like the donkey, feed on the roses of illusion, then the absurd mind, rather than resigning itself to falsehood, prefers to adopt fearlessly Kierkegaard' s

reply: "despair." Everything considered, a determined soul will always manage.” (me- wrong again)

- “Suicide, like the leap, is acceptance at its extreme. Everything is over and man returns to his essential history.”

- “The absurd man thus catches sight of a burning and frigid, transparent and limited universe in which nothing is possible but everything is given, and beyond which all is collapse and nothingness. He can then decide to accept such a universe and draw from it his strength, his refusal to hope, and the unyielding evidence of a life without consolation.”

- “The workman of today works everyday in his life at the same tasks, and his fate is no less

absurd. But it is tragic only at the rare moments when it becomes conscious.”

- “Thus, for Chestov acceptance of the absurd is contemporaneous with the absurd itself.

Being aware of it amounts to accepting it, and the whole logical effort of his thought is to bring it out so that at the same time the tremendous hope it involves may burst forth. Let me repeat that this attitude is legitimate.”

- “...like those of Kafka, Kierkegaard, or Chestov...They embrace the God that consumes them. It is through humility that hope enters in. For the absurd of this existence assures them a little more of supernatural reality. If the course of this life leads to God, there is an outcome after all.”

- “Within the limits of the human conditon, what greater hope than the hope that allows an escape from that condition? As I see once more, existential thought in this regard (and contrary to current opinion) is steeped in a vast hope.”

- “(Kafka) His work is universal (a really absurd work is not universal) to the extent to which it represents the emotionally moving face of a man fleeing humanity, deriving from his contradictions reasons fro believing, reasons for hoping from his fecund despairs, and calling life his terrifying apprenticeship in death. It is universal because its inspiration is religious.”

## 18. Emile Cioran

### On the Heights of Despair

- “why can't we stay closed up inside ourselves? why do we chase after expression and form, trying to deliver ourselves of our precious contents or"meanings," desperately attempting to organize what is after all a rebellious and chaotic process? wouldn't it be more creative simply to

surrender to our inner fluidity without any intention of objectifying it, intimately and voluptuously soaking in our own inner turmoil and struggle? then we would feel with much richer intensity the whole inner growth of spiritual experience all kinds of insights would blend

and flourish in a fertile effervescence. a sensation of actuality and spiritual content would be born, like the rise of a wave or a musical phrase. to be full of one's self, not in the sense of pride, but of enrichment, to be tormented by a sense of inner infinity...” (me- Molinos says this almost exactly)

- “only a few can endure such experiences to the end. there is always a serious danger in repressing something which requires objectification, in locking up explosive energy, because there comes a moment when one can not restrain such overwhelming power. and then the fall is from too much plenitude. there are experiences and obsessions one cannot live with. salvation lies in confessing them. the terrifying experience of death, when preserved in consciousness, becomes

ruinous. if you talk about death, you save part of yourself. but at the same time, something of your real self dies, because objectified meanings lose the actuality they have in consciousness.”

- “the deepest subjective experiences are also the most universal, because through them one

reaches the original source of life. true interiorization leads to a universality inaccessible to those who remain on the periphery.”

- “the vulgar interpretation of universality calls it a phenomenon of quantitative expansion

rather than a qualitatively rich containment. such an interpretation sees lyricism as a peripheral

and inferior phenomenon, the product of spiritual inconsistency, failing to notice that the lyrical resources of subjectivity show remark able freshness and depth. there are people who become lyrical only at crucial moments in their life; some only in the throes of death, when their

entire past suddenly appears before them and hits them with the force of a waterfall. many become lyrical after some decisively critical experience, when the turmoil of their

inner being reaches paroxysm. thus people who are normally inclined toward objectivity and impersonality, strangers both to themselves and to reality, once they become prisoners of love, experience feelings which actualize all their personal resources. the fact that almost everybody writes poetry when in love proves that the resources of conceptual thinking are too poor to

express their inner infinity; inner lyricism finds adequate objectification only through fluid, irrational material.” (a great description of Tillich's ideas of Religious Symbolism)

- “the experience of suffering is a similar case. you never suspected what lay hidden in yourself and in the world, you were living contentedly at the periphery of things, when suddenly those feelings of suffering which are second only to death itself take hold of you and transport you

into a region of infinite complexity, where your subjectivity tosses about in a maelstrom. to be lyrical from suffering means to achieve that inner purification in which wounds cease to be mere

outer manifestations without deep complications and begin to participate in the essence of your being.”

- “there is no authentic lyricism without a grain of interior madness. it is significant that the beginnings of all mental psychoses are marked by a lyrical phase during which all the usual barriers and limits disappear, giving way to an inner drunkenness of the most fertile, creative kind.”

- “the lyrical state is a state beyond forms and systems.”

- “how distant everything is! i don't understand why we must do things in this world, why we

must have friends and aspirations, hopes and dreams. wouldn't it be better to retreat to a faraway corner of the world, where all its noise and complications would be heard no

more? Then we could renounce culture and ambitions; we would lose everything and gain nothing; for what is there to be gained from this world? there are people to whom gain is unimportant, who are hopelessly unhappy and lonely. we are so closed to one another! and yet, were we to be totally open to each other, reading into the depths of our souls, how much of our

destiny would we see? We are so lonely in life that we must ask ourselves if the loneliness of dying is not a symbol of our human existence. can there be any consolation at the last moment? this willingness to live and die in society is a mark of great deficiency. it is a thousand times preferable to die somewhere alone and abandoned so that you can die without melodramatic

posturing, unseen by anyone. i despise people who on their death bed master themselves and

adopt a pose in order to impress. tears do not burn except in solitude. those who ask to be surrounded by friends when they die do so out of fear and inability to live their final moments

alone. they want to for get death at the moment of death. they lack infinite heroism. why don't they lock their door and suffer those maddening sensations with a lucidity and a fear beyond all limits? we are so isolated from everything! but isn't everything equally inaccessible to us? the deepest and most organic death is death in solitude, when even light becomes a principle of death. in such moments you will be severed from life, from love, smiles, friends and even from death. and you will ask yourself if there is anything besides the nothingness of the world and your own nothingness.” (Would Tillich agree with this?)

- “on not wanting to live. there are experiences which one cannot survive, after which one feels that there is no meaning left in anything. once you have reached the limits of life, having

lived to extremity all that is offered at those dangerous borders, the everyday gesture and the usual aspiration lose their seductive charm.” (Bach is needed, right Heisman?)

- “the most terrifying intensification bursts into nothingness. you grow inside, you dilate madly until there are no boundaries left, you reach the edge of light, where light is stolen by night, and

from that plenitude as in a savage whirlwind you are thrown straight into nothingness.”

- “at the edge of life everything is an occasion for death...every experience is in this case a leap into nothingness.”

- “did not all the mystics feel that they could not live after their great ecstasies? what could they expect from this world, those who sense, beyond the normal limits, life, loneliness, despair, death?”

- “the passion for the absurd. there are no arguments. Can anyone who has reached the limit bother with arguments, causes, effects, moral considerations, and so forth? of course not. for

such a person there are only unmotivated motives for living. on the heights of despair, the passion for the absurd is the only thing that can still throw a demonic light on chaos. When all the current reasons- moral, esthetic, religious, social, and so on - no longer guide one's life, how can one sustain life without succumbing to nothingness? Only by a connection with the absurd, by love of absolute uselessness, loving something which does not have substance but which simulates an illusion of life.” (sounds like Tillich's concrete religious symbols)

- “i feel i must burst because of all that life offers me and because of the prospect of death.

i feel that i am dying of solitude, of love, of despair, of hatred, of all that this world offers me.

with every experience i expand like a balloon blown up beyond its capacity. the most terrifying intensification bursts into nothingness.”

- “i live because the mountains do not laugh and the worms do not sing. the passion for the absurd can grow only in a man who has exhausted everything, yet is still capable of undergoing awesome transfigurations. for one who has lost everything there is nothing left in life except the passion of the absurd.”

- “what else in life could still move such a person? what seductions? some say: self-sacrifice for humanity, the public good, the cult of the beautiful, and so forth. i like only those people who have done away with all that - even for a short time. only they have lived in an absolute

manner. only they have the right to speak about life.”

- “only the sick man is delighted by life and praises it so that he won't collapse.”

- “true solitude is the feeling of being absolutely isolated between the earth and the sky. nothing should detract attention from these phenomena of absolute isolation: a fearfully lucid intuition

will reveal the entire drama of man's finite nature facing the infinite nothingness of the world. solitary walks - extremely fertile and dangerous at the same time, for the inner life - must take place in such a way that nothing will obscure the solitary's meditation on man's isolation

in the world. Solitary walks are propitious to an intense process of interiorization especially in the evening, when none of the usual seductions can steal one's interest. then revelations about the

world spring from the deepest corner of the spirit, from the place where it has detached itself from life, from the wound of life. to achieve spirituality, one must be very lonely. so much death-

in-life and so many inner conflagrations.”

- “I am: therefore the world is meaningless.” (Ha! how many times has this been said out loud?)

- “life is the privilege of mediocre people. only mediocrities live at life's normal temperature; the

others are consumed at temperatures at which life can not endure, at which they can barely breathe, already one foot beyond life.”

- “i propose the agony method to rid you of all these imperfections. apply it to every generation and its effects will soon be evident. maybe in this way i too could become useful to mankind!

bring every man to the agony of life's last moments by whip, fire, or injections, and through terrible torture he will undergo the great purification afforded by a vision of death. then free him and

let him run in a fright until he falls exhausted. i warrant you that the effect is incomparably greater than any obtained through normal means. if i could, i would drive the entire world to agony to achieve a radical purification of life; i would set a fire burning insidiously at the roots of life, not to

destroy them but to give them a new and different sap, a new heat. the fire i would set to the world would not bring ruin but cosmic transfiguration. in this way life would adjust to higher temperatures and would cease to be an environment propitious to mediocrity. and maybe in this dream, death

too would cease to be immanent in life.” (take psychedelics correctly, Mckenna)

- “i'm speaking of a precise painful sensation, not a vague and undetermined one. as in a hallucinatory dream, you feel that only your head is left, without foundation and support, without a body.”

- “it is a weariness which consumes and destroys. no effort, no hope, no illusion can satisfy you any longer. shocked witless by your own catastrophe, unable to think or to act, caught in cold and

heavy darkness, solitary as in moments of profound regret, you have reached the negative limit of life, its absolute temperature, where the last illusions about life freeze.”

- “i call agonic only those dramatic moments in the battle between life and death when the presence of death is experienced consciously and painfully. true agony occurs when you pass into nothingness through death, when a feeling of weariness consumes you irrevocably and death

wins. in every true agony there is a triumph of death, even though you may continue to live after those moments of weariness. there is nothing imaginary in this turmoil. every agony bears a conclusive stamp. isn't agony similar to an incurable sickness which torments us intermittently (me- Sickness Unto Death)? agonic moments chart the progress of death in life, revealing a drama in our consciousness caused by the disruption of the balance between life and death. such moments

are not possible except in that sensation of weariness which brings life down to its absolute negative value.”

- “i want to die but I am sorry that I want to die. this is the feeling experienced by those who abandon themselves to nothingness.” (Kierkegaard, Tillich courage to be pg 11)

- “how good it would be if one could die by throwing oneself into an infinite void!”

- “the complexity of the grotesque born out of despair resides in its capacity to indicate an inner infinity and to produce a paroxysm of the highest tension.”

- “it is evident to anyone who understands the multiple forms of inner drama that the grotesque hides secret tragedies, indirectly expressed. whoever has seen his face grotesquely disfigured can never forget it, because he will always be afraid of himself.”

- “one loses one's sense of security and the normal sensation of the immediate and the concrete.”

- “the truly awful thing in madness is that we sense a total and irrevocable loss of life while we are still living.”

- “in death one loses everything, by a fall into nothingness. that is why the fear of death is persistent and essential, but actually less strange than the fear of madness, in which our semi-presence creates an anxiety more complex than the organic fear of the total nothingness of death. but wouldn't madness be an escape from the misery of life?”

- “i would like instead a shower of warm light to fall from me, transfiguring the entire world, an

unecstatic burst of light preserving the calm of luminous eternity. far from the concentrations of ecstasy, it would be all graceful lightness and smiling warmth. The entire world should float in this dream of light, in this transparent and unreal state of delight. obstacles and matter, form and limits would cease to exist. then let me die of light in such a landscape.”

- “there are questions which, once approached, either isolate you or kill you outright. afterward you have nothing more to lose. from then on, your erstwhile "serious" pursuits- your spiritual

quest for more varied forms of life, your limitless longing for inaccessible things, your elevated

frustration with the limits of empiricism- all become simple manifestations of an excessively exuberant sensibility, lacking the profound seriousness which characterizes the man who has penetrated the realm of dangerous mysteries.”

- “only the organic and existential thinker is capable of this kind of seriousness, because truth for him is alive, born from inner agony and organic disorder rather than useless speculation. out

of the shadow of the abstract man, who thinks for the pleasure of thinking, emerges the organic man, who thinks because of a vital imbalance, and who is beyond science and art.” (Huxley said this about art, I find philosophy to be 'useless speculation, rather than a concern about the Truth of existence)

- “to step into death does not mean, as commonly believed, especially by christians, to draw one's

last breath and to pass into a region qualitatively different from life. it means, rather, to discover in the course of life the way toward death and to find in life's vital signs the immanent abyss of death.”

- “but why is the experience of agony so rare? Can it be that our hypothesis is entirely false and

that sketching a metaphysics of death is possible only by accepting death's transcendental nature?”

- “from a grave perspective, every step in life is a step into death and memory is only the sign

of nothingness. the average man, deprived of metaphysical understanding, does not have this consciousness of progressive advance into death, though neither he nor anyone else can escape its inexorable destiny. but when consciousness becomes independent of life, the revelation of death

becomes so strong that its presence destroys all naiveté, all joyful enthusiasm, and all natural voluptuousness. to have the consciousness of death is something perverse and extremely corrupt. the naive poetry of life, its seductions and charms, appear empty of content. equally empty are man's finalizing projects and his theological illusions.”

- “whoever has not experienced the awful agony of death, rising and spreading like a surge of blood, like the choking grasp of a snake which provokes terrifying hallucinations, does not know the demonic character of life and the state of inner effervescence from which great transfigurations arise. such a state of black drunkenness is a necessary prerequisite to understanding why one wishes the immediate end of this world.”

- “happy the man who could abandon himself to this becoming and could absorb all the possibilities offered each moment, ignoring the agonizingly problematic evaluation

which discovers in every moment an insurmountable relativity.”

- “the revelation of death's immanence in life occurs during illnesses and long depressive states.

there are, of course, other ways, but they are accidental and individual, and do not have the same potential for revelation as illness or depression.”

- “only those who truly suffer are capable of of genuine content and infinite seriousness...there are many who would gladly give up metaphysical revelations, obtained through despair, agony, and death, in exchange for a naive love or the voluptuous unconsciousness of dance.”

- “these states, in which separation from the world steadily and painfully increases, bring man closer to his inner reality and cause him to discover death in his own subjectivity. a growing interiority progresses toward the essential center of subjectivity, overcoming all the social forms which usually mask it. once beyond this center, progressive interiority discovers the region

where life mingles with death, where man has not yet detached himself from the primary sources of existence, where the demonic rhythm of life works with complete irrationality. in cases of depression, the awareness of death's immanence in life creates an atmosphere of constant dissatisfaction and restlessness that can never be appeased.”

- “the fear of death, which is nothing but the fear of the nothingness into which death throws us, proves that death presupposes nothingness.”

- “even though belief in eternity is necessary as historical man's unique consolation, the catastrophic ending of this tragedy of life and of man in particular will demonstrate the illusion of such naive faith.”

- “those who try to eliminate the fear of death through artificial reasoning are totally

mistaken, because it is impossible to cancel an organic fear by way of abstract constructs. whoever seriously considers the question of death must be afraid. Even those who believe in eternity do so because they are afraid of death. there is in their faith a painful effort to save - even without an absolute certitude- the world of values in which they live and to which they contribute, an effort to defeat the nothingness inherent in the temporal and attain the universal in eternity. Death met without religious faith leaves nothing standing.”

- “yet other philosophies and doctrines say almost nothing about death. the only valid attitude is absolute silence or a cry of despair. some people maintain that the fear of death does not have a deeper justification, because as long as there is an i there is no death, and once dead there

is no i any longer. these people have forgotten about the very strange phenomenon of gradual agony. what comfort does this artificial distinction between the i and death offer a man who has a strong premonition of death? what meaning can logical argument or subtle thought have for someone deeply imbued with a feeling of the irrevocable? all attempts to bring existential questions onto a logical plane are null and void. philosophers are too proud to confess their fear of death and too

supercilious to acknowledge the spiritual fecundity of illness. their reflections on death exhibit

a hypocritical serenity; in fact, they tremble with fear more than anyone else. one should not forget that philosophy is the art of masking inner torments.”

- “the art of dying cannot be learned, because there is no technique, there are no rules. the irrevocability of agony is experienced by each individual alone, through infinite and intense suffering. most people are unaware of the slow agony within themselves. for them there is only

one kind of agony, the one immediately preceding the fall into absolute nothingness. only such moments of agony bring about important existential revelations in consciousness. that is why they expect everything from the end instead of trying to grasp the meaning of a slow revelatory agony. the end will reveal too little, and they will die as ignorant as they have lived.”

- “isn't nothingness, then, salvation? but how can there be salvation in nothingness? if salvation

is nearly impossible through existence, how can it be possible through the complete absence of existence? since there is no salvation either in existence or in nothingness, let this world with its eternal laws be smashed to pieces.”

- “the sensation of expansion toward nothingness present in melancholy has its roots in a weariness characteristic of all negative states. this weariness separates man from the world. life's intense rhythm, its organic inner pulse, weakens. weariness is the first organic determinant of knowledge. because it creates the necessary conditions for man's differentiation from the world, weariness leads one to the perspective which places the world in front of man.”

- “man grows wings in melancholy not in order to enjoy the world but in order to be alone. what

is the meaning of loneliness in melancholy? isn't it related to the feeling of interior and exterior infinity?”

- “melancholy detachment removes man from his natural surroundings. his outlook on infinity

shows him to be lonely and forsaken. the sharper our consciousness of the world's infinity, the more acute our awareness of our own finitude. in some states this awareness is painfully depressing, but in melancholy it is less tormenting and sometimes even rather voluptuous.

the disparity between the world's infinity and man's finitude is a serious cause for despair; but

when one looks at this disparity in states of melancholy, it ceases to be painful and the world appears endowed with a strange, sickly beauty.”

- “nothing is important. how important can it be that i suffer and think? My presence in this world will disturb a few tranquil lives and will unsettle the unconscious and pleasant naiveté

of others. although i feel that my tragedy is the greatest in history- greater than the fall of empires - i am nevertheless aware of my total insignificance. i am absolutely persuaded that i am nothing in this universe; yet i feel that mine is the only real existence. if i had to choose between the world and me, i would reject the world, its lights and laws, unafraid to glide alone in absolute nothingness. although life for me is torture, i cannot renounce it, because i do not believe in the absolute values in whose name i would sacrifice myself.”

- “i wonder whether a truly metaphysical feeling is even possible without the disappearance of superficial forms? one reaches the center of life only by purifying it of contingent and accidental

elements.”

- “metaphysical existentialism is born out of ecstasy in front of the world's primordial origins; it

is the ultimate intoxication, ecstatic bliss in the contemplation of essence.”

- “i see a form of madness, not of knowledge, in the ecstasy of life's ultimate origins. You cannot experience it except in solitude, when you feel as if you were floating above the world. solitude is the proper milieu for madness. it is noteworthy that even the skeptic can experience this kind of ecstasy. does not the madness of ecstasy reveal itself through this odd combination of certitude and essence with doubt and despair?”

- “the world in which nothing is solved. to doubt and yet to live - this is a paradox, though not a tragic one, since doubt is less intense, less consuming, than despair. abstract doubt, in which

one participates only partially, is more frequent, whereas in despair one participates totally and

organically. not even the most organic and serious forms of doubt ever reach the intensity of despair. in comparison with despair, skepticism is characterized by a certain amount of dilettantism and superficiality. i can doubt everything, i may very well smile contemptuously at the world, but this will not prevent me from eating, from sleeping peacefully, and from marrying. in despair, whose depth one can fathom only by experiencing it, such actions are possible only with great effort. On the heights of despair, nobody has the right to sleep. thus a genuinely

desperate man cannot forget his own tragedy: his consciousness preserves the painful actuality of his subjective torment. doubt is anxiety about problems and things, and has its origins in the unsolvable nature of all big questions. if such questions could be solved, the skeptic would revert to more normal states. The condition of the desperate man in this respect is utterly different: if all

problems were solved, he would not be any less anxious, since his anxiety arises out of his own

subjective existence. Despair is the state in which anxiety and restlessness are immanent to existence. nobody in despair suffers from problems, but from his own inner torment and fire. it's a pity that nothing can be solved in this world. yet there never was and there never will be anyone who would commit suicide for this reason.”

- “one must descend all the circles of an inner hell to turn one's destiny into a subjective yet universal problem.” (Kierkegaard)

- “only great and dangerous contradictions betoken a rich spiritual life, because only they

constitute a mode of realization for life's abundant inner flow. people who know only a few spiritual states and never live on the edge do not have contradictions, because their limited

resources cannot form oppositions.”

- “rich spiritual life must know chaos and the effervescent paroxysm of illness, because in them

inspiration appears to be essential for creation and contradictions become expressions of high

inner temperatures. nobody who does not love chaos is a creator, and whoever is contemptuous of illness must not speak of the spirit.”

- “I know nothing more disgusting than death...it is ironic that one fears it the more one admires it. i must confess that i admire death's negativity. it is the only thing i can admire and yet not

love. its grandeur and infinity impress me, but my despair is so vast that i don't even harbor the hope of death. how could i love death? one can only write about it in contradictory ways. whoever says that he knows something definite about death shows that he has not even a

premonition, although he bears it within himself. every man bears with him not only his life but also his death.”

- “an observation which, to my great regret, is always verifiable: only those are happy who never think or, rather, who only think about life's bare necessities, and to think about such things means not to think at all. true thinking resembles a demon who muddies the spring of life or a sickness which corrupts its roots. to think all the time, to raise questions, to doubt your own destiny, to feel the weariness of living, to be worn out to the point of exhaustion by thoughts and life...” (Ha!)

- “i might become an animal who knows the history of philosophy. as to becoming superman, that

seems to me utter and ridiculous folly. could there be a solution, approximate of course, in a sort of superconsciousness? couldn't one live beyond (not just on this side, toward animality) all

complex forms of consciousness, anxiety, agony, in a sphere of life where access to eternity would no longer be pure myth?”

- “what should i do? work for a social and political system, make a girl miserable? hunt for weaknesses in philosophical systems, fight for moral and esthetic ideals? it's all too little.” (me- Renunciation)

- “beyond present-day common ideals and forms, one might breathe in a superconsciousness where the intoxication of eternity would do away with the qualms of this world, and where being would be just as pure and immaterial as nonbeing.”

- “to live in a bath of fire, transfigured by its rich glow – such is the state of immaterial purity where one is nothing but a dancing flame. freed from the laws of gravity, life becomes illusion

or dream.”

- “not everybody loses their innocence: therefore not everybody is unhappy...disintegration implies total loss of innocence, that lovely gift destroyed by knowledge, life's enemy.”

- “innocence is delight in natural charm...there are only two fundamental attitudes: the naive and the heroic...innocence is no longer an option, so there only remains heroism. incapable of fulfillment and happiness... to be a hero - in the most universal sense of the word means to aspire to absolute triumph. but such triumphs come only through death. heroism means transcending life; it is a fatal leap into nothingness, even though the hero may not be aware that his energy springs from a life deprived of its normal supports. all that is innocence, and does not lead to it, belongs to nothingness. can one speak of the seductions of that they are much too mysterious to penetrate.”

- “spirit in life is an anomaly. i have renounced so much, why should i not renounce spirit as well? but besides being an illness of life, is not renunciation first and foremost an illness of

the spirit?”

- “i do not know what is right and what is wrong; what is allowed and what is not; i cannot judge and i cannot praise. there are no valid criteria and no consistent principles in the world...it surprises me that some people still concern themselves with a theory of knowledge. to tell the truth, i couldn't care less about the relativity of knowledge, simply because the world does not deserve to be known. at times i feel as if i had total knowledge, exhausting the content of this world; at other times the world around me does not make any sense.”

- “the feeling of cosmic loneliness, on the other hand, stems not so much from man's subjective agony as from an awareness of the world's isolation, of objective nothingness. it is as if all the

splendors of this world were to vanish at once, leaving behind the dull monotony of a cemetery.”

- “how i would love one day to see all people, young and old, sad or happy, men and women, married or not, serious or superficial leave their homes and their work places, relinquish their duties and responsibilities, gather in the streets and refuse to do anything anymore. at that moment, let slaves to senseless work, who have been toiling for future generations under the dire delusion that they contribute to the good of humanity, avenge themselves on the mediocrity of a sterile and insignificant life, on the tremendous waste that never permitted spiritual transfiguration.” (Karma Yoga, Maya)

- “let ideals be declared void; beliefs, trifles; art, a lie; and philosophy, a joke.” (Nihilism, Renunciation)

- “the feeling of utter confusion! not to be able to differentiate, clarify, understand, or appreciate! such a feeling would make any philosopher a poet, but not all philosophers experience it the feeling of utter confusion! not to be able to differentiate, clarify, understand, or appreciate! Such a feeling would make any philosopher a poet, but not all philosophers experience it with significant and durable intensity, for if they did, they could no longer philosophize abstractly and rigidly. How a philosopher becomes a poet is like a drama. you

fall from a world of abstractions into a whirlwind of feelings, into all the fantastic shapes

and figures entangled in the soul. how could the actor of a complicated drama of the soul in which, all at once, erotic anticipation clashes with metaphysical anxiety, fear of death with desire for innocence, total renunciation with paradoxical heroism despair with pride, forebodings

of madness with longings for anonymity, screams with silence, aspiration with nothingness how

could he still go on philosophizing in a systematic way? There are men who started in the world

of abstract forms and ended in absolute confusion. therefore they can only philosophize poetically. in the state of absolute confusion, only the delights and torments of madness still

matter.”

- “grace is an illusory state in which life negates its antinomies and transcends its demonic dialectic, in which contradictions, fatality, and the consciousness of the irrevocable temporarily vanish...transcending negativity is the essential characteristic of grace.”

- “only sickness gives birth to serious and deep feelings.”

- “he who has not experienced absolute fear, universal anxiety, cannot understand struggle, the madness of the flesh and of death.”

- “a graceful sense of existence does not lead to metaphysical revelations, to a vision of truth, to the sense of an ending which poisons every moment of life.”

- “pity is not only inefficient; it is also insulting. and besides, how can you pity another when you

yourself suffer ignominiously.”

- “even today nobody can tell what is right or what is wrong...since reality is essentially irrational, why set rules, why distinguish the right from the wrong? morality cannot be saved; it's a mistake to believe otherwise. yet there are those who maintain that in this world pleasure and sin are minor satisfactions which enjoy only a brief triumph and that only good deeds partake of

eternity. they pretend that at the end of this world's misery, goodness and virtue will win but they have failed to see that, if eternity obliterates superficial pleasures, it does the same with virtue, good deeds, and moral actions. eternity does not lead to the triumph of either good or evil; it ravages all.” (me- Exactly! Ha! Vivekananda- maya, Tillich- doubt as being an intrinsic part of true faith, Kierkegaard and how the infinite scared him, how St. Therese said that thoughts concerning the Infinite brought on even deeper anguish)

- “it is silly to condemn the epicureans in the name of eternity. how is suffering rather than pleasure going to make me immortal? from a purely objective point of view, is there any significant difference between one man's agony and another's pleasure? whether you suffer or not, nothingness will swallow you forever.” (Maya)

- “the experience of eternity therefore depends on intensity of subjective feeling, and the way to eternity is to transcend the temporal...every experience of eternity presupposes a leap and a transfiguration, and few and far between are those capable of the tension necessary to arrive at the blissful contemplation of the eternal.”

- “time with its long train of individual moments is, if not unreal, irrelevant...without temporality, life loses its dramatic character...the experience of the eternity is void of life.”

- “why should i live in history, or worry about the social and cultural problems of the age?

i am weary of culture and history; i can no longer bring myself to embrace its torments and its aspirations. We must outstrip history, and we can do so only when past, present, and future cease to be important, when where and when we live becomes a matter of indifference...since there is no hierarchy of life-styles, everybody and nobody is right all at the same time...mankind's achievements could very well be great, but i do not care to know them. I take greater comfort in the contemplation of eternity. in this world not worth so much as a breath, the only valid relation is that between man and eternity, not between man and history.”

- “by outstripping history, one acquires superconsciousness, an important ingredient of eternity. it takes you into the realm where contradictions and doubts lose their meaning, where you

forget about life and death. it is the fear of death that launches men on their quest for eternity...”

- “man tends to monopolize tragedy and suffering in the world: that's why salvation

for him is a burning insoluble question. i am not proud to be a man, because i know only too

well what it is to be man. Only those who have not experienced this state intensely are proud of it, because they intend to become men. their delight is natural: there are among men some who are not far above plants or animals, and therefore aspire to humanity. but those who know what it means to be man long to be anything but.”

- “magic is useful for small and inessential things, but powerless when confronted with metaphysical reality, which requires, most of the time, silence, something magical sensitivity is incapable of. to live with an acute consciousness of fatality, of one's own impotence in the face of life's great problems, which you cannot even pose without tragically implicating yourself in existence, means to engage directly the capital question of life, that of inaccessible and unknowable infinity.”

- “you pretend that despair and agony are only preliminaries, that ideally one should overcome them if one is not to become an automaton. you think joy is the only means of salvation and you despise all others? You call the obsession with agony selfishness and find generous impulses only in joy? you offer us this joy; but how can we receive it from the outside? as long as it does not spring from our inner resources, help from the outside is quite useless. how easy it is to recommend joy to those who cannot be joyful! do all those who are so eager to promote joy realize what it means to feel and fear madness closing in, to live all your life with the tormenting presentiment of madness, to which is added the even more persistent and certain consciousness of death?”

- “let us live the agony fully; let us live our inner tragedy absolutely and frenetically to the very end.”

- “...there is no true or false, only our spontaneous reactions.”

- “isn't intense subjectivity the way to attain universality, exactly as one enters eternity through the instant? men value solitude so little! they condemn the sterility of all that it has produced and give praise exclusively to social values, for they cherish the illusion that they have all contributed to their creation. they all aspire to great achievements through which they hope to attain immortality. as if they will not crumble into dust!” (even Bach will be lost)

- “the enthusiast's ability to be constantly reborn raises him above life's demoniacal

temptations, the fear of nothingness, and the torments of agony. his life has no tragic dimension, because enthusiasm is the only form of life totally opaque to death. even grace - so similar to enthusiasm- has less of this irrational ignorance of death. grace is full of melancholy charm; not so enthusiasm. my tremendous admiration for enthusiasts stems from my inability to comprehend how there can be such men in a world where death, nothingness, sadness, and despair keep sinister company. It makes one wonder, to see people who are never desperate.”

- “the enthusiast is preeminently an unproblematic person. he understands many things without ever knowing the agonizing doubts and the chaotic sensitivity of the problematic man. the latter

cannot solve anything, because nothing satisfies him. you will find in him neither the enthusiast's gift of abandon, his naive irrationality, nor the charming paradox of love in its purest state.”

- “the biblical myth of knowledge as sin is the most profound myth ever invented. the enthusiast's euphoria is due to the fact that he is unaware of the tragedy of knowledge. why not say it? true knowledge is the most tenebrous darkness.”

- “the height of ecstasy is the final sensation, in which you feel you are dying because of all this light and darkness. especially weird is the fact that ecstasy wipes out surrounding objects, familiar forms of the world, until ail that is left is a monumental projection of shadow and light.

it is hard to explain how this selection and purification takes place, why these immaterial shadows hold such sway over us. how can we help attributing an absolute character to light and darkness when they are all that is left of the world's ecstasy? the frequency with which ecstasy occurs in oriental religions, as well as in other forms of mysticism at all times, proves the rightness of our hypothesis. the absolute is inside oneself, not outside, and ecstasy, this paroxysm

of interiority, reveals only inner shadows and glimmers of light. next to them, the charm of light

and day fades quickly. ecstasy partakes of essence to such an extent that it gives an impression

of metaphysical hallucination. pure essences, grasped through ecstasy, are immaterial, but their immateriality causes vertigo and obsession from which you cannot free yourself except by converting them into metaphysical principles.”

- “so you witnessed old age, pain, and death and told yourself that pleasure is an illusion and that the pleasure seekers do not understand the inconstancy of things. then you shunned the world, persuaded that nothing will endure. "i will not return," you proclaimed, "before i have escaped birth, old age, and death." there is much pride and suffering in every renunciation. instead

of retreating discreetly, without a big show of revolt and hatred, you denounce, emphatically

and haughtily, others' ignorance and illusions; you condemn their pleasures. the ascetics, who renounced life and fled into the desert, were convinced that they had overcome all human weaknesses. the belief that they had access to a subjective eternity gave them the illusion of total liberation. nonetheless, their condemnation of pleasure and their contempt for humanity betray their inability to actually free themselves. were i to withdraw into the most fearsome desert, renounce everything, and live in absolute solitude, still I would never dream of despising men and their pleasure. since I cannot really enter eternity through renunciation and solitude, since I shall die like the rest, why despise them, why call my way the only true one? all the great prophets lack discretion and human understanding. i witness pain, old age, death, and i know that they cannot be overcome; but why should i spoil another's enjoyment with my knowledge? suffering and the consciousness of its in escapability lead to renunciation; yet nothing would induce me, not even if i were to become a leper, to condemn another's joy. there is much envy in every act of condemnation. Buddhism and christianity are the revenge and the spite of those who suffer.” (Ha!)

- “the thought of renunciation is so bitter that it is hard to imagine how man ever came to

conceive of it. he who in a moment of despair has not experienced a cold shiver, a sensation of ineluctable abandonment, cosmic death, and individual nothingness, has not experienced the terrifying preliminaries of renunciation.”

- “not living under the fierce desert sun, with just that one thought about eternity, are we to

become saints with roofs over our heads?”

- “a world full of philosophers, what a terrifying prospect! they should be all wiped out so that

life could go on naturally – blindly and irrationally. i hate the wisdom of these men unmoved by truths, who do not suffer with their nerves, their flesh, and their blood. i like only vital, organic truths, the offspring of our anxiety. those whose thoughts are alive are always right; there are no arguments against them. and even if there were, they would not last long. i wonder

how there can still be men searching for the truth. do wise men not yet understand that truth cannot be?” (Taoism, Sean Carroll and others discussing the multi-verse without any discomfort whatsoever)

- “once you've negated everything and done away completely with all forms of existence, once nothing can survive in the path of your negativity, who can you turn to, laughing or crying, if not

your own self? once you have witnessed the fall of the entire world, there is nothing left but for you to fall too. the infinite character of irony cancels all of life's contents. i'm not speaking here of elegant, refined irony, born of a sense of superficial pride and superiority - the irony some use to show off their detachment from the world – but of the tragic, bitter irony of despair. genuine irony replaces tears, convulsions, or even a grotesque and criminal grin.”

- “the essence of social life is injustice.” (me- very Earthly reflections on “poverty”)

- “...infinity, both in time and space, leads to nothing. how can we accomplish anything in the future when we have behind us an eternity in which nothing was accomplished? if the world had had any meaning, it would have been revealed to us by now and we would know it. how can i continue to believe that it will be disclosed in the future when it has not been made manifest yet? but the world has no meaning; irrational at the core, it is, moreover, infinite. meaning is conceivable only in a finite world, where one can reach something, where there are limits to stop

our regression, clear points of reference, where history moves toward a goal envisioned

by the theory of progress.”

- “to live infinity, as well as to meditate a long time upon it, is the most terrifying lesson

in anarchy and revolt one can ever learn. infinity shakes you to the roots of your being, disorganizes you, but it also makes you forget the petty, the contingent, and the insignificant.”

- “how fortunate that, having lost all our hopes, we can still leap into infinity, dive into boundlessness, participate in the universal anarchy of its whirlwind!”

- “absolute becoming, infinity destroys anything that is formed, crystallized, or finished. isn't

music the art which best expresses infinity because it dissolves all forms into a charmingly ineffable fluidity.”

- “i have always wondered why those who have produced masterpieces in these domains have not all gone mad. music more than any other art requires so much concentration that one could easily, after creative moments, lose one's mind. all great composers ought to either commit suicide or become insane at the height of their creative powers. are not all those aspiring to infinity on the road to madness? normality, abnormality, are notions that no longer mean anything. let us live in the ecstasy of infinity, let us love that which is boundless, let us destroy forms...”

- “since i will not die right away, nor regain my innocence, going through the same routine motions every day is sheer madness. banality must be overcome at all costs and the way cleared for transfiguration. how sad to see men bypass themselves, neglect their own destiny instead of rekindling the light they carry within them or getting drunk on their abysmal darkness!” (Tillich, Tolstoy, inward)

- “why not abandon this futile work and begin anew without repeating the same wasteful mistake? is subjective consciousness of eternity not enough? it is the feeling for eternity that the frenetic activity and trepidation of work has destroyed in us. work is the negation of eternity. the more goods we acquire in the temporal realm, the more intense our external work, the less accessible and farther removed is eternity.”

- “hence the limited perspective of active and energetic people, the banality of their thought and actions. i am not contrasting work to either passive contemplation or vague dreaminess, but to an unrealizable transfiguration; nevertheless, i prefer an intelligent and observant laziness to

intolerable, terrorizing activity. to awaken the modern world, one must praise laziness. the lazy man has an infinitely keener perception of metaphysical reality than the active one.” (me- non-movement, Saints are Conquerors, Underhill thinks Quietism is misconstrued as 'laziness' when in fact it's an undying participation with the Nothingness)

- “sadness, the inebriation and excitement of last moments. is not everything final? what is the anxiety of nothingness if not the perverse joy of our final sadness, our exalted love for the eternity of nothingness and the transience of existence? can it really be that for us existence means exile, and nothingness, home? i must struggle against myself, fly into a rage at my destiny, blow up all

resistance to my transfiguration; let there be only my desire for light and darkness! let each one of my actions be either triumph or fall, flight or failure! let life grow and die in me with the speed of a lightning bolt! let not the pettiness and rationality of commonplace existence spoil the pleasures and torments of my inner chaos, the tragic delights of my final despair and joy!”

- “when men can no longer bear the monotony and the banality of ordinary existence, they will find in each experience of the absolute an opportunity to commit suicide. the impossibility

of surviving such extraordinary states of exaltation will destroy existence. no one will then doubt that it is possible to long for death after having listened to certain symphonies or admired a unique landscape.”

- “ To speak of suffering as the path to love means to know nothing of suffering's satanic essence. you don't climb up the steps of suffering; you climb down. they do not lead to heaven but to hell. the darkness at the bottom of the ladder of suffering is less eternal or infinite than the blinding light at the top of the ladder of joy.”

- “disjunction from the world through suffering leads to excessive interiorization and, paradoxically, to such a high level of consciousness that the world, with all its splendors and glooms, becomes exterior and transcendent.” (me- pantheistic paradox)

- “...however painful my agony, however great my isolation, the distance separating me from the world does nothing but render it more accessible.”

- “there's no salvation without the immediate. but man is a being who no longer knows the immediate.” (me- Jesus and anxiety about tomorrow, says think about today. Buddha talks about the present moment, etc)

- “when we have persuaded ourselves that there is no truth. all salvation comes thenceforth,

even salvation through nothing.”

- “for those deprived of faith, an excess of subjectivity leads either to megalomania or self-denigration, to too much love or too much self-hatred. Either way, you spend yourself ahead of time. subjectivity makes you either god or satan.”

- “man should stop being- or becoming - a rational animal. he should become a lunatic, risking everything for the sake of his dangerous fantasies, capable of exaltations, ready to die for all

that the world has as well as for what it has not. each man's ideal should be to stop being a man. this can only be attained through absolute arbitrariness.”

- “nothing matters. everything is possible, and yet nothing is. all is permitted, and yet again, nothing. no matter which way we go, it is no better than any other. it is all the same whether you

achieve something or not, have faith or not, just as it is all the same whether you cry or remain

silent. there is an explanation for everything, and yet there is none. everything is both real and

unreal, normal and absurd, splendid and insipid. there is nothing worth more than anything else, nor any idea better than any other. why grow sad from one's sadness and delight

in one's joy? What does it matter whether our tears come from pleasure or pain? love your unhappiness and hate your happiness, mix everything up, scramble it all! be a snowflake dancing

in the air, a flower floating downstream! have courage when you don't need to, and be a coward

when you must be brave! who knows? you may still be a winner! and if you lose, does it really matter? is there anything to win in this world? all gain is a loss, and all loss is a gain. why always expect a definite stance, clear ideas, meaningful words?”

- “all efforts to attain happiness, on the other hand, are entirely futile. you can not retrace your steps once you've taken the path to unhappiness; it is the path of no return. from being happy, one can become unhappy, so there are more unpleasant surprises in happiness than in unhappiness. the world seems right to us when we are happy; when unhappy, we wish the world were anything but what it is. though fully aware that the source of unhappiness is in us, we nevertheless turn a personal defect into a metaphysical deficiency.”

- “why do men insist on achieving something? Would it not be better if they stood still under the sun in calm and silent immobility? what is there to accomplish? why so much effort and ambition? man has forgotten the meaning of silence.”

- “could morality still serve such a being- probably the most generous because also the most absurd, capable of renouncing the whole world, and consequently giving away all that can be

given? generosity is incompatible with morality, that rationalization of customs, that mechanization of life. Any generous act is absurd, a renunciation unheard of in the

ordinary man, who drapes himself in morality in order to hide his vulgar nullity. all that is truly moral begins when we have done with morality. the pettiness of its laws is never more evident than in its condemnation of vice, the expression of carnal tragedy born from the presence of the spirit in the flesh. vice is the tragedy of the flesh, the flesh bursting out of its own fatality, attempting to break the shackles imprisoning its passionate impulses.”

- “then you will think it useless to express an opinion, to take a stand, to make an impression; the noises you have renounced increase the anxiety of your soul. after having struggled madly to solve all problems, after having suffered on the heights of despair, in the supreme hour of revelation, you will find that the only answer, the only reality, is silence.” (in 'nothing matters' he describes the Absurd Perspective that turns all and any action nonsensical. He also refers to being saved from acting like just another 'clown' through silence)

- “a little knowledge is delightful; a lot, disgusting. the more you know, the less you want to know. he who has not suffered from knowledge has never known anything.”

- “fine psychological understanding is the product of a life of self-contemplation, a life which

sees itself in other lives as if in so many mirrors; for a psychologist, all men are fragments of himself...quickly exhausting men and their limited resources, the psychologist is easily bored, for he is not naive enough to have friends and is too self-conscious to have lovers.”

- “time...becomes an ever-growing nothingness, a dilating void, a threat from beyond.”

The Premonition of Madness- Cioran describes “ego-death” which is always said to be one of the most, if not the most, important parts of an experience of the Other, in exactly the same way as Eckhart, John of the Cross, Augustine, Luther, etc., but then goes on to describe the Nihilistic experience, which is the religious experience, as “madness”. What kind of culture would allow a 22 year old to conceive of such a terrifying experience as this to be “madness” in a pejorative sense? Jesus said the path was narrow! The Nihilistic experience is madness, but it is also God.

Drawn and Quartered

- “History is the obstacle to ultimate revelation, the shackle we can strike off only if we have perceived the nullity of every event except the one that this very perception represents, and thanks to which we attain at moments to “the real truth,” i.e., to the victory over all truths.”

- “To escape our fate— what is the good of striving for that? Not that we must despair of finding a substitute ending. Yet it must be a likely one, one that has some chance of being realized. Man being what he is, can we admit that he might be granted the opportunity of subsiding in the peace of decay, amid the benefits of decrepitude?” (me- Tillich: the meaning of life is to despair over the meaninglessness of life)

- “The abyss is in ourselves and outside of ourselves, it is yesterday’s presentiment, today’s question, tomorrow’s certainty.” (me- The Kingdom of God is Within You, turn inward, Vivekananda, renouncing, selflessness)

- “Since in us has awakened the evil that slumbered in the remainder of the living, it remains for us to destroy ourselves so that they might be saved.” (me- selflessness, self-abnegation)

- “And the gods— have we not turned against them as well, outraged to see that they were conscious without suffering from the fact, while for us consciousness and shipwreck are one and the same thing?” (me- rejecting the idea of a personal God. Another tenant of the Nihilistic Mystical experience.)

- “At the climax of our Void, we will be doomed, then, to the indignity of a complete erosion, worse than a sudden catastrophe which would be honorable after all, even glamorous. Let us be confident, let us put our bets on catastrophe, more in accord with our genius and our tastes. Let us take one step further, let us suppose it to be upon us, let us treat it as a fail accompli. According to all appearances, it will include certain survivors, a few lucky ones who will have had the good fortune to contemplate its occurrence and to draw lessons from it. Their first concern will certainly be to abolish the memory of the old humanity, of all the enterprises that have discredited and destroyed it. Turning against the cities, they will seek to complete their ruin, to erase all traces of them. One rachitic tree will be worth more in their eyes than a museum or a temple. No more schools; on the other hand, courses in oblivion and unlearning to celebrate the virtues of inattention and the delights of amnesia. The disgust inspired by the sight of any book, frivolous or serious, will extend to all Knowledge, which will be referred to with embarrassment or dread as if it were an obscenity or a scourge. To bother with philosophy, to elaborate a system, to attach oneself to it and believe in it, will appear as an impiety, a provocation, and a betrayal, a criminal complicity with the past.” (me- maybe stop writing 'me'? Vivekananda- 'good to be born in church, but not die in a church, 'lack of spiritual progression', Unity in different sects, perennialism, reject literalism)

- “It is doubtless distressing that we must confront the final phase of the historical process at the moment when, having liquidated our old beliefs, we lack any metaphysical assets, any substantial reserves of the Absolute. Surprised by the death agony, dispossessed of everything, we skirt that flattering nightmare experienced by all who had the privilege of finding themselves at the heart of a conspicuous débâcle. If, with the courage to look things in the face, we had that of suspending our course, if only for an instant, this respite, this pause on a global scale, would suffice to reveal to us the nature of the precipice over which we hang, and the resulting dread would quickly be converted into prayers or lamentations, into a salutary convulsion.”

- “What advantage would having faith be to me, since I understand Meister Eckhart just as well without it?”

- “Friendship being incompatible with truth, only the mute dialogue with our enemies is fruitful.”

- “I would not want to live in a world drained of all religious feeling. I am not thinking of faith but of that inner vibration which, independent of any belief in particular, projects you into, and sometimes above God.”

- “If the narrative of the Fall is so striking, it is because its author describes neither entities nor symbols: he sees a God strolling in a garden, a rural God, as one exegete has so accurately characterized Him.”

- “To detest someone is to want him to be anything but what he is. T. writes me that I am the man he loves most in the world . . . but he urges me at the same time to forgo my obsessions, to change my ways, to become different, to break with the man I am. Which is to say that he rejects my being.”

- “What a pity that “nothingness” has been devalued by an abuse of it made by philosophers unworthy of it!”

- “Whoever speaks the language of utopia is more alien to me than a reptile from another geological era.”

- “A Tantric ritual: during the initiation ceremony, you are given a mirror in which you see your own image. Contemplating it, you realize you are nothing but that, i.e., nothing. To what end, so many pretenses, so many airs and graces, when it is so easy to comprehend one’s insignificance?”

- “Plotinus experienced only four moments of ecstasy; Ramana Maharshi, but one. What does the number matter! If anyone is to be pitied, it is the man who has never had even an inkling of such things, and who speaks of them from hearsay.”

- “To be is to be cornered.”

- “In flawed families, a scion appears who dedicates himself to the truth and who ruins himself in its pursuit.”

- “Once one has understood, it would be best to drop dead on the spot. What is to understand? What we have really grasped cannot be expressed in any way at all, and cannot be transmitted to anyone else, not even to oneself, so that we die without knowing the exact nature of our own secret.”

- “One is and remains a slave as long as one is not cured of hoping.”

- “When I see someone fighting for some cause or other, I try to know what is happening in his mind and what can be the source of his obvious lack of maturity. The rejection of resignation is perhaps a sign of “life,” never in any case of perspicacity or simply of reflexion. The sane man never lowers himself to protest. He scarcely consents to indignation. Taking human affairs seriously attests to some secret flaw.”

- “I do not struggle against the world, I struggle against a greater force, against my weariness of the world.”

- “I have less and less discernment as to what is good and what evil. When I make no distinction whatever between the two, supposing I reach this point some day— what a step forward! Toward what?”

- “Get hold of yourself, be confident once more, don’t forget that it is not given to just anyone to have idolized discouragement without succumbing to it.” (Ha!)

- “The further one advances into age, the more one runs after honors. Perhaps, in fact, vanity is never more active than on the brink of the grave. One clings to trifles in order not to realize what they conceal, one deceives nothingness by something even more null and void.”

- “To try curing someone of a “vice,” of what is the deepest thing he has, is to attack his very being, and indeed this is how he himself understands it, since he will never forgive you for wanting him to destroy himself in your way and not in his.”

- “The apparition of life? A temporary madness, a prank, a whim of the elements, a vagary of matter. The only ones entitled to grumble are the individual beings, pitiable victims of a passing fancy.”

- “The only profound thinkers are the ones who do not suffer from a sense of the ridiculous.”

- “In my childhood, a profound shock when I heard my father, back from the cemetery, tell how a young mother who had lost her baby daughter burst out laughing at the moment the coffin was lowered into the grave. Fit of madness? Yes and no. For when we attend a funeral and the absolute deception is suddenly unmasked, do we not have a craving to react precisely like that mother? It is too much— it is almost a provocation: nature exaggerates. We conceive that we might collapse in hilarity.”

- “We are all of us in error, the humorists excepted. They alone have discerned, as though in jest, the inanity of all that is serious and even of all that is frivolous.” (me- symbolism, finite/infinite distinction)

- “I abide by appearances, I note what they are and adhere to them only to the degree that, as a living being, I cannot do otherwise. I act like other people, I perform the same deeds they do, but I identify myself with neither my words nor my actions, I bow to customs and laws, I pretend to share the convictions, i.e., the prejudices, of my fellow citizens, while knowing that in the last analysis I am quite as unreal as they. What then is the skeptic? —A ghost: a conformist ghost.”

- “Life is more and less than boredom, though it is in boredom and by boredom that we discern what life is worth. Once boredom insinuates itself into you, once you fall under its invisible hegemony, everything else seems insignificant. The same might be said of suffering. Yes, indeed. But suffering is localized, whereas boredom evokes an evil without site or support, only that indefinable nothing that erodes you . . . A pure erosion, whose imperceptible effect slowly transforms you into a ruin unnoticed by others and almost unnoticed by yourself.” (Tillich)

- “To die at sixty or at eighty is harder than at ten or at thirty. Habituation to life, there’s the rub. For life is a vice— the greatest one of all. Which explains why we have so much difficulty ridding ourselves of it.”

- “When I happen to be satisfied with everything, even with God and myself, I immediately react like the man who, on a brilliant day, torments himself because the sun is bound to explode in a few billion years.”

- “Of two enemies at odds, it is unlikely that only one should be in the right. When we listen to them one after the other, we yield, if we are in good faith, to the arguments of each, at the risk of looking like a weathercock, of being, in short, too much of a philosopher.”

- “What is evil? It is what is done with a view to happiness in this world.”

- “Everything is nothing, including the consciousness of nothing.”

- “Everything that happens is at once natural and inconceivable. This conclusion is unavoidable, whether we consider great or trivial events.”

- “Everything I have ventured, everything I have held forth on all my life is indissociable from what I have experienced. I have invented nothing, I have merely been the secretary of my sensations.”

- “We can conceive of eternity only by eliminating all the perishable, all that counts for us. Eternity is absence, being that fills none of the functions of being; it is privation erected into . . . something or other, hence it is nothing or, at most, an estimable fiction.” (amazing! God is Nothing!)

- “Undeniable sign of spiritual nonfulfillment: every passionate reaction to blame, that twinge at the heart whenever we are reproached in one way or another. This is the cry of the old Adam in each of us, it proves we have not yet conquered our origins. So long as we do not aspire to be scorned, we are like the others, like those precisely whom we scorn.”

- “X, who instead of looking at things directly has spent his life juggling with concepts and abusing abstract terms, now that he must envisage his own death, is in desperate straits. Fortunately for him, he flings himself, as is his custom, into abstractions, into commonplaces illustrated by jargon. A glamorous hocus-pocus, such is philosophy. But ultimately, everything is hocus-pocus, except for this very assertion that participates in an order of propositions one dares not question because they emanate from an unverifiable certitude, one somehow anterior to the brain’s career.”

- “It makes no sense to say that death is the goal of life. But what else is there to say?”

- “We regret not having had the courage to make such and such a decision; we regret much more having made one— any one. Better no action than the consequences of an action!”

- “All things considered, philosophy is not so contemptible: to hide oneself under more or less objective truths, to disclose oppressions that apparently do not concern us, to cultivate faceless dreads, to camouflage calls for help by the splendors of language . . . Philosophy? An anonymous cry...”

- “Everyone is mistaken, everyone lives in illusion. At best, we can admit a scale of fictions, a hierarchy of unrealities, giving preference to one rather than to another; but to choose, no, definitely not that...” (me- Vivekananda, Tillich, Symbolism, Becker)

- “Boredom, which seems to search out everything to its root, actually searches out nothing, because it descends only into itself and sounds only its own void.”

- “As soon as one returns to Doubt (if it could be said that one has ever left it), undertaking anything at all seems not so much useless as extravagant. No joyful companion, Doubt works deep within you like a disease or, even more effectively, like a faith.” (me- Tillich exactly, pg. 25 dynamics of faith)

- “To that friend who tells me he is bored because he cannot work, I answer that boredom is a higher state, and that we debase it by relating it to the notion of work.”

- “Get hold of yourself, be confident once more, don’t forget that it is not given to just anyone to have idolized discouragement without succumbing to it.” (me- Vivekananda)

- “After all, why should ordinary people want to contemplate the End, especially when we see the condition of those who do?” (Ha! Bad PR)

- “Only the perception of the Void allows us to triumph over death. For if everything lacks reality, why should death be allowed it?”

- “A terrible yet endurable mortification: to be born among a people that will never be mentioned.”

The Trouble With Being Born

- “The further men get from God, the farther they advance into the knowledge of religions.”

- “Existence = Torment. The equation seems obvious to me, but not to one of my friends. How to convince them? I cannot lend him my sensations; yet only they would have the power to persuade him, to give him that additional dose of ill-being he has so insistently asked for all this time.”

- “The West: a sweet-smelling rottenness, a perfumed corpse.”

- “...Do we think of Buddha withdrawing from the world on account of his contemporaries?”

- “Life would become endurable only among a humanity which no longer have any illusions in reserve, a humanity completely disabused and delighted to be so.”

- “Life is nothing; death, everything. Yet there is nothing which is death, independent of life. It is precisely this absence of autonomous, distinct reality which makes death universal; it has no realm of its own, it is omnipresent, like everything which lacks identity, limit, and bearing; an indecent infinitude.” (me- A Pessimist's description of God)

- “When someone complains that his life has come to nothing, we need merely remind him that life itself is an analogous situation, if not worse.”

- “The perception of the Precarious raised to the level of vision, of mystical experience.”

- “Explosive force of any mortification. Every vanquished desire affords us power. We have the more hold over this world the further we withdraw from it, the less we adhere to it. Renunciation confers an infinite power.”

- “'All is suffering' – modernized, the Buddhist expression runs: 'All is nightmare.'”

The Undelivered (within The New Gods)- “The void allows us to erode the idea of being; but it is not drawn into this erosion itself; it survives an attack which would be self-destructive for any other idea.” (me- God)

- “And to understand signifies to discern the degree of awakening to which a being has achieved, in his capacity to perceive the sum of unreality which enters into each phenomenon.” (me- can you imagine the thing you find most valuable in this world as worthless? Can you imagine your most cherished anything as meaningless?)

- “Beatitude is not compatible with this world. It is for beatitude that the hermit cuts all his moorings, for beatitude that he destroys himself.” (me- Maya)

- “All our beliefs being intrinsically superficial and governing only appearances, it follows that all are on the same level, at the same degree of unreality.” (me- limitations of language, the need for symbolism and myth, religious pluralism, anti-literalism, etc.)

- “Every day we should honor someone, creature or object, by renouncing them.”

- “The void is nothingness stripped of its negative qualifications, nothingness transfigured. If we should manage to develop a taste for it, our relations with the world are transformed; something in us changes, though we keep our old defects. But we are no longer from here in the same way as before.”

- “How desist from what we shall never recover, from that pathetic and unheard of nothing which bears our name...we can vanquish it only by means of a sudden whirlwind which, sweeping away the ego, leaves us alone, without anyone, without ourselves...” (me- awakening to the truth of selflessness, that all is one, unity through complete and utter renunciation and self-abnegation, psychedelics)

- “Thought, too, is a prejudice, a shackle. It liberates only at the beginning, when it permits us to break certain moorings; afterwards, all it is capable of is to adsorb our energy and to paralyze our impulses toward liberation.”

- “We cling to anything, if only we don't have to tear ourselves away from that fascination accountable for our actions and even our nature, from that primal dazzle which keeps us from discerning the nonreality in everything.”

- “The void- myself without me- is the liquidation of the adventure of the 'I'- it is being without any trace of being, a blessed engulfment, an incomparable disaster.” (psychedelics, psylocibin)

- “All the same it seems inconceivable for us once we consider the self coldly; it crumbles, it vanishes, it is nothing more than the symbol of a fiction.”

- “Even the Buddha after illumination was only Siddhartha Gautama with knowledge in addition.” (Mckenna 'no one knows what's going on here')

- “To find that everything lacks reality and not to put an end to it all, this inconsistency is not an inconsistency at all: taken to extremes, the perception of the void coincides with the perception of the whole, with the entrance into the All.”

- “Even if the experience of the void were only a deception, it would still deserve to be tried. What it proposes, what it attempts, is to reduce to nothing both life and death, and this with the sole intention of making them endurable to us.”

Dealing with the Mystics (within The Temptation to Exist)

- “It is a mistake to supposed that mysticism derives from a softening of the instincts, from a compromised vitality...To get a sense of them, imagine a Hernando Cortez in the middle of an invisible geography. The German mystics were conquerors too.” (participation, this is hard work)

Tears and Saints

- “All great conversions are born from the sudden revelation of life's meaninglessness. Nothing could be more impressive than this sudden apprehension of the void of existence.”

- “The initial revelation of any monastery: everything is nothing. Thus begin all mysticisms. It is less than one step from nothing to God, for God is the positive expression of nothingness.”

- “Without God, everything is nothingness. But God is the supreme nothingness!”

- “No matter how educated you are, if you don't think intensely about death, you are a mere fool. A great scholar – if he is nothing but that – is inferior to an illiterate peasant haunted by final questions. Generally speaking, science has dulled people's minds by diminishing their metaphysical consciousness.”

- “If you believe in God, you are mad without having gone mad.” (ha! It's not about 'belief', but experience, one must go 'mad' for God, e.g. Vivekananda's example of holding the head under water, become a 'God-intoxicated man, embracing the Nothingness, become the bible/don't just read the bible)

- “God's greatest advantage is that one can say or think anything about him. The less you connect your thoughts, abandoning them to contradictions, the more you risk coming near the truth. God benefits from the peripheries of logic.” (symbolism, anti-literalism)

- “He who does not think of God will forever remain a stranger to himself. God is self-knowledge, and universal history is a description of his various forms.”

- “Since nothing has real substance, and life is a twirl in the void, its beginning and its end are meaningless.” (Vivekananda, Maya)

- “Only by thinking about him constantly and mercilessly, only by setting siege to his solitude can we win rich spoils in our battle with him. If we lose heart and go halfway only, he will just be one more failure.” (participation, Tillich, Tolstoy and the need for a change in one's life)

- “Theology is the negation of divinity. Looking for proofs of God is crazy idea...theology is the atheist's mode of believing. The most obscure mystical mumbo-jumbo is closer to God than the Summa Theologiae.” (symbolism, infinite/finite gap, direct experience over mere belief, ritual, dogma, etc.)

- “I am sorry sometimes that God no longer fills us with dread. If only we could feel again the primordial quiver of dread in front of the unknown!” (psychedelics)

- “Religion is a smile masking cosmic nonsense, one last waft of perfume drifting over nothingness.”

- “Bach's music is the medium of heavenly transfiguration.”

- “Wine has brought men closer to God than theology.”

- “When we have devoured the world and remain alone, God appears from behind the screen of Nothingness like a last temptation.” (Vivekananda, when you are no longer satisfied with covering up the wound)

- “...we no longer know how to prepare ourselves for death. No one cultivates death in himself any longer, it happens over and above him.” (Vivekananda, Tolstoy)

- “For an ancient philosopher or a medieval monk, 'there is no way out' would make a constant theme for meditation.”

- “God's greatest advantage is that one can say or think anything about him. The less you connect your thoughts, abandoning them to contradictions, the more you risk coming near the truth. God benefits from the peripheries of logic.” (symbolism)

- “...Bach often meditated on death...Handel compared to Bach, is of this world. Bach is divine...”

- “Saintly meditation is an imprisonment in original memory.” (Plato, recollection)

- “Why do almost all madmen speak of God or believe themselves to be one? Having lost the actual contents of their memory, their mind has kept intact the original depths of memory.”

- “The organ is an instrument which makes palpable God's distance from us.” (ha!)

- “We are all subject to death at any moment.” (Pascal)

- “There comes a moment in life when one places everything in relation to God. Anything less seems too little. Yet the fear that God may no longer be topical sometimes grabs you, and relating everything to him seems useless. The transience of the ultimate principle – a logically absurd idea, yet present in consciousness – fills you with strange terror. Could God be just a fashion of the soul, a fleeting passion of history?” (Vivekananda, Tolstoy, doubt as part of faith)

- “The more time has disappeared from one's memory, the closer one is to mysticism. Paradise is not possible without a defective memory. The healthier the memory is, the more it adheres to the world.”

- “Compared to philosophers, saints know nothing. Yet they know everything. Compared to Aristotle, any saint is illiterate. What makes us then believe that we might learn more from the latter? Because all of the philosophers put together are not worth a single saint. Philosophy has no answers. Compared to philosophy, saintliness is an exact science. It gives us precise answers to questions that philosophers do not even dare consider. Its method is suffering and its goal is God.”

- “In itself, philosophy, life the rest of culture, is nothing.”

- “A philosopher is saved from mediocrity either through skepticism or mysticism, the two forms of despair in front of knowledge. Mysticism is an escape from knowledge, and skepticism is knowledge without hope. In either instance, the world is not a solution.”

- “Saints are completely out-of-date.” (ha!)

- “Without my solitude I would be nothing but another clown.” (Quietism, non-movement, the absurdity of action, silence, renunciation, 9/13- how I am acting with Hattie with my outward actions and outburtsts, blah)

- “When the void of time gives birth to eternity, one burns with religious courage. The emptying of time, whether out of boredom or dread, throws one into a vibrant nothingness, full of vague promises. No saint could find eternity in the world.”

- “Saintliness is a negative sort of perfection...There are illnesses that can only be treated with a good dose of divinity, but I prefer the alleviation of pain provided by earthly tranquilizers.” (Ha!)

- “God nestles in spiritual voids.”

- “Saintliness cannot exist without the voluptuousness of pain and a perverse refinement of suffering.”

- “Nothing can reveal divinity better than the inner multiplication, through memory, of a Bach fugue.”

- “Mysticism revolves around the passion for ecstasy and a horror of the void. One cannot know one without the other...Once it has totally rejected the world, the soul is ripe for a long-term and fecund emptiness…One sees nothing except nothingness. And the latter has become everything. Ecstasy is plenitude in a void, a full void. It is an overwhelming frisson which convulses nothingness, an invasion of being in absolute emptiness.” (incredible description of Nihilism)

- “The 'appetite for God'...is first a negation of existence...'appetite for God' can only be a symptom of nihilism. Its intensity proves to what extent one no longer belongs to this earth. One betrays a deficiency of vital instincts whenever one thinks instinctively about God.”

- “All nihilists have wrestled with God. One more proof of his kinship with nothingness After you have trampled everything under foot, his is the last bastion of nothingness left.”

- “Each time weariness with the world takes on a religious form, God appears like a sea of forgetfulness. Drowning in God is a refuge from our own individuality.”

- “As long as you are busy with him you have an excuse for sadness and solitude. God? An official madness.” (Ha! Too funny)

- “Listening to Bach, one sees God come into being. His music generates divinity. After a Bach...one feels that God must exists. Otherwise, Bach's music would be only heartrending illusion. Theologians and philosophers wasted so many days and nights searching for proofs of his existence, ignoring the only valid one: Bach.” (agreed)

- “The more you think of God, the less you are. Thus God is nothing more than the projection of our longing for annihilation.”

- “Healthy bodies and healthy minds have never been shaken by religious fears.”

- “The failed mystic is the one who cannot cast off all temporal ties.”

- “The last step towards nihilism is the disappearance into divinity.”

- “Life is a series of obsessions that one must do away with.”

- “Man is a paradox of nature, equally removed from it and from God...With it (consciousness), God appeared in his true light as one more nothingness.”

- “Religion is a smile masking cosmic nonsense, one last waft of perfume drifting over nothingness.”

- “To have faith one must remain passive vis-a-vis the world. The believer must not do anything.” (non-movement, Quietism, Vivekananda/Karma/Jnana Yoga7)

- “Disagreement is a sign of spiritual vitality. It culminates in disagreement with God.” (Vivekananda, multiple sects, limits of language, symbolism)

- “The obsession with God dislodges earthly love.”

- “I have always wondered about people who are 'crazy for God,' who have sacrificed everything for him, first of all their minds.”

- “Thinking is not exhaustive; there are infinite variations on the theme of God.”

- “Intimations of God's supreme indifference render man's revolt utterly pointless. To be a hero only in the eyes of men is a paltry thing. There is no consolation in dying like a hero, i.e. misunderstood by the gods.”

- “There are many thinkers and dreamers who never feel the need for God. Sadness without the need for consolation does not guarantee a religious experience. Those limited to sadness per se are strangers to God. The absolute is a specific tonality of sadness.” (this would make sense of the different levels of awareness, the different levels of the Nihilistic experience)

- “...how do you fill out an empty life? With women, books, or worldly ambitions? No matter what you do, the starting point is boredom, and the end self-destruction.” (suicide)

- “The task of a solitary man is to be even more solitary.”

- “Any kind of boredom will reveal two things to us: our bodies and the nothingness of the world.”

- “God...is he anything but the fateful moment when our life totters on the brink of destruction?”

- “Churches are undercover hospices.”

- “An anxiety born out of nothing suddenly grows in us and confirms our homelessness.” (Tillich, Vivekananda)

- “Only ecstasy cures us of pessimism. Life would be unbearable if it were real. As a dream, it is a mixture of charm and terror to which we gladly abandon ourselves. Consciousness is nature's nightmare.” (Vivekananda mixed with Zapffe)

- “The company of mortals is, for a lucid man, pure torture.” (Ha!)

- “I live on what makes other people die” (quoting Michelangelo)

- “To be alone, horribly alone, is the only imperative, and it must be obeyed at any price.”

- “...life is an uninterrupted religious crisis, superficial for believers and shattering for doubters.”

- “The ultimate goal of all religions: life as a diminution of the soul.” (and on the other end) “All that if Life in me urges me to give up God.” ('the divided self', Karma Yoga, Tolstoy, Augustine)

- “The fall – emblem of our human condition – is a nervous exacerbation of consciousness.”

- “All that adheres to this world is trivial.”

- “Let God pray for the man in whom there is nothing left to die!” (uninterrupted religious crisis, infinite/finite gap that's unbridgeable)

- “Voluntary hunger is a road to heaven; hunger from poverty, a crime of the earth.”

- “Detachment is a negation of both life and death. Whoever has overcome his fear of death has also triumphed over life. For life is nothing but another word for this fear.”

- “When I realized there was no absolute except in renunciation, I dedicated myself to appearances.” (bars, extreme lifestyle, maya, etc.)

- “Nothing is more exquisite or more disturbing than to have the thought of God occur while one lies in the arms of a whore! It is easy to think of him after a page from the Bible or after an oratorio, but God's presence manifested in the midst of vulgar debauchery has an infinitely greater impact: it brings loneliness and the dread of nothingness back to mind with full force.” (Yes! Extreme lifestyle, always being aware even in situations that are supposedly distractions)

- “It may very well be that man's sole purpose is none other than to think of God...It is only by thinking of him that God makes one feel uncomfortable. Start prying into him and you are lost...God is an old frumpy coat which you must put on if you have nothing better to wear.”

- “To doubt God is to be self-ironical.”

- “Sometimes God is so easy to make out that just listening a bit more carefully to one's inner voice is enough.”

- “Spirit means renunciation...when people, not having experienced spiritual torture, satisfy their thirst for renunciation through a derivative: heroism.” (Ha! The worldly aspects of religion, atheism, etc. if there is no direct experience of everything being nothing, then you are left with delusions without the awareness that all are delusions, i.e. symbolism)

- “Intimations of God's supreme indifference render man's revolt utterly pointless. To be a hero only in the eyes of men is a paltry thing. There is no consolation in dying like a hero, i.e., misunderstood by the gods.”

- “The more bored one is, the more self-conscious.”

- “...a sort of terminal emotion seizes us. We can talk for hours on end with people we despise, we can say happy and irrelevant things without their noticing how close we are to the Last Judgment, and how lost we are to the world!” (my job/life)

- “Boredom is the only argument against immortality. From it derive all our negations.”

- “When nothing is left standing, one experiences exciting power thrills. The ironic mode is a ruse of self-importance: to make up for its nonexistence, the 'I' becomes everything.” (Ha! Desperation to the earthly)

- “Life is a reality only for wholesome people, high priests of stupidity!” (Ha!)

- “We are not when we are one with the world. Our desire to escape the world and thus be ourselves sends us on a quest for suffering. Asceticism is the paroxysm of such desire, a systematic insomnia and starvation. Self-torture intensifies subjectivity...Once you have tasted the joys of suffering, you are hooked on them for ever.”

- “There is so much knowledge in melancholy that we call it a vice.”

- “When you become prey to an incurable boredom, illness seems a welcome distraction.”

- “..detachment from worldly things, a precondition for attachment to God.”

- “Only ecstasy cures us of pessimism. Life would be unbearable if it were real. As a dream, it is a mixture of charm and terror to which we gladly abandon ourselves. Consciousness is nature's nightmare.” (Ha! Vivekananda)

- “The course of meditation: you begin by ignoring the object and end by ignoring the world.”

- “As long as I live I shall not allow myself to forget that I shall die...”

- “While reading subtle and useless philosophical polemics at the library, an irresistible longing for the desolation of deserts would sometimes grab hold of me.”

- “I think of Man and see only shadows; I think of shadows and see only myself.”

- “Man either loses himself in God or taunts him, but no one has ever remained level-headed in his presence.”

- “All that is Life in me urges me to give up God.” (THE contradiction)

- “If you don't take an interest in him, you end up interested in mankind. Could you fall any lower than that?” (Ha!)

- “The dead center of existence: when it is all the same to you whether you read a newspaper article or think of God.”

- “Despair and pride grow so closely together that even the keenest observer cannot tell them apart.”

- “Truly, everything can be used as argument for or against him, because everything in the world both confirms and denies his divinity. Blasphemy and prayer are both justified.”

- “The fall – emblem of our human condition – is a nervous exacerbation of consciousness.”

“Paleontology” with The New Gods

- “The flesh appears as an imposter, a fraud, a disguise which masks nothing. Was this all it was? And if it is worth no more, how does it manage to inspire me with repulsion or with terror?” (I ask myself this question all the time)

- Speaking about the “flesh”: “those who made a great case for its insignificance: Buddha...”

- “The vision I have of it is the vision of a gravedigger infected with metaphysics. Doubtless I am wrong to keep thinking about it; one cannot live and lay much stress of it: a colossus would perish in the attempt.” (mystics and saints are conquerors)

- “The horrible being the path of liberation...In the Middle Ages, a man made a regimen of salvation, he believed energenically: the corpse was in fashion.”

- “Today, an edulcorated religion adheres only to “nice” hallucinations, to Evolution and to Progress.”

- “In order to vanquish attachments...we should have to contemplate the ultimate nudity of a human being...wallow in the horror...in his physiology of an imminent corpse. The vision would be a methodical, a controlled obsession, particularly salutary in ordeals. The skeleton excites us to serenity; the cadaver, to renunciation.” (my father in a box)

- “...the monk...No one would gainsay the fact that he is in the process of disappearing.” (Ha!)

- “Now more than ever, we should build monasteries...for those who believe in everything and for those who believe in nothing. Where to escape? There no longer exists a single place where we can professionally execrate this world.” (Everything and Nothing)

- “In order to conceive, and to steep ourselves in, unreality, we must have it constantly present to our minds. The day we feel it, see it, everything becomes unreal, except that unreality which alone makes existence tolerable.”

- “We can discard an illusion, no matter how inveterate; but what to do when we are faced with the consistent, with the durable? If there is only what exists, if being spreads everywhere, how do we break away from it without falling to pieces? The fear there is nothing is followed by the fear that there is something. (Ha!)

- “Not that this world doesn't exist, but its reality is no such thing. Everything seems to exist and nothing exists.” (Maya)

- “Every concerted pursuit, even that of nirvana, if we are not free to abandon it, is a shackle as much as any other.” (Renunciation at it's fullest, to abandon your own happiness, Nietzsche, Vivekananda, Tillich, Therese, Kempis, born in a church/die in a church)

- “To think without being any the wiser, or rather not to think at all but to remain there and to devour the silence – that is where perspicacity should lead. No pleasure is comparable to that of knowing we don't think. It will be objected, Isn't knowing we don't think still thinking? No doubt, but the wretchedness of thought is surmounted for the time that, instead of leaping from idea to idea, we remain deliberately within just one, one which rejects all the rest and which dissolves itself as soon as it takes for its content its own absence.” (meditation on God, even though the word 'God' makes me cringe)

- “We must act so that nothing is ours, beginning with desire, that generator of dread.”

- “The world which causes it is reduced to a transitory assemblage of unreal elements. In short, our fear is intense in proportion as we give credence to the self and to the world...Only our triumph over things is real, only our realization of unreality, which our acumen constructs every day, every hour. To be delivered is to rejoice in this unreality, to seek it out each moment.” (Maya, Vivekananda)

- “Why then, knowing that in the last resort everything is unreal, still be carried away for such trifles? I am carried away, granted, but I am not involved, which is to say that I take no real interest.” (Karma Yoga, Therese, Tolstoy)

- “Awakening is independent of intellectual capacities: a genius can be a dunce, spiritually speaking. Moreover, knowledge as such gets on no further. An illiterate can possess 'the eye of understanding' and thereby find himself above and beyond any scholar.” (Ramakrishna- Vivekananda's mentor)

## 19. Pascal

“We do not require great education of the mind to understand that here is no real and lasting satisfaction; that our pleasures are only vanity; that our evils are infinite; and, lastly, that death, which threatens us every moment, must infallibly place us within a few years under the dreadful necessity of being for ever either annihilated or unhappy. There is nothing more real than this, nothing more terrible. Be we as heroic as we like, that is the end which awaits the noblest life in the world. Let us reflect on this, and then say whether it is not beyond doubt that there is no good in this life but in the hope of another; that we are happy only in proportion as we draw near it; and that, as there are no more woes for those who have complete assurance of eternity, so there is no more happiness for those who have no insight into it. Surely then it is a great evil thus to be in doubt, but it is at least an indispensable duty to seek when we are in such doubt; and thus the doubter who does not seek is altogether completely unhappy and completely wrong. And if besides this he is easy and content, professes to be so, and indeed boasts of it; if it is this state itself which is the subject of his joy and vanity, I have no words to describe so silly a creature. How can people hold these opinions? What joy can we find in the expectation of nothing but hopeless misery? What reason for boasting that we are in impenetrable darkness? And how can it happen that the following argument occurs to a reasonable man? "I know not who put me into the world, nor what the world is, nor what I myself am. I am in terrible ignorance of everything. I know not what my body is, nor my senses, nor my soul, not even that part of me which thinks what I say, which reflects on all and on itself, and knows itself no more than the rest. I see those frightful spaces of the universe which surround me, and I find myself tied to one corner of this vast expanse, without knowing why I am put in this place rather than in another, nor why the short time which is given me to live is assigned to me at this point rather than at another of the whole eternity which was before me or which shall come after me. I see nothing but infinites on all sides, which surround me as an atom, and as a shadow which endures only for an instant and returns no more. All I know is that I must soon die, but what I know least is this very death which I cannot escape...Such is my state, full of weakness and uncertainty. And from all this I conclude that I ought to spend all the days of my life without caring to inquire into what must happen to me. Perhaps I might find some solution to my doubts, but I will not take the trouble, nor take a step to seek it; and after treating with scorn those who are concerned with this care, I will go without foresight and without fear to try the great event, and let myself be led carelessly to death, uncertain of the eternity of my future state." Who would desire to have for a friend a man who talks in this fashion? Who would choose him out from others to tell him of his affairs? Who would have recourse to him in affliction? And indeed to what use in life could one put him?” (Vivekananda, Tolstoy, Kempis, Huxley, Buddha- most people aren't philosophers and don't ask 'why' about anything about existence)

- “The vanity of the sciences.—Physical science will not console me for the ignorance of morality in the time of affliction.” (the wiki page is huge on his scientific ideas, as if they were primary)

- “Returning to himself, let man consider what he is in comparison with all existence; let him regard himself as lost in this remote corner of nature; and from the little cell in which he finds himself lodged, I mean the universe, let him estimate at their true value the earth, kingdoms, cities, and himself. What is a man in the Infinite?”

- “Let him see therein an infinity of universes, each of which has its firmament, its planets, its earth, in the same proportion as in the visible world; in each earth animals, and in the last mites, in which he will find again all that the first had, finding still in these others the same thing without end and without cessation. Let him lose himself in wonders as amazing in their littleness as the others in their vastness. For who will not be astounded at the fact that our body, which a little while ago was imperceptible in the universe, itself imperceptible in the bosom of the whole, is now a colossus, a world, or rather a whole, in respect of the nothingness which we cannot reach? He who regards himself in this light will be afraid of himself, and observing himself sustained in the body given him by nature between those two abysses of the Infinite and Nothing, will tremble at the sight of these marvels; and I think that, as his curiosity changes into admiration, he will be more disposed to contemplate them in silence than to examine them with presumption. For in fact what is man in nature? A Nothing in comparison with the Infinite, an All in comparison with the Nothing, a mean between nothing and everything. Since he is infinitely removed from comprehending the extremes, the end of things and their beginning are hopelessly hidden from him in an impenetrable secret, he is equally incapable of seeing the Nothing from which he was made, and the Infinite in which he is swallowed up.”

- “Through failure to contemplate these Infinites, men have rashly rushed into the examination of nature, as though they bore some proportion to her.” (science)

- “Let us then take our compass; we are something, and we are not everything. The nature of our existence hides from us the knowledge of first beginnings which are born of the Nothing; and the littleness of our being conceals from us the sight of the Infinite.”

- “This is our true state; this is what makes us incapable of certain knowledge and of absolute ignorance. We sail within a vast sphere, ever drifting in uncertainty, driven from end to end. When we think to attach ourselves to any point and to fasten to it, it wavers and leaves us; and if we follow it, it eludes our grasp, slips past us, and vanishes for ever. Nothing stays for us. This is our natural condition, and yet most contrary to our inclination; we burn with desire to find solid ground and an ultimate sure foundation whereon to build a tower reaching to the Infinite. But our whole groundwork cracks, and the earth opens to abysses.” (Vivekananda)

- “...is not the duration of our life equally removed from eternity, even if it lasts ten years longer?” (Ha!)

- “If magistrates had true justice, and if physicians had the true art of healing, they would have no occasion for square caps; the majesty of these sciences would of itself be venerable enough. But having only imaginary knowledge, they must employ those silly tools that strike the imagination with which they have to deal; and thereby in fact they inspire respect. Soldiers alone are not disguised in this manner, because indeed their part is the most essential; they establish themselves by force, the others by show. Therefore our kings seek out no disguises. They do not mask themselves in extraordinary costumes to appear such; but they are accompanied by guards and halberdiers. Those armed and red-faced puppets who have hands and power for them alone, those trumpets and drums which go before them, and those legions round about them, make the stoutest tremble. They have not dress only, they have might. A very refined reason is required to regard as an ordinary man the Grand Turk, in his superb seraglio, surrounded by forty thousand janissaries. We cannot even see an advocate in his robe and with his cap on his head, without a favourable opinion of his ability.”

- “The consciousness of the falsity of present pleasures, and the ignorance of the vanity of absent pleasures, cause inconstancy.”

- “Nothing is so insufferable to man as to be completely at rest, without passions, without business, without diversion, without study. He then feels his nothingness, his forlornness, his insufficiency, his dependence, his weakness, his emptiness. There will immediately arise from the depth of his heart weariness, gloom, sadness, fretfulness, vexation, despair.” (superficially- distractions/everyday life. Ultimately- how does complete renunciation bring forth the 'joys' that the saints speak of? I am with Pascal here, that the Nothingness is observed through non-movement, a turning inward, etc.; and this is not a 'superficially' pleasant experience)

- “...I have discovered that all the unhappiness of men arises from one single fact, that they cannot stay quietly in their own chamber. A man who has enough to live on, if he knew how to stay with pleasure at home, would not leave it to go to sea or to besiege ax town.”

- “Whatever condition we picture to ourselves, if we muster all the good things which it is possible to possess, royalty is the finest position in the world. Yet, when we imagine a king attended with every pleasure he can feel, if he be without diversion, and be left to consider and reflect on what he is, this feeble happiness will not sustain him; he will necessarily fall into forebodings of dangers, of revolutions which may happen, and, finally, of death and inevitable disease; so that if he be without what is called diversion, he is unhappy, and more unhappy than the least of his subjects who plays and diverts himself. Hence it comes that play and the society of women, war, and high posts, are so sought after. Not that there is in fact any happiness in them, or that men imagine true bliss to consist in money won at play, or in the hare which they hunt; we would not take these as a gift. We do not seek that easy and peaceful lot which permits us to think of our unhappy condition, nor the dangers of war, nor the labour of office, but the bustle which averts these thoughts of ours, and amuses us...As men who naturally understand their own condition avoid nothing so much as rest, so there is nothing they leave undone in seeking turmoil. Not that they have an instinctive knowledge of true happiness ... So we are wrong in blaming them. Their error does not lie in seeking excitement, if they seek it only as a diversion; the evil is that they seek it as if the possession of the objects of their quest would make them really happy. In this respect it is right to call their quest a vain one.” (amazing)

- “They have a secret instinct which impels them to seek amusement and occupation abroad, and which arises from the sense of their constant unhappiness. They have another secret instinct, a remnant of the greatness of our original nature, which teaches them that happiness in reality consists only in rest, and not in stir. And of these two contrary instincts they form within themselves a confused idea, which hides itself from their view in the depths of their soul, inciting them to aim at rest through excitement, and always to fancy that the satisfaction which they have not will come to them, if, by surmounting whatever difficulties confront them, they can thereby open the door to rest.” (I just said I wanted to embrace the life of a Monk, on the one hand, of solitude and non-movement, while also living on the other extreme of going out and living a destructive lifestyle, 5/3/17)

- “Whence comes it that this man, who lost his only son a few months ago, or who this morning was in such trouble through being distressed by lawsuits and quarrels, now no longer thinks of them? Do not wonder; he is quite taken up in looking out for the boar which his dogs have been hunting so hotly for the last six hours. He requires nothing more. However full of sadness a man may be, he is happy for the time, if you can prevail upon him to enter into some amusement; and however happy a man may be, he will soon be discontented and wretched, if he be not diverted and occupied by some passion or pursuit which prevents weariness from overcoming him. Without amusement there is no joy; with amusement there is no sadness. And this also constitutes the happiness of persons in high position, that they have a number of people to amuse them, and have the power to keep themselves in this state.”

- “Diversion.—Men are entrusted from infancy with the care of their honour, their property, their friends, and even with the property and the honour of their friends. They are overwhelmed with business, with the study of languages, and with physical exercise; [71] and they are made to understand that they cannot be happy unless their health, their honour, their fortune and that of their friends be in good condition, and that a single thing wanting will make them unhappy. Thus they are given cares and business which make them bustle about from break of day.—It is, you will exclaim, a strange way to make them happy! What more could be done to make them miserable?—Indeed! what could be done? We should only have to relieve them from all these cares; for then they would see themselves: they would reflect on what they are, whence they came, whither they go, and thus we cannot employ and divert them too much. And this is why, after having given them so much business, we advise them, if they have some time for relaxation, to employ it in amusement, in play, and to be always fully occupied. How hollow and full of ribaldry is the heart of man!”

- “I spent a long time in the study of the abstract sciences, and was disheartened by the small number of fellow-students in them.” (alienation, Audi delivering a lecture in the most complex language, on the 'big' topic of the 'problem of evil' to a room full of 5, four if you don't count the old man sleeping in the front)

- “One thought alone occupies us; we cannot think of two things at the same time. This is lucky for us according to the world, not according to God.”

- “We do not content ourselves with the life we have in ourselves and in our own being; we desire to live an imaginary life in the mind of others, and for this purpose we endeavour to shine. We labour unceasingly to adorn and preserve this imaginary existence, and neglect the real. And if we possess calmness, or generosity, or truthfulness, we are eager to make it known, so as to attach these virtues to that imaginary existence. We would rather separate them from ourselves to join them to it; and we would willingly be cowards in order to acquire the reputation of being brave. A great proof of the nothingness of our being, not to be satisfied with the one without the other, and to renounce the one for the other! For he would be infamous who would not die to preserve his honour.” (the opposite of Karma Yoga)

- “We are so presumptuous that we would wish to be known by all the world, even by people who shall come after, when we shall be no more; and we are so vain that the esteem of five or six neighbours delights and contents us.”

- “We do not trouble ourselves about being esteemed in the towns through which we pass. But if we are to remain a little while there, we are so concerned. How long is necessary? A time commensurate with our vain and paltry life.”

- “Vanity.—How wonderful it is that a thing so evident as the vanity of the world is so little known, that it is a strange and surprising thing to say that it is foolish to seek greatness!” (Vivekananda speaks of the rarity of the Nihilistic belief, Kierkegaard, Cioran, Otto (recently read), all state about the rare instances of this 'true' religious experience)

- “He who does not see the vanity of the world is himself very vain. Indeed who do not see it but youths who are absorbed in fame, diversion, and the thought of the future? But take away diversion, and you will see them dried up with weariness. They feel then their nothingness without knowing it; for it is indeed to be unhappy to be in insufferable sadness as soon as we are reduced to thinking of self, and have no diversion.”

- “If our condition were truly happy, we would not need diversion from thinking of it in order to make ourselves happy.”

- “Diversion.—As men are not able to fight against death, misery, ignorance, they have taken it into their heads, in order to be happy, not to think of them at all.”

- “Misery.—The only thing which consoles us for our miseries is diversion, and yet this it the greatest of our miseries. For it is this which principally hinders us from reflecting upon ourselves, and which makes us insensibly ruin ourselves. Without this we should be in a state of weariness, and this weariness would spur us to seek a more solid means of escaping from it. But diversion amuses us, and leads us unconsciously to death.” (Kierkegaard, Maya)

- “We know ourselves so little, that many think they are about to die when they are well, and many think they are well when they are near death, unconscious of approaching fever, or of the abscess ready to form itself.” (Maya)

- “For the Christian faith goes mainly to establish these two facts, the corruption of nature, and redemption by Jesus Christ.” ('Christ' in a symbolic, non-literal sense)

-“Nothing is so important to man as his own state, nothing is so formidable to him as eternity; and thus it is not natural that there should be men indifferent to the loss of their existence, and to the perils of everlasting suffering. They are quite different with regard to all other things. They are afraid of mere trifles; they foresee them; they feel them. And this same man who spends so many days and nights in rage and despair for the loss of office, or for some imaginary insult to his honour, is the very one who knows without anxiety and without emotion that he will lose all by death. It is a monstrous thing to see in the same heart and at the same time this sensibility to trifles and this strange insensibility to the greatest objects. It is an incomprehensible enchantment, and a supernatural slumber, which indicates as its cause an all-powerful force. There must be a strange confusion in the nature of man, that he should boast of being in that state in which it seems incredible that a single individual should be. However, experience has shown me so great a number of such persons that the fact would be surprising.”

- “If, at the bottom of their heart, they are troubled at not having more light, let them not disguise the fact; this avowal will not be shameful. The only shame is to have none. Nothing reveals more an extreme weakness of mind than not to know the misery of a godless man.” (the Nihilistic experience of 'Atheism' is something that goes almost utterly unexpressed by the new atheists and our current culture)

- “I find it necessary to point out the sinfulness of those men who live in indifference to the search for truth in a matter which is so important to them...For it is not to be doubted that the duration of this life is but a moment; that the state of death is eternal, whatever may be its nature; and that thus all our actions and thoughts must take such different directions according to the state of that eternity, that it is impossible to take one step with sense and judgment, unless we regulate our course by the truth of that point which ought to be our ultimate end.”

- “They have them before their eyes; they refuse to look at them; and in that ignorance they choose all that is necessary to fall into this misfortune if it exists, to await death to make trial of it, yet to be very content in this state, to make profession of it, and indeed to boast of it. Can we think seriously on the importance of this subject without being horrified at conduct so extravagant? This resting in ignorance is a monstrous thing...”

- “The sensibility of man to trifles, and his insensibility to great things, indicates a strange inversion. Let us imagine a number of men in chains, and all condemned to death, where some are killed each day in the sight of the others, and those who remain see their own fate in that of their fellows, and wait their turn, looking at each other sorrowfully and without hope. It is an image of the condition of men.”

-“When I consider the short duration of my life, swallowed up in the eternity before and after, the little space which I fill, and even can see, engulfed in the infinite immensity of spaces of which I am ignorant, and which know me not, I am frightened, and am astonished at being here rather than there; for there is no reason why here rather than there, why now rather than then. Who has put me here? By whose order and direction have this place and time been allotted to me? The eternal silence of these infinite spaces frightens me.”

- “It is a horrible thing to feel all that we possess slipping away.”

- “Sudden death alone is feared...”

-“It is certain that the mortality or immortality of the soul must make an entire difference to morality. And yet philosophers have constructed their ethics independently of this: they discuss to pass an hour. Plato, to incline to Christianity.”

- “This is what I see and what troubles me. I look on all sides, and I see only darkness everywhere. Nature presents to me nothing which is not matter of doubt and concern. If I saw nothing there which revealed a Divinity, I would come to a negative conclusion; if I saw everywhere the signs of a Creator, I would remain peacefully in faith. But, seeing too much to deny and too little to be sure, I am in a state to be pitied; wherefore I have a hundred time wished that if a God maintains nature, she should testify to Him unequivocally, and that, if the signs she gives are deceptive, she should suppress them altogether; that she should say everything or nothing, that I might see which cause I ought to follow. Whereas in my present state, ignorant of what I am or of what I ought to do, I know neither my condition nor my duty.”

- “It is incomprehensible that God should exist, and it is incomprehensible that He should not exist; that the soul should be joined to the body, and that we should have no soul; that the world should be created, and that it should not be created, etc.; that original sin should be, and that it should not be.”

- “The finite is annihilated in the presence of the infinite, and becomes a pure nothing. So our spirit before God, so our justice before divine justice.” (Beyond Good and Evil, finite/infinite gap)

-“And thus, when one is forced to play, he must renounce reason to preserve his life, rather than risk it for infinite gain, as likely to happen as the loss of nothingness.”

- “If there is a God, He is infinitely incomprehensible, since, having neither parts nor limits, He has no affinity to us. We are then incapable of knowing either what He is or if He is...God is, or He is not." But to which side shall we incline? Reason can decide nothing here. There is an infinite chaos which separated us. A game is being played at the extremity of this infinite distance where heads or tails will turn up. What will you wager? According to reason, you can do neither the one thing nor the other; according to reason, you can defend neither of the propositions.” (no coincidence that Pascal agrees with Otto's description of the 'numinous' as 'terrifying' and 'incomprehensible', these are two aspects of the Nihilistic experience)

- “In writing down my thought, it sometimes escapes me; but this makes me remember my weakness, that I constantly forget. This is as instructive to me as my forgotten thought; for I strive only to know my nothingness. Scepticism.—I shall here write my thoughts without order, and not perhaps in unintentional confusion; that is true order, which will always indicate my object by its very disorder. I should do too much honour to my subject, if I treated it with order, since I want to show that it is incapable of it.” (how I should 'structure' my writings/thoughts; no structure, how do you 'box in' Nothingness? You, obviously, can't, Cioran has said this exact thing)

- “What astonishes me most is to see that all the world is not astonished at its own weakness. Men act seriously, and each follows his own mode of life, not because it is in fact good to follow since it is the custom, but as if each man knew certainly where reason and justice are.”

- “...man is quite capable of the most extravagant opinions, since he is capable of believing that he is not in a state of natural and inevitable weakness, but, on the contrary, of natural wisdom.” (Maya)

- “[I have passed a great part of my life believing that there was justice, and in this I was not mistaken; for there is justice according as God has willed to reveal it to us. But I did not take it so, and this is where I made a mistake; for I believed that our justice was essentially just, and that I had that whereby to know and judge of it. But I have so often found my right judgment at fault, that at last I have come to distrust myself, and then others. I have seen changes in all nations and men, and thus after many changes of judgment regarding true justice, I have recognised that our nature was but in continual change, and I have not changed since; and if I changed, I would confirm my opinion.”

- “Ecclesiastes shows that man without God is in total ignorance and inevitable misery.”

- “Scepticism helps religion.” (Tillich- doubt as faith, Kierkegaard- faith as the opposite of despair not virtue, Vivekananda- believe nothing, disbelieve everything)

- “All the principles of sceptics, stoics, atheists, etc., are true. But their conclusions are false, because the opposite principles are also true.” (this goes with Pascal's mistrust of 'contradictions' being a solid criterion for 'truth')

- “The greatness of man is great in that he knows himself to be miserable. A tree does not know itself to be miserable. It is then being miserable to know oneself to be miserable; but it is also being great to know that one is miserable.”

- “We are not miserable without feeling it. A ruined house is not miserable. Man only is miserable.” (experience is needed)

- “And those who most despise men, and put them on a level with the brutes, yet wish to be admired and believed by men, and contradict themselves by their own feelings; their nature, which is stronger than all, convincing them of the greatness of man more forcibly than reason convinces them of their baseness.” (Ha! the strongest contradiction?)

- “Man either hides his miseries, or, if he disclose them, glories in knowing them.”

- “Notwithstanding the sight of all our miseries, which press upon us and take us by the throat, we have an instinct which we cannot repress, and which lifts us up.”

- “Men are so necessarily mad, that not to be mad would amount to another form of madness.” (Becker, Tillich, Cioran)

- “It is dangerous to make man see too clearly his equality with the brutes without showing him his greatness. It is also dangerous to make him see his greatness too clearly, apart from his vileness. It is still more dangerous to leave him in ignorance of both. But it is very advantageous to show him both. Man must not think that he is on a level either with the brutes or with the angels, nor must he be ignorant of both sides of his nature; but he must know both.”

- “I blame equally those who choose to praise man, those who choose to blame him, and those who choose to amuse themselves; and I can only approve of those who seek with lamentation.”

- “It is good to be tired and wearied by the vain search after the true good, that we may stretch out our arms to the Redeemer.”

- “All these contradictions, which seem most to keep me from the knowledge of religion, have led me most quickly to the true one.”

- “Experience makes us see an enormous difference between piety and goodness.”

- “The property of justice is to humble pride, however holy may be our work...and the property of mercy is to combat sloth by exhorting to good works...” (non-movement)

- “There is nothing so perilous as what pleases God and man.” (Earthly/Other)

- “It is better not to fast, and thereby humbled, than to fast and be self-satisfied therewith.” (Vivekananda, Francis de Sales)

- “The knowledge of God without that of man's misery causes pride. The knowledge of man's misery without that of God causes despair.” (great! Huxley says that the simple formulation of pursuing God without losing the self, instead of losing the self to God is the cause of all religious atrocities)

- “Christianity is strange. It bids man recognize that he is vile, even abominable, and bids himolitude desire to be like God. Without such a counterpoise, this dignity would make him horribly vain, or this humiliation would make him terribly abject.” (Becker- how does one actually balance this 'divided-self, double-mindedness?)

- “Atheism shows strength of mind, but only to a certain degree.” (atheism realizes the emptiness of religious symbols during a particular time, but if this atheism ends in Naturalism, then it is not going far enough. The reasonable conclusion is Nihilism, the terror of it)

## 20. Thomas Ligotti

- “Like many who have tried their hand at metaphysics, Bahnsen declared that, appearances to the contrary, all reality is the expression of a unified, unchanging force— a cosmic movement that various philosophers have characterized in various ways.”

- “As history confirms, people will change their minds about almost anything, from which god they worship to how they style their hair. But when it comes to existential judgments, human beings in general have an unfalteringly good opinion of themselves and their condition in this world and are steadfastly confident they are not a collection of self-conscious nothings.” (Ha! maya)

- “As scientists, philosophers, and spiritual figures have testified, our heads are full of illusions; things, including human things, are not dependably what they seem.”

- “Immune to the blandishments of religions, countries, families, and everything else that puts both average and above-average citizens in the limelight, pessimists are sideliners in both history and the media. Without belief in gods or ghosts, unmotivated by a comprehensive delusion, they could never plant a bomb, plan a revolution, or shed blood for a cause.”

- “Since personal economic gain would be passé as a motive for the new humanity, there would be only one defensible incitement to work: to see one another through to the finish, a project that would keep everyone busy and not just staring into space while they waited for the end. There might even be bright smiles exchanged among these selfless benefactors of those who would never be forced to exist. And how many would speed up the process of extinction once euthanasia was decriminalized and offered in humane and even enjoyable ways?”

- “One would think that neuroscientists and geneticists would have as much reason to head for the cliffs because little by little they have been finding that much of our thought and behavior is attributable to neural wiring and heredity rather than to personal control over the individuals we are, or think we are. But they do not feel suicide to be mandatory just because their laboratory experiments are informing them that human nature may be nothing but puppet nature. Not the slightest tingle of uncanniness or horror runs up and down their spines, only the thrill of discovery. Most of them reproduce and do not believe there is anything questionable in doing so. If they could get a corpse to sit up on an operating table, they would jubilantly exclaim, “It’s alive!” And so would we. Who cares that human beings evolved from slimy materials?” (I always wonder why these scientists, and even some philosophers, can talk about, for instance, the 'multi-verse, with a smile, or describe it as liberating, Ha! What a joke: you are a robot, you are a nothing, every possible existence exists, your choices are not really choices since they will all be made)

- “In experiencing the uncanny, there is a feeling of wrongness...Of course, our internal authority may itself be in the wrong, perhaps because it is a fabrication of consciousness based on a body of laws that are written only within us and not a detector of what is right or wrong in any real sense, since nothing really is right or wrong in any real sense.” (Otto is supposed to be the complete opposite of Ligotti, yet this is exactly what Otto says too, Heidegger)

- (the feeling of 'Uncanny')“One day those shoes on the floor of your clothes closet may attract your eye in a way they never have before. Somehow they have become abstracted from your world, appearances you cannot place, lumps of matter without a fixed quality and meaning. You feel confused as you stare at them. What are they? What is their nature? Why should there be something rather than nothing?” (Heidegger)

- “...the ultimate threat to ordinary folk who only want to live in a world and in a way that is natural and familiar to them and their families, even though they are darkly aware that this familiarity is a fabrication that may be invalidated.”

- “In the normal course of events, both determinists and indeterminists are one in promoting some kind of operative morality. As guardians of our morale, they feel moral realism to be a necessary truth, whether it is objectively real, as it is to indeterminists, or subjectively “real,” as it is to determinists. Without this truth, or “truth,” we could not go on living as we always have and believe that being alive is all right.”

- “Can one really believe in determinism without going insane?...And those who really care cannot be anything but believers in some form of moral realism or “realism,” which buttresses the optimistic reality that most people call home and braces up everything you need in order to be you— your country, your loved ones, your job or vocation, your golf clubs, and, in an all around sense, your “way of life.” (can one really believe in the multi-verse without going insane?)

- “Only after fealty to countries, gods, and families has been shucked off can we even think about coming to grips with the least endangered of fabrications— the self.”

- “Born a prince, so the story goes, the nascent Enlightened One, Siddhartha Gautama, embarked on a quest to neutralize his ego by first leaving behind his family, gods, and sociopolitical station— all in one stroke. But Buddha’s way requires a near inhuman dedication, and few of us have that kind of stamina.”

- “There are aspects of the scientific world-view which may be damaging to our mental well-being, and that is what everybody intuitively feels” (Metzinger’s emphasis; quoted in Trafford).”

- “But could the vulgar materialist actually say that he or she is aware of being no one as a fact and still go on to pretend that he or she is someone? Would this not be another version of Metzinger’s asking “Can one really believe in determinism without going insane?”

- “cultural critic Jens Bjørneboe wrote that “he who hasn’t experienced a full depression alone and over a long period of time— he is a child.”

- “In perfect knowledge there is only perfect nothingness, which is perfectly painful if what you want is meaning in your life.” (Ligotti makes this point after referencing Hume and his claim of reason being a 'slave to the passions', i.e. reason does not make us act. '...if there were a curative magic wand on the table eight feet away, it would be too much trouble to go over and pick it up.')

- “It is all a vacuous affair with only a chemical prestige. Nothing is either good or bad, desirable or undesirable, or anything else except that it is made so by laboratories inside us producing the emotions on which we live. And to live on our emotions is to live arbitrarily, inaccurately— imparting meaning to what has none of its own. Yet what other way is there to live? Without the ever-clanking machinery of emotion, everything would come to a standstill. There would be nothing to do, nowhere to go, nothing to be, and no one to know.”

- “Buddhism and pessimism cannot be pried loose from each other. The likeness between them is simply too pronounced to be overlooked. Buddhists claim that they are not pessimists but realists...The only real discrepancy between the two philosophies is that hundreds of millions of Buddhists have accepted dukkha as the primary reality of existence. How queer that pessimists cannot boast such numbers. While it is not perceived as such by followers of this ancient religion, the disavowed fact is this: Buddhism is pessimism. Yet whereas the pessimism that dares speak its name is met with near universal incredulity, Buddhism may advertise as truth what no pessimist can prove— that suffering is basic to human existence and it should be the work of our lives to liberate ourselves from its grasp.”

- “Because no two minds are contoured alike, no one system or collocation of systems will ever be sized to fit all. If truth is what you seek, then the examined life will only take you on a long ride to the limits of solitude and leave you by the side of the road with your truth and nothing else.” (this is a good thing, says Vivekananda)

- “Since Buddhism’s only objective is attaining enlightenment, that high road to nirvana (see below), it is at one with other religions in pitching a brighter future for believers in deliverance from the woes of this world. One problem: Human beings are rarely so sensitive to the woes of this world that they feel a pressing need to reject all cravings for the pleasures of this world, as Buddhism would have them do. And it seems that any amount of pleasure is pleasure enough to get us to keep the faith that being alive is all right for everyone, or almost everyone, and will certainly be all right for any children we cause to be delivered into this world.”

- “Consciousness makes it seem as if (1) there is something to do; (2) there is somewhere to go; (3) there is something to be; (4) there is someone to know. This is what makes consciousness the parent of all horrors, the thing that makes us try to do something, go somewhere, be something, and know someone, such as ourselves, so that we can escape our MALIGNANTLY USELESS being and think that being alive is all right rather than that which should not be.” (me- renounce, find the real Self)

- “...ego-death is a state that has nothing but anecdotal evidence to support it, which groups this phenomenon with mystical experiences and revealed religions.”

- “And once our egos have been deposed, what would be left of us? By all recorded accounts, everything would be left except what Horwitz called “a vanity, an elaborate delusion, a ruse.”

- “Both of these non-dualistic meta-realities do serve the purpose of making sense of human life in their own way. But whether they make us feel good does not seem to matter to either of them. We are just vehicles; they are the drivers. And wherever we are going, as Segal and Schopenhauer have assured us, along with every other individual whose consciousness has been opened to the vastness by whatever name or nature, we must keep in mind that we are not what we think we are.”

- “Just a little doubt slipped into the mind, a little trickle of suspicion in the bloodstream, and all those eyes of ours, one by one, open up to the world and see its horror. Then: no belief or body of laws will guard you; no friend, no counselor, no appointed personage will save you; no locked door will protect you; no private office will hide you. Not even the solar brilliance of a summer day will harbor you from horror. For horror eats the light and digests it into darkness.”

- “In his best-known work, The Denial of Death (1973), Becker wrote: “I believe that those who speculate that a full apprehension of man’s condition would drive him insane are right, quite literally right.” Zapffe concluded that we kept our heads by “artificially limiting the content of consciousness.” Becker stated his identical conclusion as follows: “[ Man] literally drives himself into a blind obliviousness with social games, psychological tricks, personal preoccupations so far removed from the reality of his situation that they are forms of madness, but madness all the same.” Outlawed truisms. Taboo commonplaces.”

- “In lieu of personal immortality, we are willing to accept the survival of persons and institutions that we regard as extensions of us— our families, our heroes, our religions, our countries.”

-“In the end, though, his insistence that we must imagine Sisyphus as happy is as impractical as it is feculent.”

-“All civilizations become defunct. All species die out. There is even an expiration date on the universe itself.”, “...the universe as nothing in motion.” (this is super important)

-“For the pessimist, everything considered in isolation from human suffering or any cognition that does not have as its motive the origins, nature, and elimination of human suffering is at base recreational, whether it takes the form of conceptual probing or physical action in the world— for example, delving into game theory or traveling in outer space, respectively. And by “human suffering,” the pessimist is not thinking of particular sufferings and their relief, but of suffering itself. Remedies may be discovered for certain diseases and sociopolitical barbarities may be amended. But these are only stopgaps. Human suffering will remain insoluble as long as human beings exist.”

-“But to express with any adequacy a sense of the uselessness of everything, a nonlinguistic modality would be needed, some effusion out of a dream that amalgamated every gradation of the useless and wordlessly transmitted to us the inanity of existence under any possible conditions.”

-“Any kind of existence is useless. Nothing is self-justifying. Everything is justified only in a relativistic potato-masher sense.”

-“Christians, Jews, and Muslims have a real problem with a potato-masher system of being. Buddhists have no problem with a potato-masher system because for them there are no absolutes.”

-“In truth, we have only one foot in the natural environment of this world. Other worlds are always calling us away from nature. We live in a habitat of unrealities— not of earth, air, water, and wildlife— and cradling illusion trounces grim logic every time.”

-(On Zapffe) “To exposit why humanity should not further tarry on earth is one thing; to believe that this proposition will be agreeable to others is quite another.”

-(Again, speaking on Zapffe) “The delusional will forever be with us, thereby making pain, fear, and denial of what is right in front of our face the preferred style of living and the one that will be passed on to countless generations.” (It seems that Zapffe and Ligotti are both haters of the Earthly, without (like Nietzsche says) any sense of the Other)

-“One would think that neuroscientists and geneticists would have as much reason to head for the cliffs because little by little they have been finding that much of our thought and behavior is attributable to neural wiring and heredity rather than to personal control over the individuals we are, or think we are. But they do not feel suicide to be mandatory just because their laboratory experiments are informing them that human nature may be nothing but puppet nature. Not the slightest tingle of uncanniness or horror runs up and down their spines, only the thrill of discovery. Most of them reproduce and do not believe there is anything questionable in doing so.”

-“Ordinary folk who have nothing to do with supernaturalism and the uncanny and who are resistant to the pessimism of fictions like Invasion of the Body Snatchers and The Thing, whose principals all suffer death or deformation in their fight to hang on to their lives and their humanity.” (sounds like most trivial interpretations of religion)

-“...And those who really care cannot be anything but believers in some form of moral realism or “realism,” which buttresses the optimistic reality that most people call home and braces up everything you need in order to be you— your country, your loved ones, your job or vocation, your golf clubs, and, in an all around sense, your “way of life.”

-“Only after fealty to countries, gods, and families has been shucked off can we even think about coming to grips with the least endangered of fabrications— the self.”

-“Whatever makes us think that we are what we think we are lies in the fact that we have consciousness, which gives us a sense of being somebody, specifically a human somebody, whatever that may be, since we do not have a definition of “human” on which there is universal agreement. But we do agree that, if only in practice, we are all real-live selves, since we are all self-conscious. And once we have passed through every door that qualifies our selves in some way— be it by name, nationality, occupation, gender, or shoe size— we then stand before the door of consciousness— parent of all horrors. And that is all there is to our existence.”

-(On Metzinger) ““There are aspects of the scientific world-view which may be damaging to our mental well-being, and that is what everybody intuitively feels”

-“that you are nothing but a human puppet would not be impossible to believe. What now? Answer: Now you go insane.”, “But how much more can we take? How will the human race feel about knowing that there is no human race— that there is no one? Would this be the end of the greatest horror tale ever told? Or might it be the reinstatement of the way things had been before we had lives of our own? For now, those who cannot abide even Darwin’s theory without the Creator beside them seem to be safe.”

-“...cultural critic Jens Bjørneboe wrote that “he who hasn’t experienced a full depression alone and over a long period of time— he is a child.”

-“In the recumbence of depression, your information-gathering system collates its intelligence and reports to you these facts: (1) there is nothing to do; (2) there is nowhere to go; (3) there is nothing to be; (4) there is no one to know.”

-“In perfect knowledge there is only perfect nothingness, which is perfectly painful if what you want is meaning in your life.”

- “This is the great lesson the depressive learns: Nothing in the world is inherently compelling.”

- “The alternatives are clear: to live falsely as pawns of affect, or to live factually as depressives, or as individuals who know what is known to the depressive.”

- “As a threat to human continuance, nihilism is as dead as God.” (me- as Seraphim says: people have grown up within a nihilistic framework and therefore do not “experience” Nihilism the way people a few hundred years ago may have felt it. The Nihilistic experience is needed again)

-“Key to Nietzsche’s popularity with atheistic amoralists is his materialistic mysticism, a sleight of mind that makes the world’s meaninglessness into something meaningful and refashions fate into freedom before our eyes.”

- “Then it begins. This can’t be happening, you think— if you can think at all, if you are anything more than a whirlwind of panic. In reality, though, anything can happen now. This is the whispering undercurrent that creeps into your thoughts— nothing is safe and nothing is off limits. All of a sudden something was set in motion that changed everything. Something descended upon you that had been circling above your life from the day you were born. And for the first time you feel that which you have never felt before— the imminence of your own death. There is no possibility for self-deception now. The paradox that came with consciousness is done with. Only horror is left. This is what is real. This is the only thing that was ever real, however unreal it may have seemed. (me- great, brief description of the Nihilistic experience)

- “No other life forms know they are alive, and neither do they know they will die. This is our curse alone. Without this hex upon our heads, we would never have withdrawn as far as we have from the natural...Simply put: We are not from here. If we vanished tomorrow, no organism on this planet would miss us. Nothing in nature needs us.”

- “Even as we survive and reproduce, we know ourselves to be dying in a dark corner of infinity.”

- “If human pleasure did not have both a lid and a time limit, we would not bestir ourselves to do things that were not pleasurable, such as toiling for our subsistence. And then we would not survive.”

- “Each breath could be our last. Under such an arrangement, we would either have to become Epicureans and not fear death or, more likely, we would divert from our consciousness the thought that we could die without so much as a heads-up and in the blink of an eye.”

- “Tønnessen believes that “intellectual honesty” must lead to “ontological despair,” ( reason does lead to God, since God is seen through Nothingness and Despair, though still incomprehensible)

- “And one thing we know is real: horror. It is so real, in fact, that we cannot be sure it could not exist without us. Yes, it needs our imaginations and our consciousness, but it does not ask or require our consent to use them. Indeed, horror operates with complete autonomy. Generating ontological havoc, it is mephitic foam upon which our lives merely float. And, ultimately, we must face up to it: Horror is more real than we are.”

- “That we all deserve punishment by horror is as mystifying as it is undeniable.”

- “Being alive: decades of waking up on time, then trudging through another round of moods, sensations, thoughts, cravings— the complete gamut of agitations— and finally flopping into bed to sweat in the pitch of dead sleep or simmer in the phantasmagorias that molest our dreaming minds. Why do so many of us bargain for a life sentence over the end of a rope or the muzzle of a gun? Do we not deserve to die?”

- “No self now, consciously speaking. No feeling your old self or new self, false imaginings if you think about it, self-conscious nothings everywhere you look. No one to hear you weep or scream, making a go of it on your own, bye-bye. No bosom of nature, abandoned on the doorstep of the supernatural, minds full of flagrantly joyless possibilities, a real blunder that was, the human tragedy. No reality to speak of, nobody here but us puppets, contradictory beings, mutants who embody the contorted logic of a paradox. No immortality, ordinary folk and average mortals coming and going, can’t stay long, got an appointment with nonexistence, no alternative to consider, being alive was all right while it lasted, so they say. No life story with a happy ending to tell, only a contrivance of horror, then nothingness— and nothing else. No Free Will-to-live, no redemption by a Will-to-die, how depressing. No philosophies to peddle, pessimism a no-sale, optimism had to close its doors, too wicked to pass code. No meanings or mind-games, repressional mechanisms broke down, self-deception shuttered its windows. No awakening from a dream within a dream, mutation of consciousness— parent of all horrors, best not mess with it, extinction looking better all the time. No more pleasure, what there was of it, a few crumbs left by chaos at feast, still a good supply of pain, though. No praiseworthy incentives, just bowel-movement pressures, potato-mashing relativism. No euthanasia, bad for the business of life, you’re on your own there, but watch out for the eternal return, most horrible idea in the universe. No loving God, omnipotence off duty and omniscience on leave, the deity He dead— the horror, the horror, even the skies of spring and the flowers of summer must ever afterward be poison, blame it on the piecing together of dissociated knowledge. No compassionate Buddha, Body Snatchers got him, heard tell, or some kind of thing, maybe next lifetime. No Good-versus-Evil formulas around here, Azathoth running the show, human beings a mistake or a joke, something pernicious making a nightmare of our world. No being normal and real, the uncanny coming at you full speed, startling and dreadful. No ego-death— enlightenment by accident. No way out of harm’s way, better never to have been, worst saved for last. No Last Messiah, buried in the fingernails of midwives and pacifier makers, gone the way of messiahs past. No bleakness either, a failure indeed. No terror management by isolation, anchoring, distraction, sublimation. No tragedies to read or to write, death kept at a safe distance past the vanishing point down the road. No escape routes into a useless bliss, useless existence, malignantly so…”

- “Some morbid citizens among us might become cataleptic with anxiety because their next breath may be their last, but most of us would not be wrecked by such unremitting worry.”

“The belief in the possibility of long-lasting, high-flown pleasures is a deceptive but adaptive flimflam. It seems that nature did not make us to feel too good for too long, which would be no good for the survival of the species, but only to feel good enough for long enough to keep us from complaining that we do not feel good all the time. In the workaday world, complainers will not go far. When someone asks how you are doing, you had better be wise enough to reply, “I can’t complain.” If you do complain, even justifiably, people will stop asking how you are doing. Complaining will not help you succeed and influence people. You can complain to your physician or psychiatrist because they are paid to hear you complain. But you cannot complain to your boss or your friends, if you have any. You will soon be dismissed from your job and dropped from the social register. Then you will be left alone with your complaints and no one to listen to them.

Perhaps then the message will sink into your head: If you do not feel good enough for long enough, you should act as if you do and even think as if you do. That is the way to get yourself to feel good enough for long enough and stop you from complaining for good, as any self-improvement book can affirm. But should you not improve, someone must assume the blame. And that someone will be you. This is monumentally so if you are a pessimist or a depressive. Should you conclude that life is objectionable or that nothing matters— do not waste our time with your nonsense. We are on our way to the future, and the philosophically disheartening or the emotionally impaired are not going to hinder our progress. If you cannot say something positive, or at least equivocal, keep it to yourself. Pessimists and depressives need not apply for a position in the enterprise of life. You have two choices: Start thinking the way God and your society want you to think or be forsaken by all. The decision is yours, since you are a free agent who can choose to rejoin our fabricated world or stubbornly insist on … what? That we should mollycoddle non-positive thinkers like you or rethink how the whole world transacts its business? That we should start over from scratch? Or that we should go extinct? Try to be realistic. We did the best we could with the tools we had. After all, we are only human, as we like to say. Our world may not be in accord with nature’s way, but it did develop organically according to our consciousness, which delivered us to a lofty prominence over the Creation. The whole thing just took on a life of its own, and nothing is going to stop it anytime soon. There can be no starting over and no going back. No major readjustments are up for a vote. And no melancholic head-case is going to bad-mouth our catastrophe. The universe was created by the Creator, damn it. We live in a country we love and that loves us back. We have families and friends and jobs that make it all worthwhile. We are somebodies, not a bunch of nobodies without names or numbers or retirement plans. None of this is going to be overhauled by a thought criminal who contends that the world is not doubleplusgood and never will be. Our lives may not be unflawed— that would deny us a better future to work toward— but if this charade is good enough for us, then it should be good enough for you. So if you cannot get your mind right, try walking away. You will find no place to go and no one who will have you. You will find only the same old trap the world over. Lighten up or leave us alone. You will never get us to give up our hopes. You will never get us to wake up from our dreams. We are not contradictory beings whose continuance only worsens our plight as mutants who embody the contorted logic of a paradox. Such opinions will not be accredited by institutions of authority or by the middling run of humanity. To lay it on the line, whatever thoughts may enter your chemically imbalanced brain are invalid, inauthentic, or whatever dismissive term we care to hang on you, who are only “one of those people.” So start pretending that you feel good enough for long enough, stop your complaining, and get back in line. If you are not as strong as Samson— that no-good suicide and slaughterer of Philistines— then get loaded to the gills and return to the trap. Keep your medicine cabinet and your liquor cabinet well stocked, just like the rest of us. Come on and join the party. No pessimists or depressives invited. Do you think we are morons? We know all about those complaints of yours. The only difference is that we have sense enough and feel good enough for long enough not to speak of them. Keep your powder dry and your brains blocked. Our shibboleth: “Up the Conspiracy and down with Consciousness.”

## 21. Schopenhauer

- “He who lives to see two or three generations is like a man who sits some time in the conjurer's booth at a fair, and witnesses the performance twice or thrice in succession. The tricks were meant to be seen only once; and when they are no longer a novelty and cease to deceive, their effect is gone.”

- “...in order to increase his pleasures, man has intentionally added to the number and pressure of his needs, which in their original state were not much more difficult to satisfy than those of the brute. Hence luxury in all its forms; delicate food, the use of tobacco and opium, spirituous liquors, fine clothes, and the thousand and one things than he considers necessary to his existence.”

- “The crowd of miserable wretches whose one aim in life is to fill their purses but never to put anything into their heads, offers a singular instance of this torment of boredom. Their wealth becomes a punishment by delivering them up to misery of having nothing to do; for, to escape it, they will rush about in all directions, traveling here, there and everywhere. No sooner do they arrive in a place than they are anxious to know what amusements it affords; just as though they were beggars asking where they could receive a dole! Of a truth, need and boredom are the two poles of human life.”

- “My philosophy shows the metaphysical foundation of justice and the love of mankind, and points to the goal to which these virtues necessarily lead, if they are practised in perfection. At the same time it is candid in confessing that a man must turn his back upon the world, and that the denial of the will to live is the way of redemption. It is therefore really at one with the spirit of the New Testament...In this sense, then, my doctrine might be called the only true Christian philosophy—however paradoxical a statement this may seem to people who take superficial views instead of penetrating to the heart of the matter.”

- “The spirit of the New Testament is undoubtedly asceticism, however your protestants and rationalists may twist it to suit their purpose. Asceticism is the denial of the will to live...”

- “I refer, not to my own philosophy alone, but to the wisdom of all ages, as expressed in Brahmanism and Buddhism, and in the sayings of Greek philosophers like Empedocles and Pythagoras; as also by Cicero...”

- “And true Christianity—using the word in its right sense—also regards our existence as the consequence of sin and error.”

- “If you want a safe compass to guide you through life, and to banish all doubt as to the right way of looking at it, you cannot do better than accustom yourself to regard this world as a penitentiary...”

- “This may perhaps sound strange, but it is in keeping with the facts; it puts others in a right light; and it reminds us of that which is after all the most necessary thing in life—the tolerance, patience, regard, and love of neighbor...”

- “If he has a soul above the common, or if he is a man of genius, he will occasionally feel like some noble prisoner of state, condemned to work in the galleys with common criminals; and he will follow his example and try to isolate himself.”

- “A man finds himself, to his great astonishment, suddenly existing, after thousands and thousands of years of non-existence: he lives for a little while; and then, again, comes an equally long period when he must exist no more. The heart rebels against this, and feels that it cannot be true.”

- “...in such a world, happiness in inconceivable. How can it dwell where, as Plato says, continual Becoming and never Being is the sole form of existence?”

- “a man never is happy, but spends his whole life in striving after something which he thinks will make him so; he seldom attains his goal, and when he does, it is only to be disappointed; he is mostly shipwrecked in the end, and comes into harbor with masts and rigging gone. And then, it is all one whether he has been happy or miserable; for his life was never anything more than a present moment always vanishing; and now it is over.”

- “The pleasure in this world, it has been said, outweighs the pain; or, at any rate, there is an even balance between the two. If the reader wishes to see shortly whether this statement is true, let him compare the respective feelings of two animals, one of which is engaged in eating the other.”

- “...misfortune has its uses...If the world were a paradise of luxury and ease, a land flowing with milk and honey, where every Jack obtained his Jill at once and without any difficulty, men would either die of boredom or hang themselves.”

- “I shall be told, I suppose, that my philosophy is comfortless—because I speak the truth; and people prefer to be assured that everything the Lord has made is good. Go to the priests, then, and leave philosophers in peace! At any rate, do not ask us to accommodate our doctrines to the lessons you have been taught. That is what those rascals of sham philosophers will do for you. Ask them for any doctrine you please, and you will get it. Your University professors are bound to preach optimism; and it is an easy and agreeable task to upset their theories.”

- “...the misery of boredom...boredom is a form of suffering unknown to brutes.”

- “The brute flies from death instinctively without really knowing what it is, and therefore without ever contemplating it in the way natural to a man, who has this prospect always before his eyes.” (me- the path is narrow)

- “The brute is an embodiment of present impulses, and hence what elements of fear and hope exist in its nature—and they do not go very far—arise only in relation to objects that lie before it and within reach of those impulses: whereas a man's range of vision embraces the whole of his life, and extends far into the past and future.” (me- concern for ultimate things, the arbitrariness of culture and time, etc.)

- “Between the ethics of the Greeks and the ethics of the Hindoos, there is a glaring contrast. In the one case (with the exception, it must be confessed, of Plato), the object of ethics is to enable a man to lead a happy life; in the other, it is to free and redeem him from life altogether—as is directly stated in the very first words of the Sankhya Karika.”

- “This is the realm of finality; and its opposite would be an infinite existence, exposed to no attack from without, and needing nothing to support it; [Greek: haei hosautos dn], the realm of eternal peace; [Greek: oute giguomenon oute apollumenon], some timeless, changeless state, one and undiversified; the negative knowledge of which forms the dominant note of the Platonic philosophy. It is to some such state as this that the denial of the will to live opens up the way.”

- “This is direct proof that existence has no real value in itself; for what is boredom but the feeling of the emptiness of life?” (me- which just is God)

- “Were it of any value in itself, anything unconditioned and absolute, it could not thus end in mere nothing.”

## 22. William James

Starting with his own Nihilistic Experience- “"Whilst in this state of philosophic pessimism and general depression of spirits about my prospects, I went one evening into a dressing-room in the twilight to procure some article that was there; when suddenly there fell upon me without any warning, just as if it came out of the darkness, a horrible fear of my own existence. Simultaneously there arose in my mind the image of an epileptic patient whom I had seen in the asylum, a black-haired youth with greenish skin, entirely idiotic, who used to sit all day on one of the benches, or rather shelves against the wall, with his knees drawn up against his chin, and the coarse gray undershirt, which was his only garment, drawn over them inclosing his entire figure. He sat there like a sort of sculptured Egyptian cat or Peruvian mummy, moving nothing but his black eyes and looking absolutely non-human. This image and my fear entered into a species of combination with each other THAT SHAPE AM I, I felt, potentially. Nothing that I possess can defend me against that fate, if the hour for it should strike for me as it struck for him. There was such a horror of him, and such a perception of my own merely momentary discrepancy from him, that it was as if something hitherto solid within my breast gave way entirely, and I became a mass of quivering fear. After this the universe was changed for me altogether. I awoke morning after morning with a horrible dread at the pit of my stomach, and with a sense of the insecurity of life that I never knew before, and that I have never felt since.[ 83] It was like a revelation; and although the immediate feelings passed away, the experience has made me sympathetic with the morbid feelings of others ever since. It gradually faded, but for months I was unable to go out into the dark alone.”

- “To prove this point, Tolstoy quotes the Buddha, Solomon, and Schopenhauer. And he finds only four ways in which men of his own class and society are accustomed to meet the situation. Either mere animal blindness, sucking the honey without seeing the dragon or the mice—" and from such a way," he says, "I can learn nothing, after what I now know;" or reflective epicureanism, snatching what it can while the day lasts— which is only a more deliberate sort of stupefaction than the first; or manly suicide; or seeing the mice and dragon and yet weakly and plaintively clinging to the bush of life. Suicide was naturally the consistent course dictated by the logical intellect. "Yet," says Tolstoy, "whilst my intellect was working, something else in me was working too, and kept me from the deed— a consciousness of life, as I may call it, which was like a force that obliged my mind to fix itself in another direction and draw me out of my situation of despair…. During the whole course of this year, when I almost unceasingly kept asking myself how to end the business, whether by the rope or by the bullet, during all that time, alongside of all those movements of my ideas and observations, my heart kept languishing with another pining emotion. I can call this by no other name than that of a thirst for God.”

-“The method of averting one’s attention from evil, and living simply in the light of good is splendid as long as it will work. It will work with many persons; it will work far more generally than most of us are ready to suppose; and within the sphere of its successful operation there is nothing to be said against it as a religious solution. But it breaks down impotently as soon as melancholy comes; and even though one be quite free from melancholy one’s self, there is no doubt that healthy-mindedness is inadequate as a philosophical doctrine, because the evil facts which it refuses positively to account for are a genuine portion of reality; and they may after all be the best key to life’s significance, and possibly the only openers of our eyes to the deepest levels of truth. The normal process of life contains moments as bad as any of those which insane melancholy is filled with, moments in which radical evil gets its innings and takes its solid turn. The lunatic’s visions of horror are all drawn from the material of daily fact. Our civilization is founded on the shambles, and every individual existence goes out in a lonely spasm of helpless agony. If you protest, my friend, wait until you arrive there yourself.”

-“Healthy Mindedness”: “The persons to whom I refer have still retained for the most part

their nominal connection with Christianity, in spite of their discarding of its more pessimistic theological elements...His contentment with the finite in cases him like a lobster-shell and shields him from all morbid repining at his distance from the infinite. We have in him an excellent example of the optimism which may be encouraged by popular science.”

-Does this sound like me or not (seriously, ha!): “We saw how this temperament may become the basis for a peculiar type of religion, a religion in which good, even the good of this world’s life, is

regarded as the essential thing for a rational being to attend to. This religion directs him to settle his scores with the more evil aspects of the universe by systematically declining to lay them to heart or make much of them, by ignoring them in his reflective calculations, or even, on

occasion, by denying outright that they exist.”

- “Martin Luther by no means belonged to the healthy-minded type in the radical sense in which we have discussed it, and he repudiated priestly absolution for sin.”

-Strange that I seem to agree with this “healthy-mindedness” of James', since it's contrary to the “sick soul” that I relate so much to: “...healthy-mindedness refuses to say anything of the sort.

Evil, it says, is emphatically irrational, and NOT to be pinned in, or preserved, or consecrated

in any final system of truth. It is a pure abomination to the Lord, an alien unreality, a waste8 element, to be sloughed off and negated, and the very memory of it, if possible, wiped out and forgotten.” This sounds right to me. The Other world has no evil...nor any good! Beyond good and evil! It's Other, not good. Which is why Augustine says that Evil is negative in existence since evil is simply a lack of goodness.

- “Let us see rather whether pity, pain, and fear, and the sentiment of human helplessness may not open a profounder view and put into our hands a more complicated key to the meaning of the situation.”

- On Luther- “rather than live forty years more, I would give up my chance of Paradise.”

- “But this is only the first stage of the world-sickness. Make the human being’s sensitiveness a little greater, carry him a little farther over the misery-threshold, and the good quality of the successful moments themselves when they occur is spoiled and vitiated. All natural goods

perish. Riches take wings; fame is a breath; love is a cheat; youth and health and pleasure vanish. Can things whose end is always dust and disappointment be the real goods which our souls require? Back of everything is the great spectre of universal death, the all-encompassing

blackness.”

-”To a mind attentive to this state of things and rightly subject to the joy-destroying chill which such a contemplation engenders, the only relief that healthy-mindedness can give is by saying: “Stuff and nonsense, get out into the open air!” or “Cheer up, old fellow, you’ll be all right erelong, if you will only drop your morbidness!” But in all seriousness, can such bald animal talk as that be treated as a rational answer? To ascribe religious value to mere happy-go-lucky contentment with one’s brief chance at natural good is but the very consecration of forgetfulness and superficiality. Our troubles lie indeed too deep for THAT cure. The fact that we CAN die, that we CAN be ill at all, is what perplexes us; the fact that we now for a moment live and are well is irrelevant to that perplexity. We need a life not correlated with death, a health not liable to

illness, a kind of good that will not perish, a good in fact that flies beyond the Goods of nature.”

- “...turn us into melancholy metaphysicians. The pride of life and glory of the world will shrivel. It is after all but the standing quarrel of hot youth and hoary eld. Old age has the last word: the purely naturalistic look at life, however enthusiastically it may begin, is sure to

end in sadness. This sadness lies at the heart of every merely positivistic, agnostic, or

naturalistic scheme of philosophy. Let sanguine healthy-mindedness do its best with its strange power of living in the moment and ignoring and forgetting, still the evil background is really there to be thought of, and the skull will grin in at the banquet. In the practical life of the individual, we know how his whole gloom or glee about any present fact depends on the remoter schemes and hopes with which it stands related. Its significance and framing give it the chief part of its value. Let it be known to lead nowhere, and however agreeable it may be in its immediacy, its glow and gilding vanish.” (Heisman)

-”Place round them on the contrary the curdling cold and gloom and absence of all permanent meaning which for pure naturalism and the popular science evolutionism of our time are all that is visible ultimately, and the thrill stops short, or turns rather to an anxious trembling.”

-”For naturalism, fed on recent cosmological speculations, mankind is in a position similar to that of a set of people living on a frozen lake, surrounded by cliffs over which there is no escape, yet knowing that little by little the ice is melting, and the inevitable day drawing near when the

last film of it will disappear, and to be drowned ignominiously will be the human creature’s portion.”

-”But there is a pitch of unhappiness so great that the goods of nature may be entirely forgotten, and all sentiment of their existence vanish from the mental field. For this extremity of pessimism to be reached, something more is needed than observation of life and reflection upon death. The

individual must in his own person become the prey of a pathological melancholy. As the healthy-minded enthusiast succeeds in ignoring evil’s very existence, so the subject of melancholy is forced in spite of himself to ignore that of all good whatever: for him it may no longer have the

least reality.”

-”Such sensitiveness and susceptibility to mental pain is a rare occurrence where the nervous constitution is entirely normal; one seldom finds it in a healthy subject even where he is the victim of the most atrocious cruelties of outward fortune. So we note here the neurotic constitution...”

-”These have their source in another sphere of existence altogether, in the animal and spiritual region of the subject’s being. Conceive yourself, if possible, suddenly stripped of all the emotion with which your world now inspires you, and try to imagine it AS IT EXISTS, purely by itself, without your favorable or unfavorable, hopeful or apprehensive comment. It will be almost impossible for you to realize such a condition of negativity and deadness. No one portion of

the universe would then have importance beyond another; and the whole collection of its things and series of its events would be without significance, character, expression, or perspective.” (Exactly like when I ask: “Imagine the one thing that you value most in this world. Now, can you imagine that thing, the thing that you feel sustains your own existence, not meaning anything? Can you imagine it losing all meaning? No? Then, we have nothing further to talk about.” I have yet to meet a person who has answered “yes.” to this question)

-”How can the moribund old man reason back to himself the romance, the mystery, the imminence of great things with which our old earth tingled for him in the days when he was

young and well?”

-”In melancholiacs there is usually a similar change, only it is in the reverse direction. The world now looks remote, strange, sinister, uncanny. Its color is gone, its breath is cold, there is no speculation in the eyes it glares with. “It is as if I lived in another century,” says one

asylum patient.”

-”Now there are some subjects whom all this leaves a prey to the profoundest astonishment. The strangeness is wrong. The unreality cannot be. A mystery is concealed, and a metaphysical solution must exist. If the natural world is so double-faced and unhomelike, what world, what thing is real?”

-”In none of these cases was there any intellectual insanity or delusion about matters of fact; but were we disposed to open the chapter of really insane melancholia, with its {159} hallucinations and delusions, it would be a worse story still—desperation absolute and complete, the whole

universe coagulating about the sufferer into a material of overwhelming horror, surrounding him without opening or end. Not the conception or intellectual perception of evil, but the grisly blood-freezing heart-palsying sensation of it close upon one, and no other conception or sensation able to live for a momentin its presence. How irrelevantly remote seem all our usual refined optimisms and intellectual and moral consolations in presence of a need of help like this! Here is the real core of the religious problem: Help! help! No prophet can claim to bring a final message unless he says things that will have a sound of reality in the ears of victims such as these.”

-”The completest religions would therefore seem to be those in which the pessimistic elements are best developed.”

The Divided Self- “Natural good is not simply insufficient in amount and transient, there lurks a falsity in its very being. Cancelled as it all is by death if not by earlier enemies, it gives no final balance, and can never be the thing intended for our lasting worship. It keeps us from our real good, rather; and renunciation and despair of it are our first step in the direction of the truth. There are two lives, the natural and the spiritual, and we must lose the one before we can participate in the other.”

- “Saint Augustine and Alline both emerged into the smooth waters of inner unity and peace, and I shall next ask you to consider more closely some of the peculiarities of the process of unification, when it occurs. It may come gradually, or it may occur abruptly; it may come through altered feelings, or through altered powers of action; or it may come through new intellectual insights, or through experiences which we shall later have to designate as 'mystical.' However it come, it brings a characteristic sort of relief; and never such extreme relief as when it is cast into the religious mould. Happiness! happiness! religion is only one of the ways in which men gain that gift. Easily, permanently, and successfully, it often transforms the most intolerable misery into the profoundest and most enduring happiness.”

- “But neither Bunyan nor Tolstoy could become what we have called healthy-minded. They had drunk too deeply of the cup of bitterness ever to forget its taste, and their redemption is into a universe two stories deep. Each of them realized a good which broke the effective edge of his sadness; yet the sadness was preserved as a minor ingredient in the heart of the faith by which it was overcome.”

- “For Tolstoy's perceptions of evil appear within their sphere to have remained unmodified. His later works show him implacable to the whole system of official values: the ignobility of fashionable life; the infamies of empire; the spuriousness of the church, the vain conceit of the professions; the meannesses and cruelties that go with great success; and every other pompous crime and lying institution of this world. To all patience with such things his experience has been for him a permanent ministry of death.”

- Bunyan: “"I must first pass a sentence of death," he says, "upon everything that can properly be called a thing of this life, even to reckon myself, my wife, my children, my health, my enjoyments, and all, as dead to me, and myself as dead to them; to trust in God through Christ, as touching the world to come, and as touching this world, to count the grave my house, to make my bed in darkness...”

Chapter- Saintliness

- “These devotees have often laid their course so differently from other men that, judging them by worldly law, we might be tempted to call them monstrous aberrations from the path of nature.”

- “The saintly character is the character for which spiritual emotions are the habitual centre of the personal energy; and there is a certain composite photograph of universal saintliness, the same in all religions, of which the features can easily be traced.”

- “Asceticism.— The self-surrender may become so passionate as to turn into self-immolation. It may then so over-rule the ordinary inhibitions of the flesh that the saint finds positive pleasure in sacrifice and asceticism, measuring and expressing as they do the degree of his loyalty to the higher power.”

- “'We would make known in our own persons the usefulness of rule, of discipline, of resignation and renunciation; we would teach the necessary perpetuity of suffering, and explain the creative part which it plays. We would wage war upon false optimism; on the base hope of happiness coming to us ready made; on the notion of a salvation by knowledge alone, or by material civilization alone, vain symbol as this is of civilization, precarious external arrangement ill-fitted to replace the intimate union and consent of souls.'”

- “Psychologically and in principle, the precept "Love your enemies" is not self-contradictory. It is merely the extreme limit of a kind of magnanimity with which, in the shape of pitying tolerance of our oppressors, we are fairly familiar. Yet if radically followed, it would involve such a breach with our instinctive springs of action as a whole, and with the present world's arrangements, that a critical point would practically be passed, and we should be born into another kingdom of being. Religious emotion makes us feel that other kingdom to be close at hand, within our reach.”

- “The saintly person becomes exceedingly sensitive to inner inconsistency or discord, and mixture and confusion grow intolerable. All the mind's objects and occupations must be ordered with reference to the special spiritual excitement which is now its keynote. Whatever is unspiritual taints the pure water of the soul and is repugnant.”

- “The impulse to expiate and do penance is, in its first intention, far too immediate and spontaneous an expression of self-despair and anxiety to be obnoxious to any such reproach. In the form of loving sacrifice, of spending all we have to show our devotion, ascetic discipline of the severest sort may be the fruit of highly optimistic religious feeling.” (Suso's mortifications)

- “Since Hindu fakirs, Buddhist monks, and Mohammedan dervishes unite with Jesuits and Franciscans in idealizing poverty as the loftiest individual state...”

- “Accordingly, throughout the annals of the saintly life, we find this ever-recurring note: Fling yourself upon God's providence without making any reserve whatever— take no thought for the morrow— sell all you have and give it to the poor— only when the sacrifice is ruthless and reckless will the higher safety really arrive.”

## 23. Taoism

- “The Tao that can be described is not the enduring and unchanging Tao. The name that can be named is not the enduring and unchanging name.”

- “Under these two aspects, it is really the same; but as development takes place, it receives the different names. Together we call them the Mystery.”

- “Therefore the sage manages affairs without doing anything...”

- “He constantly (tries to) keep them without knowledge and without desire, and where there are those who have knowledge, to keep them from presuming to act (on it). When there is this abstinence from action, good order is universal.”

- “The Tao is (like) the emptiness of a vessel; and in our employment of it we must be on our guard against all fulness. How deep and unfathomable it is, as if it were the Honoured Ancestor of all things!”

- “Heaven and earth do not act from (the impulse of) any wish to be benevolent; they deal with all things as the dogs of grass are dealt with. The sages do not act from (any wish to be) benevolent; they deal with the people as the dogs of grass are dealt with.”

- “When wealth and honours lead to arrogancy, this brings its evil on itself. When the work is done, and one's name is becoming distinguished, to withdraw into obscurity is the way of Heaven.”

- “The thirty spokes unite in the one nave; but it is on the empty space (for the axle), that the use of the wheel depends. Clay is fashioned into vessels; but it is on their empty hollowness, that their use depends. The door and windows are cut out (from the walls) to form an apartment; but it is on the empty space (within), that its use depends. Therefore, what has a (positive) existence serves for profitable adaptation, and what has not that for (actual) usefulness.”

- “Colour's five hues from th' eyes their sight will take; Music's five notes the ears as deaf can make; The flavours five deprive the mouth of taste; The chariot course, and the wild hunting waste Make mad the mind; and objects rare and strange, Sought for, men's conduct will to evil change. Therefore the sage seeks to satisfy (the craving of) the belly, and not the (insatiable longing of the) eyes. He puts from him the latter, and prefers to seek the former.”

- “What makes me liable to great calamity is my having the body (which I call myself); if I had not the body, what great calamity could come to me?”

- “We look at it, and we do not see it, and we name it 'the Equable.' We listen to it, and we do not hear it, and we name it 'the Inaudible.' We try to grasp it, and do not get hold of it, and we name it 'the Subtle.' With these three qualities, it cannot be made the subject of description; and hence we blend them together and obtain The One. Its upper part is not bright, and its lower part is not obscure. Ceaseless in its action, it yet cannot be named, and then it again returns and becomes nothing. This is called the Form of the Formless, and the Semblance of the Invisible; this is called the Fleeting and Indeterminable. We meet it and do not see its Front; we follow it, and do not see its Back. When we can lay hold of the Tao of old to direct the things of the present day, and are able to know it as it was of old in the beginning, this is called (unwinding) the clue of Tao.”

- “If we could renounce our sageness and discard our wisdom, it would be better for the people a hundredfold. If we could renounce our benevolence and discard our righteousness, the people would again become filial and kindly. If we could renounce our artful contrivances and discard our (scheming for) gain, there would be no thieves nor robbers.”

- “When we renounce learning we have no troubles. The (ready) 'yes,' and (flattering) 'yea;'— Small is the difference they display. But mark their issues, good and ill;— What space the gulf between shall fill? What all men fear is indeed to be feared; but how wide and without end is the range of questions (asking to be discussed)! The multitude of men look satisfied and pleased; as if enjoying a full banquet, as if mounted on a tower in spring. I alone seem listless and still, my desires having as yet given no indication of their presence. I am like an infant which has not yet smiled. I look dejected and forlorn, as if I had no home to go to.”

- “The multitude of men all have enough and to spare. I alone seem to have lost everything. My mind is that of a stupid man; I am in a state of chaos. Ordinary men look bright and intelligent, while I alone seem to be benighted. They look full of discrimination, while I alone am dull and confused. I seem to be carried about as on the sea, drifting as if I had nowhere to rest. All men have their spheres of action, while I alone seem dull and incapable, like a rude borderer. (Thus) I alone am different from other men, but I value the nursing-mother (the Tao).”

- “The grandest forms of active force From Tao come, their only source. Who can of Tao the nature tell? Our sight it flies, our touch as well. Eluding sight, eluding touch, The forms of things all in it crouch; Eluding touch, eluding sight, There are their semblances, all right. Profound it is, dark and obscure; Things' essences all there endure.”

- “So, in their beautiful array, Things form and never know decay. How know I that it is so with all the beauties of existing things? By this (nature of the Tao).”

- “There was something undefined and complete, coming into existence before Heaven and Earth. How still it was and formless, standing alone, and undergoing no change, reaching everywhere and in no danger (of being exhausted)! It may be regarded as the Mother of all things. I do not know its name, and I give it the designation of the Tao (the Way or Course). Making an effort (further) to give it a name I call it The Great.”

- “...if he proceed to active movement, he will lose his throne.”

- “The sage, when employed, becomes the Head of all the Officers (of government); and in his greatest regulations he employs no violent measures.”

- “The kingdom is a spirit-like thing, and cannot be got by active doing...Hence the sage puts away excessive effort, extravagance, and easy indulgence.”

- “He who would assist a lord of men in harmony with the Tao will not assert his mastery in the kingdom by force of arms.”

- “Calm and repose are what he prizes; victory (by force of arms) is to him undesirable. To consider this desirable would be to delight in the slaughter of men; and he who delights in the slaughter of men cannot get his will in the kingdom.”

- “The Tao, considered as unchanging, has no name.”

- “Simplicity without a name Is free from all external aim. With no desire, at rest and still, All things go right as of their will.”

- “Thus it was that when the Tao was lost, its attributes appeared; when its attributes were lost, benevolence appeared; when benevolence was lost, righteousness appeared; and when righteousness was lost, the proprieties appeared.”

- “Scholars of the highest class, when they hear about the Tao, earnestly carry it into practice. Scholars of the middle class, when they have heard about it, seem now to keep it and now to lose it. Scholars of the lowest class, when they have heard about it, laugh greatly at it. If it were not (thus) laughed at, it would not be fit to be the Tao.”

- “The Tao is hidden, and has no name; but it is the Tao which is skilful at imparting (to all things what they need) and making them complete.”

- “The violent and strong do not die their natural death. I will make this the basis of my teaching.”

- “I know hereby what advantage belongs to doing nothing (with a purpose). There are few in the world who attain to the teaching without words, and the advantage arising from non-action.”

- “Or fame or life, Which do you hold more dear? Or life or wealth, To which would you adhere? Keep life and lose those other things; Keep them and lose your life:— which brings Sorrow and pain more near? Thus we may see, Who cleaves to fame Rejects what is more great; Who loves large stores Gives up the richer state.”

- “Purity and stillness give the correct law to all under heaven.”

- “There is no guilt greater than to sanction ambition; no calamity greater than to be discontented with one's lot; no fault greater than the wish to be getting. Therefore the sufficiency of contentment is an enduring and unchanging sufficiency.”

- “Without going outside his door, one understands (all that takes place) under the sky; without looking out from his window, one sees the Tao of Heaven. The farther that one goes out (from himself), the less he knows. Therefore the sages got their knowledge without travelling; gave their (right) names to things without seeing them; and accomplished their ends without any purpose of doing so.”

- “He who devotes himself to learning (seeks) from day to day to increase (his knowledge); he who devotes himself to the Tao (seeks) from day to day to diminish (his doing). He diminishes it and again diminishes it, till he arrives at doing nothing (on purpose). Having arrived at this point of non-action, there is nothing which he does not do.”

- “The sage has no invariable mind of his own; he makes the mind of the people his mind. To those who are good (to me), I am good; and to those who are not good (to me), I am also good;— and thus (all) get to be good. To those who are sincere (with me), I am sincere; and to those who are not sincere (with me), I am also sincere;— and thus (all) get to be sincere.”

- “Therefore all things without exception honour the Tao, and exalt its outflowing operation.”

- “(The Tao) which originated all under the sky is to be considered as the mother of them all. When the mother is found, we know what her children should be. When one knows that he is his mother's child, and proceeds to guard (the qualities of) the mother that belong to him, to the end of his life he will be free from all peril.”

- “Let him keep his mouth closed, and shut up the portals (of his nostrils), and all his life he will be exempt from laborious exertion. Let him keep his mouth open, and (spend his breath) in the promotion of his affairs, and all his life there will be no safety for him.”

- “They shall wear elegant and ornamented robes, carry a sharp sword at their girdle, pamper themselves in eating and drinking, and have a superabundance of property and wealth;— such (princes) may be called robbers and boasters. This is contrary to the Tao surely!”

- “He who has in himself abundantly the attributes (of the Tao) is like an infant.”

- “And in the knowledge wisdom finds its throne. All life-increasing arts to evil turn; Where the mind makes the vital breath to burn, (False) is the strength, (and o'er it we should mourn.) When things have become strong, they (then) become old, which may be said to be contrary to the Tao. Whatever is contrary to the Tao soon ends.”

- “He who knows (the Tao) does not (care to) speak (about it); he who is (ever ready to) speak about it does not know it…He (who knows it) will keep his mouth shut and close the portals (of his nostrils). He will blunt his sharp points and unravel the complications of things; he will attemper his brightness, and bring himself into agreement with the obscurity (of others). This is called 'the Mysterious Agreement.'”

- “the kingdom is made one's own (only) by freedom from action and purpose. How do I know that it is so? By these facts:— In the kingdom the multiplication of prohibitive enactments increases the poverty of the people; the more implements to add to their profit that the people have, the greater disorder is there in the state and clan; the more acts of crafty dexterity that men possess, the more do strange contrivances appear; the more display there is of legislation, the more thieves and robbers there are. Therefore a sage has said, 'I will do nothing (of purpose), and the people will be transformed of themselves; I will be fond of keeping still, and the people will of themselves become correct. “I will take no trouble about it, and the people will of themselves become rich; I will manifest no ambition, and the people will of themselves attain to the primitive simplicity.”

- “Misery!— happiness is to be found by its side! Happiness!— misery lurks beneath it!”

- “Shall we then dispense with correction? The (method of) correction shall by a turn become distortion, and the good in it shall by a turn become evil. The delusion of the people (on this point) has indeed subsisted for a long time. Therefore the sage is (like) a square which cuts no one (with its angles); (like) a corner which injures no one (with its sharpness). He is straightforward, but allows himself no license; he is bright, but does not dazzle.”

- “(It is the way of the Tao) to act without (thinking of) acting; to conduct affairs without (feeling the) trouble of them; to taste without discerning any flavour; to consider what is small as great, and a few as many; and to recompense injury with kindness.”

- “The sage does not act (so), and therefore does no harm.” (Pascal: if all men could learn to sit in their room most bad things would be eliminated)

- “Therefore the sage desires what (other men) do not desire, and does not prize things difficult to get; he learns what (other men) do not learn, and turns back to what the multitude of men have passed by. Thus he helps the natural development of all things, and does not dare to act (with an ulterior purpose of his own).”

- “My words are very easy to know, and very easy to practise; but there is no one in the world who is able to know and able to practise them. There is an originating and all-comprehending (principle) in my words, and an authoritative law for the things (which I enforce). It is because they do not know these, that men do not know me. They who know me are few, and I am on that account (the more) to be prized. It is thus that the sage wears (a poor garb of) hair cloth, while he carries his (signet of) jade in his bosom.”

- “To know and yet (think) we do not know is the highest (attainment); not to know (and yet think) we do know is a disease.” (Socrates, Maya)

- “When the people do not fear what they ought to fear, that which is their great dread will come on them. Let them not thoughtlessly indulge themselves in their ordinary life; let them not act as if weary of what that life depends on. It is by avoiding such indulgence that such weariness does not arise. Therefore the sage knows (these things) of himself, but does not parade (his knowledge); loves, but does not (appear to set a) value on, himself.”

- “The people make light of dying because of the greatness of their labours in seeking for the means of living. It is this which makes them think light of dying. Thus it is that to leave the subject of living altogether out of view is better than to set a high value on it.”

- “Those who are skilled (in the Tao) do not dispute (about it); the disputatious are not skilled in it. Those who know (the Tao) are not extensively learned; the extensively learned do not know it.”

## 24- Buddhism

- “We may not be happy to hear about our death, but contemplating and meditating on death is very important for the effectiveness of our Dharma practice. This is because it prevents the main obstacle to our Dharma practice – the laziness of attachment to the things of this life...”

- LIFE OF BUDDHA BY ASVAGHOSHA BODHISATTVA

- “All flesh submerged in the sea of sorrow; all diseases collected as the bubbling froth; decay and age like the wild billows; death like the engulfing ocean; embarking lightly in the boat of wisdom he will save the world from all these perils, by wisdom stemming back the flood.”

- “In the self-twined meshes of folly and ignorance all flesh poor and in misery, helplessly lying, the king of the law has come forth, to rescue these from bondage.”

- “Bodhisattva affected by the words; shaking with apprehension, he deeply sighed; constrained at heart because of the pain of age; with shaking head and constant gaze, he thought upon this misery of decay; what joy or pleasure can men take, he thought, in that which soon must wither, stricken by the marks of age; affecting all without exception; though gifted now with youth and strength, yet not one but soon must change and pine away. The eye beholding such signs as these before it, how can it not be oppressed by a desire to escape?”

- “what rest or quiet can there be! Alas! that worldly men, blinded by ignorance and oppressed with dark delusion, though the robber sickness may appear at any time, yet live with blithe and joyous hearts!" On this, turning his chariot back again, he grieved to think upon the pain of sickness. As a man beaten and wounded sore, with body weakened, leans upon his staff, so dwelt he in the seclusion of his palace, lone-seeking, hating worldly pleasures.”

- “The king himself then went forth to observe everything successively, and to make the gardens even yet more attractive, selecting with care the attendant women, that they might excel in every point of personal beauty; quick in wit and able to arrange matters well, fit to ensnare men by their winning looks; he placed additional keepers along the king's way, he strictly ordered every offensive sight to be removed, and earnestly exhorted the illustrious coachman, to look well and pick out the road as he went.” (distractions)

- “"This is a dead man: all his powers of body destroyed, life departed; his heart without thought, his intellect dispersed; his spirit gone, his form withered and decayed; stretched out as a dead log; family ties broken—all his friends who once loved him, clad in white cerements, now no longer delighting to behold him, remove him to lie in some hollow ditch tomb."

- “The prince was now harassed and perplexed in mind; his body bent upon the chariot leaning-board, with bated breath and struggling accents, stammered thus, "Oh worldly men! how fatally deluded! beholding everywhere the body brought to dust, yet everywhere the more carelessly living; the heart is neither lifeless wood nor stone, and yet it thinks not 'all is vanishing!'" Then turning, he directed his chariot to go back, and no longer waste his time in wandering. How could he, whilst in fear of instant death, go wandering here and there with lightened heart!” (me- Pascal, Vivekananda, Heidegger, Kempus)

- “He, addressing the women, said, "Now all of you, so graceful and fair, see if you cannot by your combined power hit on some device; for beauty's power is not forever. Still it holds the world in bondage, by secret ways and lustful arts; but no such loveliness in all the world as yours, equal to that of heavenly nymphs; the gods beholding it would leave their queens, spirits and Rishis would be misled by it; why not then the prince, the son of an earthly king? why should not his feelings be aroused? This prince indeed, though he restrains his heart and holds it fixed, pure-minded, with virtue uncontaminated, not to be overcome by power of women...”

- “But Bodhisattva, peaceful and collected, firm as a rock, difficult to move, hearing all these women's talk, unaffected either to joy or sorrow, was driven still more to serious thought, sighing to witness such strange conduct, and beginning to understand the women's design, by these means to disconcert his mind, not knowing that youthful beauty soon falls, destroyed by old age and death, fading and perishing! This is the great distress! What ignorance and delusion (he reflected) overshadow their minds: "Surely they ought to consider old age, disease, and death, and day and night stir themselves up to exertion, whilst this sharp double-edged sword hangs over the neck. What room for sport or laughter, beholding those monsters, old age, disease, and death? A man who is unable to resort to this inward knowledge, what is he but a wooden or a plaster man, what heart-consideration in such a case! (me- Pascal) Like the double tree that appears in the desert, with leaves and fruit all perfect and ripe, the first cut down and destroyed, the other unmoved by apprehension, so it is in the case of the mass of men: they have no understanding either!”

- “It is not that I am careless about beauty, or am ignorant of the power of human joys, but only that I see on all the impress of change; therefore my heart is sad and heavy; if these things were sure of lasting, without the ills of age, disease, and death, then would I too take my fill of love; and to the end find no disgust or sadness.”

- “To know that other men grow old, sicken, and die, would be enough to rob such joys of satisfaction; yet how much more in their own case (knowing this) would discontentment fill the mind; to know such pleasures hasten to decay, and their bodies likewise; if, notwithstanding this, men yield to the power of love, their case indeed is like the very beasts.”

- “It is but to seduce one with a hollow lie—such ways are not for me to practise; or, for those who love the truth and honesty; for they are, forsooth, unrighteous ways, and such a disposition is hard to reverence; shaping one's conduct after one's likings, liking this or that, and seeing no harm in it, what method of experience is this! A hollow compliance, and a protesting heart, such method is not for me to follow; but this I know, old age, disease, and death, these are the great afflictions which accumulate, and overwhelm me with their presence; on these I find no friend to speak, alas!”

- “...the eyes see all things falling in decay, and yet the heart finds joy in following them...”

- “Distracted, as I never was before; sleepless by night and day, how can I then indulge in pleasure? Old age, disease, and death consuming me, their certainty beyond a doubt, and still to have no heavy thoughts, in truth my heart would be a log or stone.”

- “The king, his father, hearing of the prince, his heart estranged from thoughts of pleasure, was greatly overcome with sorrow, and like a sword it pierced his heart...And so the king increased the means for gratifying the appetite for pleasure; both night and day the joys of music wore out the prince, opposed to pleasure; disgusted with them, he desired their absence, his mind was weaned from all such thoughts, he only thought of age, disease, and death...”

- “All low desire removed, most perfect peace ensued; and fully now in Samâdhi he saw the misery and utter sorrow of the world; the ruin wrought by age, disease, and death; the great misery following on the body's death; and yet men not awakened to the truth!”

- “"I am a Shâman, depressed and sad at thought of age, disease, and death; I have left my home to seek some way of rescue, but everywhere I find old age, disease, and death; all things hasten to decay and there is no permanency. Therefore I search for the happiness of something that decays not, that never perishes, that never knows beginning, that looks with equal mind on enemy and friend, that heeds not wealth nor beauty; the happiness of one who finds repose alone in solitude, in some unfrequented dell, free from molestation, all thoughts about the world destroyed; dwelling in some lonely hermitage, untouched by any worldly source of pollution, begging for food sufficient for the body."

- “The prince now entering the city, there met him men and women, earnest for their several ends; the old besought him for their children, the young sought something for the wife, others sought something for their brethren; all those allied by kinship or by family, aimed to obtain their several suits, all of them joined in relationship dreading the pain of separation. And now the prince's heart was filled with joy, as he suddenly heard those words "separation and association." "These are joyful sounds to me,"

- “Then he explained his dread of age, disease, and death, and sought respectfully permission to become a hermit. "For all things in the world," he said, "though now united, tend to separation." Therefore he prayed to leave the world; desiring to find "true deliverance."

- “to give up your father and your sacred duties, this is not to act religiously; you should suppress this thought of 'leaving home,' and undertake your worldly duties, find your delight in getting an illustrious name, and after this give up your home and family." The prince, with proper reverence and respectful feelings, again besought his royal father; but promised if he could be saved from four calamities, that he would give up the thought of "leaving home." If he would grant him life without end, no disease, nor undesirable old age, and no decay of earthly possessions, then he would obey and give up the thought of "leaving home."

- “The prince again besought his father, "If you may not grant me these four prayers, then let me go I pray, and leave my home. O! place no difficulties in my path; your son is dwelling in a burning house, would you indeed prevent his leaving it! To solve a doubt is only reasonable, who could forbid a man to seek its explanation? Or if he were forbidden, then by self-destruction he might solve the difficulty, in an unrighteous way: and if he were to do so, who could restrain him after death?"

- “The royal father, seeing his son's mind so firmly fixed that it could not be turned, and that it would be waste of strength to bandy further words or arguments, forthwith commanded more attendant women, to provoke still more his mind to pleasure...”

- “And now the prince seated, in his beauty, looked with thought on all the waiting women; before, they had appeared exceeding lovely, their laughing words, their hearts so light and gay, their forms so plump and young, their looks so bright; but now, how changed! so uninviting and repulsive. And such is woman's disposition! how can they, then, be ever dear, or closely trusted; such false appearances! and unreal pretences; they only madden and delude the minds of men.”

- “Would that you would listen with attentive mind; we know that you delight to act religiously; it is certain, then, without a doubt, this is not the time for you to enter the forest wilds; a feeling of deep pity consumes our heart! You, if you be indeed moved by religion, ought to feel some pity for our case; let your kindly feelings flow abroad, to comfort us who are worn at heart; let not the tide of sorrow and of sadness completely overwhelm the outlets of our heart; as the torrents which roll down the grassy mountains; or the calamities of tempest, fiery heat, and lightning; for so the grieving heart has these four sorrows, turmoil and drought, passion and overthrow...Religion requires not the wild solitudes; you can practise a hermit's duties in your home; studiously thoughtful, diligent in expedients, this is to lead a hermit's life in truth. A shaven head, and garments soiled with dirt—to wander by yourself through desert wilds—this is but to encourage constant fears, and cannot be rightly called 'an awakened hermit's life….Your loving mother who cherished you so kindly, with no regard for self, through years of care, as the cow deprived of her calf, weeps and laments, forgetting to eat or sleep; you surely ought to return to her at once, to protect her life from evil...”

- “my fear of birth, old age, disease, and death, has led me to disobey, and disregard his extreme kindness. Whoever neglects right consideration about his present life, and because he hopes to escape in the end, therefore disregards all precautions in the present: on this man comes the inevitable doom of death. It is the knowledge of this, therefore, that weighs with me, and after long delay has constrained me to a hermit's life; hearing of my father, the king, and his grief, my heart is affected with increased love; but yet, all is like the fancy of a dream, quickly reverting to nothingness.”

- “This, then, would be the consequence of compliance: that I, who, delighting in religion, am gradually getting wisdom, should now quit these quiet woods, and returning home, partake of sensual pleasures, and thus by night and day increase my store of misery.”

- “"For having spewed forth lust, passion, and ignorance, shall I return to feed upon it? as a man might go back to his vomit! such misery, how could I bear? Like a man whose house has caught fire, by some expedient finds a way to escape, will such a man forthwith go back and enter it again? such conduct would disgrace a man! So I, beholding the evils, birth, old age, and death, to escape the misery, have become a hermit; shall I then go back and enter in, and like a fool dwell in their company? ...escape is born from quietness and rest...”

- “I fear birth, old age, disease, and death, and so I seek to find a sure mode of deliverance; I have put away thought of relatives and family affection...” (Theresa of Avila, St. Farigno)

- “...the wise man seeing the bitterness of sorrow, stamps out and destroys the risings of desire; that which the world calls virtue, is but another form of this baneful law;

worldly men enjoying the pleasure of covetous desire then every form of careless conduct results...”

- “covetousness seeks for something to satisfy its longings; foolish men regard these things as permanent, and as the necessary requirements of life, but, in sooth, there is no permanent cessation of sorrow; for by coveting to appease these desires we really increase them; there is no character of permanency therefore about them.”

- “Whatever our condition in the world, still sorrow accumulate around us.”

- “the appearance of lustful desire; the wise man will have nothing to do with it; he would rather throw his body into the water or fire, or cast himself down over a steep precipice. Seeking to obtain heavenly pleasures, what is this but to remove the place of sorrow, without profit.”

- “better to walk along the way of purity, or rather follow the pure law of self-denial, hate the practice of impurity, reflect on what was said of old, not obstinate in one belief or one tradition, with sincere mind accepting all true words, and ever banishing sinful sorrow (i.e. sin, the cause of grief).”

- “I desire to get rid of birth, old age, and death, with body restrained, to beg my food; with appetites moderated, to keep in my retreat; and then to avoid the evil modes of a future life, this is to find peace in two worlds: now then I pray you pity me not. Pity, rather, those who rule as kings!”

- “...death as a robber with a drawn sword follows us all, desiring to catch his prey; how then should we wait for old age, ere we bring our mind to a religious life? Inconstancy is the great hunter, age his bow, disease his arrows, in the fields of life and death he hunts for living things as for the deer; when he can get his opportunity, he takes our life; who then would wait for age?”

- “Destroying life to gain religious merit, what love can such a man possess? even if the reward of such sacrifices were lasting, even for this, slaughter would be unseemly; how much more, when the reward is transient! Shall we, in search of this, slay that which lives, in worship? this is like those who practise wisdom, and the way of religious abstraction, but neglect the rules of moral conduct.”

- “Have you been long an ascetic, divided from your family and broken from the bonds of love, like the elephant who has cast off restraint? Full of wisdom, completely enlightened, you seem well able to escape the poisonous fruit of this world.”

- “...whilst in that state of abstraction rising higher, perceiving there is a place beyond any bodily condition, adding still and persevering further in practising wisdom, rejecting this fourth dhyâna, firmly resolved to persevere in the search, still contriving to put away every desire after form, gradually from every pore of the body there is perceived a feeling of empty release, and in the end this extends to every solid part, so that the whole is perfected in an apprehension of emptiness. In brief, perceiving no limits to this emptiness, there is opened to the view boundless knowledge. Endowed with inward rest and peace, the idea of 'I' departs, and the object of 'I'—clearly discriminating the non-existence of matter, this is the condition of immaterial life.”

- “...as the wild bird which escapes from its prison trap, so, getting away from all material limitations, we thus find perfect release. Thus ascending above the Brahmans, deprived of every vestige of bodily existence, we still endure. Endued with wisdom! let it be known this is real and true deliverance.”

- ““Absence, extinction, and unoccupancy--these are not the Buddhist conception of emptiness. Buddhists' Emptiness is not on the plane of relativity. It is Absolute Emptiness transcending all forms of mutual relationship, of subject and object, birth and death, God and the world, something and nothing, yes and no, affirmation and negation. In Buddhist Emptiness there is no time, no space, no becoming, no-thing-ness; it is what makes all these things possible; it is a zero full of infinite possibilities, it is a void of inexhaustible contents.” (Cioran- the void of plenitude)

Suzuki, Daisetz Teitaro

## 25. Hinduism

Katha Upanishad

Chapter 1

- “23. Ask for sons and grandsons who will live  
A hundred years. Ask for herds of cattle,  
Elephants and horses, gold and vast land,  
And ask to live as long as you desire.  
24. Or, if you can think of anything more  
Desirable, ask for that, with wealth and  
Long life as well. Nachiketa, be the ruler  
Of a great kingdom, and I will give you  
The utmost capacity to enjoy  
25. The pleasures of life. Ask for beautiful  
Women of loveliness rarely seen on earth,  
Riding in chariots, skilled in music,  
To attend on you. But Nachiketa,  
Don't ask me about the secret of death.

NACHIKETA

26. These pleasures last but until tomorrow,  
And they wear out the vital powers of life.  
How fleeting is all life on earth! Therefore  
Keep your horses and chariots, dancing  
27. And music, for yourself. Never can mortals  
Be made happy by wealth. How can we be  
Desirous of wealth when we see your face  
And know we cannot live while you are here?  
This is the boon I choose and ask you for.

28. Having approached an immortal like you,  
How can I, subject to old age and death,  
Ever try to rejoice in a long life  
For the sake of the senses' fleeting pleasures?  
29. Dispel this doubt of mine, O king of death:  
Does a person live after death or does he not?  
Nachiketa asks for no other boon  
Than the secret of this great mystery

Chapter 2

- 2. Perennial joy or passing pleasure?  
This is the choice one is to make always.  
The wise recognize these two, but not  
The ignorant. The first welcome what leads  
To abiding joy, though painful at the time.  
The latter run, goaded by their senses,  
After what seems immediate pleasure.

3. Well have you renounced these passing pleasures  
So dear to the senses, Nachiketa,  
And turned your back on the way of the world  
Which makes mankind forget the goal of life.

4. Far apart are wisdom and ignorance.  
The first leads one to Self-realization;  
The second makes one more and more  
Estranged from his real Self.

5. Ignorant of their ignorance, yet wise  
In their own esteem, these deluded men  
Proud of their vain learning go round and round  
6. Like the blind led by the blind. Far beyond  
Their eyes, hypnotized by the world of sense,  
Opens the way to immortality.  
"I am my body; when my body dies,  
I die." Living in this superstition  
They fall life after life under my sway.

7. It is but few who hear about the Self.  
Fewer still dedicate their lives to its  
Realization. Wonderful is the one  
Who speaks about the Self; rare are they  
Who make it the supreme goal of their lives.  
Blessed are they who, through an illumined  
Teacher, attain to Self-realization.

10. I know that earthly treasures are transient  
And never can I reach the eternal through them. (me- no amount of “works” gets you 'enlightenment', luther, kierkegaard, mystics, Nihilism, etc.)  
Hence have I renounced all my desires for earthly treasures  
To win the eternal through your instruction.

I spread before your eyes, Nachiketa,  
The fulfillment of all worldly desires:  
Power to dominate the earth, delights  
Celestial gained through religious rites,  
Miraculous powers beyond time and space.  
These with will and wisdom have you renounced.

14. Teach me of That you see as beyond right  
And wrong (me- Nietzsche- beyond good and evil), cause and effect, past and future.8

15. I will give you the Word all the scriptures  
Glorify, all spiritual disciplines  
Express, to attain which aspirants lead  
A life of sense-restraint and self-naughting.  
16. It is O M. This symbol of the Godhead  
Is the highest. Realizing it one finds  
Complete fulfillment of all one's longings.  
17. It is of the greatest support to all seekers.

23. The Self cannot be known through study  
Of the scriptures, nor through the intellect,  
Nor through hearing learned discourses.  
The Self can be attained only by those  
Whom the Self chooses. Verily unto them  
Does the Self reveal himself. (Third Mundaka, First Kanda, 8)

24. The Self cannot be known by anyone  
Who desists not from unrighteous ways,  
Controls not his senses, stills not his mind,  
And practices not meditation.  
25. None else can know the omnipresent Self,  
Whose glory sweeps away the rituals  
Of the priest and the prowess of the warrior  
And puts death itself to death.

Chapter 3

- 5. When one lacks discrimination  
And his mind is undisciplined, the senses  
Run hither and thither like wild horses.  
6. But they obey the rein like trained horses  
When one has discrimination and has made  
The mind one-pointed (Kierkegaard). Those who lack  
Discrimination, with little control  
Over their thoughts and far from pure,  
Reach not the pure state of immortality  
8. But wander from death to death; but those  
Who have discrimination, with a still mind  
And a pure heart, reach journey's end,  
Never again to fall into the jaws of death.  
9. With a discriminating intellect  
As charioteer and a trained mind as reins,  
They attain the supreme goal of life  
To be united with the Lord of Love.

Brahman is the first cause and last refuge.  
12. Brahman, the hidden Self in everyone  
Does not shine forth. He is revealed only  
To those who keep their mind one-pointed  
On the Lord of Love and thus develop  
A superconscious manner of knowing.  
13. Meditation enables them to go  
Deeper and deeper into consciousness,  
From the world of words to the world of thoughts,  
Then beyond thoughts to wisdom in the Self.

14. Get up! Wake up! Seek the guidance of an  
Illumined teacher and realize the Self.  
Sharp like a razor's edge, the sages say,  
Is the path, difficult to traverse.

15. The supreme Self is beyond name and form,  
Beyond the senses, inexhaustible,  
Without beginning, without end, beyond  
Time, space, and causality, eternal,  
Immutable. Those who realize the Self  
Are forever free from the jaws of death.

Part 2, Chapter 1

- Thus we look to the world  
Outside and see not the Self within us.  
A sage withdrew his senses from the world  
Of change and, seeking immortality,  
Looked within and beheld the deathless Self.

2. The immature run after sense pleasures  
And fall into the widespread net of death.  
But the wise, knowing the Self as deathless,  
Seek not the changeless in the world of change.

Mundaka Upanishad

- “6. 'That which cannot be seen, nor seized, which has no family and no caste, no eyes nor ears, no hands nor feet, the eternal, the omnipresent (all-pervading), infinitesimal, that which is imperishable, that it is which the wise regard as the source of all beings.”

- “5. If a man performs his sacred works when these flames are shining, and the oblations follow at the right time, then they lead him as sun-rays to where the one Lord of the Devas dwells.

6. Come hither, come hither! the brilliant oblations say to him, and carry the sacrificer on the rays of the sun, while they utter pleasant speech and praise him, saying: 'This is thy holy Brahma-world (Svarga), gained by thy good works.'7. But frail, in truth, are those boats, the sacrifices, the eighteen, in which this lower ceremonial has been told. Fools who praise this as the highest good, are subject again and again to old age and death. 8. Fools dwelling in darkness, wise in their own conceit, and puffed up with vain knowledge, go round and round staggering to and fro, like blind men led by the blind. 9. Children, when they have long lived in ignorance, consider themselves happy. Because those who depend on their good works are, owing to their passions, improvident, they fall and become miserable when their life (in the world which they had gained by their good works) is finished. 10. Considering sacrifice and good works as the best, these fools know no higher good, and having enjoyed (their reward) on the height of heaven, gained by good works, they enter again this world or a lower one. 11. But those who practise penance and faith in the forest, tranquil, wise, and living on alms, depart free from passion through the sun to where that immortal Person dwells whose nature is imperishable. 12. Let a Brâhmana, after he has examined all these worlds which are gained by works, acquire freedom from all desires. Nothing that is eternal (not made) can be gained by what is not eternal (made). Let him, in order to understand this, take fuel in his hand and approach a Guru who is learned and dwells entirely in Brahman.”

## 26. Montaigne

-“Cicero says- "that to study philosophy is nothing but to prepare one's self to die."

-“how much I have less to do with the commodities of life, by reason that I begin to lose the use and pleasure of them, by so much I look upon death with less terror. Which makes me hope, that the further I remove from the first, and the nearer I approach to the latter, I shall the more easily exchange the one for the other.”

-“I disengage myself throughout from all worldly relations...”

-“Besides, live as long as you can, you shall by that nothing shorten the space you are to be dead; 'tis all to no purpose; you shall be every whit as long in the condition you so much fear, as if you had died at nurse.”

-“Our very religion itself has no surer human foundation than the contempt of death.”

- “...how much I have less to do with the commodities of life, by reason that I begin to lose the use and pleasure of them, by so much I look upon death with less terror. Which makes me hope, that the further I remove from the first, and the nearer I approach to the latter, I shall the more easily exchange the one for the other.”

- “he who should teach men to die would at the same time teach them to live.”

- “...how is it possible a man should disengage himself from the thought of death, or avoid fancying that it has us every moment by the throat?”

-“They go, they come, they gallop and dance, and not a word of death. All this is very fine; but withal, when it comes either to themselves, their wives, their children, or friends, surprising them at unawares and unprepared, then, what torment, what outcries, what madness and despair! Did you ever see anything so subdued, so changed, and so confounded?”

## 27. Ecclesiastes

-“All is vanity.”

-“...the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun.”

-“I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind. What is crooked cannot be made straight, and what is lacking cannot be counted.”

-“...he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.”

-“So I became great and l surpassed all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my l wisdom remained with me. And whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart m found pleasure in all my toil, and this was my n reward for all my toil. Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing p to be gained under the sun.”

-“They all have the same breath, and man has no advantage over the beasts, for all is vanity. All go to one place. All are from the dust, and to dust all return.”

-“Better is a handful of quietness than two hands full of toil and a striving after wind.”

-“He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income...”

-“The more words, the more vanity, and what is the advantage to man? For who knows what is good for man while he lives the few days of his vain life, which he passes like a shadow?”

## 28. Will Durant

-“In those “happy days” men agreed that life was evil: Gautama called the extinction of individual consciousness the greatest good, and the Church described life as a vale of tears. Men could afford to be pessimists about the earth, because they were optimists about the sky; behind those clouds they saw the isles of the blessed, the abode of everlasting bliss.”

-“Science does not offer consolation, it offers death. Everything, from the unwinding universe of the astronomers to the college girl irradiating life with beauty and laughter, must pass away: this handsome youth, erect and vigorous, fresh from athletic victories, will be laid low tomorrow by some modest, ingratiating germ; this noble pianist, who has dignified his time with perfection, and has taught a million souls to forget themselves in beauty, is already in the clutch of death, and will, within a decade, be rotting in the tomb.   The greatest question of our time is not communism vs. individualism, not Europe vs. America, not even the East vs. the West; it is whether men can bear to live without God.”

-”Egypt builds and Persia destroys it; Persia builds and Greece destroys it; Greece builds and Rome destroys it; Islam builds and Spain destroys it; Spain builds and England destroys it; Europe builds and Europe destroys it. Men kill one another at first with sticks and stones, then with arrows and lances, then with phalanxes and cohorts, then with cannon and musketry, then with dreadnoughts and submarines, then with tanks and planes; the scale and grandeur of construction and progress are equaled by the scale and terror of destruction and war.”

-”We taught people how to read, and they enrich the “tabloids” and motion pictures; we invented the radio, and they pour out, a hundred times more abundantly than before, the music of savages and the prejudices of mobs. We gave them, through technology and engineering, unprecedented wealth -- miraculous automobiles, luxurious travel, and spacious homes; only to find that peace departs as riches come, that automobiles over-ride morality and connive at crime, that quarrels grow bitterer as the spoils increase, and that the largest houses are the bloodiest battlegrounds of the ancient war between woman and man...We dreamed of socialism, and found our own souls too greedy to make it possible; in our hearts we too are capitalists, and have no serious objection to becoming rich.”

-”All things, said Aristotle, have been discovered and forgotten many times over. Progress, he assures us, is a delusion; human affairs are like the sea, which on its surface is disturbed into a thousand motions, and seems to be headed somewhere, while at its bottom it is comparatively changeless and still. What we call progress is, perhaps, mere superficial change: a succession of fashions in dress, transportation, government, psychology, religion; Christian Science, behaviorism, democracy, automobiles, and pants are not progress, they are change; they are new ways of doing old things, new errors in the vain attempt to understand eternal mysteries. Underneath these varying phenomena the essence remains the same; the man who uses the steam shovel and the electric drill, the tractor and the tank, the adding-machine and the machinegun, the airplane and the bomb, is the same sort of man as those who used wooden ploughs, flint knives, log wheels, bows and arrows, knot writing, and poisoned spear-heads; the tool differs, the end is the same; the scale is vaster, the purposes as crude and selfish, as stupid and contradictory, as murderous and suicidal, as in prehistoric or ancient days; everything has progressed except man.   All history, then, all the proud record of human accumulations and discoveries, seems at times to be a futile circle, a weary tragedy in which Sisyphus man repeatedly pushes invention and labor up the high hill of civilization and culture, only to have the precarious structure again and again topple back into barbarism...”

-”history, as Bacon said, is the planks of a shipwreck, and nothing seems certain in it except decadence, degeneration, and death.   A thousand varieties of man -- Piltdown, Neanderthal, Chellean, Acheulean, Mousterian, Aurignacian, Cro-magnon, Rhodesian, Pekin man -- lived for thousands of years, fought, thought, invented, painted, carved, made children, and left no more to posterity than a few flints and scratches, forgotten for millennia and found only by the picks and spades of our inquisitive day.   A thousand civilizations have disappeared under the ocean or the earth, leaving, like Atlantis, merely a legend behind...” (this is a huge part of the Nihilistic experience, the complete disappearance of everything)

-”Almost every idea this strange organism will have will be a delusion; almost every perception will be a prejudice. It will rear fine theories of free will and immortal life, and “from hour to hour” it will “rot and rot”; it will construct great systems of philosophy, in which the drop of water will explain the sea.”

-”Given science, and there would soon be wealth, which would make men happy; given science, and there would soon be truth, which would make men free. Universal education would spread the findings of science, liberate men from superstition, and make them fit for democracy...a picture was unfolded of universal struggle and death; and decade-by-decade the optimism of

the nineteenth century yielded to the pessimism of today...The biologists reported that all life lives at the expense of other life, that big things eat little things and are eaten in turn; that strong organisms use and abuse weak organisms in a hundred thousand ways forever; that the ability to kill is the ultimate test of survival; that reproduction is suicide, and that love is the prelude to replacement and death.”

-”Here, as example and symbol of all life, is my dog “Wolf,” who owes her existence to the olfactory attractiveness of her police-dog mother to her collie sire. She eats greedily and drinks abstemiously (she is a teetotaler, and despite the pressure of current fashions refuses all alcoholic beverages); she chases whatever we throw, takes the coziest seats in the house, receives our affection as a matter of course, falls into a rut, and lures to our porch half a hundred lovers. All night long our neighbor’s Airedale waits at our door, and moans like a Troubadour. What but bad poetry is the difference between this and love?”

-”Where such a faith, after supporting men for centuries, begins to weaken, life narrows down from a spiritual drama to a biological episode; it sacrifices the dignity conferred by a destiny endless in time, and shrinks to a strange interlude between a ridiculous birth and an annihilating death. Reduced to a microscopic triviality by the perspective of science, the informed individual loses belief in himself and his race, and enterprises of great pith and moment, which once aroused his effort and admiration, awaken in him only skepticism and scorn. Faith and hope disappear; doubt and despair are the order of the day.”

- “If a man is a materialist, or a mechanist, or whatever he likes to call himself, I can see for him no escape from belief in a futility so prolonged and complicated and diabolical and preposterous as to be worse than absurd; and as I do not know that such a tragic absurdity is not a fact, I can only know my native inability to believe that it is one.” (quoting Edwin Robinson)

## 29. Pseudo-Dionysius

- “Therewith, they learn that It is the Cause of all things and yet Itself is nothing, because It super-essentially transcends them all.”

## 30. Thomas Aquinas

-"I can write no more. I have seen things that make my writings like straw." On his infused contemplation.

## 31. Clifford Williams

## 32. Aldous Huxley

- “As recently as three hundred years ago an expression of thoroughgoing world denial and even world condemnation was both orthodox and comprehensible. “We should feel wonder at nothing at all in Nature except only the Incarnation of Christ.” In the seventeenth century, Lallemant’s phrase seemed to make sense. Today it has the ring of madness.” (Vivekananda was told that he was a type of Man, one of renunciation, that had been long buried years ago)

- “Let me add, before we leave this subject, that there is no form of contemplation, even the most quietistic, which is without its ethical values. Half at least of all morality is negative and consists in keeping out of mischief.”

- “The one-sided contemplative leaves undone many things that he ought to do; but to make up for it, he refrains from doing a host of things he ought not to do. The sum of evil, Pascal remarked, would be much diminished if men could only learn to sit quietly in their rooms. The contemplative whose perception has been cleansed does not have to stay in his room. He can go about his business, so completely satisfied to see and be a part of the divine Order of Things that he will never even be tempted to indulge in what Traherne called “the dirty Devices of the world.”

- “Contemplatives are not likely to become gamblers, or procurers, or drunkards; they do not as a rule preach intolerance, or make war; do not find it necessary to rob, swindle or grind the faces of the poor.” (Ligotti, Cioran)

- “...if they practice it in the height, they will become conduits through which some beneficent influence can flow out of that other country into a world of darkened selves, chronically dying for lack of it.”

- “Meanwhile I had turned, at the investigator’s request, from the portrait of Cézanne to what was going on, inside my head, when I shut my eyes. This time, the inscape was curiously unrewarding. The field of vision was filled with brightly colored, constantly changing structures that seemed to be made of plastic or enameled tin. “Cheap,” I commented. “Trivial. Like things in a five-and-ten.” And all this shoddiness existed in a closed, cramped universe. “It’s as though one were below decks in a ship,” I said. “A five-and-ten-cent ship.” And as I looked, it became very clear that this five-and-ten-cent ship was in some way connected with human pretensions, with the portrait of Cézanne, with A.B. among the Dolomites overacting his favorite character in fiction. This suffocating interior of a dime-store ship was my own personal self; these gimcrack mobiles of tin and plastic were my personal contributions to the universe.”

- “The outer world is what we wake up to every morning of our lives, is the place where, willy-nilly, we must try to make our living. In the inner world there is neither work nor monotony. We visit it only in dreams and musings, and its strangeness is such that we never find the same world on two successive occasions. What wonder, then, if human beings in their search for the divine have generally preferred to look within! Generally, but not always. In their art no less than in their religion, the Taoists and the Zen Buddhists looked beyond visions to the Void, and through the Void at “the ten thousand things” of objective reality.” (me- Cioran, Vivekananda, Tillich, Suzuki)

- “Over against the quietist stands the active-contemplative, the saint, the man who, in Eckhart’s phrase, is ready to come down from the seventh heaven in order to bring a cup of water to his sick brother. Over against the arhat, retreating from appearances into an entirely transcendental Nirvana, stands the Bodhisattva, for whom Suchness and the world of contingencies are one, and for whose boundless compassion every one of those contingencies is an occasion not only for transfiguring insight, but also for the most practical charity.”

- “Mescalin opens up the way of Mary, but shuts the door on that of Martha. It gives access to contemplation— but to a contemplation that is incompatible with action and even with the will to action, the very thought of action. In the intervals between his revelations the mescalin taker is apt to feel that, though in one way everything is supremely as it should be, in another there is something wrong. His problem is essentially the same as that which confronts the quietist...”

- “How could one reconcile this timeless bliss of seeing as one ought to see with the temporal duties of doing what one ought to do and feeling as one ought to feel? “One ought to be able,” I said, “to see these trousers as infinitely important and human beings as still more infinitely important.” One ought— but in practice it seemed to be impossible. This participation in the manifest glory of things left no room, so to speak, for the ordinary, the necessary concerns of human existence, above all for concerns involving persons. For persons are selves and, in one respect at least, I was now a Not-self, simultaneously perceiving and being the Not-self of the things around me.”

- “For if one always saw like this, one would never want to do anything else. Just looking, just being the divine Not-self of flower, of book, of chair, of flannel. That would be enough. But in that case what about other people? What about human relations?”

- “In life, man proposes, God disposes.”

- “The whole is disorganized. But each individual fragment is in order, is a representative of a Higher Order. The Highest Order prevails even in the disintegration. The totality is present even in the broken pieces. More clearly present, perhaps, than in a completely coherent work. At least you aren’t lulled into a sense of false security by some merely human, merely fabricated order. You have to rely on your immediate perception of the ultimate order. So in a certain sense disintegration may have its advantages. But of course it’s dangerous, horribly dangerous. Suppose you couldn’t get back, out of the chaos…”

- “And anyhow the body seemed perfectly well able to look after itself. In reality, of course, it always does look after itself.”

- “It was inexpressibly wonderful, wonderful to the point, almost, of being terrifying. And suddenly I had an inkling of what it must feel like to be mad. Schizophrenia has its heavens as well as its hells and purgatories.”

- “Alas, this paradise of cleansed perception, of pure one-sided contemplation, was not to endure. The blissful intermissions became rarer, became briefer, until finally there were no more of them; there was only horror. Most takers of mescalin experience only the heavenly part of schizophrenia.”

- “...I found myself all at once on the brink of panic. This, I suddenly felt, was going too far. Too far, even though the going was into intenser beauty, deeper significance. The fear, as I analyze it in retrospect, was of being overwhelmed, of disintegrating under a pressure of reality greater than a mind, accustomed to living most of the time in a cosy world of symbols, could possibly bear. The literature of religious experience abounds in references to the pains and terrors overwhelming those who have come, too suddenly, face to face with some manifestation of the Mysterium tremendum. In theological language, this fear is due to the incompatibility between man’s egotism and the divine purity, between man’s self-aggravated separateness and the infinity of God. Following Boehme and William Law, we may say that, by unregenerate souls, the divine Light at its full blaze can be apprehended only as a burning, purgatorial fire. An almost identical doctrine is to be found in The Tibetan Book of the Dead, where the departed soul is described as shrinking in agony from the Pure Light of the Void, and even from the lesser, tempered Lights, in order to rush headlong into the comforting darkness of selfhood as a reborn human being, or even as a beast, an unhappy ghost, a denizen of hell. Anything rather than the burning brightness of unmitigated Reality— anything! The schizophrenic is a soul not merely unregenerate, but desperately sick into the bargain. His sickness consists in the inability to take refuge from inner and outer reality (as the sane person habitually does) in the homemade universe of common sense— the strictly human world of useful notions, shared symbols and socially acceptable conventions. The schizophrenic is like a man permanently under the influence of mescalin, and therefore unable to shut off the experience of a reality which he is not holy enough to live with, which he cannot explain away because it is the most stubborn of primary facts, and which, because it never permits him to look at the world with merely human eyes, scares him into interpreting its unremitting strangeness, its burning intensity of significance, as the manifestations of human or even cosmic malevolence, calling for the most desperate countermeasures, from murderous violence at one end of the scale to catatonia, or psychological suicide, at the other. And once embarked upon the downward, the infernal road, one would never be able to stop. That, now, was only too obvious. “If you started in the wrong way,” I said in answer to the investigator’s questions, “everything that happened would be a proof of the conspiracy against you. It would all be self-validating. You couldn’t draw a breath without knowing it was part of the plot.” “So you think you know where madness lies?” My answer was a convinced and heartfelt, “Yes.” “And you couldn’t control it?” “No I couldn’t control it. If one began with fear and hate as the major premise, one would have to go on to the conclusion.” “Would you be able,” my wife asked, “to fix your attention on what The Tibetan Book of the Dead calls the Clear Light?” I was doubtful. “Would it keep the evil away, if you could hold it? Or would you not be able to hold it?” I considered the question for some time. “Perhaps,” I answered at last, “perhaps I could— but only if there were somebody there to tell me about the Clear Light. One couldn’t do it by oneself. That’s the point, I suppose, of the Tibetan ritual— someone sitting there all the time and telling you what’s what.” After listening to the record of this part of the experiment, I took down my copy of Evans-Wentz’s edition of The Tibetan Book of the Dead, and opened at random. “O nobly born, let not thy mind be distracted.” That was the problem— to remain undistracted. Undistracted by the memory of past sins, by imagined pleasure, by the bitter aftertaste of old wrongs and humiliations, by all the fears and hates and cravings that ordinarily eclipse the Light. What those Buddhist monks did for the dying and the dead, might not the modern psychiatrist do for the insane? Let there be a voice to assure them, by day and even while they are asleep, that in spite of all the terror, all the bewilderment and confusion, the ultimate Reality remains unshakably itself and is of the same substance as the inner light of even the most cruelly tormented mind. By means of such devices as recorders, clock-controlled switches, public address systems and pillow speakers it should be very easy to keep the inmates of even an understaffed institution constantly reminded of this primordial fact. Perhaps a few of the lost souls might in this way be helped to win some measure of control over the universe— at once beautiful and appalling, but always other than human, always totally incomprehensible— in which they find themselves condemned to live.”

- “I had returned to that reassuring but profoundly unsatisfactory state known as “being in one’s right mind.” That humanity at large will ever be able to dispense with Artificial Paradises seems very unlikely. Most men and women lead lives at the worst so painful, at the best so monotonous, poor and limited that the urge to escape, the longing to transcend themselves if only for a few moments, is and has always been one of the principal appetites of the soul.”

- Quoting Goethe: “We should talk less and draw more. I personally should like to renounce speech altogether and, like organic Nature, communicate everything I have to say in sketches. That fig tree, this little snake, the cocoon on my window sill quietly awaiting its future— all these are momentous signatures. A person able to decipher their meaning properly would soon be able to dispense with the written or the spoken word altogether. The more I think of it, there is something futile, mediocre, even (I am tempted to say) foppish about speech. By contrast, how the gravity of Nature and her silence startle you, when you stand face to face with her, undistracted, before a barren ridge or in the desolation of the ancient hills.”

- “Verbalists are suspicious of the non-verbal; rationalists fear the given, non-rational fact; intellectuals feel that “what we perceive by the eye (or in any other way) is foreign to us as such and need not impress us deeply.” Besides, this matter of education in the non-verbal humanities will not fit into any of the established pigeonholes. It is not religion, not neurology, not gymnastics, not morality or civics, not even experimental psychology. This being so the subject is, for academic and ecclesiastical purposes, non-existent and may safely be ignored altogether or left, with a patronizing smile, to those whom the Pharisees of verbal orthodoxy call cranks, quacks, charlatans and unqualified amateurs.”

- “Under a more realistic, a less exclusively verbal system of education than ours, every Angel (in Blake’s sense of that word) would be permitted as a sabbatical treat, would be urged and even, if necessary, compelled to take an occasional trip through some chemical Door in the Wall into the world of transcendental experience. If it terrified him, it would be unfortunate but probably salutary. If it brought him a brief but timeless illumination, so much the better. In either case the Angel might lose a little of the confident insolence sprouting from systematic reasoning and the consciousness of having read all the books.”

- “Near the end of his life Aquinas experienced Infused Contemplation. Thereafter he refused to go back to work on his unfinished book. Compared with this, everything he had read and argued about and written— Aristotle and the Sentences, the Questions, the Propositions, the majestic Summas— was no better than chaff or straw. For most intellectuals such a sit-down strike would be inadvisable, even morally wrong. But the Angelic Doctor had done more systematic reasoning than any twelve ordinary Angels, and was already ripe for death.”

- “This lowering of what may be called the biological efficiency of the brain seems to permit the entry into consciousness of certain classes of mental events, which are normally excluded, because they possess no survival value. Similar intrusions of biologically useless, but aesthetically and sometimes spiritually valuable material may occur as the result of illness or fatigue; or they may be induced by fasting, or a period of confinement in a place of darkness and complete silence.”

- “If men and women torment their bodies, it is not only because they hope in this way to atone for past sins and avoid future punishments; it is also because they long to visit the mind’s antipodes and do some visionary sightseeing. Empirically and from the reports of other ascetics, they know that fasting and a restricted environment will transport them where they long to go. Their self-inflicted punishment may be the door to paradise.”

- “In vision, men perceive a profusion of what Ezekiel calls 'stones of fire', of what Weir Mitchell describes as 'transparent fruit'. These things are self-luminous, exhibit a praeter-natural brilliance of color and possess a praeter-natural significance. The material objects which most nearly resemble these sources of visionary illumination are gem-stones. To acquire such a stone

is to acquire something whose preciousness is guaranteed by the fact that it in the Other World.

Hence man's otherwise inexplicable passion for gems and hence his attribution to precious stones of therapeutic and magical virtue. The causal chain, I am convinced, begins in the psychological Other World of visionary experience, descends to earth, and mounts again to the theological Other World of heaven. In this context the words of Socrates, in the Phaedo, take on a new significance. There exists, he tells us, an ideal world above and beyond the world of matter. In this other earth the colours are much purer and much more brilliant than they are down here. ... The very mountains, the very stones have a richer gloss, a lovelier transparency and intensity of hue. The precious stones of this lower world, our highly prized cornelians, jaspers, emeralds, and all the rest, are but the tiny fragments of these stones above. In the other earth there is no stone but is precious and exceeds in beauty every gem of ours." In other words, precious stones are

precious because they bear a faint resemblance to the glowing marvels seen with the inner eye of the visionary. 'The view of that world,' says Plato, 'is a vision of blessed beholders'; for to see things 'as they are in themselves' is bliss unalloyed and inexpressible.”

- “From glass, stained or cut, we pass to marble and the other stones that take a high polish and can be used in mass. The fascination exercised by such stones may be gauged by the amount of time and trouble spent in obtaining them. At Baalbek, for example, and, two or three hundred miles further inland, at Palmyra, we find among the ruins columns of pink granite from Aswan. These great monoliths were quarried in Upper Egypt, were floated in barges down the Nile,

were towed across the Mediterranean to Byblos or Tripolis, and from thence were hauled, by oxen, mules, and men, uphill to Horns, and from Horns southward to Baalbek or east,

across the desert, to Palmyra. What a labour of giants! And, from the utilitarian point

of view, how marvellously pointless! But in fact, of course, there was a point - a point

that existed in a region beyond mere utility. Polished to a visionary glow, the rosy shafts proclaimed their manifest kinship with the Other World. At the cost of enormous efforts men had transported these stones from their quarry on the Tropic of Cancer; and now, by way of

recompense, the stones were transporting their transporters half-way to the mind's visionary antipodes.”

- “I have spoken so far only of the blissful visionary experience and of its interpretation in terms of theology, its translation into art. But visionary experience is not always blissful, It is sometimes terrible. There is hell as well as heaven.”

- “...the significance is intrinsically appalling and the light is 'the smoky light' of the Tibetan Book of the Dead, the 'darkness visible' of Milton. In the Journal d'une schizophrene, the autobiographical record of a young girl's passage through madness, the world of the schizophrenic is called le pays d'eclairement - 'the country of lit-upness'. It is a name which a mystic might have used to denote his heaven.” ('lit-upness': forced visions into one's view)

- “But for poor Renee, the schizophrenic, the illumination is infernal - an intense electric glare without a shadow, ubiquitous and implacable. Everything that, for healthy visionaries, is

a source of bliss, brings to Renee only fear and a nightmarish sense of unreality. The summer sunshine is malignant; the gleam of polished surfaces is suggestive not of gems, but of machinery and enameled tin; the intensity of existence which animates every object, when seen at close range and out of its utilitarian context, is felt as a menace. And then there is the horror of infinity. For the healthy visionary, the perception of the infinite in a finite particular is a revelation of divine immanence; for Renée, it was a revelation of what she calls “the System,” the vast cosmic mechanism which exists only to grind out guilt and punishment, solitude and unreality.\*\* Sanity is a matter of degree, and there are plenty of visionaries, who see the world as Renée saw it, but contrive, none the less, to live outside the asylum.”

- “And then there is the horror of infinity. For the healthy visionary, the perceptio The literature of religious experience abounds in references to the pains and terrors overwhelming those who have come, too suddenly, face to face with some manifestation of the Mysterium tremendum. In theological language, this fear is due to the incompatibility between man’s egotism and the divine purity, between man’s self-aggravated separateness and the infinity of God n of the infinite in a finite particular is a revelation of divine immanence; for Renee, it was a revelation of what she calls 'the System', the vast cosmic mechanism which exists only to grind out guilt and punishment, solitude and unreality.”

- “Sanity is a matter of degree, and there are plenty of visionaries who see the world as Renee saw it, but contrive, none the less, to live outside the asylum. For them, as for the positive visionary, the universe is transfigured - but for the worse. Everything in it, from the stars in the sky to the dust under their feet, is unspeakably sinister or disgusting; every event is charged with a hateful significance; every object manifests the presence of an Indwelling Horror, infinite, all-powerful, eternal.”

- “But what is more important for our present purposes is the fact that negative visionary experience may be induced by purely psychological means. Fear and anger bar the way to

the heavenly Other World and plunge the mescalin taker into hell.”

- “Upon this psychological foundation has been reared the theological doctrine of saving faith - a

doctrine to be met with in all the great religious traditions of the world. Eschatologists have always found it difficult to reconcile their rationality and their morality with the brute facts of psychological experience. As rationalists and moralists, they feel that good behavior should be rewarded and that the virtuous deserve to go to heaven. But as psychologists they know that virtue is not the sole or sufficient condition of blissful visionary experience. They know that works alone are powerless and that it is faith, or loving confidence, which guarantees that visionary experience shall be blissful. Negative emotions - the fear which is the absence

of confidence, the hatred, anger, or malice which exclude love - are the guarantee that

visionary experience, if and when it comes, shall be appalling. The Pharisee is a virtuous man; but his virtue is of the kind which is compatible with negative emotion. His visionary experiences are therefore likely to be infernal rather than blissful. The nature of the mind is such that the sinner who repents and makes an act of faith in a higher power is more likely to have a blissful visionary experience than is the self-satisfied pillar of society with his righteous indignations, his anxiety about possessions and pretensions, his ingrained habits of blaming, despising, and condemning. Hence the enormous importance attached, in all the great religious traditions,

to the state of mind at the moment of death.”

- “In life, even the blissful visionary experience tends to change its sign if it persists too long. Many schizophrenics have their times of heavenly happiness; but the fact that (unlike

the mescalin taker) they do not know when, if ever, they will be permitted to return to the reassuring banality of everyday experience causes even heaven to seem appalling. But for those who, for whatever reason, are appalled, heaven turns into hell, bliss into horror, the Clear

Light into the hateful glare of the land of lit-upness.”

- “Of those who die an infinitesimal minority are capable of immediate union with the divine Ground, a few are capable of supporting the visionary bliss of heaven, a few find themselves in the visionary horrors of hell and are unable to escape; the great majority end up in the kind of world described by Swedenborg and the mediums. From this in world it is doubtless possible to pass, when the necessary conditions have been fulfilled, to worlds of visionary bliss or the final enlightenment. My own guess is that modern spiritualism and ancient tradition are both correct. There is a posthumous state of the kind described in Sir Oliver Lodge's book, Raymond; but there is also a heaven of blissful visionary experience; there is also a hell of the same kind of appalling visionary experience as is suffered here by schizophrenics and some of those who take

mescalin; and there is also an experience, beyond time, of union with the divine Ground.”

- “Mortification of the body may produce a host of undesirable mental symptoms; but it may also open a door into a transcendental world of Being, Knowledge, and Bliss. That is why, in spite of its obvious disadvantages, almost all aspirants to the spiritual life have, in the past, undertaken

regular courses of bodily mortification.”

- ““How many philosophers, how many theologians, how many professional educators have had the curiosity to open this Door in the Wall? The answer, for all practical purposes, is, None.” (Mckenna, James, sad that there isn't more)

The Perennial Philosophy

- “...the ultimate Reality is not clearly and immediately apprehended, except by those who have made themselves loving, pure in heart and poor in spirit. This being so, it is hardly surprising that a theology based upon the experience of nice, ordinary, unregenerate people should carry so little conviction. This kind of empirical theology is on precisely the same footing as an empirical astronomy, based upon the experience of naked-eye observers.” (Plato's cave, psychedelics)

- “...no saint or founder of a religion, no exponent of the Perennial Philosophy, has ever been optimistic. 'Many are called, but few are chosen.'

- “The Christ of the Gospels is a preacher and not a dispenser of sacraments or performer of rites; he speaks against vain repetitions; he insists on the supreme importance of private worship; he has no use for sacrafices and not much use for the Temple. But this did not prevent historic Christianity from going on its own, all too human, way.

- “For long periods of history and prehistory it would seem that men and women, though perfectly capable of doing so, did not wish to pay attention to problems, which their descendents found absorbingly interesting.”

- “Certain thoughts are practically unthinkable except in terms of an appropriate language and within the framework of an appropriate system.”

- “...from imbecility to Quantum Theory...to the intuitive knowledge of the Godhead, or to manufacture self-propelled flame-throwers...It is clear that many of the things in which modern men have chosen to pay attention to were ignored by their predecessors. Consequently the very means for thinking clearly and fruitfully about those things remained uninvented, not merely during prehistoric times, but even to the opening of the modern era.”

- “...in modern industrialized societies, a few people work their way out of the prevailing occupation with matter and through the prevailing habits of analytical thought into the direct experience of the spiritual Ground of things.” (Jnana)

- “The last end of man, the ultimate reason for human existence, is unitive knowledge of the divine Ground...very few will achieve the final end of human existence.”

- “...they who know Him most perfectly perceive most clearly that He is infinitely incomprehensible...”

- “...it is easier for us to reach our goal if we are not handicapped by a set of erroneous or inadequate beliefs about the right way to get there and the nature of what we are looking for.”

- “The best that can be said for ritualistic legalism is that it improves conduct. It does little, however, to alter character and nothing of itself to modify consciousness.” (good to be born in a church, bad to die in one)

- “Nobody has yet invented a Spiritual Calculus, in terms of which we may talk coherently about the divine Ground and of the world conceived as its manifestation. For the present, therefore, we must be patient with the linguistic eccentricities of those who are compelled to describe one order of experience in terms of a symbol-system, whose relevance is to the facts of another and quite different order.”

- “In statements such as Eckhart's, God is equated with nothing.”

- Quoting “The Cloud of the Unknowing: “This sorrow, if it be truly conceived, is full of holy desire...” (Tolstoy, Vivekananda, Tillich)

- “Sometimes crisis alone, without any preparatory training, is sufficient to make a man forget to be his customary self and become, for the time being, something quite different.”

- “The saint is one who knows that every moment of our human life is a moment of crisis; for at every moment we are called upon to make an all-important decision- to choose between the way that leads to death and the spiritual darkness and the way that leads towards light and life; between interests exclusively temporal and the eternal order...”

- “...for the lover of God, every moment is a moment crisis, spiritual training is incomparably more difficult and searching than military training. There are many good soldiers, few saints.”

- “...the aim of spiritual training is to make people become selfless in every circumstance of life, while the aim of military training is to make them selfless only in certain very special circumstances and in relation to only certain classes of human beings.”

- “But if the Gospels tell us very little about the “I” which was Jesus, they make up for this deficiency by telling us inferentially, in the parables and discourses, a good deal about the spiritual “not-I,” whose manifest presence in the mortal man was the reason why his disciples called him the Christ and identified him with the eternal Logos.” (Spong, Vivekananda)

- “The doctrine that God is in the world...the sacredness of nature, and the sinfulness and folly of man's overwhelming efforts to be her master rather than her intelligently docile collaborator.” (Vivekananda, Karma Yoga)

- “…for some inexplicable reason, the travellers still hold fast to the religion of Inevitable Progress...every victory must be paid for...It is because the reality of Progress can never be determined that...the Perennial Philosophy, the question whether Progress is inevitable or even real is not a matter of primary importance...the important thing is that individual men and women should come to the unitive knowledge of the divine Ground, and what interests them in regard to the social environment is not its progressiveness or non-progressiveness (whatever those terms may mean), but the degree to which it helps or hinders individuals in their advance towards man's final end.” (beyond good and evil, Vivekananda, Seraphim)

- “The world inhabited by ordinary, nice, unregenerate people is mainly dull (so dull that they have to ditract their minds from being aware of it by all sorts of artificial 'amusements') sometimes briefly and intensely pleasurable, occasionally or quite often disagreeable and even agonizing.”

- “The slime of personal and emotional love is remotely similar to the water of the Godhead's spiritual being, but of inferior and of insufficient quantity...human beings can do something to mitigate the horrors of their situation by 'keeping one another wet with their slime.' But there can be no happiness or safety in time and no deliverance into eternity, until they give up thinking that slime is enough and, by abandoning themselves to what is in fact their element, call back the eternal waters...the modern idolaters of progress...prefer an agonizing and impossible existence on dry land to love, joy and peace in our native ocean.” (Vivekananda, Maya, Earthly/Other)

- “...the Perennial Philosophy will do something to preserve men and women from the temptation to idolatrous worship of things in time- church-worship, state-worship, revolutionary future-worship, humanistic self-worship, all of them essentially and necessarily opposed to charity.”

- “To the extent that there is attachment to 'I,' 'Me,' 'Mine,' there is no attachment to, and therefore no unitive knowledge of, the divine Ground.” (psychedelics, ego-death)

- “To sum up, that mortification is the best which results in the elimination of self-will, self-interest, self-centered thinking, wishing and imagining...which means, in practice, refraining from about fifty percent of ordinary conversations...to achieve a 'holy indifference' to the temporal success or failure of the cause to which one has devoted one's best energies.” (Tillich, Quietism, Karma, Vivekananda)

- “Until we put an end to particular attachments, there can be no love of God with the whole heart, mind and strength and no universal charity towards all creatures for God's sake. Hence the hard sayings of the Gospels about the need to renounce exclusive family ties.”

- “Mortification is painful...This fact of spiritual experience is sometimes obscured by the language in which it is described...Seen through the dung-colored spectacles of self-interest, the universe looks singularly like a dung-heap.”

- “Those who choose the profession of artist, philosopher, or man of science, choose, in many cases, a life of poverty and unrewarded hard work.”

- “...the critical philosophy must mortify his commonsense...”

- “The verbal statements of theology's more or less adequate rationalizations of experience have been taken too seriously and treated with reverence that is due only to the Fact they are intended to describe. It has been fancied that souls are saved if assent is given to what is logically regarded as the correct formula, lost if it is withheld.” (Ha! Symbolism, God is too big to be bound by language)

- “Most human beings are not philosophers and care not at all for consistency in thought or action.” (Ha!)

- “The poet is born with the capacity of arranging words...This is a great and precious gift; but if the poet remains content with his gift, if he persists in worshiping the beauty in art and nature without going on to make himself capable, through selflessness, of apprehending Beauty as it is in the divine Ground, then he is only an idolater.”

- “Rational intelligence makes possible unparalleled success on the one hand and, on the other, a further advance towards spirituality and a return, through unitive knowledge, to the divine ground.” (Kierkegaard, Vivekananda, Jnana)

- “The orthodox doctrine of the Atonement attributes to God characteristics that would be discredible even to a human potentate, and its model of the universe is not the product of spiritual insight rationalized by philosophical reflection, but rather the projection of a lawyer's phantasy.” (Ha!)

- “'Turning to God without turning from self' – the formula is absurdly simple; and yet, simple as it is, it explains all the follies and iniquities committed in the name of religion.”

- “The Christ of the Gospels is a preacher and not a dispenser of sacraments or performer of rites; he speaks against vain repetitions; he insists on the supreme importance of private worship; he has no use for sacrifices and not much use for the Temple. But this did not prevent historic Christianity from going its own, all too human way.”

- “For the Buddha of the Pali scriptures, ritual was one of the fetters holding back the soul from enlightenment and liberation. Nevertheless, the religion he founded has made full use of ceremonies, vain repetitions and sacramental rites.”

- “The righteous man can escape suffering only by accepting it and passing beyond it...by being converted from righteousness to total selflessness and God-centeredness, by ceasing to be just a Pharisee, or good citizen...The difficulties...are...enormous...those who 'speak with authority,' who has ever said that the road to complete deliverance was easy or the gate anything but 'strait and narrow'?”

- “...an immense increase in technical and governmental efficiency and an immense increase in scientific knowledge- each of them a result of the general shift of Western man's attention from the eternal to the temporal order...”

- “'vain repetition...to use the name of God to justify what they do in pursuit of place, power and wealth.”

- “The moralists cease to be realistic and commit idolatry inasmuch as they worship, not God, but their own ethical ideals, inasmuch as they treat virtue as an end in itself and not as t he necessary condition of the knowledge and love of God- a knowledge and love, without which that virtue will never be made perfect or even socially effective.”

- “Our education disparages the more primitive forms of idolatry; but at the same time it disparages, or at the best it ignores, the Perennial Philosophy and the practice of spirituality. In place of mumbo-jumbo at the bottom and the immanent and transcendent Godhead at the top, it sets up, as objects of admiration, faith and worship, a pantheon of strictly human ideas and ideals.”

- “In academic circles, and among those who have been subjected to higher education, there are few fetishists and few devout contemplatives; but the enthusiastic devotees of some form of political or social idolatry are as common as blackberries.” (Ha! Ben Shapiro and Milo)

- “Self-re[roach is painful; but the very pain is a reassuring proof that the self is still intact: so long as attention is fixed on the delinquent ego, it cannot be fixed upon God...”

- “The religious systems of the world have been built up, in the main, by men and women who were not completely selfless or enlightened. Hence all religions have had their dark and even frightful aspects, while the good they do is rarely gratuitous, but must, in most cases, be paid for, either on the nail or by installments.”

- “It is permissible to seek God provisionally under a form which is from the first recognized as merely a symbol of Reality, and a symbol which must sooner or later be discarded in favour of what it stands for. To seek Him under a settled form – settled because regarded as the very shape of Reality – is to commit onself to illusion and a kind of idolatry.” (Good to be born in a church, bad to die in a church, Vivekananda)

- “Probably all persons, even the most saintly, suffer to some extent from distractions...make use of distractions.”

- “Self-knowledge, leading to self-hatred and humility, is the condition of the love and knowledge of God.”

- “Professionally, in relation to his chosen specialty, a man may be completely mature. Spiritually and sometimes even ethically, in relation to God and his neighbors, he may be hardly more than a fetus.” (Ha!)

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“Beliefs” (an essay printed at the end of The Perennial Philosophy)

- “Arbitrarily, because it happens to be convenient, because his methods do not allow him to deal with the immense complexity of reality, he selects from the whole of experience only those elements which can be weighed, measured, numbered, or which lend themselves in any other way to mathematical treatment.”

- “...many men of science have come to realize that the scientific picture of the world is a partial one – the product of their special competence in mathematics and their special incompetence to deal systematically with aesthetic and moral values, religious experiences and intuitions of significance.”

- “The masses,...are convinced that the scientific picture of an arbitrary abstraction from reality is a picture of reality as a whole and that therefore the world is without meaning or value. But nobody likes living in such a world. To satisfy their hunger for meaning and value, they turn to such doctrines as nationalism, fascism and revolutionary communism. Philosophically and scientifically, these doctrines are absurd; but for the masses in every community, they have this great merit: they attribute the meaning and value that have been taken away from the world as a whole to the particular part of the world in which the believers happen to be living.” (the influence of Positivism has trickled down for a little more than a century and it has corrupted the thought process and worldviews of almost everyone without their even knowing it! Ha!)

- “...the philosophy of meaninglessness carried to its logical conclusion. Life was without significance. Values were illusory and ideals merely the inventions of cunning priests and kings. Sensations and animal pleasures alone possessed reality and were alone worth living for. There was no reason why any one should have the slightest consideration for any one else. For those who found rape and murder amusing, rape and murder were fully legitimate activities. And so on.”

- “If it is legitimate to torment and kill in one set of circumstances, it must be equally legitimate to torment and kill in all other circumstances.”

- “The general acceptance of a doctrine that denies meaning and value to the world as a whole,

while assigning them in a supreme degree to certain arbitrarily selected parts of the totality, can only have evil and disastrous results...We have thought of ourselves as members of supremely meaningful and valuable communities – deified nations, divine classes and what not – existing within a meaningless universe.” (Ha!)

- “...supplying the masses with 'vital lies' calculated to make those who accepted them not only happy, but well behaved. The truth – which was that there was no meaning or value in the world – should be revealed only to the few who were strong enough to stomach it.”

- “Some people, it is true, can live contentedly with a philosophy of meaninglessness for a very long time. But in most cases it will be found that these people possess some talent or accomplishment that permits them to live a life which, to a limited extent, is profoundly meaningful and valuable. Thus an artist, or a man of science can profess a philosophy of general meaninglessness and yet lead a perfectly contented life...artistic creation and scientific research are absorbingly delightful occupations...They are proclaimed to be ends absolutely in themselves – ends so admirable that those who pursue them are excused from bothering about anything else.” (Ha! This is Becker! this lack of 'talent' is the driving force of 'mental illness', it comes down to 'stupidity' or not being able to express or 'let out' the crazy thoughts within, maybe even deeper- it would be that the expressions, beyond stupidity or inability to produce expressions, themselves lose all meaning for the person; therefore a person cannot move forward, since the last illusion, the illusion of one's own fulfillment/happiness, is shown to be utterly ludicrous: Nietzsche's 'great contempt', Bertrand Russell's response to Durant about being 'too busy' to discuss the meaning of life, Ha!)

- “Meditation, in other words, is the technique of mysticism...'transcendental consciousness' – the direct intuition of an ultimate spiritual reality that is perceived as simultaneously beyond the self and in some way within it.”

- “First Bach fugues, a bore...But training changes the structure of our spiritual experiences. In due course, contact with an obscurely beautiful poem, an elaborate piece of counterpoint or of mathematical reasoning, causes us to feel direct intuitions of beauty and significance.” (participation, head held under water)

- “Systematic training in recollection and meditation makes possible the mystical experience, which is a direct intuition of ultimate reality.”

- “The direct intuition of an impersonal spiritual reality, underlying all being, is in accord with the findings of the majority of the world's philosophers.”

- “If he is to transcend the limitations of man's private universe he must be a member of a community which gives him protection against the inclemencies of the environment and makes it easy for him to supply his physical wants. But this is not enough. He must also train himself in the art of being dispassionate and disinterested, must cultivate intellectual curiosity for its own sake and not for what he, as an animal, can get out of it.”

- “Only the disinterested mind can transcend commonsense and pass beyond the boundaries of animal or average-sensual human life. The mystic exhibits disinterestedness in the highest degree possible to human beings and is therefore able to transcend ordinary limitations more completely than the man of science, the artist or the philosopher.” (maybe the Real Philosopher in his Nothingness/Meaninglessness is at a farther point than the mystic who claims constant 'bliss')

- “We fail to attend to our true relations with ultimate reality and, through ultimate reality, with our fellow beings, because we prefer to to attend to our animal nature and to the business of getting on in the world.”

- “Mysticism...is unsatisfactory in moral content. The ultimate reality of the world is not moral ('God is not good') and the mystic who unites himself with ultimate reality is uniting himself with a non-moral being, therefore he is not moral.” (beyond good and evil, Nihiltheism)

## 33. John Bunyan

- “One morning as I lay in my bed, I was, as at other times, most fiercely assaulted with this temptation to sell and part with Christ, the wicked suggestion still running in my mind, “Sell Him, sell Him, sell Him, sell Him,” as fast as a man could speak. Against this I also in my mind, as at other times, I answered, “No, no, not for thousands, thousands, thousands,” at least twenty times together. At last, after much striving, even until I was almost out of breath, I felt this thought pass through my heart, “Let Him go if He will.” I thought also that I felt my heart freely consent to this. Oh, the diligence of Satan! Oh, the desperateness of man’s heart! Now was the battle won, and down I fell, as a bird that is shot from the top of a tree, into great guilt and fearful despair. Now I was as one bound; I felt myself shut up into the judgment to come. Nothing for the next two years would abide with me but damnation and an expectation of damnation.

I did ever so know now what it was to be weary of my life and yet afraid to die. I Oh, how gladly I would have been anybody but myself, anything but a man, and in any condition but my own. There was nothing that did cross my mind more frequently than that it was impossible for me to be forgiven my transgression and be saved from the wrath to come. (Tolstoy, Kierkegaard, Cioran)

A Few Sighs From Hell- “And again, had not God given such a discovery of the sad condition of those that are for the most part rich men, we should have had men concluded absolutely that the rich are the blessed men. Nay, albeit the Lord himself doth so evidently declare that the rich ones of the world are, for the most part, in the saddest condition, yet they, through unbelief, or else presumption, do harden themselves, and seek for the glory of this world...”

- “For, as I said before, it is evident, that they who live after the flesh in the lusts thereof, do not really and seriously think on death, and the judgment that doth follow after: neither do they indeed endeavour so to do; for did they, it would make them say with holy Job, 'All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come' (Job 14:14). And as I said before, that not only the wicked, but also the godly have their time to depart this life. And the beggar died. The saints of the Lord, they must be deprived of this life also, they must yield up the ghost into the hands of the Lord their God; they must also be separated from their wives, children, husbands, friends, goods, and all that they have in the world.”

## 34. Edgar Saltus

### The Philosophy of Disenchantment

- On Leopardi: “He was not much over twenty before excessive study had well-nigh ruined such health as he once possessed. The slightest application was wearisome both to eye and brain. He wandered silently about the neighboring forests, seeking solitude not only for the sake of solitude, but also perhaps for the suggestions, at once soothing and rebellious, which solitude always whispers to him who courts her truly. At other times he sat hour by hour in a state as motionless as that of catalepsy. "I am so much overcome," he wrote to a friend, "by the nothingness that surrounds me, that I do not know how I have the strength to answer your letter. If at this moment I lost my reason, I think that my insanity would consist in sitting always with eyes fixed, open-mouthed, without laughing or weeping, or changing place. I have no longer the strength to form a desire, be it even for death." (Kierkegaard, Cioran, Tillich about wanting to die but not being able to)

- “...the isolation which he partly made himself, and which was partly forced upon him, he watched the incubation of thought very much as another might have noted the progress of a disease. A life of this description, even at best, is hardly calculated to awaken much enthusiasm for every-day matters, and it was not long before Leopardi became not only heartily sick of the commonplace aspects of life, but contemptuous, too, of those who lived in broader and more active spheres.”

- "I study night and day, so long as my health permits; when it prevents me from working, I wait a month or so, and then begin again. As I am now totally different from that which I was, my plan of study has altered with me. Everything which savors of the pathetic or the eloquent wearies me beyond expression. I seek now only the true, the real, which before was so repulsive. I take pleasure in analyzing the misery of men and things, and in shivering as I note the sinister and terrible mystery of life. I see very clearly that when passion is once extinguished, there subsists in study no other source of pleasure save that of vain curiosity, whose satisfaction, however, is not without a certain charm."

- “His logic reduced itself to the paraphrase of an axiom, "I am, therefore I suffer," and the suffering which he experienced was not, he was very sure, limited solely to himself. It was, he considered, the garment and appanage of every sentient being. In this he was perfectly correct, but his error consisted in holding all cases to be equally intense, and in imagining that means might be devised which would at once do away with or, at least, lessen the evil.”

- “Leopardi at that time was in his twenty-seventh year, and the task to which he then devoted himself was, he said, to be the sad ending of a miserable life. His intention was to run the bitter truth to earth, to learn the obscure destinies of the mortal and the eternal, to discover the wherefore of creation, and the reason of man's burden of misery. "I wish," he said, "to dig to the root of nature and seek the aim of the mysterious universe, whose praises the sages sing, and before which I stand aghast."

- “Leopardi's philosophy is nothing if not destructive; he does not aim so much to edify as to undermine.” (Heisman)

- “Why, this is rubbish, look at modern institutions, look at progress, look at science; for if he listens to Leopardi he will learn that all these palpable advantages have, in expanding activity, only aggravated the misery of man.”

- “Finding himself, at last, face to face with Nature he took her to task, demanding what right she had to create him without his permission, and then, having done so, to leave him to his own devices?”

- “The Buddhist believes that the soul migrates until Nirvâna is attained, and that in the preparation for this state, which is the death of Death, the nothingness of a flame extinguished, there are four degrees. In the first, the novitiate learns to be implacable to himself, yet charitable and compassionate to others. He then acquires an understanding into the nature of all things, until he has suppressed every desire save that of attaining Nirvâna, when he passes initiate into the second degree, in which judgment ceases. In the next stage, the vague sentiment of satisfaction, which had been derived from intellectual perfection, is lost, and in the last, the confused consciousness of identity disappears.”

- “In brief, then, life to the Christian is a probation, to the Brahmin a burden, to the Buddhist a dream, and to the pessimist a nightmare.”

- “The so-called allurements and charms of the world are attractive to the vulgar, but not to the thinker, and whether the thinker be a Trappist or a comedian, he will, if called to account, express himself in a manner equally frank.” (comedians are today's philosophers)d

- “They are merely the resultants of the obvious and the true; they leap into being in every intelligent mind.” (me- recollection, revelation, involuntary, etc.)

- “In the world ye shall have tribulation," is the explicit warning of the Founder of Christianity, and to this warning all creeds, save that of the early Hellenists, concur. It did not, therefore, come from any religious teaching, nor, for that matter, from any philosophy. Still the impression, however vague it may seem when analyzed, has none the less been with him, as with all others, the reason being simply that he grew up with it as he may have grown up with fairy tales, and it is not until his aspirations stumble over facts that he begins to see that life, instead of being the pleasant land flowing with milk and honey, which he had imagined, is in reality something entirely different.”

- “...any man who has begun to dislike the propinquity of the average, and to feel that where the crowd find amusement there will be nothing but weariness and vexation of spirit for him. Under such circumstances he is an instinctive pessimist, and one who needs but little theoretic instruction to learn that he, as all others, has been made use of, and cheated to boot. The others, it is true, are, generally speaking, unaware of the deception that has been practiced on them; they have, it may be, a few faint suspicions that something has gone wrong somewhere, but even in uttermost depression the untutored look upon their misfortunes as purely individual, and unshared by the world at large.” (Kierkegaard, Cioran, Vivekananda, the path is narrow)

- “There are those, too, who from dyspepsia, torpidity of the liver, or general crankiness of disposition, are inclined to take a gloomy view of all things; then there is a temperamental pessimism which displays itself in outbursts of indignation against the sorrows of life, and in frantic struggles with destiny and the meshes of personal existence; there is also the sullen pessimism of despair noticeable in the quiet folding of hands, and which with tearless eyes awaits death without complaint; then there are those who complain and sulk, who torment themselves and others, and who have neither the spunk to struggle nor the grace to be resigned,— this is the "forme miserable;" there is also a haphazard pessimism which comes of an unevenness of disposition, and which asserts itself on a rainy day, or when stocks are down; another is the accidental type, the man who, with loss of wife, child, or mistress, settles himself in a dreary misanthropy; finally, there is hypochondria, which belongs solely to pathology. In none of these categories do the victims have any suspicion that a philosophical significance is attached to their suffering.”

- “Furthermore, as without brain there is no consciousness...” (Naturalism leads to descriptions of the Divinity of Nothing as Pessimistic)

- “To all this advanced pessimism has a ready answer: first, there can be no morality, for where there is no body and no property it is impossible to injure another; second, there can be no love, for every form of love, from the highest to the lowest, rests on the basis of sensibility; when, therefore, after the abstraction of shape, voice, features, and all bodily actions that are manifested through the medium of the brain, nothing but an unsubstantial shadow remains, what is there left to love? third, there can be no contemplation, for in a state of clairvoyance contemplation is certainly useless.” (me- this is also what Mystics say. All the Earthly desires, emotions, etc. are worthless in the Eternal. This passage also shows the breakdown of Human language when attempts to describe the Other put forth. Nihiltheism)

- “From a religious standpoint advanced pessimism teaches that the misery of life is immedicable, and strips away every illusion with which it has been hitherto enveloped...” (Nihiltheism says this too. Mystics say this too.)

- “For pessimism, while showing that each joy is an illusion, leaves pleasure where it found it, and simply incloses it in a black border, from which, in greater relief, it shines more brightly than before." Another objection which has been advanced against pessimism is that it is a creed of quietist inactivity.”

- “...denying that there is any finality even immanent in Nature, asserts that the order of phenomena is utterly illogical.” (me- a complete and utter denouncement of the Earthly. No truth, no value, nothingness)

- “To sum up, then, what has gone before, the modern pessimist is a Buddhist who has strayed from the Orient, and who in his exodus has left behind him all his fantastic shackles, and has brought with him, together with ethical laws, only the cardinal tenet, "Life is evil." Broadly considered, the difference between the two creeds is not important. The Buddhist aspires to a universal nothingness...”

- “Happiness is an illusion.”

- “...whatever their private beliefs may be, they still wish their neighbors to think that they at least have no cause to complain. It is this desire to appear well in the eyes of others that makes what is termed the shabby-genteel, and which prevents so many proud yet vulgar minds from avowing their true position. Indeed, there are few who, save to an intimate, have the courage to acknowledge that they are miserable; there is at work within them the same instinct that compels the wounded animal to seek the depths of the bushes in which to die. People generally are ashamed of grief, and turn to hide a tear as the sensitive turn from an accident in the street, and veil their eyes from deformity. Moreover, it is largely customary to mock at the melancholy; and in good society it is an unwritten law that every one shall bring a certain quota of contentment and gayety, or else remain in chambered solitude.” (me- consequences of the death of God, there is to be no “problem”, since there is no solution. Distractions, repression, denial, diversions, etc.)

- “Added to this, and beyond the insatiable desire to appear serene and successful in the eyes of others, there is the terrible dread of seeming to be cheated and outwitted of that which is apparently a universal birthright; and, according to a general conception, there is the same sort of moral baseness evidenced in an unuttered yet visible appeal for sympathy, as that which is at work in the beggar's outstretched palm. Many, it is true, there are who drop the furtive coin, but the world at large passes with averted stare. "There is work for all," is a common saying, and for the infirm there are hospitals and institutions; "What, then, is the use of giving?" it is queried, and the answer follows, "They who ask for alms are frauds." (me- is this a consequence of the death of God also? If so, then no wonder I feel so guilty. Talk to these people when they ask!)

- “...go to a well-nurtured and refined girl of eighteen and tell her that life is an affliction, and she will look upon her informant as a retailer of trumpery paradox. And at eighteen what a festival is life! To one splendid in beauty and rich in hope how magnificent it all seems; what unexplored yet inviting countries extend about the horizon! winter is a kiss that tingles, and summer a warm caress; everything, even to death, holds its promise. And then picture her as she will be at eighty, without an illusion left, and turning her tired eyes each way in search of rest.”

- “Illusion after illusion vanish into still air; to the intelligent, to the observer, and especially to him who is forced against his will to struggle in the van, life is an affliction, a mishap, a calamity, and sometimes a curse.”

- “When it does appear, it is, as a rule, presented by such thinkers as have been mentioned in the course of these pages, who, through their assertion of the undeniable awake the dislike and animosity of those who have not yet had their fill of proceedings in bankruptcy, and still hope to find life a pleasant thing well worth the living.” (me- God or Naturalism)

- “...the moral atmosphere of the present century is charged with three distinct disturbances,— the waning of religious belief, the insatiable demand for intense sensations, and the increasing number of those who live uncompanied, and walk abroad in solitude.”

- “What its final solution will be is, of course, uncertain. Schopenhauer recommended absolute chastity as the means to the great goal, and Hartmann has vaguely suggested a universal denial of the will to live; more recently, M. Renan has hazarded the supposition that in the advance of science some one might discover a force capable of blowing the planet to atoms, and which, if successfully handled, would, of course, annihilate pain. But these ideas, however practicable or impracticable they may be in the future, are for the moment merely theories; the world is not yet ripe for a supreme quietus, and in the mean time the worth of life may still be questioned.”

- “The phenomenon, Schopenhauer says, by which this change is marked is the transition from virtue to asceticism. In other words, it then no longer suffices for him to love others as himself; there arises within him a horror of the kernel and essence of the world, which recognizably is full of misery, and of which his own existence is an expression, and thereupon denying the nature that is in him, and ceasing to will anything, he gives himself up to complete indifferentism to all things. Such, in outline, is Schopenhauer's theory of ethics, which, starting from the principle of kindness of heart, leads to the renunciation of all things, and, curious as the denouement may appear, at last to universal deliverance.”

- “'It is this," Schopenhauer exclaims in his concluding paragraph, "that the Hindus have expressed in the empty terms of Nirvâna, and reabsorption in Brahma. We readily recognize that what remains after the entire abolition of the Will is without effect on those in whom it still works; but to those in whom it has been crushed, what is this world of ours with its suns and stellar systems? Nothing.'”

- “As a creed, the birthplace of pessimism is to be sought on the banks of the Ganges, or far back in the flower-lands of Nepaul, where the initiate, with every desire lulled, awaits Nirvâna, and murmurs only, "Life is evil."”

- “Now, as is well known, in every religion there is a certain metaphysical basis which is designed to supply an answer to man's first question; for while the animal lives in undismayed repose, man of all created things alone marvels at his own existence and at the destruction of his fellows. To his first question, then, What is life and death? each system attempts to offer a perfect reply; indeed, the temples, cathedrals, and pagodas clearly attest that man at all times and in all lands has continually demanded that some reply should be given, and it is perhaps for this very reason that where other beliefs have found fervent adherents, neither materialism nor skepticism have been ever able to acquire a durable influence. It is, however, curious to note that in attempting the answer, nearly every creed has given an unfavorable interpretation to life. Aside from the glorious lessons of Christianity, its teaching, in brief, is that the world is a vale of tears, that nothing here can yield any real satisfaction, and that happiness, which is not for mortals, is solely the recompense of the ransomed soul. To the Brahmin, while there is always the hope of absorption in the Universal Spirit, life meanwhile is a regrettable accident. But in Buddhism, which is perhaps the most naïve and yet the most sublime of all religions, and which through its very combination of simplicity and grandeur appeals to a larger number of adherents than any other, pessimism is the beginning, as it is the end.” (This says a lot)

- “He considered that, as a rule, a man is never in perfect harmony save with himself, for, he argued, however tenderly a friend or mistress may be beloved, there is at times some clash and discord. Perfect tranquillity, he said, is found only in solitude, and to be permanent only in absolute seclusion; and he insisted that the hermit, if intellectually rich, enjoys the happiest condition which this life can offer. The love of solitude, however, can hardly be said to exist in any one as a natural instinct; on the contrary, it may be regarded as an acquired taste, and one which must be developed in indirect progression. Schopenhauer...”

- (On Schopenhauer) “It was the rule of his life to expect nothing, desire as little as possible, and learn all he could, and as little was to be expected and nothing was to be learned from the majority of the dull ruffians who go to the making of the census, it is not to be wondered that he trod the thoroughfares of thought alone and dismissed the majority of men with a shrug. "They are," he said, "just what they seem to be, and that is the worst that can be said of them." Epigrams of this description were naturally not apt to increase his popularity. But for that he cared very little. He considered that no man can judge another save by the measure of his own understanding. Of course, if this understanding is of a low degree, the greatest intellectual gifts which another may possess convey to him no meaning; they are as colors to the blind; and consequently, in a great nature there will be noticed only those defects and weaknesses which are inseparable from every character.”

- “Schopenhauer's character was made up of that combination of seeming contradictions which is the peculiarity of all great men. He had the audacity of childhood and the timidity of genius. He was suspicious of every one, and ineffably kind-hearted. With stupidity in any form he was blunt, even to violence, and yet his manner and courtesy were such as is attributed to the gentlemen of the old school. If he was an egotist, he was also charitable to excess; and who shall say that charity is not the egotism of great natures? He was honesty itself, and yet thought every one wished to cheat him.”

- “"One thing is certain," said Schopenhauer, reflectively, "I am unworthy of my contemporaries, or they of me."”

- Voltaire's Pessimism: “To this conclusion the optimist will naturally object, but he does so in the face of history and experience, either of which is quite competent to prove that this world is far from being the best one possible. If neither of them succeeds in so doing, then let him wander through the hospitals, the cholera slums, the operating-rooms of the surgeon, the prisons, the torture-chambers, the slave-kennels, the battlefields, or any one of the numberless haunts of nameless misery; or, if all of these are too far, or too inconvenient, let him take a turn into one of the many factories where men and women, and even infants, work from ten to fourteen hours a day at mechanical labor, simply that they may continue to enjoy the exquisite delight of living.”

- “Briefly, then, life, to the pessimist, is a motiveless desire, a constant pain and continued struggle, followed by death, and so on, in secula seculorum, until the planet's crust crumbles to dust.” (the distinction between pessimism and Nihilism is definitely important. Pessimism seems to be the attitude towards the experiences of Nihilism, not simply another word for Nihilism)

- “But here the question naturally arises, how is this annihilation to be accomplished? Through a vulgar and commonplace suicide? Not at all. Schopenhauer is far too logical to suggest a palliative so fruitless and clap-trap as that. For suicide, far from being a denial of the will to live, is one of its strongest affirmations. Paradoxical as it may seem, the man who takes his own life really wants to live; what he does not want are the misery and trials attendant on his particular existence. He abolishes the individual, but not the race. The species continues, and pain with it.” (Tolstoy, Kierkegaard, Cioran, 'wanting to die yet feeling bad about it/fearing Nothingness/not being able to')

- “In ancient philosophy, ethics was a treatise of happiness; in modern works, it is generally a doctrine of eternal salvation; to Schopenhauer, it is neither; for if happiness is unobtainable, the subject is necessarily untreatable from such a standpoint, and on the other hand, if morality is practiced in the hope of future reward, or from fear of future punishment, it can hardly be said to spring from any great purity of intention.”

- “On a higher level is he who, possessing a considerable income, uses but little of it for himself and gives the rest to the poor, the man who makes less distinction than is usually made between himself and others. Such an one is as little likely to let others starve while he himself has enough and to spare, as another would be to hunger one day that he might eat more the next. To a man of this description the veil of Mâyâ, which may be taken to mean the veil of illusions, has become transparent. He recognizes himself in every being, and consequently in the sufferer. Let this veil of Mâyâ be lifted from the eyes of a man to such an extent that he makes no distinction at all between himself and others, and is not only highly benevolent, but ready at all times to sacrifice himself for the common good; then he has in him the holiness of the saint and the germ that may flower into renunciation. The phenomenon, Schopenhauer says, by which this change is marked is the transition from virtue to asceticism. In other words, it then no longer suffices for him to love others as himself; there arises within him a horror of the kernel and essence of the world, which recognizably is full of misery, and of which his own existence is an expression, and thereupon denying the nature that is in him, and ceasing to will anything, he gives himself up to complete indifferentism to all things. Such, in outline, is Schopenhauer's theory of ethics, which, starting from the principle of kindness of heart, leads to the renunciation of all things, and, curious as the dénouement may appear, at last to universal deliverance.”

- “...the awakening can only come with a recognition of the true nature of the dream. The work to be accomplished, therefore, is less physical than moral. We are not to strangle ourselves in sleep, but to rise out of it in meditation.” (non-movement, KOGWY)

- “The love of solitude, however, cannot be considered otherwise than as an acquired taste; it must come as the result of experience and reflection, and advance with the development of the intellect as well as with the progress of age. A child will cry with fright if it be left alone even for a moment; in boyhood, solitude is a severe penance; young men are eminently sociable, and it is only the more elevated among them who from time to time wander off by themselves; but even so, a day passed in strict seclusion is no easy matter. In middle age, it is not so difficult, while to the aged, solitude seems the natural element. But in each individual, separately considered, the growth of the inclination for solitude is always in proportion to the strength of the intellect, and, according to Schopenhauer, it is never thoroughly matured until the individual becomes firmly convinced that society is the most disagreeable of all the unpleasant things in the world.”

- “Chamfort says somewhere, very wittily, "It is sometimes said of a man that he lives alone and does not care for society; this is very much the same as saying that he does not care for exercise, because he does not make excursions at night in the forest of Bondy." (Ha!)

- “...every aspirant should accustom himself to carry a part of his solitude into society, and learn to be alone even in a crowd; in other words, not to tell others at once what he thinks, and not to pay much attention to what others may say; in this way he will in a measure keep himself unaffected by the stupidities which must necessarily surge about him, and harden himself to exterior influences.” (Karma Yoga, Kempis)

- “It is for this reason that when one wishes, or is obliged to live among his fellow-creatures, it becomes necessary to let each one work out his own nature and accept each individual as he stands; the most that can be done is to attempt to utilize the qualities and dispositions of each, so far as they may be adaptable, but in no case is a man to be condemned purely and simply for what he is.” (Jesus, non-judgment, Tolstoy, Vivekananda, Symbolism, religious pluralism)

- “In short, the creed as it stands is one of charity and good-will to all men; and, apart from its denial of future happiness, it does not in its ethics differ in any respect from the sublime teachings of the Christian faith.”

## 35. Timothy Leary

- “Admit it. You aren’t like them. You’re not even close. You may occasionally dress yourself up as one of them, watch the same mindless television shows as they do, maybe even eat the same fast food sometimes. But it seems that the more you try to fit in, the more you feel like an outsider, watching the “normal people” as they go about their automatic existences. For every time you say club passwords like “Have a nice day” and “Weather’s awful today, eh?”, you yearn inside to say forbidden things like “Tell me something that makes you cry” or “What do you think deja vu is for?”. Face it, you even want to talk to that girl in the elevator. But what if that girl in the elevator (and the balding man who walks past your cubicle at work) are thinking the same thing? Who knows what you might learn from taking a chance on conversation with a stranger? Everyone carries a piece of the puzzle. Nobody comes into your life by mere coincidence. Trust your instincts. Do the unexpected. Find the others…”

- “You cannot stay "turned-on" all the time. You cannot stay any place all the time. That's a law of evolution. After the revelation it is necessary to drop-back-in, return to the fake-prop TV-studio and initiate small changes which reflect the glory and the meaning of the "turn-on".

- “For thousands of years the greatest artists, poets, philosophers, and lovers have used consciousness-expanding substances to turn-on tune-in drop-out. As part of the search for the meaning of life. As tools to reach new levels of awareness. To see beyond

the immediate social game. For revelation. For light in the darkness of the long voyage.”

- “Do you wish to use marijuana and LSD to get beyond the TV scenario? To enhance creativity? As catalysts to deepen wisdom? If so, you will be helped by making explicit the religious nature of your psychedelic activities.”

- “So write out your own language for the trip. "God" or "evolution", ''acid" or "sacrament", "guide" or "guru", "purgatorial redemption" or "bad trip", "mystic revelation" or ''goodigious high''. Say it naturally.” (importance of symbolism to describe the direct experience)

- “You select a myth as a reminder that you are part of an ancient and holy process. You select

a myth to guide you when you drop out of the narrow confines of the fake-prop studio-set.

Your mythic guide must be one who has solved the death-rebirth riddle. A TV drama hero cannot help you. Caesar, Napoleon, Kennedy are no help to your cellular orientation. Christ, Lao Tse, Hermes Trismegistus, Socrates are recurrent turn-on figures.”

- “Unless you form your own new religion and devote an increasing amount of your energies to it,

you are (however exciting your personality TV role) a robot. Your new religion can be formed only by you. Do not wait for a Messiah. Do it yourself. Now.”

- “The goals, roles, rules, rituals, values, language, space/ time locale, and mythic context of

your religion must be put on paper for two reasons. (make the journey clear and to deal with “Caesar”)

- “Everything that exists outside your body and your shrine belongs to Caesar. Caesar has constructed the fake-prop studio for his "king-of -the-mountain"game, and he can have it. Highways, property, status, power, money, weapons, all things, all external man-made objects belong to him. The spiritual life is completely detached from these props.”

- “Throughout human history, as our species has faced the frightening, terrorizing fact that we do not know who we are, or where we are going in this ocean of chaos, it has been the authorities, the political, the religious, the educational authorities who attempted to comfort us by giving us order, rules, regulations, informing, forming in our minds their view of reality. To think for yourself you must question authority and learn how to put yourself in a state of vulnerable, open-mindedness; chaotic, confused, vulnerability to inform yourself.”

- “Did you imagine that there could be emotions in heaven? Emotions are closely tied to ego games. Check your emotions at the door to paradise.”

## 36. Peter Zappfe

- “One night in long bygone times, man awoke and saw himself. He saw that he was naked under cosmos, homeless in his own body. All things dissolved before his testing thought, wonder above wonder, horror above horror unfolded in his mind.”

- “Life had overshot its target, blowing itself apart.”

- “And now he can discern the outline of his biologicocosmic terms: He is the universe’s helpless captive, kept to fall into nameless possibilities. From this moment on, he is in a state of relentless panic. Such a ‘feeling of cosmic panic’ is pivotal to every human mind.”

- “In depressive states, the mind may be seen in the image of such an antler, in all its fantastic splendour pinning its bearer to the ground.”

- “Why, then, has mankind not long ago gone extinct during great epidemics of madness? Why do only a fairly minor number of individuals perish because they fail to endure the strain of living – because cognition gives them more than they can carry?”

- “Psychiatry even works on the assumption that the ‘healthy’ and viable is at one with the highest in personal terms. Depression, ‘fear of life,’ refusal of nourishment and so on are invariably taken as signs of a pathological state and treated thereafter. Often, however, such phenomena are messages from a deeper, more immediate sense of life, bitter fruits of a geniality of thought or feeling at the root of antibiological tendencies. It is not the soul being sick, but its protection failing, or else being rejected because it is experienced – correctly – as a betrayal of ego’s highest potential.”

- “In everyday interaction, isolation is manifested in a general code of mutual silence: primarily toward children, so these are not at once scared senseless by the life they have just begun, but retain their illusions until they can afford to lose them.”

- “The craving for material goods (power) is not so much due to the direct pleasures of wealth, as none can be seated on more than one chair or eat himself more than sated. Rather, the value of a fortune to life consists in the rich opportunities for anchoring and distraction offered to the owner.”

- “When a human being takes his life in depression, this is a natural death of spiritual causes. The modern barbarity of ‘saving’ the suicidal is based on a hair-raising misapprehension of the nature of existence.”

- “Only a limited part of humanity can make do with mere ‘changes’, whether in work, social life, or entertainment. The cultured person demands connections, lines, a progression in the changes. Nothing finite satisfies at length, one is ever proceeding, gathering knowledge, making a career. The phenomenon is known as ‘yearning’ or ‘transcendental tendency.’...Any grounds for 'progressive optimism' are removed by this major psychological law.”

- “And if we use the word in a religious sense, only the latter description fits. For here, none has yet been clear about what he is longing for, but one has always a heartfelt awareness of what one is longing away from, namely the earthly vale of tears, one’s own inendurable condition. If awareness of this predicament is the deepest stratum of the soul, as argued above, then it is also understandable why the religious yearning is felt and experienced as fundamental.”

- “Is it possible for ‘primitive natures’ to renounce these cramps and cavorts and live in harmony with themselves in the serene bliss of labour and love? Insofar as they may be considered human at all, I think the answer must be no.” (Infinite/finite gap, selflessness seemingly impossible, the existential philosopher different than the mystic, meaninglessness more overwhelming than mystical experience)

- “he absence of naturally (biologically) based spiritual activity shows up, for example, in the pervasive recourse to distraction (entertainment, sport, radio – ‘the rhythm of the times’). Terms for anchoring are not as favourable – all the inherited, collective systems of anchorings are punctured by criticism, and anxiety, disgust, confusion, despair leak in through the rifts (‘corpses in the cargo.’)”

- “If we continue these considerations to the bitter end, then the conclusion is not in doubt. As long as humankind recklessly proceeds in the fateful delusion of being biologically fated for triumph, nothing essential will change.”

## 37. Mitchell Heisman

- “The following is an experiment in nihilism. Already I have contradicted myself! How can one believe in disbelief? I might be a nihilist except that I don’t believe in anything. If there is no extant God and no extant gods, no good and no evil, no right and no wrong, no meaning and no purpose; if there are no values that are inherently valuable; no justice that is ultimately justifiable; no reasoning that is fundamentally rational, then there is no sane way to choose

between science, religion, racism, philosophy, nationalism, art, conservatism, nihilism, liberalism, surrealism, fascism, asceticism, egalitarianism, subjectivism, elitism, ismism.”

- “If reason is incapable of deducing ultimate, nonarbitrary human ends, and nothing can be judged as ultimately more important than anything else, then freedom is equal to slavery; cruelty is equal to kindness; love is equal to hate; war is equal to peace; dignity is equal to contempt;

destruction is equal to creation; life is equal to death and death is equal to life.”

- “...the most important question is whether there is an important question. The only serious question is whether there is anything to take seriously.”

- “Can one live a philosophy of the nihilistic, reconciling meaninglessness with every thought and emotion at every moment? If active unbelief were the highest organizing principle of a life, would the consequence be rational self-destruction? Could suicide represent the pinnacle of the rational life realized?” (Vivekananda says a Rationalist must be ready to follow reason to its farthest conclusion, e.g. the self is an illusion, most atheists, and even theists, say they are 'following reason', but they aren't, most end up with worldly conclusions which do not go far enough, the end is the self-negation of the self, in order to embrace or attempt to recognize the True Self)

- “Nihilism is where science and philosophy meet.”

- “Nihilism could be interpreted as the inherent paradox of living a belief in disbelief. So called “nihilism”, however, is more unbelief than belief in disbelief. Unbelief is a condition reached through negation. It is not a positive expression of belief in disbelief, but rather, the negative cumulative result of refuting and recognizing the groundlessness of any and every instance of belief encountered thus far: lack of justification for belief in the authority of the state, lack of

justification for belief in the authority of one’s instincts and emotions, and, lack of justification for belief that God exists.” (the seeming difference between Nihilism and skepticism)

- “Willing death is, then, an attempt to live a nihilistic life.”

- “If no values are inherently valuable, then life has no inherent value. If life has no inherent purpose, then its end could be directed towards its negation or death. Death could be posited as the highest value. Since the other secular values are premised upon life, death is the test of all the

others. To test life with death tests the most important question I can conceive of: whether there is an important question.”

- “The implications of life’s meaninglessness have not been elicited with sufficient ruthlessness. My methodology is honesty to the point of absurdity; honesty without mercy; honesty unprejudiced by morals, aesthetics, faith, or hope. When all illusions have been dispelled, at the end of overcoming subjectivities, biases, and prejudices towards life, one encounters the possibility of rational negation of self-interest; rational self-annihilation; rational self-destruction. The experiment in nihilism is to seek out precisely those truths that are most deadly and destructive to me. To will death through truth and truth through death.”

- “When all choices are equal, equality is compatible with total randomness. If all choices are equal, then the choice of death is equal to the choice of life. If life is meaningless, then God

is nothing. But a funny thing happened on the way to nihilistic self-destruction. It was precisely through radical disbelief that I discovered an evolutionary basis for God. Most secular people in the West are simply not ruthless enough in their nihilism to vivisect belief to death. Yet vivisecting belief to death exposes how the original monotheistic conception of God likely arose out of ruthless realism. Monotheism may have originated out of a skeptical, nihilistic, materialistic

objectivity that annihilated the biologically based subjectivity of the self, and thus created something ‘out of nothing’. (maybe God doesn't 'originate' with Nihilism, but can be 'found' through Nihilism) WOW- look how “far back” my thoughts were; not long ago at all, maybe a few months)

- “The attempt to be consistently materialistic yielded the tentative conclusion that the attempt to be consistently materialistic is rational self-destruction.”

- “Perhaps the whole experiment in nihilism is a failure simply because I somehow managed to make it too meaningful.”

- “Nihilism turns out to be more paradoxical than I first thought. The Singularity does not refute nihilism, but rather, “God” may be technological nihilism — yet only in the same sense in which a human being is technological nihilism as a gene replicating machine.”

- “My formula for self-destruction is truth seeking. Doing so diverts me away from a normal path, the biological path or the path of life, and the entire mythological cave of human relationships.”

- “Psychological explanations can be used, not only to evade the nihilistic, but to evade the scientific equation of the larger material world with a material view of one’s own mind — and thus to misunderstand the problem.”

- “When I say that I do not believe in my emotions, I don’t meant that I don’t have them; I mean that I do not accord them any ultimate meaning or significance. Darwin’s The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals demonstrates why: emotions and instincts are the product of

evolutionary adaptations that happened to be adaptive for generations of ancestors. I do not

believe in my emotions, however much I continue to be driven by them. This, on a human level, this is what nihilism or unbelief means. On the most plain, down to earth and human level, this is really where the entire “experiment in nihilism” arose. The experiment in nihilism is really only

the consequence or extension of this original experiment on myself. After exploring an unadulterated materialistic view, life lost its cogency for me.”

- “The experiment in nihilism is a test of what I really do or do not believe. If it is the case that emotions are former genetic adaptations or illusions of an evolutionary inheritance, the chance products of a particular course of natural selection, then there is no reason to assume that they

are guides beyond their original adaptive functions. This also means that everyone else and their emotions are also treatable as physical material.”

- “Self-consistent materialism leads to interpreting every subjective experience, i.e. fear, love, inspiration, dreams, etc., as physical matter.”

- “If humans are emotion machines, then music must work, in some sense, like a machine.

Music could be a form of emotional technology to control my own behavior intelligently. In other words, if emotions are the products of material processes, then art could be viewed as a form of

technology. From the standpoint of this musical materialism, as one of the most extreme implications of an unadulterated materialism, lay a possible solution to dominance of my own

analytic and objective tendency to materialize everything. I began to listen to music, especially German music (and especially Wagner and Bach), as a form of technology to counter my own tendencies to view everything as material or technology.”

- “Bach is ground from outside of myself that makes up for the nihilistic lack of ground within myself. Bach counters my material self-consistency and its tendency towards self-decomposition

with a form of holistic-mind order.”

- “It is a fundamental hypothesis of this work that, not indifference, but an active blind spot to certain kinds of “truth”, certain kinds of objectivity, is the condition of biological human life. Martin Heidegger is what happens when one believes in one’s own emotions, i.e. poetry.”

- “If life is truly meaningless and there is no rational basis for choosing among fundamental

alternatives, then all choices are equal and there is no fundamental ground for choosing life over death.”

- “Liberals are not at all fully nihilistic. In part, there is the practical belief in values vaguely corresponding to human rights. But more fundamentally, “secularists” implicitly

believe in a religion of the common emotions. They generally believe that meaning is to be found in the material, biochemical processes that humans experience as emotions.”

- “Were Nietzsche and the Athenians right about Socrates? Reason appears unable to determine values and, therefore, the entire Western pretension to rationalism is a kind of joke. And even worse, it’s not even a good joke.”

- “From a Darwinistic view, every capacity for emotion evolved as a product of genetic adaptation. Emotions, then, are biochemical-based illusions that evolved to propagate genes. Pleasure, happiness, emotions, and desire: these are the evolutionary tricks that promoted the survival of our ancestors. The “happiness” and “sadness” of present day humans are the genetically adaptations of generations of ancestors. This is “happiness”, the great goal of humanity has been striving for: a particular configuration of biochemical reactions.” (Ha!)

- “For some, the meaninglessness gleaned from a scientific view of life leads to nausea, angst, and nihilistic despair. I reject this attitude on the grounds that nausea, angst, and nihilistic despair also originate in material reactions in the brain. What does despair mean to someone who interprets that emotion as a chemical reaction in the brain? The process of disillusionment can also be disillusioned and de-aestheticized.”

- “What is closest to total indifference is to be dead. If an observer hypothesizes death then, from that perspective, the observer has no vested interests in life and thus possible grounds for

the most objective view. The more an observer is reduced to nothing, the more the observer is no longer a factor, the more the observer might set the conditions for the most rigorous objectivity.” (selflessness)

- “It is likely that most people will not even consider the veracity of this correlation between death and objectivity even if they understand it intellectually because most will consciously or unconsciously choose to place the interests of self-preservation over the interests of objectivity. In other words, to even consider the validity of this view assumes that one is willing and able to even consider prioritizing objectivity over one’s own self-preservation. Since it not safe to simply assume this on an individual level, let alone a social level, relatively few are willing and able to seriously address this issue (and majority consensus can be expected to dismiss the issue). In short, for most people, including most “scientists”, overcoming self-preservation is not ultimately a subject for rational debate and objective discussion.” (the path is narrow, most people are not philosophers, Taoism and the supremacy of direct experience)

- “I cannot fully reconcile my understanding of the world with my existence in it.”

- “To pursue science, scientists must be justified by something that, strictly speaking, is not science itself, i.e. curiosity, wonder, faith in science, the will to master all knowledge, belief that

it will benefit the world, belief in pure knowledge for its own sake, or some other breach of objectivity. Because science, apparently, cannot consistently justify itself, something else must if it is to exist at all.”

- “The attempt to eliminate all subjective bias would culminate in the elimination of science, for science has failed to produce evidence that it is capable of fully justifying itself. The very existence of science is the strongest evidence that scientists are less than fully objective. An attempted self-consistent objectivity is a self-destructing objectivity, since the bias of the subjective belief in the value of objectivity must be removed to be objective. This implies that an

objective “theory of all” could not account for itself.”

- “How, then, does a scientist choose a subject to study? Is there a way to objectively determine what the subject of objectivity should be? Is there a fundamentally objective reason for choosing the study of archaeology over the study of chemistry? Is the decision to study Sanskrit over Chinese more rational than the decision to worship Allah over not worshiping Allah? Is there a fundamentally rational ground for making one choice over another?”

- “Even once one has decided on some facet of reality, there is still the problem of interpretation. Consider the interpretation that my interpretation is just a way of throwing order upon the chaos of the world. Is this interpretation itself a just a way of throwing order on the chaos of the world? Even the word “chaos” imposes a kind of order over (things), which cannot (?) be put into (words). In any case, if objectivity cannot justify itself then objectivity is subjective in the sense of being selective; one must always determine what the dominant factors are; what is important; the value of facts. Some facts are valued at the expense of others. Some things are selected for study, while others are neglected or demoted. I can find no definitive, objective way to choose one subject or field of inquiry over another. Why am I even reflecting on this problem right now

at the expense of some other problem? This work thus appears, by definition, subjective, in that I chose certain domains as subjects of objectivity at the expense of others. How, then, can I justify the subjects I “choose” to be objective about?”

- “If I had no biases I would be dead, rather that sitting here right now, writing about them.” (this is towards the end of the letter. The misspellings and poorly structured sentence says a lot in a 'strange/poor' way. It's almost as if he is 'cracking')

- “By simply changing my values from life values to death values, and setting my trajectory for rational biological self-destruction, I am able to liberate myself from many of the biases that

dominate the horizons of most people’s lives.” (I feel Mckenna might say this in a more 'optimistic' fashion)

- “This means, however, that for the average Westerner who plays the basic ‘Euclidean’ rules of the liberal democratic system, my ‘non-Euclidean’ logic will likely appear to be “irrational”. It may appear repugnant to the “nature” of individual self-preservation. Yet if my theory is nearly

universally condemned, does this mean that I do not have a valid point or does it mean

that other observers are not willing to prioritize objectivity over the bias of self-preservation?” (jean amery speaks of the 'logic of life' and the 'logic of death' which is why he thinks that most psychological theories have 'some truth' to them, but they all hinge of an unjustified preference for life)

- “My objective is to kill myself. Now how can I explain this? If reason cannot determine ultimate values, then how do I explain the facts of my values? I can begin to explain myself through the Nietzschean distinction between truth and life. It is a modern delusion to believe that pursuit of truth has any necessary correspondence with life-affirming values. To not gloss over the forks between these paths with myths and compromises, but to confront them openly, directly, and as far as possible, without illusion, can lead to the path of truth and death.”

- “Yet if Gödel is right, then it may be that to understand yourself is to understand that you can

never fully understand yourself.”

- “The attempt to fully include one’s self in one’s own theory can never, it seems, be achieved. However, the attempt to approach this state amounts to a process of rational self-destruction because, in order to approach objectivity, the elimination of subjectivity must proceed, and the elimination of all self-interest approaches the elimination of biases of life over death. Rational self-destruction that culminates in death is correlated with the most thorough attempt at

scientific objectivity: the attempt to include one’s self in one’s own scientific Weltanschauung. The impossible goal of self-consistent objectivity nonetheless approaches a definition of suicide or death through the attempt at the consistent elimination of biases towards life.”

- “I cannot synthesize this work with my living, sociobiological existence. I cannot live with the implications of my work and this leaves the possibility of separating the interests of truth and life.” (this is an almost 'sad/desperate' paragraph coming from someone who is cracking under the pressure of existence, of being. Nihilism, or naturalism vs theism, material vs non-temporal are seemingly irreconcilible, which leads to what Heisman refers to as 'rational self-destruction)

- “The literal act of killing myself is a literal act of willing the progress of equality — the equality of the biological and the physical — by overcoming biological boundaries that preserve biology “above” the larger physical environment. Biological life or biological self-preservation, in other words, has no superior status to any other form of matter. This work embodies acts that rationally and systematically deprive my life of the conditions of its own self-preservation. Rational self-destruction is posited here as the actualization of an experiment to test a tentative

nihilism.”

- “Just as life is a process, the undoing of life is also a process or “progress”. My writings are daily affirmations of death. I am painting myself into a corner until there is only one inevitable act left. I am killing every belief and breaking down every value that upholds my very life until what is left

is nothing. An experiment in nihilism, I am destroying all values that uphold life until I am left with nowhere to stand.” (this is renunciation, this is what I am doing)

- “When all choices are equal, equality is compatible with total randomness. If all choices are equal, then the choice of death is equal to the choice of life. If life is meaningless, then God is nothing. (this is above, but important enough to stand out as a repeat)

- “When my father died when I was twelve, I dealt with his death by interpreting him as a purely material phenomenon. In other words, I viewed my father as a material thing and his death as a material process. Well before my father died, I had interpreted my own emotions as material processes and my reaction to my father’s death was treated no differently. If I treat myself and understand myself by the standard of physical materialism, there is no reason why I should not do the same to others who, by the same Darwinistic understanding of life, are also physical material.”

- “From a materialist, Darwinist standpoint, I and every other human is an animal and a

material object. All emotions, whether joy or misery, elation or depression, are rooted in behavior that proved to be genetically adaptive for animal ancestors.” (this is not a piece of apologetics from an evangelical christian, this is a dude who held to this, experienced this materialist worldview, and killed himself from it)

- “The distinction between the desire to know and the will to know is key here. The desire to know, motivated only by curiosity or pleasure, tends to be selective. The desire to know tends to ignore, repress, or otherwise not confront what is not conducive to pleasure or happiness. The will to

know is confrontation with all as it comes in life and a seeking out of the least pleasurable and the least joyous truths. This distinction is imperative here because I interpreted happiness, pleasure,

and joy itself as “material”, as the product of physical processes, and strove to overcome

submission to their biasing influence.” (how is this any different than Vivekananda or Kierkegaard in his will one thing?)

- “The decisive turn that made me different, or consummated my self-destructive difference from others, was really this experiment on myself where I systematically interpreted all subjective experience: emotions, experiences, intuitions, instincts as physical material; not better or worse

than any other physical material. This experiment, in its conception, amounts to a definition of disillusionment. Originally, the procedure was built on a radical selfishness— not belief in selfishness, but a tentative-programmatic one based on the tentative assumption that no premise is

fundamentally justified.” (fuck, this Naturalism is 'disillusionment', agreed)

- “Emotions are the root of beliefs. To destroy all beliefs, all belief in emotion must be destroyed.

After systematically interpreting my emotions are material processes for at least a year and a half, the cause of life simply lost its cogency.”

- “Disillusioned of belief in my own subjective experiences, at rock bottom, I turned to completely destroy myself. If life itself is without ultimate meaning, and is not fundamentally

rationally superior to death, then perhaps the test of the worth of life is found in willing death and self-destruction.”

-”Instead of attempting to overcoming my socially self-destructive tendencies, I gave them free reign. Instead of doing what strengthening, I do what is weakening. Instead of doing what is considered socially acceptable, I do what is considered humiliating. These little self-destructions help feed the larger ones. Yet, at the same time, it means in at least some respects, it means I

pay my rent and work out to keep myself physically fit, so I am in a position to achieve the most rational and most comprehensive self-negation.” (fuck, this is me)

- “So what, then, are the psychological characteristics of such a person who engages in such self-destructive behavior? Whatever the psychological quirks I might possess, my central problem is nihilism. Can the meaninglessness of existence be cured with therapy? Lie therapy, whether religious or secular, is overwhelmingly the normative state of the human race. Put another way, there may be sound psychological reasons why radical nihilism is not a condition prescribed by therapists. Yet if psychologists are scientists, and their own methodology confirms the scientific view of human beings as material things in motion, on what grounds can they criticize nihilism in itself? Only insofar as psychologists are not scientists; insofar as they are non-objective partisans of the ‘life party’ are psychologists fundamentally and irrevocably biased against consideration

of my point of view. Psychological explanations can be used, not only to evade the nihilistic, but to evade the scientific equation of the larger material world with a material view of one’s own mind — and thus to misunderstand the problem.” (the idea of 'mental illness' not being what it is normally defined as. Tillich makes this distinction, as does Becker, e.g. what could psychotherapy possibly say to the Nihilist? Nihilism is seeing the world correctly, happiness is for the pigs, Zapffe all say this)

- “I have become disenchanted and have lost spontaneous naivety to an extent that all efforts to

regain the cause of life ring hollow and fall flat.”

- “You must in some sense believe the subjective state of fear, and not anticipate and out-compete it with an objective, physical-material reduction, in order to take it seriously.”

- “The most consistent physicalism, a physicalism that makes no exceptions whatsoever for subjective experiences such as instincts, intuitions, and emotions, leads to rational self-destruction or rational death. Self-consistent materialism leads to interpreting every subjective experience, i.e. fear, love, inspiration, dreams, etc., as physical matter.” (again, this is not an evangelical christian speaking, this is the consequences of a Naturalistic worldview)

- “My formula for self-destruction is truth seeking.”

- “...I ultimately concluded that unadulterated material objectivity was probably the most basic source of the problem itself...This meant that I could take myself apart in some ways, but I could not put myself back together.”

- “If life is truly meaningless and there is no rational basis for choosing among fundamental

alternatives, then all choices are equal and there is no fundamental ground for choosing life over death. Yet since I do not believe in nihilism, why not test “nihilism”? Perhaps I am wrong, but if

the question of whether there is an important question is the most important question, then testing this question is closest thing to importance. Since counterarguments almost always

take their starting point with a bias towards existence, to criticize this bias is to take a starting that is open to the possibility of death.” (Amery)

- “Every word, every thought, and every emotion come back to one core problem: life is

meaningless. The experiment in nihilism is to seek out and expose every illusion and every myth, wherever it may lead, no matter what, even if it kills us.”

- “Who is to say that a life of a saint, an artist, or a philosopher is superior to a life sniffing glue.”

- “To engage in human relationships is to dwell within a mythological world.”

- “While one may feel compassion, does this mean that one lacks the capacity to discipline one’s self from being mastered by that impulse. That people are mastered by such impulses is only another confirmation of Darwin’s insight that humans are animals. Most humans are driven

overwhelmingly by instinct and emotion.”

- “If reason cannot determine fundamental values, then reason can be used to justify literally anything.”

- “Nihilism, noted Friedrich Nietzsche, “represents the ultimate logical conclusion of our great values and ideals”. This is the bankrupt, philosophical disaster area the West dwells in. I see no “bottom”, no limits to stop the freefall into value nothingness. Implicit in nihilism is the

collapse of the entire human cause. The ultimate logical conclusion of Western values is the rational self-destruction of the West. Is this absurd? If this is absurd then it must also be absurd

that I rage at the entire cosmos for having no ultimate meaning. But there is no reason to be pessimistic. There is no justification whatsoever for a negative attitude! There is no justification whatsoever for a positive attitude! There is no justification whatsoever for a neutral attitude!”

## 38. John Shelby Spong

- “My commitment, however, is to the reality of Jesus as a God experience; it is not a commitment to the reality of the traditional explanations of that God experience in Jesus.”

- “My spiritual life, I now came to recognize, was destined to be an endless journey into that mystery.”

- “I discover that God always transcends the grasp of my explanations. The fact alone drives me beyond any religious system that claims to possess the truth of God in any particular sense.”

- “The spiritual reality we seek in this postmodern world cannot be achieved without enlightened minds, but it will also never be discovered without warm hearts.”

- “Our task is to separate the eternal experience from the time-bound and time-warped explanations.”

- “Can that reality be separated from creeds, doctrines, and dogmas?”

- “Modern people today function as atheists, yet they still struggle with the religious dimension of their lives to grasp tightly an artificially respirated theism.”

- “...the theistic definition of God was never about God; it was always about human beings desperately in need of a coping system that would enable them to live with the anxieties of what it means to be human.”

- “...consciousness became self-consciousness and awareness became self-awareness...What was it like in the creatures in whom this new reality was dawning over whatever number of years it took to become the norm?...It was probably both a startling wonder and a traumatic moment of fear and enormous anxiety. I suspect these first of our human ancestors shook in their skin at the new vision of what life had become and all that it now entailed.”

- “It is one thing to die...It is quite another to know that you are going to die, to plan for it and to accept its inevitability. That was the human situation.”

- “It is one thing to be unaware that your existence has no meaning...it is quite another to deal with that reality consciously and to battle against it.”

- “Human beings...they will die and are aware that they will disappear...No other living thing before us has ever been required to embrace this level of anxiety.”

- “It means that if life has no ultimate meaning, we alone of all other creatures embrace the threat of meaninglessness.”

- “The fate of all living creatures is to lose, but only human life knows this self-consciously. It is not easy to be human.”

- “...human religious systems have never been primarily a search for truth; they have always been first and foremost a search for security.”

- “The fires of anxiety, born in self-consciousness, are thus banked by religion and we are content, if not grateful, to live inside the theistic definition of God that we created. Theism, therefore, is not who God is. Theism is a human definition of who God is.”

- “The sings of the death of a theistic understanding of God are all around us. Many of us will not allow ourselves to see them, because we have no alternative and would rather live with an illusion than try to embrace reality.”

- “We fear that if theism is dismissed, only a bottomless pit remains.”

- “Many forms of religion are little more than cultural manifestations of the fear of nothingness. That is why people become hysterical when theism is challenged.”

- “I know that I must either find a way to move beyond the theistic patterns of the past in search for a new way to speak of and to engage the ultimate reality that I call God, or be honest about living in a godless world.”

- “All of these stories from the New Testament make it clear that the meaning of the Jesus experience was that he empowered others to lay down their survival barriers, to step beyond tribe, beyond language, beyond the fear-imposed levels of our security.”

- “We need to recognize that even the word 'divine' is a human word created to name a human experience.” (Tillich, symbolism, Otto)

- “It is an act of enormous courage to embrace what it means to be a self-conscious human being. It is not easy to live with the awareness of the unrelieved anxiety that is the mark of human life.”

- “Jesus' disciples in every generation have struggled against their own survival mentality...This was a life so whole, so free, that he had no need to cling to it. This is the picture of one who has escaped the survival mentality that marks all self-conscious, human beings.”

- “God is experienced when life is opened up to transcendental otherness.”

- “The call of Jesus is this not a call to be religious. It is not a call to escape life's traumas, to find security, to possess peace of mind. All of those things are invitations to a life-contracting idolatry. The call of God through Jesus is a call to be fully human, to embrace insecurity without building protective fences, to accept the absence of peace of mind as a requirement for humanity.”

## 39. Herman Tønnessen

Happiness is for the Pigs

- Great intro/summary of thesis, starting with reasons why humans do not experience their 'cosmic situation': “...cognitive...empathetic 'disintegrity'...to hold cognitively incompatible views or positions...to prevent knowledge from penetrating 'volitional' (etc.) personality layers and this permitting it to remain purely 'intellectual'...Man's knack for extracting intervals out of his total term of Being and filling them with work and other pastimes, external sensations, chatter and small talk…

With that said: “This, to return to the analogy, empowers the crew and passengers in the space-ship to go on, polishing brass and playing bridge, blissfully unaware of their 'cosmic situation.' They are all psychologically healthy, content, well adjusted and accommodated: ontologically secure. They have a feeling of integral selfhood, of personal identity, and of the permanency of things. They believe in their own continuity – in being made of good, lasting stuff – and in meaning and order and justice in life and in the universe. In the most fortunate cases, there is a good, healthy unconditional surrender and submission to the norms of nicety and normalcy of the average, square-headed, stuffed-shirted, sanctimonious, middle-class North-American church-goer and bridge player, with his pseudo-intelligent, quasi-progressive, simili-cultured, platitudinal small-talk. Happy days! In this the best of all possible worlds. One doesn't notice until too late. In short: All is well (since nobody notices the end of 'all that is well') until one night: the day's work is well done and all the ships' crapulant fools frantically engulf themselves in a deadly serious game of bridge (till it is time for the night-cap and the tranquillizer). One of the 'dummies,' a champion brass polisher, suffering from an acute case of uncaused depression, goes to lie down for a while; he doesn't have a dime for the jukebox; the room is painfully satiated with embarrassing silence. Instantly and unexpectedly he is struck by an execrative curse of inverted serendipity. He suddenly, in unbearable agony, sees himself as an upholstered pile of bones and knuckles, with the softer parts slung up in a bad on the front side, and his whole like as a ludicrously brief interlude between embryo and corpse, two repulsive caricatures of himself. As for this flying farce, this nauseatingly trivial burlesque in a whirling coffin, and its aimless, whimsical flight through the void: 'What is it all about?' The question permeates him with dread and anguish, with 'ontological despair' and 'existential frustration.' 'Angsten' (Kierkegaard) constrains out of him all his puny, piddling hatreds, and petty ambitions in brass and bridge, and fills him with care and compassion for his fellow travelers. In other words, he has become a philosopher, an alienated, nostalgic 'cosmopath,' and, eo ipso, a case for psychologists and psychotherapists, some of whom want to study him and label his 'Daseinsweise,' others to 'unsick' him as well.”

- “Intellectual honesty and Man's high spiritual demand for order and meaning, may drive Man to the deepest antipathy for life and necessitate, as one existential philosopher chooses to express it: 'A 'no' to this wild, banal, grotesque, and loathsome carnival in the world's graveyard.'”

- “Ordinary language...it lulls us into this platitudinal world of small-talk where everything is taken for granted: life, death, the world, and man's fate in it, the society, the language. No reason to wonder or worry; everything is what it is and not another thing. The world is what it seems to be to a dry, unimaginative, down to earth, square-headed stuffshirt about mid-morning after a good night's rest. And as for such questions as what it means to live and die – there's nothing to it, it is commonplace, almost everybody does it. We are thrown into an absurdly indifferent world of sticks and stones and stars and emptiness. Our “situation” is that of a man who falls out of the empire state building. Any attempt at “justifying” our brief, accelerating fall, the inconceivably short interlude between our breath-taking realization of our “situation” and our inexorable total destruction, is bound to be equally ludicrous; i.e. whether we choose to say: (a) “This is actually quite comfortable as long as it lasts, let's make the best of it.” or (b) “Let us at least do something useful while we can,” and we start counting the windows on the building. In any event, both attitudes presuppose an ability to divert ourselves from realizing our desperate “situation,” to abstract, as it were, every single moment of the “fall” out of its irreparable totality, to cut our lives up into small portions with petty, short time-span goals.” (Vivekananda)

- “As for “value,” we are confronted with the chasm between an authentic life worthy of man, lived in clear and penetrating awareness of its utter absurdity, and a fraudulent, illusory life, lived in pleasant self-deception, essentially indistinguishable from the life of any other self-complacent, giddy-witted pig with some sense of cleanliness and indoor plumbing.”

- “Another question...is the question of whether such insights can be taught...The so-called 'engaged' discourse introduced in heart-philosophy admits of a third component which we may tentatively designate the degree of integration of knowledge. An example will indicate what may be meant by the expressions “integrated” and “integration”...the Finns caught a Russian spy...He knew the outcome...When finally the death sentence is pronounced, he completely collapses. What on earth happened? He knew the outcome with absolute certainty. We should want to say the spy knows about his immanent death now, in a new and terrifying way. He has suddenly obtained an insight, a knowledge which penetrates him, goes through bones and marrow and violently shakes up the total personality structure into its deepest and darkest labyrinths. Unfortunately, this “integration” of knowledge cannot be taught in any ordinary sense of teaching.” (me- Tozer says we need a 'Spiritual Experience', Huxley, Houston Smith, Psycehdelics, Nietzsche's lack of this direct or big experience, e.g. psylocibin vs cannabis, Vivekananda)

- “There is a nagging suspicion that the diagnostics are exploiting Heidegger's exotic language in order to “keep talking,” and thus keep calm and unaffected by the horror of the bottomless abyssus humanae conscientiae with which they are incessantly confronted.” (Heisman- when you take yourself to seriously, you get Heidegger's work: poetry. Ha!)

- “The fact that a patient is classified as mentally or emotionally sick prevents the psychotherapist from inquiring into the possibility of whether, or to what extent, his patient might be cognitively right. It is perfectly possible that a person with 'existential frustration,' 'ontological despair,' or simply 'sub-clinical depression' may, because of his abnormal position, be in a better position to look through the camouflage of life that still is deceiving the 'healthy' psychotherapists.” (Tillich, Becker, depressive realism)

- “Man's predicament is this: On the one hand we have man's high spiritual demands for justice, order, meaning,; on the other his, in principle, unlimited capacity for insight and knowledge – perfection, plus his intellectual honesty, constantly sharpened by increased sensibility of the most refined mechanisms of human self-deception, all combined to drive man to face his own desperate incorrigible fate of futility, satiating him with the most sickening aversion against life in general, human existence, and his own 'Dasein' in particular.” (Becker!)

- “He may be paying lip-service to the idea of humanization while at the same time surreptitiously practicing suffocation by exploiting the traditional ontological hebetants: work, religion, metaphysics, alcohol, drugs, lobotomy, everydayness, noseyness, external sensations, ordinary language prose, platitudinal small-talk, or chatter, role-playing, role experiences, social norms, rigidity, insanity or conformity.”

- “Aristotle said that a society, unprepared for true leisure, will degenerate in good times.”

- “The time is close when professional baseball, football, hockey, wrestling, and roller-skating just won't do to keep the labor force under a sufficiently permanent sedation.”

- “One of the simplest forms of suffocation (offering happiness and peace of mind through the most comfortable evasions and illusions) consists in nothing more than just the lowering of the levels of such “meaning demands. A modern man may find satisfaction of his ontological needs in a combination of experience and imagination in a pia desideria for 'victory of the supreme good,' 'eternal peace,' a superior culture', 'health and happiness for all men,'longevity, 'liberation of undreamt-of physical forces,' intergalactic space flights,' etc. one more unbearably exciting than the other.”

- “A popular suffocating metaphysical hebetant is often found in man's tendency to concentrate all energy and awareness on concrete objects, like the Company, the University, the Community, the Fatherland, Humanity, Culture, Civilization, etc.” (renunciation of anything transitory)

- “In the near future I envisage whole generations who will have reached the millionaires' level of disillusionment at a much earlier age. They will shiver in their nakedness under the white, indifferent stars and cry to psychotherapists for a solid and cozy metaphysical armour. But again there may be some, the true existentialists philosophers, who will rather risk to remain in the chilly outdoors than to give up a jot of the noble privilege of human 'ek-sistence'.”

- “...the chances are Zapffe (rather than being cured) would be baffled by Frankl's sophomoric philosophizing. 'You may be psychologically healthier than I,' Zapffe would gladly admit, 'but I must insist that I am a better philosopher. A lifelong search for a meaning in life in general, and of my life in particular, has led me – reluctantly, but with cataclysmic consistency and sleepwalker's certainty – to realize that it's all fantasy and delusions, divinely subsidized to put us at peace with our situation. You are certainly right that psycho-pathological explanations of my biosophical pessimism would be totally irrelevant; but I also fail to see what you can accomplish with your naive, maladroit metaphysics, behind which – if you will permit me to speak your language for once – I see but the profoundest, most fundamental trauma, and that the great universal repression which prevents all fatal insight into man and his cosmic conditions, the mysterious, grotesquely absurd origin and genesis of body and mind, their inalienable interests, and their final and complete obliteration, the return to the synthesis to the absolute zero.”

- “The biosophist is fully aware of the many marvelous metaphysics offering...to anyone who is willing to join this or that suffocating sect, and replace intellectually honest experience with fictitious worldviews.” (Vivekananda, Tillich, Symbolism)

- “The situation becomes farcical only when the hobby-man attempts to “unsick” the lifetime devoted philosopher, to cure him, as it were, of being insalubriously pessimistic!”

- “If a student has difficulties in getting to the university because of their fear of stepping on cracks in the pavement, this is not a problem to be taken seriously or the cognitive level; in other words, it doesn't raise the problem: 'is it really dangerous to step on cracks in the pavement?' It is quite a different story if the student has 'working inhibitions,' because he has struck against the stark problem of death and annihilation. His stomach is clawed to shreds, his breathing throttled by the anguish of nothingness, the dread of being no more. His behavior, his feelings, and emotions may deviate so far from what is presently considered customary that there is no question of their abnormality, in at least one possible sense of 'abnormality.' But his reasons for the 'deviation' may not be troubles in adjusting to narrow 'social' aspects of his environment, as is the case with our first student, but caused by the unusual awakening to a clear and penetrating awareness of a vast 'cosmic' environment to which there is no adjustment possible.”

- “...most modern men against the terrifying insight into their conditions, is their safe and busy way of life, which pushes back from their consciousness the intuitive certainty of death, until what is left is a mere rational knowledge of it.” (no direct experience of Nihilism, Taoism and the understanding rather than experiencing it)

- “The existentialists, on the other hand, find a life lived in utter awareness of man's cosmic conditions to be a life void of human dignity, a life not worthy of living. Every human being should be forced to mature beyond what is biologically advantageous, mentally 'healthy,' forced to face his fate, and open his eyes and mind to the unbearably agonizing insight into 'the wild, banal, grotesque, loathsome carnival in the world's graveyard.”

- “There is not a single sentence among what we today should look upon as adequate transmitters of our most important, surest, and most indisputably significant assertions, which may not at another stage of our insight become an object for ridicule and painful shame.” (Vivekananda)

- “Thrown into an eternally changing universe, human beings cannot be tied by a set of rigid rules for language, thought, or action.”

## 40. Huston Smith

- “Revelations can be terrifying.”

- “The most empathic epiphanies are those that arrive in times of darkness and despair.”

- “Secular modes of thought could handicap receivers today, causing them to discount intimations they might otherwise take seriously...”

- “…even the cures of souls has become, through psychiatry, a secular pursuit.”

- “...loneliness, withdrawal, identity confusion, and existential dread...Thanks to the fact that our society has become impersonal...”

- “There could not have been a more fanatical zealot for naturalism than Huston Smith the graduate student at the University of Chicago, but shortly before I exited that university my naturalistic worldview collapsed like a house of cards...Mysticism had scarcely figured in my education, but when it was placed before me undismissively, I saw it as true. There is a reality other than the one that science and common sense – a workable definition of naturalism – set before us...more ultimate, more powerful, more awesome, more significant, and more mysterious...My instructors had taught me that Plato's Allegory of the Cave was a brilliant piece of speculation, and yes, magnificent poetry too, but the book I was reading presented it as true...I soon discovered that its fundamental dichotomy – between this world and another world.”

- “The world into which I was ushered was strange, weird, uncanny, significant, and terrifying beyond belief.”

- “As in Plato's myth of the cave, what I was seeing struck me with the force of the sun, in comparison with which everyday experience reveals only a flickering shadows in a dim cavern.”

- “It should not be assumed from what I have written that the experience was pleasurable. The accurate words are significance and terror.”

- “Drug experiences that assume a religious cast tend to have fearful and/or beatific features.”

- “Ecstasy! In common parlance ecstasy is fun. But ecstasy is not fun. Your very soul is seized and shaken until it tingles. After all, who will choose to feel undiluted awe? The unknowing vulgar abuse the word; we must recapture its full and terrifying sense.”

- “Drugs appear to be able to induce religious experiences; it is less evident that they can produce religious lives.” (this is the line!)

- “The conclusion to which the evidence seems currently to point is that it is indeed possible for chemicals to enhance the religious life, but only when they are set within the context of faith (conviction that what they discover is true) and discipline (exercise of the will toward fulfilling what the disclosures ask of us). Nowhere today in Western civilization are both of these conditions met.”

- “I suspect that psychedelic religious experiences are having, and for the foreseeable future will continue to have, less faith-filled carryover than those that occur spontaneously...The most important one is conviction, carrying over into the non-drug state, that the insights that emerge in the theophany are true...The experience's content is certain because doubts that could enter only from the perspective of this world, which world pales before (where it is not obliterated by) the world into which the see-er has stepped...Except in the tragic case of psychotics, however, this world eventually reasserts itself and its claims press hard upon us, which claims in our culture challenge the validity of pharmacological theophanies.”

## 41. Lev Shestov

- “Where Nietzsche lacks faith, Tolstoy also lacks faith. But Nietzsche does not hide this (he hides other things), while Tolstoy believes that it is possible not to tell his disciples of the emptiness of his heart above which he erected the - from the literary point of view - brilliant edifice of his preaching.”

- “And if Nietzsche, who found himself precisely in this situation, could nevertheless not believe, we cannot find in this an occasion for scathing preachments. On the contrary, here we must be silent and listen, in order to learn to understand why the road to faith, once so easy and accessible and, in any case, possible, is now barred to those who have most need of it and seek it so passionately.”

- “Has Tolstoy the right to demand of us that we, without doubting the good faith and sincerity of his words, must accept his proclamation that "good" and "brotherly love" are God? Must he not tell himself that the indignation he pours out on unbelievers, and the prescription of physical work that he recommends as a universal panacea, can seem to us nothing other than a skillful - perhaps also unskillful - means of evading his own doubts?” (ha!)

- “In the words of Zarathustra quoted above, a stage of development is formulated which has become for modern man unavoidable. It is no longer given us to find without having sought. More is demanded of us. We must renounce, as Tolstoy in his time renounced. We must understand all the horror of the situation of which Nietzsche speaks with the words of a madman, which is hidden behind Heine’s humor, which Dante experienced after having passed through that door, which gave birth to the tragedies of Shakespeare and to the novels and preaching of Tolstoy.”   
- “We know that it is not so, that there can be guilt against morality but not against God, because morality is created by men but God is not.”

- “Zarathustra’s conversation with the pope already shows us how little the God who is the good could satisfy Nietzsche and how the image of a "judging God" made him recoil before the customary religious conceptions.” (Huxley- Atonement equals a lawyer's phantasy)

- “Let us hear how the pope answers Zarathustra: "‘O Zarathustra, with such unbelief, you are more pious than you believe. Some God in you has converted you to your ungodliness. Is it not your piety itself that no longer lets you believe in God?'”

- “Let us, then, listen to Nietzsche; he will tell us all that Ivan Ilych would have told us if he had been destined to remain for fifteen years in the state in which he found himself at the moment when he understood that "all was lost," that the "end, the final end," had come.”

- “Of God, such a God as he who has understood all the horror of his own helplessness needs, a God who, as Heine put it, "is able to help" - of such a God Nietzsche obviously could not even dream. The only thing that he knew clearly is what men had lost in killing God, what sacrifice they had made in renouncing faith. As an altogether modern man, completely imbued with the idea of evolution, the idea that presents our present world to us as naturally evolved from nebulae and considers man a link in the chain of evolution, how could he have dared think that his personal situation, i.e., the misfortune of his life, could find a justification somewhere in the universe? He knew that such a point of view would be called anthropocentric and that it testifies to the naïve ambition of an infinitely small particle to be the final goal of the world.”

- “As the reader will recall, Nietzsche wished to fill his existence with "love of neighbor" in order thus to hide from the terrible visions that visited him. And this is what came of it: the good said to him, "You flee from yourselves to your neighbor, and you would wish to make a virtue of this. But I see clearly through your ‘unselfishness.’"

- “"The worst enemy that you can meet will always be yourself; it is for yourself that you lie in wait in caverns and forests... You will be a heretic to yourself, and a wizard, and a diviner, and a fool, and a doubter, and a reprobate, and a scoundrel. You must be ready to be burned in your own flame; how could you be renewed, if you have not first been reduced to ashes!" ["The Way of the Creating One," Thus Spoke Zarathustra”

- “I repeat, it is an error to think that Nietzsche's experience was unique, new, unprecedented. On the contrary, it occurs perhaps much more frequently than is ordinarily assumed. But it is usually passed over in silence. Those who have it do not venture forth because of the general condemnation that threatens them. The merit of Nietzsche consists only in that he dared to raise his voice and speak aloud what others said only to themselves, what others, indeed, did not dare even to say to themselves because they were afraid of giving a name to what occurred in their souls. Perhaps Nietzsche himself would not have been so audacious if he had not been a man who had nothing more to lose, who no longer had any choice. "It is necessary to have seen the catastrophe at close range, better still, it is necessary to have experienced it oneself, it is necessary to have come almost to one's ruin because of it, to understand that there is no longer any joke here." [The Antichrist, 8] This is what he says, speaking of the theological instinct, about what morality had done to him.”

- “For ordinary remorse, as even deep and strong men feel it, cannot be compared to Nietzsche's experience. We know Tolstoy's confessions. We know out of what feeling of self-hatred The Kreutzer Sonata arose. But this is still not the same. In his peasant's garments and in his work in the fields, Count Tolstoy found not only repose, but even, if only for a time, joy. But in Nietzsche, behind every line of his writings, we sense the palpitation of a tortured, agonized soul which knows that for it no pity exists or can exist on earth.”

- “The investigations of the British philosophers and psychologists are the best illustration of this. If morality is only utility clothed, only the expression of social relations, it must obviously be stripped of all its sacred attributes and be reduced to the plane of purely political (likewise most useful, even necessary) prescriptions which protect order and security. But belief in the sacredness of morality was so deeply rooted, the conviction that a clean conscience is the most precious thing in the world, the last and strongest support of men, was so interwoven with the customary conceptions of men, that not for a moment could the English philosophers think that explained morality might lose the prestige that unexplained morality had had. They were convinced that no theory could destroy the magic of the sacredness of morality, and for this very reason they unhesitatingly raised utility to the position of ancestor of morality.”

- “That is why Nietzsche was perfectly right when he declared that he was the first to raise the question of morality. He put it thus: "In every ‘science of morals’ until now - strange as this may seem - the problem of morality itself has been omitted; there has been no suspicion that there is anything problematic here. What the philosophers called ‘giving a foundation to morality’ and tried to realize has, seen in a true light, proved merely a learned form of good faith in the dominant morality, a new means of its expression, consequently only a matter-of-fact within the sphere of a definite morality - indeed, in the final ground, a kind of denial that this morality needs to be seen as a problem." [Beyond Good and Evil, 186)

- “And - what is most important - the special attitude of Nietzsche toward morality was not the result of abstract considerations. The question of the meaning of morality found its solution not in Nietzsche's mind and not by way of logical arguments, but in the most secret depths of his soul and through the most painful experiences.”

- “What did Nietzsche know? What was his secret? It is in fact a horrible secret and it can be expressed in a few words: "The tortures of Macbeth are not ordained only for those who have served ‘evil’ but also for those who have devoted themselves to the ‘good."’ Nietzsche was the first who said this. And "the first born are sacrificed," die Erstlinge werden geopfert. This Zarathustra experienced in himself.”

- “Almost everything about which Nietzsche wrote is absolutely removed from the ordinary ideas of human thought and from the experience of the majority of men; consequently, a superficial knowledge of his works can only yield a false and incorrect judgment. This is especially the case with that part of his doctrine which deals with God and the good. Most people see nothing in it but an ordinary attack on church-going and the carrying out of certain unpleasant duties. But the passion in Nietzsche's tone should alone have excluded the possibility of such an interpretation of his doctrine. Because already before Nietzsche our time had been taught by even so weak a thinker as Tolstoy's Stiva not to take too seriously the practices of religion or the rules of morality.”

- “Ordinary free-thinkers would not have endured for a single day Nietzsche's trials, which he calls his "fortune." In his situation, they would have accepted as God the first idol that came along, made a duty of the most absurd rules, in order only somehow to justify their existence. And less than anything else would they have attacked the "good," which for many unlucky persons is their only support. And they certainly would not have rejected compassion, which those who suffer need so urgently.” (Cioran/Michelangelo)

- “Too clear-sighted and inwardly honest to deceive himself or others, he was finally constrained to remain alone face to face with all the horrors of his existence. Neither science nor religion nor the good could give him anything. And we can only repeat here what we have said about Tolstoy: Nietzsche rebelled against the good not because he was a hard, insensible, pitiless man. To believe this would be a mistake.” (pessimists 'religious' thinkers say the same because of the idea of the 'horrible,' total renunciation, renunciation of the self, of the subjective for the objective, stop seeing people as flesh, see them as part of the infinite)

- “As the reader can see, Nietzsche, contrary to the generally accepted opinion, did not listen to the immediate feelings of vindictiveness, bitterness, or petty egoism. All these sentiments were as alien to him as to Tolstoy. He pursued only the greathearted design of saving and redeeming man through the word. If he gave up this design, if he renounced teaching men love and compassion, it was only because he learned through hard experience that love and compassion cannot help at all and that the task of the philosopher is different: not to propagandize for love of neighbor or compassion, but to be finished with these sentiments, to find an answer to the questions they pose.” (beyond good and evil, Maya)

- “This sympathy invariably deceives itself as to its power; woman would like to believe that love can do everything - it is her peculiar superstition. Alas, one who knows the heart discovers how poor, impotent, pretentious, blundering, more likely to destroy than to save, even the best and deepest love is. [Beyond Good and Evil, 269]

This throws light on Nietzsche's "immoralism." If even the best and deepest love does not save but hastens destruction, if pity is impotent and helpless, then what remains to him who can neither love nor pity? Where is that to be found which is above pity, above love of neighbor? Tolstoy replies that neither he nor anyone else has any need of such an "above." Whoever so desires is free to believe that Tolstoy said this not for his disciples but to himself, that he did not know Nietzsche's doubt, that the formula "the good = fraternal love = God" satisfied him completely. But Nietzsche, according to all the evidence, could not think thus, for this would have meant depriving God of his sacred attributes, omnipotence, omniscience, etc., and exalting to divinity a poor, weak human feeling, which can be of help only where one can do without its help and which turns out to be impotent when the need for its help is most urgent. Nietzsche, in his misfortune, was obliged to reject the help and concern of men and withdraw into solitude, there to await his Zarathustra who would explain to him that there is and must be in the world something above compassion, that the "good" is fine and necessary for "all" but useless for some, that compassion consoles "many" but offends some, especially when it is brought to anyone as the gift of morality and as the result of the search for "blessedness.”

- “He clearly had the right to consider himself "beyond good and evil," irrespective of the fact that he knew how necessary and useful the conceptions of good and evil are to men for their common life. Utilitarian considerations did not interest him and they could, generally speaking, have only secondary significance in moral questions, so long as morality claims a special, higher role among the goals set up by man. Whether moral rules are useful or harmful, whether they protect or destroy the solidity of the social organism - these questions do not and cannot belong to Nietzsche's moral philosophy. He came to morality, like Tolstoy, in the hope that it would be all-powerful, that it would replace God for him, and that mankind would gain by such a replacement. How could he be satisfied with the fact that morality brings certain advantages by guaranteeing to society order and security (without forcing it to the expense of a police and judicial organization), with the fact that morality is nothing other than police and justice, introduced by a clever maneuver into the souls of men, obliging us even where the juristic norm no longer dares to raise its voice? All this interested Nietzsche as little as all the public institutions that exist in the world. He sought in morality divine traces and he did not find them. Morality showed itself impotent precisely where men would have been justified in expecting of it the greatest manifestation of its power.”

- “Lightning kills man, diseases torture him to death, other animals take away his food; all this is natural, all this is a part of order of things, all this conforms to the laws of nature. How inexorable and pitiless this nature is Nietzsche knew only too well through his own experience. When, weak, humiliated, broken, he looked with mad terror into his unknown future, there was not in the whole universe any good genius, any voice that might be interested in him. And this cruelty, practiced in nature with such system, we suddenly dare to call unnatural and unlawful as soon as it manifests itself in the affairs of men. It is permissible for lightning to kill, but it is forbidden for man to do so. It is permitted for drought to give the inhabitants of an entire country over to famine, but we call the person who refuses bread to a hungry man impious! Must such a contradiction exist? Does it not prove that when we revere a law contrary to nature, we take a false road? And does not the secret of "the impotence of the good" lie in this, does it not prove that virtue is destined to go around in rags because it serves a petty, useless cause?”

- “Nietzsche's collected works, however, except for the first volume, are dedicated to the solution of the dark enigma of life: idealism or reality. Nietzsche calls it "looking into the depths of pessimism." Logically he had to deny idealism and affirm the "insect," i.e., real life with its horrors, its misfortunes, its crimes, its vices. He was forced to give up the rare islets of the "good" that rise over the waters of the boundless sea of evil. Otherwise, the abysses of pessimism, of negation, of nihilism would have opened up before him.” (Naturalism/theism, objective/subjective)

- “Anyone who has studied Nietzsche carefully cannot doubt that his attacks are directed not against Christianity nor against the gospel, but against certain widely spread commonplaces of Christian doctrine which hide from all, and even from Nietzsche himself, the meaning and the light of truth.” (which is why he has the same ideas and criticisms as Tolstoy concerning 'Christianity')

- “He understood that the evil was as necessary as the good, indeed even more necessary than the good; he understood that both are necessary conditions of human existence and development; he understood that the sun must shine equally on the good and the wicked. This is the meaning of Nietzsche's formula "beyond good and evil." There can be no doubt: to Nietzsche was revealed a great truth, a truth hidden in the words of the gospel which we did, indeed, recognize but never dared to introduce into our "philosophical" conception of the world. This time also a new Golgotha was necessary for a new truth to be born. Otherwise life appears never to reveal its secrets. Here is how Zarathustra speaks of it: "Before my highest mountain do I stand, and before my longest wandering: therefore I must first go down deeper than I ever climbed - deeper down into pain than I ever ascended, even into its darkest flood! So wills my fate. Well! I am ready.” ["The Wanderer," Thus Spake Zarathustra]

- “The discipline of suffering, of great suffering - do you not know that it is only this discipline that has created all the elevations of mankind until now? That tension of soul in misfortune which communicates to it its strength, its shuddering in view of great destruction, its inventiveness and gallantry in bearing, enduring, interpreting and exploiting misfortune, and whatever depth, mystery, disguise, spirit, artifice or greatness has been granted to the soul - has it not been granted through suffering, through the discipline of great suffering? In man creature and creator are united; in man there is matter, shred, excess, clay, mud, folly, chaos; but in man there is also the creator, the sculptor, the hardness of the hammer, the divinity of the spectator, and the seventh day - do you understand this contrast? And that your sympathy for the creature in man applies to that which must be fashioned, broken, forged, burned, annealed, refined - to that which must necessarily suffer and is meant to suffer? And our sympathy - do you not understand what our reversed sympathy applies to, when it resists your sympathy as the worst of all pampering and weakening? [Beyond Good and Evil, 225]

How much force, how much passion, how much pathos lies in these words! It was in this way that fate fashioned him, Nietzsche himself. It was in his soul that everything superfluous, senseless, chaotic was broken, torn, burned, melted down, and reforged, in order that there might be born in it a creator, an artist, whom the divine gaze awaits on the seventh day. To be sure, men will not believe, will not dare to believe, what Nietzsche recounts. Men wish to despise the evil; what they fear above all else is suffering. Otherwise they cannot live. But Nietzsche himself, I repeat, would perhaps not have acknowledged his own philosophy if he had not first emptied the bitter cup that fate prepared for him. His "immoralism" is the result of a profoundly tragic, boundlessly unhappy life. For the light of this star to reach man, he must plunge into "the dark abyss of suffering"; only out of this depth can he see that star. In the light of day, however, the distant stars, even the brightest, are invisible to the human eye.

- “Again he plays the hypocrite, again he plays a role, but this time it is no longer unintentional, no longer with a clear conscience as in youth: now he is fully aware of his conduct. Now he knows he cannot do otherwise, and not only is he not horrified when he must say "Yes" aloud when his entire being says "No," he even prides himself on this art and finds a particular charm in it.”

- “For it was one of two things: either Nietzsche was right, or his tragedy was indeed so profound, so unprecedentedly horrible that all people must forget their usual joys and sorrows, their daily cares and interests and go with him into eternal mourning for a young life that had been unjustly ruined, or he must renounce himself and fulfill - not hypocritically, but with all his heart and soul - the demands being made on him in the name of eternal wisdom.”

- “Nietzsche was and always remained sympathetic only to the language of skepticism - and not, of course, the skepticism of the drawing room or the study, which amounts to witty remarks or theorizing, but the skepticism that permeates a man's entire soul and unsettles his life forever. Zarathustra says: "The shore has disappeared from my sight, the waves of the infinite have engulfed me."

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Kierkegaard and the Existential Philosophy

- “For Kierkegaard, philosophy is by no means a purely intellectual activity of the mind. The origin of philosophy is not wonder, as Plato and Aristotle taught, but despair. Human thought undergoes a complete transformation in despair and terror, discovering new powers which lead it to those sources of truth considered unimportant by other persons.”

- “...that the method of inquiry into the truth lies not in a search for "the self-movement of the concept," (discovered by Hegel) but in wails of despair which from his point of view are wild and meaningless, then he would have had to confess that his whole life's work and he himself amounted to nothing.”

- “No one has power over the body or over the world. That means there is nothing we can do: let the world exist for itself as it pleases or as it thinks best; we shall learn, and teach others, to do without the world and without the body that belongs to this world.”

- “can the gods be superior to the truth? Are not all thinking beings made equal by the truth? Men and devils and gods and angels—all have equal rights, or, more correctly, all are equally without rights before truth, which is wholly subject to reason. When Socrates and Plato realized that the world is ruled not just by the gods, but by necessity also, and that no one has power over necessity, they found the truth for both mortals and the immortals.”

- “In other words, if all external things, including his own body, can be given to man only in trust, and if there is no possibility of changing the situation (even though it would not be bad, not in the least, if everything could be arranged differently) then let it be so. Man still has a "divine" gift—the freedom to want a thing or not to want it. He is entirely capable of not wishing to own his body and external things as property: he is capable of wishing to possess them only in trust. And then everything will suddenly take a turn for the best and reason will actually boast that for the man who loves and heeds it, life in the world is good, and that there is no greater misfortune than to become a misologos. This is the katharsis of Plato and Aristotle, which the Stoics expressed in their famous theory that "things" have no intrinsic worth, and that autonomous ethics has its starting point in our freedom to consider a thing valuable or worthless as we wish. Ethics makes its own laws. It has the power to declare whatever it pleases (whatever pleases it, of course) worthwhile, important, significant, and also to declare whatever it pleases worthless, unimportant, good for nothing. And no one, not even the gods, can contend with autonomous ethics. Everyone is obliged to yield to it; everyone is obliged to bow before it. The "you must" of ethics came into being at the moment when Necessity said to men and gods alike: "You cannot." The ethical was born of the same parents that produced necessity: poros and penia ("abundance" and "want.") Everything in the world is the product of poros and penia, even the gods. And so, strictly speaking, there are no gods and never were; there are only demons. This is what reason teaches us, this is what is revealed to us by the rational view, by intellectual vision, by speculation. And could reason indeed disclose anything else, if it was itself born of poros and penia?” (reason leads to Nihilism, Nihilism is God)

- “From my early youth," says Kierkegaard, "I have lived a perpetual contradiction: to others I appear uncommonly gifted, but in the depths of my soul I know that I am fit for nothing." [IV, 218] Who was right, those others who considered Kierkegaard to be uncommonly gifted, or the man himself who knew that he was fit for nothing? Can one even pose such a question in regard to Kierkegaard? He himself says: "It is only in a religious way that I can understand myself, alone before God. But between me and others there stands the wall of misunderstanding. I have no common language with them."

- “Everybody" considers him a very gifted man; he knows that he is fit for nothing. Everybody supposes that he suffers because of trifles, but for him, his suffering is a universally historic event. His certainty that "everybody" will never consent to admit that his "sufferings" are worthy of any attention whatever makes it impossible for him to share his secret with others; this forces his anguish to an extreme pitch and it becomes unendurable.”

- “Nevertheless, Kierkegaard left the distinguished philosopher Hegel for Job, the "private thinker," solely because Job dared to talk like that. Job, as he expresses himself in Kierkegaard's words, also "withdrew from the general," also had no common language with others. The horrors that befell Job drove him to madness, and "human cowardice cannot bear what death and madness have to say about life." [III, 185] Kierkegaard continually repeats that most people do not even suspect what terrible things life conceals within itself.”

- “But is Kierkegaard "right," is Job right? Isn't it an indisputable and self-evident truth that madness and death are "simply" the end of everything, just as it is indisputably and self-evidently true that the calamities and griefs of Job, and even of all humanity, will not on any scales outweigh the sands of the sea? And does not "everyone," that is, he who does not know and does not want to know the horrors of life, thus find himself more favorably situated to grasp the truth than a person who has experienced these things.”

- “We now come to Kierkegaard's basic question: on whose side is the truth; on the side of "everybody" and "everybody's cowardice," or on the side of those who have dared to look madness and death in the eye? It was for this and this alone that Kierkegaard forsook Hegel and turned to Job, and at that moment determined the characteristics that distinguish existential philosophy from speculative philosophy. To abandon Hegel meant to renounce Reason and rush toward the Absurd without a backward glance. However, as we shall presently see, the path to the Absurd proved to be barricaded by "ethics"; it was necessary to suspend not only reason, but' also the ethical.” (beyond good and evil)

- “In his journals Kierkegaard says that he who wishes to understand existential philosophy must understand the meaning concealed in the words "suspension of the ethical." As long as the "ethical" stands in the way, it is impossible to break through to the Absurd.” (beyond good and evil, absurd perspective, all actions as the 'same', Maya)

- “Furthermore, how could the "ethical," which men associate with all that is most important, most essential, most valuable in life, come forward with its "you must" to champion that meaningless, disgusting, dull, stupid, blind thing, Necessity?”

- “Is there any hint in all this of that which we call greatness? Is ethics at all interested in the fact that Job recovered his cattle, his gold, and even his children (and twofold at that)? Is ethics interested in whether Kierkegaard regains his ability to be a husband? The "blessings of this world," as the spirit defines them, are of no concern: Kierkegaard himself tells us this at the end of Repetition. And he goes on to explain that everything finite becomes insignificant for a person with a proper understanding of his relationship with God. But then, this was known long ago to the wise men of pagan times, who invented self-regulated (autonomous) ethics. And if it is true that everything worldly is a matter of indifference to the spirit, and the essence of the "religious" is that it teaches one to scorn what is finite, then why bother, why turn away from Socrates?”

- “What if Job regains his cattle, and Kierkegaard his ability to be a husband—these cannot seriously matter to anyone and it is unnecessary to turn such trifles into universally historic events. Job would have wept, would have cried out, and would have fallen silent. Kierkegaard, too, finally ceased his weeping and cursing; for not only are life's blessings (which they were both denied) transitory things: Kierkegaard and Job themselves were no less transitory than their cries, tears, and curses. Eternity swallows up everything, as the sea swallows the rivers emptying into it and becomes no fuller thereby. And in the long run even the praise and censure of the ethical come to nothing in the limitless expanse of eternity.”

- (Quoting Kierkegaard) “We find ourselves faced with a paradox. Either the individual, as such, stands in absolute relationship to the Absolute, in which case the ethical is not supreme; or Abraham is lost.” (the 'suspension of the ethical' is the same as the Absurd Perspective, i.e. all actions being the same, beyond good and evil, etc.)

- “The fight he has taken up is too daring; even the boldest of men cannot avoid being frightened by it. Everything has been taken from Kierkegaard. He has "withdrawn from the general," he is "deprived of the protection of the laws.” (Cioran)

- “He notes in his journal: "Only horror that has turned to despair can develop a man's higher powers." [Journal, II, 204]

- “Quite a few men have their wealth taken from them, lose their children, fall ill with a serious and incurable disease. Kierkegaard says of himself that his suffering is "tedious." But Job's case is no more remarkable or more diverting! Kierkegaard knows this, and is frightened by it.”

- “Earthly misfortunes, however terrible or grand they may be, do not give man a deciding voice at the council of the great and eternal forces of nature.”

- “If Kierkegaard wishes to speak and wishes to be heard, he must win over the ethical to his side and put on its vestments. And if he does the opposite and appears naked before people, without any ceremonial robes—just as man looked when he came from the hand of the Creator, and just as each of us will appear sooner or later before the Creator (so Kierkegaard is convinced)—no one will stop to listen to him, or if any one does, then it will likely be to laugh at him.”

- “Fear of the power of necessity and the judgment of men never left Kierkegaard. He knew that his voice was the voice of one crying in the wilderness and that he was condemned to absolute loneliness and hopeless abandonment by circumstances which he could not alter. He constantly and incessantly speaks of this, both in his journals and his books.”

- “Not for nothing did he give the name The Concept of Dread to one of the most remarkable of his works. He had discovered in himself and others a fear that was unaccountable, unjustifiable, and unreasonable, and moreover, as we shall presently see, a fear of Nothingness. And to anticipate what will be explained later, it must here be said that in his struggle with his fear of Nothingness, he remained as before in the power of Nothingness. I must add that the fear of Nothingness, in the sense given it by Kierkegaard, is not a personal, subjective trait of his. Owing to the special conditions of his existence, he merely exposed this fear and the Nothingness that gives rise to it with a precision distinguished by its clarity and its great vividness. Or perhaps we might put it this way: that which exists only potentially, and therefore invisibly, in the souls of other men became for him an actuality, an everyday reality. This is why he maintained that the beginning of philosophy is not wonder but despair. As long as a man wonders, he has not yet touched on the mysteries of being. Only despair brings him to the brink, to the limits of the existing. And if philosophy, as we have always been told, seeks the beginnings, sources, and roots of everything, then whether it wishes to or not it must pass through despair.” (Tillich, Vivekananda, Cioran, Tolstoy)

- “But—and here lies Kierkegaard's final question—has despair the power to dispel the fear of Nothingness?” (Tillich thinks he answers this)

- “And still his truly titanic struggle with fear and Nothingness produces a shattering impression, unmasking for us those aspects of being of whose existence people have not the least notion.”

- “"What force is this that has taken my pride and my honor from me?" the ethical suspended itself from him. The ethical is unable to answer this question. It experiences the very same fear of Nothingness that paralyzed Kierkegaard's will. It is continually obliged to look directly at necessity, that terrible Medusa's head which turns to stone all those who gaze upon it. But Kierkegaard still managed from time to time to find the courage and the strength to tear himself away from the enchanted circle into which he had stumbled, and to search in life for another principle, a principle that knows no fear, not even fear of Nothingness. This is what led him to existential philosophy. It is pertinent to say here that even in those moments when like the prodigal son he returns to the ethical, he does in such a way that there is some doubt whether he is not more of a danger to the ethical when he returns to it than when he leaves it; more of a danger when he testifies for it than when he testifies against it.”

- “Is not such a celebration of the "ethical," in Kierkegaard's work as well as Nietzsche's, simply an expression of profound, irreconcilable, ineradicable hatred for it? It is as if Kierkegaard wished to say: men think the ethical to be a superior vital principle, but look what it promises you: do you accept this? Do not think to rid yourself of it by giving it a pittance in alms. It demands from you what you consider most precious in the world. It comes to Job as he lies in filth and says to him: I cannot give you back your flock, your riches, your children, or your health. But if you agree to renounce all this and admit that my praise is worth more than all the good things in the world, I will sustain you, I will take you to my bosom. If you do not agree, if you insist as before that all that was taken from you be returned, then I will censure you, will turn you from my bosom, and add to the horrors that fell to you from my brother Necessity new horrors, much more terrible than those you already know. Nor will I do this in my own name, but in the name of Him who called to Himself the laboring and the heavy-laden, promising them rest. For even He cannot, as even I cannot, give you "repetition," and the rest that He promised shall be many times worse than the misfortunes you have suffered.”

- “He writes: "I looked into the eyes of the horror and I was not afraid, I did not tremble. But I know that even if I courageously offer resistance to the horror, my courage is not the courage of faith; compared with the latter, it is nothing. I cannot accomplish the movement of faith; I cannot close my eyes and fling myself without a glance into the abyss of the Absurd." He repeats this innumerable times: "No, I cannot make this movement. As soon as I try to do so, everything begins to whirl about me." And he even expresses it this way: "To make the final movement, the paradoxical movement of faith is simply impossible for me. And I run to take shelter in the bitterness of resignation." (this is where I think Kierkegaard is 'closer to the truth' in comparison to Vivekananda or other mystics, also Becker talks about Kierlegaard's Knight of Faith being a great myth, story, ideal, that is not possible to reach)

- “Whence came all these "I cannots" and "impossible's"? Who or what paralyzes Kierkegaard's will, prevents him from making what he calls the movement of faith, and imperiously drives him into the sorrowful vale of resignation and inaction? Philosophy (that is, rational thinking) does not, as he tells us, have the right to take man's faith away with its glib talk.”

- “And yet Job rejected all the consolationes philosophiae, all the "deceitful consolations" of human wisdom—and the God of the Bible not only did not see evil will in this, but condemned his "comforters," who had suggested that he exchange his "finite" blessings for the contemplation of eternity.”

- “Two things have, I hope, become fairly clear to us by now. On the one hand, Kierkegaard resolves to suspend the "ethical," which is the expression of "resignation," and to a certain degree he is successful; not only Job and Abraham, but also the poor youth who fell in love with the king's daughter, renounce the "deceitful consolations" suggested to them by reason and by Socrates, and have no fear of the judgment of the "ethical." They do not care whether ethics recognizes them as laudabiles or vituperabiles (worthy of praise or blame); they are aiming at something entirely different.”

- “We must not strive for finite happiness—must not aim for the flocks and lands of Job, or the return of a son, or the winning of the king's daughter—for everything finite passes; such is the fundamental law of existence.”

- “Eternity devours everything and never returns what she has seized. She does not recognize "repetition" and takes from man with equal indifference all that is most precious to him—his honor, his pride, his Isaac, his Regina Olsen.”

- “But on the other hand, will "proofs" still be able to prove anything to a man for whom all is lost, all is over? Will there not be an end to proofs, in that case? There, in the abyss, in the depths of despair, thought itself will revive; this is the meaning of those puzzling words of the Psalmist: de profundis ad te, Domine, clamavi. That which we call "understanding" is like an enormous stone, fallen from God knows where, which has crushed and flattened our consciousness, beaten it down to the two-dimensional plane of an illusory hall-existence, and weakened our powers of thought.”

- “And that is just the point: to renounce rational thinking, to deprive oneself of the support and protection of the ethical—is this not the ultimate horror for man? But Kierkegaard has anticipated us: existential philosophy begins in despair.” (me- “Beyond Good and Evil”)

- “Kierkegaard had to drink more deeply than anyone else from the bitter cup given to man by the knowledge of his powerlessness. When he says that some terrible force took from him his honor and his pride, he has in mind his own powerlessness, powerlessness that made him feel that the woman he loved became a shadow when he touched her, powerlessness that made him feel that for him all reality was becoming a shadow. How did this happen? What sort of force is it, where can it be found,—this force which can so ravage a man's soul? In his journal he writes: "If I had had faith, I would not have left Regina.”

- “All that is not of faith, as Kierkegaard reminds us in the enigmatic words of the Apostle, is sin.”

- “As long as man is guided by reason and bows before the ethical, "nowhere" and "not obliged" are insuperable. Without taking this into account, man decides, instead of seeking "the one thing that is needful," to put himself at the disposal of the "general and necessary" judgments for which reason, followed by its servant Ethics, so "eagerly strives." And, indeed, how can one suspect reason and ethics of anything bad, for they are our support, everywhere and in everything. They protect us from loss of honor and loss of pride! Can man think even for a moment that they, by their solicitude, are affording shelter to that "horror" which lies in wait for us at every step—that they are concealing from man's powerlessness not only his, but also their own powerlessness before Necessity?”

- “One must escape from reason, escape from ethics, without trying to find out beforehand what the end of the journey will be. This is the paradox, this is the Absurd...” (beyond good and evil, Vivekananda, Cioran, Tillich and courage)

- “It does not in any way alter the case for us to say, as did Kierkegaard, that for God all things are possible—for this implies an admission that God does not take into account either our reason or our ethics.”

- “The thought of finding a logical explanation of how sin came to the world," he writes, "is a piece of nonsense which could occur only to men who are preoccupied to a ridiculous degree with perpetually explaining everything, no matter what." And again, a page later: "Each man must understand for himself how sin came into the world—for if he wishes someone else to teach him this, it means that there is some hidden misunderstanding here... And if any sort of science makes an appearance at this point with its explanations—it will only confuse everything. It is truly said, that a scholar should forget about himself: but this is exactly why sin is not a scientific problem."

- “It would seem least of all appropriate for Kierkegaard, who sang the praises of the Absurd so ardently, to connect the awakening of the mind with knowledge; and since he had surmised that the knight of faith was obliged to suspend the ethical, it would be even less fitting for him to see any spiritual advantage in the ability to distinguish good from evil. But not for nothing did he lament that he was not able to make the final movement of faith. Even at the moment of greatest inward strain, when his entire soul is rushing in a frenzy toward the Absurd, he turns to "knowledge," demands an examination of the Absurd.”

- “"In that state (i.e., in the state of innocence) there is peace and serenity, but in addition to that there is something else: not confusion, not a struggle—for there is no reason to struggle. But what is it? Nothingness. What effect has Nothingness? It arouses fear. The great mystery of innocence lies in this: that it is, at the same time, fear."

- “Original sin, the Fall of the first man, as the result of fear of Nothingness, is the basic concept of the book by Kierkegaard mentioned above.”

- “...this fear is, as he puts it, "the reality of freedom, as the possibility of possibilities." In other words, Adam's fear was not motivated by anything—and yet it seemed insurmountable.”

– “The serpent inspired the first man's fear; although a false fear—fear of Nothingness—it was overwhelming and insuperable. And this fear has lulled the human mind to sleep, paralyzed the human will.”

- “It is my opinion—and I hope that the following explanation will bear this out—that Kierkegaard behaves contrary to his nature whenever he tries to amend the Bible (alas, he does this more than once), and that therefore we will come far closer to him if we say this: the state of innocence did not include fear, because it had no knowledge of limited possibilities. The innocent man lived in the presence of God, and God signifies that all is possible. The serpent, in the temptation of man, had at his disposal only Nothingness. This Nothingness, although it is only Nothingness, or, more probably, all the more because it is Nothingness, has lulled the human mind to sleep, and the man whose mind is asleep has become the prey or the victim of fear, even though there is no reason or basis for fear. But then, Nothingness is only Nothingness. How did it happen to turn into Something? And once having become Something, how did it acquire such limitless power over man, and even over all existence?”

- “When Jesus was asked which was the first commandment of all, he replied: "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord" (Mark 12:29). How, then, could Kierkegaard assume that innocence (i.e., the state of man as he stood in the direct presence of God) presupposes fear of Nothingness and, therefore, contains within itself the source of, or the potential for, those horrors of which human life is full and which he himself depicts with such incomparable, stunning power both in his journals and in his other works?”

- “As long as we put our trust in reason and the knowledge which reason brings, the rights of Nothingness and the rights of Necessity will be guaranteed by self-evidences which we have not the power to overcome, and which we dare not even try to overcome. Kierkegaard went to Job, went to Abraham, invoked the Absurd and craved Faith, only because he hoped in this way to blow up the impregnable fortress behind whose walls speculative thought was hiding all-destroying Nothingness.”

- “The fear of Nothingness is thus made plain to us, not as a condition inherent in Innocence and Ignorance, but as a condition inherent in sin and knowledge.”

- “This is no doubt why modern life, weary of positivism and disillusioned by it, but possessed of neither the strength nor the desire to go beyond the boundaries it has established, has made such a fierce attack upon the work of the mystics.”

- “Kierkegaard always disassociated himself from mystics and obviously did not trust them. He reproaches them for their impetuosity and even for their obtrusiveness. What he says about them might be more succinctly expressed in the words of Holy Scripture: they already have their reward. The more gifted, the more fiery, the more daring a mystic is, the more one feels, both in his writings and in his life, that he has already received his full reward and there is nothing more to be expected from any quarter.” (me- his/my need for the psychedelic experience?, As Tillich says: the mystical experience is not as all-encompassing and powerful as the experience of Nothingness/Meaninglessness, my 'disagreement' with someone like Underhill or other mystics who claim that they have 'escaped' Nothingness or Meaninglessness, maybe these are two distinct things)

- “He approached the mystery of the Fall without having rid himself of the "uncertainty of fear" (is it indeed possible to get rid of fear; has anyone ever succeeded in driving it away?), and then he found it necessary to misinterpret, i.e., to amend and alter the Biblical story and even to invest the state of innocence with what he had found in his own experience, the experience of a sinful, fallen man. He achieved a "logical explanation" which he had so stubbornly resisted.”

- “But the fear of Nothingness has remained, and Kierkegaard cannot and does not want to forget about it. However, in order to retain at least the semblance of consistency, he performs a metabasis eis allo genos which is almost completely imperceptible to the inexperienced eye. He began with pointless and causeless fear; next he substitutes for the word "fear" the quite similar word "terror," and then, as if it were perfectly natural, he proceeds to the real horror of life, from which his mind can never free itself. But in fact, fear of Nothingness, by which sin is maintained, has nothing in common with the terror experienced by children as they listen to tales of perilous adventure and the like. Kierkegaard himself observed correctly that inherent in terror there is a moment of "sweetness" which always accompanies our fancies of the mysterious, the extraordinary, and the marvelous. The origin of fear of Nothingness is altogether different from the origin of terror; it is also impossible to demonstrate any direct link between fear of Nothingness and the horrors of which human life is full. That is precisely why this fear is pointless and causeless, and, in its pointlessness and causelessness, so incomprehensible to us.” (Tillich)

- “'The Nothingness of fear thus seems to be a complex of premonitions which the individual considers more and more closely all the time, even though they have practically no meaning as far as the fear is concerned (that is, they offer it no sustenance, so to speak): nevertheless this is not the kind of Nothingness to which the individual has no relationship, but a Nothingness which has a vital mutual relationship with the ignorance of innocence.'” (Tillich)

- “Only in the Bible is there an indication that all is not well with reason and the eternal truths conveyed by reason. God warned man against knowledge: thou shalt surely die.”

- “Faith leads to the tree of life, and from the tree of life comes, not knowledge, not theoretical philosophy, but existential philosophy.”

- “Kierkegaard does not decide to accept the story of Genesis about the Fall of the first man without reservations and without making corrections. He takes exception to the Biblical serpent, he cannot grant that the ignorance of the first man revealed the truth to him and that knowledge of good and evil implies sin.”

- “But when someone asks you a stupid question, beware of answering it—you will become just as stupid as the questioner.” (Ha!)

- “The choice is made for him by Nothingness, which—Kierkegaard, again, has told us of this— turns out to be a Proteus. In the beginning it assumes the form of Necessity. Now it has adopted the guise of the "ethical." And it will not stop at this. Before our eyes it will take the shape of Eternity, Infinity, love. And consequently existential philosophy will retreat further and further before the objective truth of theoretical philosophy, against which Kierkegaard fought so desperately, and which he considers to be mankind's most terrible enemy.”

- “Not just Socrates, not just Kant—but Hegel, too, would have saluted Kierkegaard. Hegel went even further; he completely rejected the miracles of the Gospels, and was angered by them, thinking them to be a "violation of the spirit." And, indeed, this is true: the miracle described in Acts is capable of obscuring completely, and making us forget, all the edifying discourses ever uttered by men. Is this not offensive? And would it not have been better if the Apostle Peter had limited himself simply to words of love and comfort, instead of healing a lame man, as Jesus of Nazareth himself had once done? Or if the lame man himself, rising to those heights where the ethical dwells, had said to the Apostle: I have no need of your miracles, I seek only love and charity, for, although I am no Hegel, I do know for certain that miracles are a violation of the spirit.”

- “And there is only one way to save oneself from it, which Zeus recommended to Chryssip: to leave the world of-the finite or the "real" for the ideal world. Love, charity, and all the other virtues have an intrinsic value, completely independent of the course of events in the outside world, in which they cannot, and do not wish to, change anything. Even if all mankind, all living creatures should vanish from their presence—love and charity and the whole multitude of virtues surrounding them would not be moved or disturbed in their self-sufficient and self-satisfied existence.”

- “The ethical and its "gifts" are not supreme. In the face of the horrors that befell Job, helpless love and powerless charity must themselves understand their own insignificance and appeal to another principle. Job's friends are guilty of the greatest of sins: the desire to deal in their own pitiful human way with a matter that awaits, and calls for, a different comforter. If the ethical is supreme, then Job is not only a lost man, but also a condemned one. And, on the other hand, if Job is justified, if Job is saved, it means that there is a higher principle in the world, and that the "ethical" must take its humble place and submit to the religious.”

- “All Kierkegaard's edifying discourses—and he wrote an immense number of them—are one continual fiery, unrestrained, ecstatic hymn to horrors and suffering. And although he emphasizes many times, with extraordinary persistence, that he possesses no authority and that he presents his edifying discourses as a private individual (for this reason he never calls his discourses sermons)—he speaks in the name of Christianity, refers to its good tidings. "My severity is not of my own making—it comes from Christianity." He repeats this in his later works, especially The Sickness Unto Death and Training in Christianity. He takes great pains to prove to us that the mildness of Christianity's teachings is simply an illusion; that the good tidings they bring amount to the same thing as Spinoza's statement that "happiness is not a reward for virtue, but virtue itself'; and that Christian happiness is, in human estimation, more terrible than the most grievous misfortune. In the intensity and gloomy pathos with which he depicts the horrors of human existence, and the merciless severity with which in the name of Christianity he preaches of cruelty, he does not yield to, and perhaps even surpasses, Nietzsche, who so astonished our age with his words about "love for the far-off." On every occasion, and even without occasion, Kierkegaard reminds us of Christ's earthly sufferings and, in the name of Christ, declares almost word for word what Nietzsche declared in the name of the superman, or Zarathustra: "Do you think that I have come here to make things more comfortable for the suffering? Or to show you who have lost your bearings and taken the wrong road an easier way? No, more and more frequently the best of you will perish, for it will become harder and harder for you." There is no need to enlarge upon the "severity" of Nietzsche's doctrine. It is true that people have become used to hearing it and are accustomed to it, and there are few whom it disturbs—but everyone knows it well enough. I remind you only that Nietzsche, like Kierkegaard, felt constantly obliged to avow that his severity was not of his own making. But then—whence did it come to him? Was it also from Christianity? Or does some other force stand behind the Christianity of Kierkegaard, as behind the superman of Nietzsche?”   
- "The life of Christ," he says, "is a unique kind of unhappy love: he loved by. virtue of the divine concept of love, he loved all mankind... Christ's love was not sacrificial in the human sense of the word—by no means was it that: he did not make himself unhappy in order to make his followers happy. No, he made himself and his followers as unhappy as was humanly possible... He offered himself as a sacrifice only in order to make those whom he loved just as unhappy as he was himself."

- “Here is how he "interprets" the words of Christ: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," in his book Training in Christianity: "If you who are the unhappiest of the unhappy want to be helped in such a way that you will become even more unhappy, then go to Him: He will help you" (IX, 50). And in order that there be no doubt of what he understands the power and mission of Christ to be, a few pages later he again remarks sarcastically: "To go to a man who is dying of hunger and say to him: I bring you word of the beneficent forgiveness of sins, is simply shocking! This is almost laughable, but it is too serious to laugh about" (IX, 55) Thus, Christ taught men to rise above the finite, just as the ancients taught and the sages of today teach.”

- “He lingers with particular attention, not to say fondness, over the famous passage from the Gospel of St. Luke: if you do not hate your father, mother, and so on, Christ, Christ himself demands that you hate your father, mother, wife, children. This alone can reconcile Kierkegaard; only reaching this paradoxical limit of cruelty can "set his mind at rest," if the phrase "set one's mind at rest" can in any sense be applied to Kierkegaard.”

- “Kierkegaard felt the burden of "sin" in everything—but at the same time he also felt that only the idea of sin as it exists in Holy Scripture can inspire man and raise him above those self-evidences on whose plane our thinking wanders, to the sphere where divine possibilities dawn for man.”

- “Of course, it is very tempting to dismiss Kierkegaard and all his insights by citing the exaggerated and unusual sensibility which always accompanies a nervous disorder. And, if we approach the thinking of Kierkegaard with our usual criteria, there will be little left of it. All the horrors he suffered can then be easily challenged. He said himself that men cannot bear what madness and death have to tell them.”

- “It may be that in a certain sense, i.e., "practically speaking," men are right: but they have not the strength to reduce madness and death to silence. Madness and death can be driven away temporarily, but they will return, and, having returned, will carry out their purpose: they will ask man questions which he would rather forget forever.”

- “Kierkegaard was aware of all this; in Stages on Life's Way he wrote: "The bustling parsons and their advisors from the laity, who wish to deliver man from fear of the terrible, are opposed to me. It is true that anyone who wants to attain anything in this life would be better off forgetting about the terrible. But anyone who sets himself problems of a religious nature must open his soul to the terrible.” (amazing)0

- “"My severity is not of my own making," Kierkegaard tells us. But whence came the severity of Socrates, of Epictetus, of Spinoza? And—the time has come to ask one more question which is perhaps, in its own way, even more important: why did the Greek sages, who glorified virtue, elaborate so little and, as it seems, only lightly upon the difficulties to be found in the way of the righteous, while Kierkegaard's journals and his other writings are filled to overflowing with weeping and wailing about these horrors? Kierkegaard asked that men imitate Christ in their own lives, and seek from life, not joy, but sorrow.”

- “Bliss, for both mortals and immortals, is not to be found in the "finite," in transitory joys and the absence of equally transitory sorrows, but in "good," which has no connection with either our joys or our sorrows, and which is made of an entirely different stuff from that which men usually prize, or love.”

- “No one ever heard Socrates complain, and he certainly had reason to complain. He drank the cup of poison brought to him by his jailer as if it were a healing potion: how movingly was this story told, in the words of the disciples who were present at his death, by the divine Plato for the edification of posterity!...Socrates never heard of Job; but had he been able to meet Job, he would have tried to cure him in his usual manner: with dialectic and irony. Kierkegaard's books and journals would have evoked great indignation from him and inspired him with unfeigned disgust...Can there be any question that Pascal was right when he discerned superbe diabolique in the wisdom of that remote spiritual descendant of Socrates?”

- “...as Plato explained to us, the man who devotes himself, not to philosophy, but to his desires, will never attain the salvation which is reserved for the righteous and the righteous alone.”

- “...there is no escape, either for God or for men, from the horrors of existence. But, if this is so, if these horrors are so inextricably bound up with existence—then not only must they not be hidden away, they must not even be covered over; they must be brought to view, and must not be avoided, but sought out, not only accepted, but given our blessing.”

- “"Picture two believers," he says, addressing the reader; "one of them has passed his life on earth happily, without knowing poverty or sickness, has enjoyed general respect, and been a happy family man. The other man, on the contrary, has suffered persecution during his entire life in defense of the truth. Both of them are Christians and both of them hope for bliss in the next life.   
I have no authority," he continues, "and I am not about to take exception to this, although if you should come across a man who does possess authority, he would probably have something quite different to say to you, and you would realize to your horror that your Christianity is only a word, and that hell awaits you. I am far from considering this view an exaggeration, but I have no authority and it would not be right for me to say that I believe you will find bliss, as if I were a genuine witness for the truth or a hero of faith. But I do say to you: remember how you have lived and how he has lived. Remember what he had to sacrifice, he who renounced everything: both that which seems at first glance hardest of all to give up, and that which is all the harder to give up with the passage of time. Think of how he suffered—how painfully, how long! And at the same time you were living happily in the bosom of your family, your wife loved you with all her heart, your children were a joy to you—only think what a comfort it is to live your life in such peace and tranquility—and this was your life for all your days on earth... and then think of the witness for the truth. You did not live in idleness (I do not think that), but your work did not consume all your time: you were able to rest and refresh yourself; you may not have lived in luxury, but you did not know want... In short, your life was passed in quiet joy, but his—alas!—was hard work and suffering day in and day out. And now you have both attained bliss; you have attained what he has." Further on Kierkegaard tells us more specifically what the "witness for the truth" had to bear, how he was driven and persecuted, and after that he concludes: "Then both of you died and one attained the same bliss as the other. Think about that and then see if you do not say the same thing as I: what sort of "crying injustice" is this, that we have attained equal bliss.”

- “For, in truth, Christian doctrine inspires greater despair than the most grievous earthly suffering or the greatest misfortune."

- “We will recall that Kierkegaard not only remained aloof from Hegel and theoretical philosophy, but also drew a line between himself and the mystics; we would hardly be wrong in saying that what repelled him most of all in the mystics was the very thing that makes them so attractive to most people, even educated persons of our own time: their earthly bliss, humanly attainable right here on earth.” (agreed. Tillich also felt that the experience of Meaninglessness is greater than the Mystical experience, at least in the sense that we are engulfed in Meaninglessness at all times we are not in the Mystical experience, i.e. Meaninglessness is more prominent due to the finite/infinite distinction, i.e. earthly/other)

- “The Instant, where he published his vehement phillipics against married pastors, complacent theologians, and the laity who had turned Biblical revelation into a comprehensible and tolerable, even advantageous, moral system, and in which he declared that Christian man had abolished Christ, Kierkegaard frankly admitted that he did not even consider himself equal to the demands made upon him by Christianity. After repeating for the hundredth time his fundamental idea: "The truth is that to be a Christian means to be unhappy in this life and you will be (humanly speaking) all the more unhappy and will suffer all the more in this life, the more you devote yourself to God and the more God loves you," he adds, immediately afterward: "To the weak man this idea appears terrible and destructive, demanding a superhuman straining of all his powers. I know this from twofold experience. First of all—I myself cannot endure it (italics mine) and can only observe from a distance, only get a hint of, this truly Christian idea of Christianity... secondly, the peculiar circumstances of my existence have riveted my attention upon it; otherwise I would never have concentrated on it, and would be even less capable of bearing its burden.” (Tolstoy)

- “"Therefore," he writes, "I do not even consider myself a Christian—I am far from that. But in one respect I have an advantage over official Christianity: when I speak of Christianity, I am talking about the real Christianity and not adulterating it, and I speak in the same way of my relationship to Christianity.”

- “Kierkegaard himself could not endure his own "severity" and his "ferocious" Christianity, and I think it would not even be a distortion of the formal text for us to say that there is not a soul alive who could endure the severity of Kierkegaard's Christianity.” (I am having so much trouble because my philosophy is too 'severe')  
- “Human cowardice, as Kierkegaard said more than once, cannot endure what madness and death have to tell us.”

- “It would not be amiss to mention at this point that by "sufferings" Kierkegaard does not mean the usual hardships, however considerable, which men must overcome, and do overcome to a greater or less degree, together and separately, guided by the counsel of their reason and supported by their moral strength. When Kierkegaard speaks of "sufferings," he means the hopelessness and gloom from which even reason and virtue flee as from the plague.”

- “...the works of Schopenhauer, who was already at that time coming to be well known in Germany. They made a great impression upon him. "In spite of my complete difference of opinion with him," he remarks in his journal, "I was amazed to find a writer who resembled me so closely.” (Pessimist and Theist similarity, this is the message that is lost, this is why Nihiltheism exists in my mind)

- “We human beings suppose that the main thing is to pass our lives happily in this world. Christianity, however, holds that all horrors are of the next world; the horrors of our world are but child's play in comparison with the horrors of eternity; and therefore the problem is not to live happily in this world, but to achieve through suffering a genuine relationship to eternity.”

- “The terrible monster Nothingness holds us in its power. We know, we feel with our whole being, that this is Nothingness, i.e., that there is nothing to it, and yet we cannot fight against it, just as if it were not impotent Nothingness, but omnipotent Something.”

- “No one in the world can do anything against this age-old "law" of being established by almighty Nothingness: all are powerless, as Soren Kierkegaard was powerless—only no one recognizes or feels horror at his own powerlessness. There is no difference here between the wise and the foolish, between the learned and the ignorant. In fact, the wise and learned prove to be even weaker and more defenseless than the foolish and ignorant. For wisdom and knowledge not only see the perishable and transitory nature of all that exists; they understand that it cannot be otherwise, and that therefore everything will remain as it is forever, whereas, the foolish and ignorant do not even suspect this.”   
- “That is the basic and unshakable truth achieved by human understanding and demonstrated by human wisdom. Understanding has revealed to us that there is nowhere to flee from Nothingness.” (Tillich, doubt as a necessary part of faith, the infinite/finite gap)

- “...life tortures men and continues to torture them from all sides, and for a long time has been wringing from them the admission that what is, not only is as it is, but cannot be otherwise.”

- “The passage quoted earlier from Kierkegaard's The Thorn in the Flesh shows us with appalling precision the state of mind of a man who has trusted to "pure reason": he feels, as in a nightmare, that a terrible monster is advancing on him and he cannot move a muscle. What keeps him in this stupor? What has chained and enslaved his will? Kierkegaard answers us: Nothingness. He sees clearly that the power which has defeated him, the power which has defeated us all, is the power of pure Nothingness—but he cannot overcome the fear of Nothingness, cannot find the word or make the gesture that would banish the spell. He is always searching for new "knowledge"; he tries to convince himself through inspirational edifying discourses that our enviable duty lies in a readiness to accept resignedly and even gladly the horrors that fall to our lot...”

- “Plato realized quite clearly that morality is the guardian of truth and that, if it deserts its post, truth will meet with disaster.”

- (Dostoevsky) “Men yield at once to impossibility. Impossibility means a stone wall! What stone wall? Why, the laws of nature, of course, mathematics, the conclusions of the natural sciences. For instance, once they have proved to you that you are descended from the ape, it does no good to frown; just accept it as it is. Once they have proved that a single particle of your own fat must actually be worth more to you than a hundred thousand like you..., well, accept it, there is nothing to be done about it, for twice two is mathematics. Try to dispute it. For goodness' sake, they will shout at you, no insubordination; twice two is four. Nature does not ask your permission; she is not concerned with your wishes and with whether her laws please you or not. You are obliged to accept her as she is and therefore you must accept all her consequences as well. A wall, then, is a wall, etc., etc.”

- “Nevertheless, in the very depths of his soul man hates coercive truth, as if sensing that it conceals a sham and a delusion, that it has its origin in empty and powerless Nothingness, fear of which has paralyzed our will. And when they hear the voices of persons who, like Dostoevsky, Luther, Pascal, and Kierkegaard, remind them of the Fall of the first man, even the most heedless prick up their ears. There is no truth where coercion reigns. It is impossible that coercive truth, which is indifferent to all, should determine the fate of the universe. We have no power to banish the spell of Nothingness, we cannot free ourselves from the supernatural enchantment and stupor that have taken possession of us. To vanquish the supernatural requires supernatural intervention.”

- “For God there is neither a law of contradiction nor a law of sufficient basis. For Him there are also no eternal, uncreated truths. Man tasted of the tree of knowledge and thereby ruined both himself and all his descendants; the fruit of the tree of life has become inaccessible to him, his existence has become an illusion, has turned into a shadow, like Kierkegaard's love for Regina Olsen. So it has been—Scripture bears witness to that. So it is—Scripture bears witness to that as well, as do our everyday experience and theoretical philosophy.”

- “But the path to revelation is blocked by the truths of our reason and the laws of our morality, which have become petrified in their indifference. The heartless or indifferent power of Nothingness seems terrible to us, but we do not have the strength to partake of the freedom proclaimed in Scripture. We fear it even more than Nothingness. A God bound by nothing, not even truth and good, a God Who created both truth and good by His own will! We take this to be arbitrariness, we think that the limited certainty of Nothingness is still preferable to the limitlessness of divine possibilities.”

- “This is the starting point of the Absurd. It was from the Absurd, forged by the horrors of existence, that Kierkegaard found out about sin and learned to see sin where Scripture shows it to be.”

- “Kierkegaard's books, together with his journals, all his direct and indirect communications, are an unbroken narrative of man's desperate, frenzied, convulsive struggle with original sin and the horrors of life which arose from sin. Rational thinking and the morality which stands guard over it—by which men live and with which they are satisfied—brought Kierkegaard to what is most terrible of all: powerlessness.”

- “Historical Christianity, which adapts itself to the average conditions of human existence, has forgotten God, has renounced God. It is satisfied with "possibilities," convinced a priori that God, too, must be satisfied with the possible; Christians, as Kierkegaard put it, have abolished Christ.”

- “Kierkegaard experienced all this as directly and agonizingly as few in the world have ever experienced anything; as a result, hardly anyone has been able to give such authentic testimony about sin and the powerlessness of the will as he. In addition, rarely has anyone had the ability and the desire to celebrate so ebulliently, so passionately, so ecstatically the Absurd which paves the way for faith. He could not make the "movement of faith"—his will was paralyzed, "in a swoon." But he despised his powerlessness and cursed it with all the vehemence of which a man is capable. Is this not in fact the first "movement" of faith? Is this not faith itself? Genuine, true faith? He rejected the eternal truths of reason, he shook the unshakable principles of morality. If reason is supreme, if morality is supreme—Abraham is lost, Job is lost, all men are lost; the "Inflexibility" which has permeated uncreated truths will, like a giant python, strangle everything alive, even God Himself, in its terrible embrace.”

## 42. A. W. Tozer

- “The whole transaction of religious conversion has been made mechanical and spiritless. Faith may now be exercised without a jar to the moral life and without embarrassment to the Adamic ego. Christ may be "received" without creating any special love for Him in the soul of the receiver. The man is "saved," but he is not hungry nor thirsty after God.”

- “How tragic that we in this dark day have had our seeking done for us by our teachers. Everything is made to center upon the initial act of "accepting" Christ (a term, incidentally, which is not found in the Bible) and we are not expected thereafter to crave any further revelation of God to our souls. We have been snared in the coils of a spurious logic which insists that if we have found Him we need no more seek Him.”

- “This is set before us as the last word in orthodoxy, and it is taken for granted that no Bible-taught Christian ever believed otherwise. Thus the whole testimony of the worshipping, seeking, singing Church on that subject is crisply set aside. The experiential heart-theology of a grand army of fragrant saints is rejected in favor of a smug interpretation of Scripture which would certainly have sounded strange to an Augustine, a Rutherford or a Brainerd. In the midst of this great chill there are some, I rejoice to acknowledge, who will not be content with shallow logic. They will admit the force of the argument, and then turn away with tears to hunt some lonely place and pray, "O God, show me thy glory." They want to taste, to touch with their hearts, to see with their inner eyes the wonder that is God. I want deliberately to encourage this mighty longing after God. The lack of it has brought us to our present low estate.”

- “Complacency is a deadly foe of all spiritual growth.”

- “Right now we are in an age of religious complexity. The simplicity which is in Christ is rarely found among us. In its stead are programs, methods, organizations and a world of nervous activities which occupy time and attention but can never satisfy the longing of the heart. The shallowness of our inner experience, the hollowness of our worship, and that servile imitation of the world which marks our promotional methods all testify that we, in this day, know God only imperfectly, and the peace of God scarcely at all.” (agreed)

- The author of the Cloud of Unknowing “Again, he recommends that in prayer we practice a further stripping down of everything, even of our theology.” (Tillich, Vivekananda, finite/infinite gap, ineffability, etc.)

- “Our woes began when God was forced out of His central shrine and "things" were allowed to enter. Within the human heart "things" have taken over. Men have now by nature no peace within their hearts, for God is crowned there no longer, but there in the moral dusk stubborn and aggressive usurpers fight among themselves for first place on the throne. This is not a mere metaphor, but an accurate analysis of our real spiritual trouble. There is within the human heart a tough fibrous root of fallen life whose nature is to possess, always to possess. It covets "things" with a deep and fierce passion. The pronouns "my" and "mine" look innocent enough in print, but their constant and universal use is significant. They express the real nature of the old Adamic man better than a thousand volumes of theology could do. They are verbal symptoms of our deep disease. The roots of our hearts have grown down into things, and we dare not pull up one rootlet lest we die. Things have become necessary to us, a development never originally intended. God's gifts now take the place of God, and the whole course of nature is upset by the monstrous substitution.”

- “...it would seem that there is within each of us an enemy which we tolerate at our peril. Jesus called it "life" and "self," or as we would say, the self-life. Its chief characteristic is its possessiveness: the words "gain" and "profit" suggest this. To allow this enemy to live is in the end to lose everything.” (psychedelics, Mckenna)

- “The way to deeper knowledge of God is through the lonely valleys of soul poverty and abnegation of all things. The blessed ones who possess the Kingdom are they who have repudiated every external thing and have rooted from their hearts all sense of possessing. These are the "poor in spirit." (Vivekananda, Huxley)

- “"Whosoever will lose for my sake shall find." God let the suffering old man go through with it up to the point where He knew there would be no retreat, and then forbade him to lay a hand upon the boy. To the wondering patriarch He now says in effect, "It's all right, Abraham. I never intended that you should actually slay the lad. I only wanted to remove him from the temple of your heart that I might reign unchallenged there. I wanted to correct the perversion that existed in your love.” (Kierkegaard)

- “He had concentrated his all in the person of his dear son, and God had taken it from him. God could have begun out on the margin of Abraham's life and worked inward to the center; He chose rather to cut quickly to the heart and have it over in one sharp act of separation. In dealing thus He practiced an economy of means and time. It hurt cruelly, but it was effective. I have said that Abraham possessed nothing. Yet was not this poor man rich? Everything he had owned before was his still to enjoy: sheep, camels, herds, and goods of every sort. He had also his wife and his friends, and best of all he had his son Isaac safe by his side. He had everything, but he possessed nothing. There is the spiritual secret. There is the sweet theology of the heart which can be learned only in the school of renunciation. (Vivekananda, Karma Yoga vs full/complete/spontaneous renunciation, e.g. retreat into the forest)

- “If the longing after God is strong enough within him he will want to do something about the matter.” (head held under water, thief in the room with gold, Vivekananda, go mad for God)

- “Let him insist that God accept his all, that He take things out of his heart and Himself reign there in power. It may be he will need to become specific, to name things and people by their names one by one. If he will become drastic enough he can shorten the time of his travail from years to minutes and enter the good land long before his slower brethren who coddle their feelings and insist upon caution in their dealings with God. Let us never forget that such a truth as this cannot be learned by rote as one would learn the facts of physical science. They must be experienced before we can really know them. We must in our hearts live through Abraham's harsh and bitter experiences if we would know the blessedness which follows them. The ancient curse will not go out painlessly; the tough old miser within us will not lie down and die obedient to our command.” (this has a little bit of everything in it, Vivekananda)

- “...the life of man upon the earth is a life away from the Presence...”

- “The world is perishing for lack of the knowledge of God and the Church is famishing for want

of His Presence. The instant cure of most of our religious ills would be to enter the Presence in

spiritual experience, to become suddenly aware that we are in God and that God is in us. (Terence Mckenna, Psychedelics, Nietzsche's 'lack of experience', etc.)

- “Self is the opaque veil that hides the Face of God from us. It can be removed only in spiritual

experience, never by mere instruction. As well try to instruct leprosy out of our system. There must be a work of God in destruction before we are free. We must invite the cross to do its deadly work within us. We must bring our self-sins to the cross for judgment. We must prepare ourselves for an ordeal of suffering in some measure like that through which our Saviour passed when He suffered under Pontius Pilate.”

- “...the rending of the veil...is nothing pleasant...To tear it away is to injure us, to hurt us and make us bleed. To say otherwise is to make the cross no cross and death no death at all. It is never fun to die. To rip through the dear and tender stuff of which life is made can never be anything but deeply painful. Yet that is what the cross did to Jesus and it is what the cross would do to every man to set him free.”

- “why do they know so little of that habitual conscious communion with God which the Scriptures seem to offer? The answer is our chronic unbelief. Faith enables our spiritual sense to function. Where faith is defective the result will be inward insensibility and numbness toward spiritual things. This is the condition of vast numbers of Christians today. No proof is necessary to support that statement. We have but to converse with the first Christian we meet or enter the first church we find open to acquire all the proof we need.”

- “A spiritual kingdom lies all about us, enclosing us, embracing us, altogether within reach of our inner selves, waiting for us to recognize it. God Himself is here waiting our response to His Presence. This eternal world will come alive to us the moment we begin to reckon upon its reality.”

- “We must shift our interest from the seen to the unseen.”

- “If we truly want to follow God we must seek to be other-worldly.”

- “He is transcendent above all His works even while He is immanent within them.” (me- Stace has the same views in his book on Mysticism. Tozer has the same conclusions as a “mystic” then. Similarities, the paradox of pantheism)

- “How different for example was Moses from Isaiah; how different was Elijah from

David; how unlike each other were John and Paul, St. Francis and Luther, Finney and Thomas a

Kempis. The differences are as wide as human life itself: differences of race, nationality, education, temperament, habit and personal qualities. Yet they all walked, each in his day, upon a high road of spiritual living far above the common way. Their differences must have been incidental and in the eyes of God of no significance. In some vital quality they must have been alike. What was it? I venture to suggest that the one vital quality which they had in common was spiritual receptivity. Something in them was open to heaven, something which urged them Godward. Without attempting anything like a profound analysis I shall say simply that they had spiritual awareness and that they went on to cultivate it until it became the biggest thing in their lives. They differed from the average person in that when they felt the inward longing they did something about it. They acquired the lifelong habit of spiritual response.

- “The idea of cultivation and exercise, so dear to the saints of old, has now no place in our total religious picture. It is too slow, too common. We now demand glamour and fast flowing dramatic action. A generation of Christians reared among push buttons and automatic machines is impatient of slower and less direct methods of reaching their goals. We have been trying to apply machine-age methods to our relations with God. We read our chapter, have our short devotions and rush away, hoping to make up for our deep inward bankruptcy by attending another gospel meeting or listening to another thrilling story told by a religious adventurer lately returned from afar. The tragic results of this spirit are all about us. Shallow lives, hollow religious philosophies, the preponderance of the element of fun in gospel meetings, the glorification of men, trust in religious externalities, quasi-religious fellowships, salesmanship methods, the mistaking of dynamic personality for the power of the Spirit: these and such as these are the symptoms of an evil disease, a deep and serious malady of the soul.”

- For this great sickness that is upon us no one person is responsible, and no Christian is wholly

free from blame. We have all contributed, directly or indirectly, to this sad state of affairs. We have been too blind to see, or too timid to speak out, or too self-satisfied to desire anything better than the poor average diet with which others appear satisfied. To put it differently, we have accepted one another’s notions, copied one another’s lives and made one another’s experiences the model for our own. And for a generation the trend has been downward. Now we have reached a low place of sand and burnt wire grass and, worst of all, we have made the Word of Truth conform to our experience and accepted this low plane as the very pasture of the blessed.”

- “This universal Voice has ever sounded, and it has often troubled men even when they did not

understand the source of their fears. Could it be that this Voice distilling like a living mist upon the hearts of men has been the undiscovered cause of the troubled conscience and the longing for immortality confessed by millions since the dawn of recorded history? We need not fear to face up to this. The speaking Voice is a fact. How men have reacted to it is for any observer to note.”

- “In the living breathing cosmos there is a mysterious Something, too wonderful, too awful for any mind to understand. The believing man does not claim to understand.”

- “Everyone of us has had experiences which we have not been able to explain: a sudden sense of

loneliness, or a feeling of wonder or awe in the face of the universal vastness. Or we have had a

fleeting visitation of light like an illumination from some other sun, giving us in a quick flash an

assurance that we are from another world, that our origins are divine. What we saw there, or felt, or heard, may have been contrary to all that we had been taught in the schools and at wide variance with all our former beliefs and opinions. We were forced to suspend our acquired doubts while, for a moment, the clouds were rolled back and we saw and heard for ourselves. Explain such things as we will, I think we have not been fair to the facts until we allow at least the possibility that such experiences may arise from the Presence of God in the world and His persistent effort to communicate with mankind.”

- ““Be still, and know that I am God,” and still He says it, as if He means to tell us that our strength and safety lie not in noise but in silence. It is important that we get still to wait on God. And it is best that we get alone, preferably with our Bible outspread before us. Then if we will we may draw near to God and begin to hear Him speak to us in our hearts.” (me- same experience always leading to non-movement, quietism, isolation, inwardness, etc.)

- “A man may say, “These words are addressed to me,” and yet in his heart not feel and know that they are. He is the victim of a divided psychology. He tries to think of God as mute everywhere else and vocal only in a book. I believe that much of our religious unbelief is due to a wrong conception of and a wrong feeling for the Scriptures of Truth. A silent God suddenly began to speak in a book and when the book was finished lapsed back into silence again forever. Now we read the book as the record of what God said when He was for a brief time in a speaking mood. With notions like that in our heads how can we believe? The facts are that God is not silent, has never been silent. It is the nature of God to speak.”

- “Many have found the secret of which I speak and, without giving much thought to what is going on within them, constantly practice this habit of inwardly gazing upon God. They know that something inside their hearts sees God. Even when they are compelled to withdraw their conscious attention in order to engage in earthly affairs, there is within them a secret communion always going on. Let their attention but be released for a moment from necessary business and it flies at once to God again.”

- “I do not want to leave the impression that the ordinary means of grace have no value. They most assuredly have. Private prayer should be practiced by every Christian. Long periods of Bible meditation will purify our gaze and direct it; church attendance will enlarge our outlook and increase our love for others. Service and work and activity; all are good and should be engaged in by every Christian. But at the bottom of all these things, giving meaning to them, will be the inward habit of beholding God. A new set of eyes (so to speak) will develop within us enabling us to be looking at God while our outward eyes are seeing the scenes of this passing world.”

- “The flesh whimpers against the rigor of God’s inexorable sentence and begs like

Agag for a little mercy, a little indulgence of its carnal ways.”

- “Our break with the world will be the direct outcome of our changed relation to God. For the

world of fallen men does not honor God. Millions call themselves by His Name, it is true, and pay

some token respect to Him, but a simple test will show how little He is really honored among them.

Let the average man be put to the proof on the question of who is above, and his true position will

be exposed. Let him be forced into making a choice between God and money, between God and

men, between God and personal ambition, God and self, God and human love, and God will take

second place every time. Those other things will be exalted above. However the man may protest,

the proof is in the choices he makes day after day throughout his life.”

- “Be thou exalted” is the language of victorious spiritual experience. It is a little key to unlock the door to great treasures of grace. It is central in the life of God in the soul.”

- “His deep disgrace lay in his moral derangement, his unnatural usurpation of the place of God. His honor will be proved by restoring again that stolen throne.”

- “Made as we were in the image of God we scarcely find it strange to take again our God as our

All. God was our original habitat and our hearts cannot but feel at home when they enter again that ancient and beautiful abode.”

- “Another saying of Jesus, and a most disturbing one, was put in the form of a question, “How

can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God alone?” If I understand this correctly Christ taught here the alarming doctrine that the desire for honor among men made belief impossible. Is this sin at the root of religious unbelief? Could it be that those “intellectual difficulties” which men blame for their inability to believe are but smoke screens to conceal the real cause that lies behind them? Was it this greedy desire for honor from man that made men into Pharisees and Pharisees into Deicides? Is this the secret back of religious self-righteousness and empty worship? I believe it may be. The whole course of the life is upset by failure to put God where He belongs. We exalt ourselves instead of God and the curse follows.”

- “In the world of men we find nothing approaching the virtues of which Jesus spoke in the opening words of the famous Sermon on the Mount. Instead of poverty of spirit we find the rankest kind

of pride; instead of mourners we find pleasure seekers; instead of meekness, arrogance; instead of

hunger after righteousness we hear men saying, “I am rich and increased with goods and have need

of nothing”; instead of mercy we find cruelty; instead of purity of heart, corrupt imaginings; instead

of peacemakers we find men quarrelsome and resentful; instead of rejoicing in mistreatment we find

them fighting back with every weapon at their command. Of this kind of moral stuff civilized society is composed. The atmosphere is charged with it; we breathe it with every breath and drink it with our mother’s milk. Culture and education refine these things slightly but leave them basically untouched. A whole world of literature has been created to justify this kind of life as the only normal one. And this is the more to be wondered at seeing that these are the evils which make life the bitter struggle it is for all of us. All our heartaches and a great many of our physical ills spring directly out of our sins. Pride, arrogance, resentfulness, evil imaginings, malice, greed: these are the sources of more human pain than all the diseases that ever afflicted mortal flesh. Into a world like this the sound of Jesus’ words comes wonderful and strange, a visitation from above.”

- “The burden is not a local one, peculiar to those first hearers, but one which is borne by the whole human race. It consists not of political oppression or poverty or hard work. It is far deeper than that. It is felt by the rich as well as the poor for it is something from which wealth and idleness can never deliver us. The burden borne by mankind is a heavy and crushing thing.”

- “The labor of self-love is a heavy one indeed. Think for yourself whether much of your sorrow has not arisen from someone speaking slightingly of you. As long as you set yourself up as a little god to which you must be loyal there will be those who will delight to offer affront to your idol. How then can you hope to have inward peace? The heart’s fierce effort to protect itself from every slight, to shield its touchy honor from the bad opinion of friend and enemy, will never let the mind have rest. Continue this fight through the years and the burden will become intolerable. Yet the sons of earth are carrying this burden continually, challenging every word spoken against them, cringing under every criticism, smarting under each fancied slight, tossing sleepless if another is preferred before them. Such a burden as this is not necessary to bear. Jesus calls us to His rest, and meekness is His method. The meek man cares not at all who is greater than he, for he has long ago decided that the esteem of the world is not worth the effort. He develops toward himself a kindly sense of humor and learns to say, “Oh, so you have been overlooked? They have placed someone else before you? They have whispered that you are pretty small stuff after all? And now you feel hurt because the world is saying about you the very things you have been saying about yourself? Only yesterday you were telling God that you were nothing, a mere worm of the dust. Where is your consistency? Come on, humble yourself, and cease to care what men think.”

- “Our trouble springs from the fact that we who follow Christ inhabit at once two worlds, the spiritual and the natural...Merely to live among men requires of us years of hard toil and much care and attention to the things of this world.”

- “For this God-above-all position is one not easy to take. The mind may approve it while not having the consent of the will to put it into effect. While the imagination races ahead to honor God, the will may lag behind and the man never guess how divided his heart is. The whole man must make the decision before the heart can know any real satisfaction.”

- “Over against these sacred acts are the secular ones. They include all of the ordinary activities of life...The upshot of this is that we are uneasy most of the time. We go about our common tasks with a feeling of deep frustration, telling ourselves pensively that there’s a better day coming when we shall slough off this earthly shell and be bothered no more with the affairs of this world.”

## 43. Miguel de Unamuno

The Tragic Sense of Life

- “Man is said to be a reasoning animal. I do not know why he has not been defined as an affective or feeling animal. Perhaps that which differentiates him from other animals is feeling rather than reason. More often I have seen a cat reason than laugh or weep. Perhaps it weeps or laughs inwardly—but then perhaps, also inwardly, the crab resolves equations of the second degree.” (Hume would agree with this. Direct experience of existence is what is needed, not a futile reasoning through. Philosophy is to envision the consequences of views, not experience or tell you which view is 'right')

- “A human soul is worth all the universe, someone—I know not whom—has said and said magnificently. A human soul, mind you ! Not a human life. Not this life. And it happens that the less a man believes in the soul—that is to say in his conscious immortality, personal and concrete—the more he will exaggerate the worth of this poor transitory life.”

- “If consciousness is, as some inhuman thinker has said, nothing more than a flash of light between two eternities of darkness, then there is nothing more execrable than existence.” (Ha!)

- “Some may espy a fundamental contradiction in every thing that I am saying, now expressing a longing for unending life, now affirming that this earthly life does not possess the value that is given to it. Contradiction? To be sure! The contradiction of my heart that says Yes and of my head that says No ! Of course there is contradiction. Who does not recollect those words of the Gospel, "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief"? Contradiction! Of course! Since we only live in and by contradictions, since life is tragedy and the tragedy is perpetual struggle, without victory or the hope of victory, life is contradiction.”

- “If a philosopher is not a man, he is anything but a philosopher; he is above all a pedant, and a pedant is a caricature of a man. The cultivation of any branch of science—of chemistry, of physics, of geometry, of philology—may be a work of differentiated specialization, and even so only within very narrow limits and restrictions; but philosophy, like poetry, is a work of integration and synthesis, or else it is merely pseudo-philosophical erudition.”

- “All knowledge has an ultimate object. Knowledge for the sake of knowledge is, say what you will, nothing but a dismal begging of the question...But just as a scientific fact has its finality in the rest of knowledge, so the philosophy that we would make our own has also its extrinsic object—it refers to our whole destiny, to our attitude in face of life and the universe. And the most tragic problem of philosophy is to reconcile intellectual necessities with the necessities of the heart and the will. For it is on this rock that every philosophy that pretends to resolve the eternal and tragic contradiction, the basis of our existence, breaks to pieces. But do all men face this contradiction squarely?”

- “Little can be hoped from a ruler, for example, who has not at some time or other been preoccupied, even if only confusedly, with the first beginning and the ultimate end of all things, and above all of man, with the " why " of his origin and the "wherefore" of his destiny. And this supreme preoccupation cannot be purely rational, it must involve the heart. It is not enough to think about our destiny: it must be felt.” (Direct experience, entheogens, Pascal's disdain for anyone who doesn't recognize ultimate ends nor the importance of them)

- “All this talk of a man surviving in his children, or in his works, or in the universal consciousness, is but vague verbiage which satisfies only those who suffer from affective stupidity, and who, for the rest, may be persons of a certain cerebral distinction. For it is possible to possess great talent, or what we call great talent, and yet to be stupid as regards the feelings and even morally imbecile.” (so many people say this, cioran, vivekananda, etc. You can be a 'smart person' within the world, yet be a spiritual dunce, this is why most people do not comprehend the 'moral argument', regardless of the arguments validity)

- “These clever-witted, effectively stupid persons are won't to say that it is useless to seek to delve in the unknowable or to kick against the pricks. It is as if one should say to a man whose leg has had to be amputated that it does not help him at all to think about it. And we all lack something; only some of us feel the lack and others do not. Or they pretend not to feel the lack, and then they are hypocrites.” (Vivekananda, Tolstoy, Participation, Simple Salvation)

- “And I am convinced that we should solve many things if we all went out into the streets and uncovered our griefs, which perhaps would prove to be but one sole common grief, and joined together in beweeping them and crying aloud to the heavens and calling upon God.”

- “Consciousness is a disease.”

- “Do you want another version of our origin ? Very well then. According to this account, man is, strictly speaking, merely a species of gorilla, orang-outang, chimpanzee, or the like, more or less hydrocephalous. Once on a time an anthropoid monkey had a diseased offspring—diseased from the strictly animal or zoological point of view, really diseased; and this disease, although a source of weakness, resulted in a positive gain in the struggle for survival.” (naturalism)

- “The gorilla, the chimpanzee, the orang-outang, and their kind, must look upon man as a feeble and infirm animal, whose strange custom it is to store up his dead. Wherefore?” (Ha!)

- “Man has debated at length and will continue to debate at length—the world having been assigned as a theatre for his debates—concerning the origin of knowledge; but, apart from the question as to what the real truth about this origin may be, which we will leave until later, it is a certainly ascertained fact that in the apparential order of things, in the life of beings who are endowed with a certain more or less cloudy faculty of knowing and perceiving, or who at any rate appear to act as if they were so endowed, knowledge is exhibited to us as bound up with the necessity of living and of procuring the wherewithal to maintain life.” (Purely pragmatic, naturalistic concerns, a total spectacle of ego and 'showing off' ones 'intelligence, a complete and utter ignorance, whether intentional or not, of ultimate things. Atheist/theist debates of today, seemingly most academics of today)

- “...the philosopher is a man before he is a philosopher, he must needs live before he can philosophize, and, in fact, he philosophizes in order to live. And usually he philosophizes either in order to resign himself to life, or to seek some finality in it, or to distract himself and forget his griefs, or for pastime and amusement.” (fancy crosswords for most phillosophers, e.g. the arguments for god's existence and the 'knowing' the arguments of particular position holding to a particular concept, e.g. abstract objects or whether mathematics is invented or discovered)

- “Science exists only in personal consciousness and thanks to it; astronomy, mathematics, have no other reality than that which they possess as knowledge in the minds of those who study and cultivate them. And if some day all personal consciousness must come to an end on the earth; if some day the human spirit must return to the nothingness—that is to say, to the absolute unconsciousness—from whence it sprang; and if there shall no more be any spirit that can avail itself of all our accumulated knowledge—then to what end is this knowledge?” (why pursue knowledge 'for itself' if all knowledge ends in nothingness?)

- “For this is usually the reason why men philosophize- in order to convince themselves, even though they fail in the attempt.”

- “Whence do I come and whence comes the world in which and by which I live? Whither do I go and whither goes everything that environs me? What does it all mean ? Such are the questions that man asks as soon as he frees himself from the brutalizing necessity of labouring for his material sustenance.” (Aristotle said a society that is not ready for leisure will perish. If one is not ready for the questions of existence, then one will go mad)

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- “In each moment of our life we entertain some purpose, and to this purpose the synergy of our actions is directed. Notwithstanding the next moment we may change our purpose.” (Heidggerian)

- “If you look at the universe as closely and as inwardly as you are able to look—that is to say, if you look within yourself; if you not only contemplate but feel all things in your own consciousness, upon which all things have traced their painful impression—you will arrive at the abyss of the tedium, not merely of life, but of something more: at the tedium of existence, at the bottomless pit of the vanity of vanities. And thus you will come to pity all things; you will arrive at universal love.” ('Universal Love, God, Otherness, Nirvana, 'objectivity' as a result of Nihilism, etc. Heidegger says in 'anxiety' the world loses all significance' in 68B )

- “For all consciousness is consciousness of death and of suffering.” (well, yes, in a 'symbolic' way, Heidegger's everydayness/the nothings of the world, the 'they' cannot be dismissed as an 'overwhelming' part of human existence)

- “We personalize the All in order to save ourselves from Nothingness; and the only mystery really mysterious is the mystery of suffering. Suffering is the path of consciousness, and by it living beings arrive at the possession of self-consciousness.”

- “And how do we know that we exist if we do not suffer, little or much? How can we turn upon ourselves, acquire reflective consciousness, save by suffering? When we enjoy ourselves we forget ourselves, forget that we exist; we pass over into another, an alien being, we alienate ourselves. And we become centred in ourselves again, we return to ourselves, only by suffering.” (Kierkegaard, Seraphim Rose, Cioran, Vivekananda, etc. We forget our True selves when we are caught up in the world, this is frustrating, divided-self, double-mindedness, Heidegger says this 38. concerning 'alienation')

- “Although this meditation upon mortality may soon induce in us a sense of anguish, it fortifies us in the end. Retire, reader, into yourself and imagine a slow dissolution of yourself—the light dimming about you—all things becoming dumb and soundless, enveloping you in silence—the objects that you handle crumbling away between your hands—the ground slipping from under your feet—your very memory vanishing as if in a swoon —everything melting away from you into nothingness and you yourself also melting away—the very consciousness of nothingness, merely as the phantom harbourage of a shadow, not even remaining to you. I have heard it related of a poor harvester who died in a hospital bed, that when the priest went to anoint his hands with the oil of extreme unction, he refused to open his right hand, which clutched a few dirty coins, not considering that very soon neither his hand nor he him self would be his own any more. And so we close and clench, not our hand, but our heart, seeking to clutch the world in it. A friend confessed to me that, foreseeing while in the full vigour of physical health the near approach of a violent death, he proposed to concentrate his life and spend the few days which he calculated still remained to him in writing a book. Vanity of vanities!” (Ha! This and a Cioran quote could intro the book, maybe preface)

- “If we all die utterly, wherefore does everything exist? Wherefore?”

- “Why do I wish to know whence I come and whither I go, whence comes and whither goes everything that environs me, and what is the meaning of it all ? For I do not wish to die utterly, and I wish to know whether I am to die or not definitely. If I do not die, what is my destiny ? and if I die, then nothing has any meaning for me. And there are three solutions : (a) I know that I shall die utterly, and then irremediable despair, or (b) I know that I shall not die utterly, and then resignation, or (c) I cannot know either one or the other, and then resignation in despair or despair in resignation, a desperate resignation or a resigned despair, and hence conflict. " It is best," some reader will say, "not to concern yourself with what cannot be known." But is it possible?”

The Beginning of the chapter The Hunger for Immortality

- “The effort to comprehend it causes the most tormenting dizziness. We cannot conceive ourselves as not existing.”

- “Nothing is real that is not eternal.”

- “Like Pascal, I do not understand those who assert that they care not a farthing for these things, and this indifference " in a matter that touches themselves, their eternity, their all, exasperates me rather than moves me to compassion, astonishes and shocks me," and he who feels thus "is for me," as for Pascal, whose are the words just quoted, 'a monster.'”

- “The wretched consciousness shrinks from its own annihilation, and, just as an animal spirit, newly severed from the womb of the world, finds itself confronted with the world and knows itself distinct from it, so consciousness must needs desire to possess another life than that of the world itself.” (Again, very Heideggerian. Uncanny, not at home. Becker- A god, but a god who shits)

- “From the depth of this anguish, from the abyss of the feeling of our mortality, we emerge into the light of another heaven...”

- “And they have made a religion of art, a cure for the metaphysical evil, and invented the meaningless phrase of art for art's sake. And it does not suffice them. If the man who tells you that he writes, paints, sculptures, or sings for his own amusement, gives his work to the public, he lies; he lies if he puts his name to his writing, painting, statue, or song. He wishes, at the least, to leave behind a shadow of his spirit, something that may survive him. If the Imitation of Christ is anonoymous, it is because its author sought the eternity of the soul and did not trouble him self about that of the name.” (things done for their own sake are pathetic, e.g. knowledge, science, art, etc.)

- “Before this terrible mystery of mortality, face to face with the Sphinx, man adopts different attitudes and seeks in various ways to console himself for having been born.” (Becker)

- “There is not a single one of them who, if he came to know the true and the false, would not prefer the falsehood that he had found to the truth discovered by another. Where is the philosopher who would not willingly deceive mankind for his own glory? Where is he who in the secret of his heart does not propose to himself any other object than to distinguish himself? Provided that he lifts himself above the vulgar, provided that he outshines the brilliance of his competitors, what does he demand more? The essential thing is to think differently from others. With believers he is an atheist; with atheists he would be a believer." How much substantial truth there is in these gloomy confession of this man of painful sincerity!” (Ha! Humility?)

- “The methodical doubt of Descartes is a comic doubt, a doubt purely theoretical and provisional—that is to say, the doubt of a man who acts as if he doubted without really doubting...This methodical or theoretical Cartesian doubt, this philosophical doubt excogitated in a stove, is not the doubt, is not the scepticism, is not the incertitude, that I am talking about here. No! This other doubt is a passionate doubt, it is the eternal conflict between reason and feeling, science and life, logic and biotic. For science destroys the concept of personality by reducing it to a complex in continual flux from moment to moment—that is to say, it destroys the very foundation of the spiritual and emotional life, which ranges itself unyieldingly against reason. And this doubt cannot avail itself of any provisional ethic, but has to found its ethic, as we shall see, on the con flict itself, an ethic of battle, and itself has to serve as the foundation of religion.”

- “The vital consequence of rationalism would be suicide.” (Heisman, reason leads to contradictions and Ultimate Skepticism, it leads to the faith of a Kierkegaard, i.e. 'the opposite of 'sin' is not 'virtue', but faith, this is so because the nothingness of morality, of finite/transitory existence falls away and you are left with the overwhelming insignificance of the world/the want to die while not knowing how to die)

- “Positivism inducted us into an age of rationalism—that is to say, of materialism, mechanism, or mortalism; and behold now the return of vitalism, of spiritualism. What was the effort of pragmatism but an effort to restore faith in the human finality of the universe?”

- “We have created God in order to save the Universe from nothingness, for all that is not consciousness and eternal consciousness, conscious of its eternity and eternally conscious, is nothing more than appearance.” (everything is still nothing even with God)

- “And we need God in order to save consciousness; not in order to think existence, but in order to live it; not in order to know the why and how of it, but in order to feel the wherefore of it. Love is a contradiction if there is no God.”

- “"If of two men," says Kierkegaard, " one prays to the true God without sincerity of heart, and the other prays to an idol with all the passion of an infinite yearning, it is the first who really prays to an idol, while the second really prays to God."

- “Reason orders the sensible perceptions which give us the material world; but when its analysis is exercised upon the reality of the perceptions themselves, it dissolves them and plunges us into a world of appearances, a world of shadows without consistency, for outside the domain of the formal, reason is nihilist and annihilating. And it performs the same terrible office when we withdraw it from its proper domain and apply it to the scrutiny of the imaginative intuitions which give us the spiritual world. For reason annihilates and imagination completes, integrates or totalizes; reason by itself alone kills, and it is imagination that gives life. If it is true that imagination by itself alone, in giving us life without limit, leads us to lose our identity in the All and also kills us as individuals, it kills us by excess of life. Reason, the head, speaks to us the word Nothing! imagination, the heart, the word All! and between all and nothing, by the fusion of the all and the nothing within us, we live in God, who is All, and God lives in us who, without Him, are nothing-. Reason reiterates, Vanity of vanities! all is vanity! And imagination answers, Plenitude of plenitudes! all is plenitude! And thus we live the vanity of plenitude or the plenitude of vanity.” (Vivekananda asks if one is truly willing to follow reason to its logical conclusions: 'reason is nihilist and annihilating', reason leads to Nihilism as the Divine)

- “" The wicked man hath said in his heart, There is no God." And this is truth. For in his head the righteous man may say to himself, God does not exist! But only the wicked can say it in his heart. Not to believe that there is a God or to believe that there is not a God, is one thing; to resign oneself to there not being a God is another thing, and it is a terrible and inhuman thing; but not to wish that there be a God exceeds every other moral monstrosity; although, as a matter of fact, those who deny God deny Him because of their despair at not finding him.”

- “Those who say that they believe in God and yet neither love nor fear Him, do not in fact believe in Him but in those who have taught them that God exists, and these in their turn often enough do not believe in Him either. Those who believe that they believe in God, but without any passion in their heart, without anguish of mind, without uncertainty, without doubt, without an element of despair even in their consolation, believe only in the God-Idea, not in God Himself.” (Tillich, Vivekananda- holding head under water, thief in room with gold, etc.)

- “What is certain is that for thinking believers to-day, faith is, before all and above all, wishing that God may exist.” (faith is not a knowledge, but it is part of reason, since reason leads to Nihilism, which is God, and faith is the 'response' or the 'full-on doubt' that is involved with living within the Nihilism)

- “And if you should ask me how I believe in God—that is to say, how God creates Himself in me and reveals Himself to me—my answer may, perhaps, provoke your smiles or your laughter, or it may even scandalize you. I believe in God as I believe in my friends, because I feel the breath of His affection, feel His invisible and intangible hand, drawing me, leading me, grasping me; because I possess an inner consciousness of a particular providence and of a universal mind that marks out for me the course of my own destiny. And the concept of law—it is nothing but a concept after all!—tells me nothing and teaches me nothing.”

- “And God is simply the Love that springs from universal suffering and becomes consciousness.”

- “He who affirms a faith built upon a basis of uncertainty does not and cannot lie.”

- “The consciousness that everything passes away, that we ourselves pass away, and that everything that is ours and everything that environs us passes away, fills us with anguish, and this anguish itself reveals to us the consolation of that which does not pass away, of the eternal, of the beautiful.” (as with the first of quotes in this section, this is the Nihilistic experience)

- “We ought to ask God to make us conscious of ourselves in ourselves, in our suffering.”

- “My most immediate sensation is the sense and love of my own misery, my anguish, the compassion I feel for myself, the love I bear for myself. And when this com passion is vital and superabundant, it overflows from me upon others, and from the excess of my own compassion I come to have compassion for my neighbors. My own misery is so great that the compassion for myself which it awakens within me soon overflows and reveals to me the universal misery.”

- “Suffering is a spiritual thing.”

- “Consciousness, the craving for more, more, always more, hunger of eternity and thirst of infinity, appetite for God—these are never satisfied.”

- “And we must spiritualize everything. And this we shall accomplish by giving our spirit, which grows the more it is distributed, to all men and to all things.”

- “What is religion? In what does it differ from the religious sense and how are the two related? Every man's definition of religion is based upon his own inward experience of it rather than upon his observation of it in others, nor indeed is it possible to define it without in some way or another experiencing it.”

- “Religion is better described than defined and better felt than described.”

- “Miguel de Molinos, who said in his Guia Espiritual 1 that 'he who would attain to the mystical science must abandon and be detached from five things : first, from creatures; second, from temporal things; third, from the very gifts of the Holy Spirit; fourth, from himself; and fifth, he must be detached even from God.' And he adds that 'this last is the completest of all, because that soul only that knows how to be so detached is that which attains to being lost in God, and only the soul that attains to being so lost succeeds in finding itself.' Emphatically a true Spaniard, Molinos, and truly Spanish is this paradoxical expression of quietism or rather of nihilism— for he himself elsewhere speaks of annihilation—and not less Spanish, nay, perhaps even more Spanish, were the Jesuits who attacked him, upholding the prerogatives of the All against the claims of Nothingness.”

- “How can a human soul live and enjoy God eternally without losing its individual personality—that is to say, without losing itself?...Was it not a kind of doom that the ancient gods, no less than the demons, were subject to—the deprivation of the power to commit suicide?...In effect, an eternal life is unthinkable and an eternal life of absolute felicity, of beatific vision, is more unthinkable still.” (Cioran says the thought of suicide kept him alive, an escape)

- “He who sees God shall die, say the Scriptures (Judg. xiii. 22); and may it not be that the eternal vision of God is an eternal death, a swooning away of the personality ? But St. Teresa, in her description of the last state of prayer, the rapture, transport, flight, or ecstasy of the soul, tells us that the soul is borne as upon a cloud or a mighty eagle, 'but you see yourself carried away and know not whither,' and it is "with delight," and 'if you do not resist, the senses are not lost, at least I was so much myself as to be able to perceive that I was being lifted up '—that is to say, without losing consciousness. And God'”

- “But there is another more intimate union, and this is " like rain falling from heaven into a river or stream, becoming one and the same liquid, so that the river and the rain-water cannot be divided; or it resembles a streamlet flowing into the sea, which cannot afterwards be disunited from it; or it may be likened to a room into which a bright light enters through two win dows—though divided when it enters, the light becomes one and the same." And what difference is there between this and the internal and mystical silence of Miguel de Molinos, the third and most perfect degree of which is the silence of thought ? (Guia Espiritual, book i., chap, xvii., § 128). Do we not here very closely approach the view that " nothingness is the way to attain to that high state of a mind reformed " ? (book iii., chap, xx., § 196).”

- “A beatific vision, a loving contemplation in which the soul is absorbed in God and, as it were, lost in Him, appears either as an annihilation of self or as a pro longed tedium to our natural way of feeling. And hence a certain feeling which we not infrequently observe and which has more than once expressed itself in satires, not altogether free from irreverence or perhaps impiety, with reference to the heaven of eternal glory as a place of eternal boredom. And it is useless to despise feelings such as these, so wholly natural and spontaneous.”

- “May it not be that the very condition which makes our eternal union with God thinkable destroys our longing? What difference is there between being absorbed by God and absorbing Him in ourself ? Is it the stream that is lost in the sea or the sea that is lost in the stream ? It is all the same. Our fundamental feeling is our longing not to lose the sense of the continuity of our consciousness, not to break the concatenation of our memories, the feeling of our own personal concrete identity, even though we may be gradually being absorbed in God, enriching Him.”

- “Seek, therefore, thyself! But in rinding oneself, does not one find one's own nothingness?”

- “Yes, but what I work at, will not that too be lost in the end? And if it be lost, wherefore should I work at it? Yes, yes, it may be that to accomplish my work—and what is my work?—without thinking about myself, is to love God.”

- “But, on the other hand, as a religious conception and veiled in mystery, why not—although the idea revolts our feelings—an eternity of suffering? why not a God who is nourished by our suffering? Is our happiness the end of the Universe? or may we possibly sustain with our suffering some alien happiness? (Nietzsche, Cioran, experiencing your own 'happiness' as worthless)

## 44. Angela of Foligno

- ““Blessed (saith He), verily blessed is, and shall be, he who loveth poverty in all the aforesaid things and who desireth to be truly poor in worldly things, in deed and not only in words ; poor in friends, in familiar inter course, in all delights, vain knowledge and curiosity, poor in the repute of holiness and in all preferment and dignity. And if any should not be able to put away from himself utterly all these aforesaid things, he should at least endeavour with all his might to withdraw his affection from them. Of a surety these poor are blessed, for they shall inherit the kingdom of heaven. And those who have done the contrary in all things, and have only preached with their lips and uttered empty words, shall be left cursed and lamenting ; because theirs shall be the utmost poverty, eternal hunger and the house of hell, where there is everlasting hunger and thirst, where there is neither friend, nor brother, nor father to redeem them, nor any help whatsoever.”

- “He deigned to be poor in all the temporal things of this world. Thus did He own neither land, nor vineyard, nor garden, nor other possessions; He had neither gold, nor silver, nor money whatsoever, nor any other thing of His own, neither would He consent to accept of the things of this world aught save what did suffice to succour Him in the depths of His great poverty and supply the needs of His body, that is to say, hunger, thirst, and want, cold and heat, great weariness, austerity and hardship. Yet of bodily necessaries would He accept naught that was delicate or pleasant to the taste, but only coarse and common food such as was found in those places and provinces wherein Christ did live as live a beggar, without house or habitation. The second degree of Christ s poverty was greater than the first, seeing that He did desire to be poor in friends and kindred and in all familiarity with the great and powerful, and finally in all worldly friendship. Where fore did He not possess, nor desire to possess, any friend whatsoever of His own, nor yet of His mother or His putative father Joseph, or His disciples. For this reason did none hesitate to kick Him, strike Him, and scourge Him, and to speak hurtful words unto Him.”

- “In that time and by God’s will there died my mother, who was a great hindrance unto me in following the way of God; my husband died likewise, and in a short time there also died all my children. And because I had commenced to follow the aforesaid way and had prayed God that He would rid me of them, I had great consolation of their deaths, albeit I did also feel some grief.”

## 45. Thomas Keating

The Human Condition: Contemplation and Transformation (same/similar message of the Bagavagita/Ram Dass)

- “This is the human condition—to be without the true source of happiness, which is the experience of the presence of God, and to have lost the key to happiness, which is the contemplative dimension of life, the path to the increasing assimilation and enjoyment of God’s presence. What we experience is our desperate search for happiness where it cannot possibly be found. The key is not in the grass; it was not lost outside ourselves. It was lost inside ourselves. That is where we need to look for it.”

- “When thinking and self-reflection begin, since the experience of God is missing, some other form of happiness has to take its place, just for the sake of survival.”

- “A generation ago, in the psychedelic era, people opened themselves to the unconscious before they had the humility or the devotion to God to be able to handle it. The unconscious needs to be respected and approached with prudence.”

- “The contemplative journey, because it involves the purification of the unconscious, is not a magic carpet to bliss. It is an exercise of letting go of the false self, a humbling process, because it is the only self we know.”

- “Sometimes a sense of failure is a great means to true humility, which is what God most looks for in us. I realize this is not the language of success, but we have oversubscribed to that language. We need to hear about the interior freedom that comes through participation in the sufferings of Christ, the symbol of God’s love for everyone on earth.”

- “In the coming millennium, religious leaders and spiritual teachers might consider as their primary responsibility not so much to convert new constituents or new followers to a particular form of meditation, but to create communion—harmony, understanding, and respect for everyone in the human family, especially the members of other religions. In the world that lies ahead, religious pluralism is going to penetrate all cultures.”

- “The same unconditional love that moves in God is moving in us by grace, supplanting the human ego with the divine “I.” We begin to manifest in daily life not our false selves and prejudices, but the infinite tenderness of God, the concern of God for every living thing, especially for the needy and the poor.”

- “The false self is looking for fame, power, wealth, and prestige.”

- “Without profound purification, how far can social action actually extend? People involved in social action have a false self, too. They need to know the dynamics that are at work within them. Otherwise, social projects may fall apart, or they will suffer burnout.”

- “All human history is under the influence of the false-self system that easily moves from our hearts unto our families, communities, and nations and then afflicts the whole human race. God invites us to take responsibility for being human and to open ourselves to the unconscious damage that is influencing our decisions and relationships.”

- “We are not sick just because of some physiological pathology. It is not just a question of sin either; it is a question of the human condition, for which none of us is initially responsible but, on becoming adults, we are now called to be responsible.”

- “Contemplative prayer begins to make us aware of the divine presence within us, the source of true happiness. As soon as we begin to taste the peace that comes from the regular practice of contemplative prayer, it relativizes the whole unreal world of demands and “shoulds,” of aversions and desires that were based on emotional programs for happiness that might have worked for children, but that are, in fact, killing us.”

- “God is existence. In everything that exists, God is present. The greatest reality is God’s presence. The problem is that we only access that presence to the degree that our interior life is attuned to it. Hence the importance in the Christian tradition of listening to sacred scripture, which is much more than just listening to its literal meaning. It is sitting with the text in the presence of the Holy Spirit and allowing the Spirit to deepen our capacity to listen. That in no way denigrates the value of the literal; listening simply doesn’t stop there. The external word of God is designed to awaken the presence of the word of God in us. When that happens, we become, in a certain sense, the word of God.”

- “To what might we liken our awareness in ordinary daily life? It is like being at a good movie where we identify with the characters on the screen. We may even forget that we are in the movie house. In similar fashion, unless our selfish programs for happiness have begun to be dismantled by a spiritual practice or discipline, we are not aware that events and people or our plans and memories are dominating our awareness from morning to night.”

- “Everybody is culturally conditioned to some degree. Even the greatest saints only reach a certain degree of freedom from cultural over-identification. That over-identification is challenged in Centering Prayer. We spend the first part of our lives finding a role—becoming a mother or father, a professor, a doctor, a minister, a soldier, a business person, an artisan, or whatever. The paradox is that we can never fully fulfill our role until we are ready to let it go. Whoever we think we are, we are not. We have to find that out, and the best way to do so, or at least the most painless way, is through the process that we call the spiritual journey. This requires facing the dark side of our personality and the emotional investment we have made in false programs for happiness and in our particular cultural conditioning.”

- “To be really healed requires that we allow our dark side to come to full consciousness and then to let it go and give it to God. The divine therapy is an agreement that we make with God. We recognize that our own ideas of happiness are not going to work, and we turn our lives over completely to God.”

- “To submit to the divine therapy is something we owe to ourselves and the rest of humanity. If we don’t allow the Spirit of God to address the deep levels of our attachments to ourselves and to our programs for happiness, we will pour into the world the negative elements of our self-centeredness, adding to the conflicts and social disasters that come from over-identifying with the biases and prejudices of our particular culture and upbringing. This is becoming more important as we move into a global culture and into the increasing pluralism of religious beliefs.”

- “The spiritual journey is not a career or a success story. It is a series of humiliations of the false self that become more and more profound. These make room inside us for the Holy Spirit to come in and heal.”

- “Then God seemed to walk out of my life, abandoning me in a church pew, so to speak. In the dark nights, consolations on the spiritual journey, including the rituals and practices that previously supported our faith and devotion, fail us. Faith becomes simply belief in God’s goodness without any taste of it. It is trusting in God without knowing whom we are trusting, because the relationship we thought we had with God has disappeared.”

- “To bring oneself to nothing—no thing—is to cease to identify with the tyranny of our emotional programs for happiness and the limitations of our cultural conditioning. They are so strong in our culture that even our language reflects them. We say, “I am angry.” But you are not angry; you just have angry feelings. You may say, “I am depressed.” No, you are not depressed; you have feelings of depression.”

- “The beginning of our spiritual conversion is followed by a transition period that is always dark, confusing, and confining. Then comes a period of peace, enjoyment of a new inner freedom, the wonder of new insights. That takes time. Rarely is there a sudden movement to a new level of awareness that is permanent.”

- “As long as we are identified with some role or persona, we are not free to manifest the purity of God’s presence. Part of life is a process of dropping whatever role, however worthy, you identify with. It is not you. Your emotions are not you. Your body is not you. If you are not those things, who are you?” (me- psychedelics, mystics, Heisman said this same thing, but did not have a verbal language, never mind a conceptual “language” to deal with this 'ego death')

- “The ultimate abandonment of one’s role is not to have a self as a fixed point of reference; it is the freedom to manifest God through one’s own uniqueness. This monk had hit bottom. But the bottom in the spiritual journey is also the top. To be no one is to be everyone. To be no self is to be the true Self. To be nothing is to be everything. In a sense, it is to be God.”

- “For Christians, it is to be a kind of fifth Gospel: to become the word of God and to manifest God rather than the false self, with its emotional programs for happiness and attachments to various roles, including the most spiritual. When you have been liberated from them all, you are in a space that is both empty of self and full of God.”

- “This monk chose the way of spiritual discipline to become the Other. There is at least one other way of negotiating the spiral staircase. It is by passing through great tragedy or physical and mental suffering. God leads some people through the most terrible anguish and pain to the same place.”

## 46. Evelyn Underhill

### Mysticism

- A direct encounter with absolute truth, then, appears to be impossible for normal non-mystical consciousness. We cannot know the reality, or even prove the existence, of the simplest object: though this is a limitation which few people realize acutely and most would deny. But there persists in the race a type of personality which does realize this limitation: and cannot be content with the sham realities that furnish the universe of normal men. It is necessary, as it seems, to the comfort of persons of this type to form for themselves some image of the Something or Nothing which is at the end of their telegraph lines: some “conception of being,” some “theory of knowledge.” They are tormented by the Unknowable, ache for first principles, demand some background to the shadow show of things. In so far as man possesses this temperament, he hungers for reality, and must satisfy that hunger as best he can: staving off starvation, though he many not be filled.”

- Naturalism: “Such an attitude as this may be a counsel of prudence, in view of our ignorance of all that lies beyond: but it can never satisfy p. 9 our hunger for reality. It says in effect, “The room in which we find ourselves is fairly comfortable. Draw the curtains, for the night is dark: and let us devote ourselves to describing the furniture.”

- “Hence, artist and surgeon, Christian and rationalist, pessimist and optimist, do actually and truly live in different and mutually exclusive worlds, not only of thought but also of perception. Only the happy circumstance that our ordinary speech is conventional, not realistic, permits us to conceal from one another the unique and lonely world in which each lives. Now and then an artist is born, terribly articulate, foolishly truthful, who insists on “Speaking as he saw.” Then other men, lapped warmly in their artificial universe, agree that he is mad: or, at the very best, an “extraordinarily imaginative fellow.”

- “The mind which seeks the Real, then, in this shifting and subjective “natural” world is of necessity thrown back on itself: on images and concepts which owe more to the “seer” than to the “seen.” But Reality must be real for all, once they have found it: must exist “in itself” upon a plane of being unconditioned by the perceiving mind. Only thus can it satisfy that mind’s most vital instinct, most sacred passion—its “instinct for the Absolute,” its passion for truth.

You are not asked, as a result of these antique and elementary propositions, to wipe clean the slate of normal human experience, and cast in your lot with intellectual nihilism. You are only asked to acknowledge that it is but a slate, and that the white scratches upon it which the ordinary man calls facts, and the Scientific Realist calls knowledge, are at best relative and conventionalized symbols of that aspect of the unknowable reality at which they hint.”

- “We begin, then, to ask what can be the nature of this One; and whence comes the persistent instinct which—receiving no encouragement from sense experience—apprehends and desires this unknown unity, this all-inclusive Absolute, as the only possible satisfaction of its thirst for truth.”

- “In the great moments of existence, when he rises to spiritual freedom, these are the things which every man feels to be real. It is by these and for these that he is found willing to live, work suffer, and die. Love, patriotism, religion, altruism, fame, all belong to the transcendental world. Hence, they partake more of the nature of reality than any “fact” could do; and man, dimly recognizing this, has ever bowed to them as to immortal centres of energy. Religions as a rule are steeped in idealism: Christianity in particular is a trumpet call to an idealistic conception of life, Buddhism is little less. Over and over again, their Scriptures tell us that only materialists will be damned.

- “But, when we ask the idealist how we are to attain communion with the reality which he describes to us as “certainly there,” his system suddenly breaks down; and discloses itself as a diagram of the heavens, not a ladder to the stars.” (psychedelics could help)

- “Those who are temperamentally inclined to credulity may become naturalists, and persuade themselves to believe in the reality of the sense world. Those with a certain instinct for the Absolute may adopt the more reasonable faith of idealism. But the true intellectualist, who concedes nothing to instinct or emotion, is obliged in the end to adopt some form of sceptical philosophy. The horrors of nihilism, in fact, can only be escaped by the exercise of faith, by a trust in man’s innate but strictly irrational instinct for that Real “above all reason, beyond all thought” towards which at its best moments his spirit tends.” (Horrors of Nihilism! Ha!)

- If the metaphysician be true to his own postulates, he must acknowledge in the end that we are all forced to live, to think, and at last to die, in an unknown and unknowable world: fed arbitrarily and diligently, yet how we know not, by ideas and suggestions whose truth we cannot test but whose pressure we cannot resist. It is not by sight but by faith—faith in a supposed external order which we can never prove to exist, and in the approximate truthfulness and constancy of the vague messages which we receive from it—that ordinary men must live and move. We must put our trust in “laws of nature” which have been devised by the human mind as a convenient epitome of its own observations of phenomena, must, for the purposes of daily life, accept these phenomena at their face value: an act of faith beside which the grossest superstitions of the Neapolitan peasant are hardly noticeable.” (the skepticism 'not of the study' or theoretical, but the skepticism that paralyzes)

- “Certain facts of which too keen a perception would act detrimentally to the life-force are, for most men, impossible of realization: i.e. , the uncertainty of life, the decay of the body, the vanity of all things under the sun. When we are in good health, we all feel very real, solid, and permanent; and this is of all our illusions the most ridiculous, and also the most obviously useful from the point of view of the efficiency and preservation of the race.” (Buddha, Vivekananda, realization, Maya)

“Nothing can be more certain than that man is not so content. He has been called by utilitarian philosophers a tool-making animal—the highest praise they knew how to bestow. More surely he is a vision-making animal; a creature of perverse and unpractical ideals, dominated by dreams no less than by appetites—dreams which can only be justified upon the theory that he moves towards some other goal than that of physical perfection or intellectual supremacy, is controlled by some higher and more vital reality than that of the determinists. We are driven to the conclusion that if the theory of evolution is to include or explain the facts of artistic and spiritual experience—and it cannot be accepted by any serious thinker if these great tracts of consciousness remain outside its range—it must be rebuilt on a mental rather than a physical basis.”

- Amongst the more intractable of these groups of perceptions and experiences are those which we connect with religion, with pain and with beauty. All three, for those selves which are capable of receiving their messages, possess a mysterious authority far in excess of those feelings, arguments, or appearances which they may happen to contradict. All three, were the universe of the naturalists true, would be absurd...”

- “The question is not, whence come those conditions which provoke in the self the experiences called sorrow, anxiety, pain: but, why do these conditions hurt the self? The pain is mental; a little chloroform, and though the conditions continue unabated the suffering is gone. Why does full consciousness always include the mysterious capacity for misery as well as for happiness—a capacity which seems at first sight to invalidate any conception of the Absolute as Beautiful and Good? Why does evolution, as we ascend the ladder of life, foster instead of diminishing the capacity for useless mental anguish, for long, dull torment, bitter grief?”

- “If it is to be vanquished, either the disharmony must be resolved by a deliberate and careful adjustment of the self to the world of sense, or, that self must turn from the sense-world to some other with which it is in tune. Pessimist and optimist here join hands. But whilst the pessimist, resting in appearance, only sees “nature red in tooth and claw” offering him little hope of escape, the optimist thinks that pain and anguish—which may in their lower forms be life’s harsh guides on the path of physical evolution—in their higher and apparently “useless” developments are her leaders and teachers in the upper school of Supra-sensible Reality. He believes that they press the self towards another world, still “natural” for him, though “supernatural” for his antagonist, in which it will be more at home. Watching life, he sees in Pain the complement of Love: and is inclined to call these the wings on which man’s spirit can best take flight towards the Absolute. Hence he can say with A Kempis, “Gloriari in tribulatione non est grave amanti,” and needs not to speak of morbid folly when he sees the Christian saints run eagerly and merrily to the Cross.” (interesting use of the word 'optimist', ha!)

- “He calls suffering the “gymnastic of eternity,” the “terrible p. 20 initiative caress of God”; recognizing in it a quality for which the disagreeable rearrangement of nerve molecules cannot account. Sometimes, in the excess of his optimism, he puts to the test of practice this theory with all its implications. Refusing to be deluded by the pleasures of the sense world, he accepts instead of avoiding pain, and becomes an ascetic; a puzzling type for the convinced naturalist, who, falling back upon contempt—that favourite resource of the frustrated reason—can only regard him as diseased.”

- “Pain, then, which plunges like a sword through creation, leaving on the one side cringing and degraded animals and on the other side heroes and saints, is one of those facts of universal experience which are peculiarly intractable from the point of view of a merely materialistic philosophy.”

- “The seeing self is indeed an initiate thrust suddenly into the sanctuary of the mysteries: and feels the “old awe and amazement” with which man encounters the Real. In such experiences, a new factor of the eternal calculus appears to be thrust in on us, a factor which no honest seeker for truth can afford to neglect; since, if it be dangerous to say that any two systems of knowledge are mutually exclusive, it is still more dangerous to give uncritical priority to any one system.”

- “Why, after all, take as our standard a material world whose existence is affirmed by nothing more trustworthy than the sense-impressions of “normal men”; those imperfect and easily cheated channels of communication? The mystics, those adventurers of whom we spoke upon the first page of this book, have always declared, implicitly or explicitly, their distrust in these channels of communication. They have never been deceived by phenomena, nor by the careful logic of the industrious intellect. One after another, with extraordinary unanimity, they have rejected that appeal to the unreal world of appearance which is the standard of p. 23 sensible men: affirming that there is another way, another secret, by which the conscious self may reach the actuality which it seeks. More complete in their grasp of experience than the votaries of intellect or of sense, they accept as central for life those spiritual messages which are mediated by religion, by beauty, and by pain.”

- “To all who will receive it, news comes of a world of Absolute Life, Absolute Beauty, Absolute Truth, beyond the bourne of time and place: news that most of us translate—and inevitably distort in the process—into the language of religion, of beauty, of love, or of pain.”

- “Of all those forms of life and thought with which humanity has fed its craving for truth, mysticism alone postulates, and in the persons of its great initiates proves, not only the existence of the Absolute, but also this link: this possibility first of knowing, finally of attaining it. It denies that possible knowledge is to be limited (a) to sense impressions, (b) to any process of intellection, (c) to the unfolding of the content of normal consciousness. Such diagrams of experience, it says, are hopelessly incomplete. The mystics find the basis of their method not in logic but in life: in the existence of a discoverable “real,” a spark of true being, within the seeking subject, which can, in that ineffable experience which they call the “act of union,” fuse itself with and thus apprehend the reality of the sought Object. In theological language, their theory of knowledge is that the spirit of man, itself essentially divine, is capable of immediate communion with God, the One Reality.”

- “Where the philosopher guesses and argues, the mystic lives and looks; and speaks, consequently, the disconcerting language of first-hand experience, not the neat dialectic of the schools.” (me- Kierkegaard would agree and say that this definition of 'mysticism' is actually a true description of philosophy, e.g. Job over Hagel, despair over reason)

- “...you will find it impossible to prove that the world as seen by the mystics, ‘unimaginable, formless, dark with excess of bright,’ is less real than that which is expounded by the youngest and most promising demonstrator of a physicochemical universe. We will be quite candid with you. Examine us as much as you like: our machinery, our veracity, our results. We cannot promise that you shall see what we have seen, for here each man must adventure for himself; but we defy you to stigmatize our experiences as impossible or invalid. Is your world of experience so well and logically founded that you dare make of it a standard? Philosophy tells you that it is founded on nothing better than the reports of your sensory apparatus and the traditional concepts of the race. Certainly it is imperfect, probably it is illusion in any event, it never touches the foundation of things. Whereas ‘what the world, which truly knows nothing, calls “mysticism” is the science of ultimates, . . . the science of self-evident Reality, which cannot be “reasoned about,” because it is the object of pure reason or perception.’”

- ““The intellect by itself moves nothing,” said Aristotle, and modern psychology has butc affirmed this law. Hence his quest of Reality is never caused, though it may be greatly assisted, by the intellectual aspect of his consciousness; for the reasoning powers as such have little initiative.”

- “This act of perfect concentration, the passionate focusing of the self upon one point, when it is applied “with a naked intent” to real and transcendental things, constitutes in the technical language of mysticism the state of recollection: a condition which is peculiarly characteristic of the mystical consciousness, and is the necessary prelude of pure contemplation, that state in which the mystic enters into communion with Reality.” (me- 'recollection' is a main theme in mystical thought. It seems there is something 'outside' of you that is really 'inside' of you, information is being 'discovered'”)

- “It appears generally from these that the act of contemplation is for the mystic a psychic gateway; a method of going from one level of consciousness to another...It was recognized by Plato as that consciousness which could apprehend the real world of the Ideas.”

- “These adventures, looked upon by those who stay at home as a form of the Higher Laziness, are in reality the last and most arduous labours which the human spirit is called to perform.”

- “Mary has chosen the better, not the idler part; for her gaze is directed towards those First Principles without which the activity of Martha would have no meaning at all. It remains a paradox of the mystics that the passivity at which they appear to aim is really a state of the most intense activity: more, that where it is wholly absent no great creative action can take place. In it, the superficial self compels itself to be still, in order that it may liberate another more deep-seated power which is, in the ecstasy of the contemplative genius, raised to the highest pitch of efficiency.” (Cioran says Mystics are 'conquerors)

- “The value of contemplation is that it tends to produce this state, release this transcendental sense; and so turns the “lower servitude” in which the natural man lives under the sway of his earthly environment to the “higher servitude” of fully conscious dependence on that Reality “in Whom we live and move and have our being.”

- “The mystic way must therefore be a life, a discipline...”

- “It is clear that under ordinary conditions, and save for sudden gusts of “Transcendental Feeling” induced by some saving madness such as Religion, Art, or Love, the superficial self knows nothing of the attitude of this silent watcher—this “Dweller in the Innermost”—towards the incoming messages of the external world: nor of the activities which they awake in it. Concentrated on the sense-world, and the messages she receives from it, she knows nothing of the relations which exist between this subject and the unattainable Object of all thought. But by a deliberate inattention to the messages of the senses, such as that which is induced by contemplation, the mystic can bring the ground of the soul, the seat of “Transcendental Feeling,” within the area of consciousness: making it amenable to the activity of the will.”

- (Transcendent Feelings)“A belief in its actuality is the pivot of the Christian position; indeed of every religion worthy of the name. It is the justification of mysticism, asceticism, the whole machinery of the self-renouncing life. That there is an extreme point at which man’s nature touches the Absolute: that his ground, or substance, his true being, is penetrated by the Divine Life which constitutes the underlying reality of things; this is the basis on which the whole mystic claim of possible union with God must rest.”

- ““The two eyes of the soul of man,” says the “Theologia p. 56 Germanica,” here developing a profound Platonic image, “cannot both perform their work at once: but if the soul shall see with the right eye into eternity, then the left eye must close itself and refrain from working, and be as though it were dead. For if the left eye be fulfilling its office toward outward things, that is holding converse with time and the creatures; then must the right eye be hindered in its working; that is, in its contemplation. Therefore, whosoever will have the one must let the other go; for ‘no man can serve two masters.’”

- “Transcendental matters are, for most of us, always beyond the margin; because most of us have given up our whole consciousness to the occupation of the senses, and permitted them to construct there a universe in which we are contented to remain. Only in certain states—recollection, contemplation, ecstasy and their allied conditions—does the self contrive to turn out the usual tenants, shut the “gateways of the flesh,” and let those submerged powers which are capable of picking up messages from another plane of being have their turn.”

- “The phenomenon known as double or disintegrated personality may perhaps give us a hint as to the mechanical nature of the change which contemplation effects. In this psychic malady the total character of the patient is split up; a certain group of qualities are, as it were, abstracted from the surface-consciousness and so closely associated as to form in themselves a complete “character” or “personality”—necessarily poles asunder from the “character” which the self usually shows to the world, since it consists exclusively of those elements which are omitted from it.” (this is one of the biggest issues of my thoughts/actions. Augustine and Tolstoy are good examples of this as well, this is the ;divided-self of James, or the double-mindedness of Kierkegaard)

- “Indian mysticism founds its external system almost wholly on ( a ) Asceticism, the domination of the senses, and ( b ) the deliberate practice of self-hypnotization; either by fixing the eyes on a near object, or by the rhythmic repetition of the mantra or sacred word. By these complementary forms of discipline, the pull of the phenomenal world is diminished and the mind is placed at the disposal of the subconscious powers. Dancing, music, and other exaggerations of natural rhythm have been pressed into the same service by the Greek initiates of Dionysus, by the Gnostics, by innumerable other mystic cults.”

- “They have not hesitated to call St. Paul an epileptic. St. Teresa the “patron saint of hysterics”; and have found room for most of their spiritual kindred in various departments of the pathological museum. They have been helped in this grateful task by the acknowledged fact that the great contemplatives, though p. 59 almost always persons of robust intelligence and marked practical or intellectual ability—Plotinus, St. Bernard, the two Ss. Catherine, St. Teresa, St. John of the Cross, and the Sufi poets Jàmi and Jalalu ‘ddin are cases in point—have often suffered from bad physical health.”

- ““In such cases as Kant and Beethoven,” says Von Hügel justly, “a classifier of humanity according to its psycho-physical phenomena alone would put these great discoverers and creators, without hesitation, amongst hopeless and useless hypochondriacs.”

- “In the mystic the dominant idea is a great one: so great in fact, that when it is received in its completeness by the human consciousness, almost of necessity it ousts all else. It is nothing less than the idea or perception of the transcendent reality and presence of God. Hence the mono-ideism of the mystic is rational, whilst that of the hysteric patient is invariably irrational.”

- “Our bodies are animal things, made for animal activities. When a spirit of unusual ardour insists on using its nerve-cells for other activities, they kick against the pricks; and inflict, as the mystics themselves acknowledge, the penalty of “mystical ill-health.” “Believe me, children,” says Tauler, “one who would know much about these high matters would often have to keep his bed, for his bodily frame could not support it.” (Cioran- conquerors)

- “In those abnormal types of personality to which we give the name of genius, we seem to detect a hint of the relations which may exist between these deep levels of being and the crust of consciousness. In the poet, the musician, the great mathematician or inventor, powers lying below the threshold, and hardly controllable by their owner’s conscious will, clearly take a major part in the business of perception and conception. In all creative acts, the larger share of the work is done subconsciously: its emergence is in a sense automatic. This is equally true of mystics, artists, philosophers, discoverers, and rulers of men. The great religion, invention, work of art, always owes its inception to some sudden uprush of intuitions or ideas for which the superficial self cannot account; its execution to powers so far beyond the control of that self, that they seem, as their owner sometimes says, to “come from beyond.” (me- Plato's theory of recollection)

- “To let oneself go, be quiet, receptive, appears to be the condition under which such contact with the Cosmic Life may be obtained.” (humility)

- “The subliminal mind of the great mystic, however, is not disorderly. It is abnormally sensitive, richly endowed and keenly observant—a treasure house, not a lumber room—and becomes in the course of its education, a highly disciplined and skilled instrument of knowledge.”

- “(4) Neither conation nor cognition—action nor thought—as performed by this surface mind, concerned as it is with natural existence and dominated by spatial conceptions, is able to set up any relations with the Absolute or transcendental world. Such action and thought deal wholly with material supplied directly or indirectly by the world of sense. The testimony of the mystics, however, and of all persons possessing an “instinct for the Absolute,” points to the existence of a further faculty—indeed, a deeper self—in man; a self which the circumstances of diurnal life usually keep “below the threshold” of his consciousness, and which thus becomes one of the factors of his “subliminal life.” This hidden self is the primary agent of mysticism, and lives a “substantial” life in touch with the real or transcendental world. (5) Certain processes, of which contemplation has been taken as a type, can so alter the state of consciousness as to permit the emergence of this deeper self; which, according as it enters more or less into the conscious life, makes man more or less a mystic.”

- “It will be our business later to consider in more detail the characteristics and significance of magic. Now it is enough to say that we may class broadly as magical all forms of self-seeking transcendentalism. It matters little whether the apparatus which they use be the incantations of the old magicians, the congregational prayer for rain of orthodox Churchmen, or the consciously self-hypnotizing devices of "New Thought": whether the end proposed be the evocation of an angel, the power of transcending circumstance, or the healing of disease. The object is always the same: the deliberate exaltation of the will, till it transcends its usual limitations and obtains for the self or group of selves something which it or they did not previously possess. It is an individualistic and acquisitive science: in all its forms an activity of the intellect, seeking Reality for its own purposes, or for those of humanity at large. Mysticism, whose great name is too often given to these supersensual activities, has nothing in common with this. It is non-individualistic. It implies, indeed, the abolition of individuality; of that hard separateness, that "I, Me, Mine" which makes of man a finite isolated thing. It is essentially a movement of the heart, seeking to transcend the limitations of the individual standpoint and to surrender itself to ultimate Reality; for no personal gain, to satisfy no transcendental curiosity, to obtain no other-worldly joys, but purely from an instinct.”

- “...transcendental philosophy, hardly comes within the scope of the present inquiry; since it is purely academic, whilst both magic and mysticism are practical and empirical. Such philosophy is often wrongly called mysticism, because it tries to make maps of the countries which the mystic explores. Its performances are useful, as diagrams are useful, so long as they do not ape finality; remembering that the only final thing is personal experience…” (Symbolism, Vivekananda and realization, Tillich, finite/infinite gap, psychedelics)

- “The mystic, too, tries very hard to tell an unwilling world his secret. But in his case, the difficulties are enormously increased. First, there is the huge disparity between his unspeakable experience and the language which will most nearly suggest it. Next, there is the great gulf fixed between his mind and the mind of the world. His audience must be bewitched as well as addressed, caught up to something of his state, before they can be made to understand.”

- “The mystery of music is seldom realized by those who so easily accept its gifts. Yet of all the arts music alone shares with great mystical literature the power of waking in us a response to the life-movement of the universe: brings us--we know not how--news of its exultant passions and its incomparable peace. [p. 77] Beethoven heard the very voice of Reality, and little of it escaped when he translated it for our ears.”

- “Mysticism, then, is not an opinion: it is not a philosophy. It has nothing in common with the pursuit of occult knowledge. On the one hand it is not merely the power of contemplating Eternity: on the other, it is not to be identified with any kind of religious queerness. It is the name of that organic process which involves the perfect consummation of the Love of God: the achievement here and now of the immortal heritage of man. Or, if you like it better--for this means exactly the same thing--it is the art of establishing his conscious relation with the Absolute.”

- “The movement of the mystic consciousness towards this consummation, is not merely the sudden admission to an overwhelming vision of Truth: though such dazzling glimpses may from time to time be vouchsafed to the soul.”

- “It were more accurate to reverse the epigram above stated, and say, that Platonism is the reaction of the intellectualist upon mystical truth.”

- “The paradoxical "quiet" of the contemplative is but the outward stillness essential to inward work.”

- “Mysticism is an entirely spiritual activity.”

“Only this mystic passion can lead us from our prison. Its brother, the desire of knowledge, may enlarge and improve the premises to an extent as yet undreamed of: but it can never unlock the doors.” (philosophy is useful, helpful, only in navigating the experience)

- “The psychologist finds little difficulty, for instance, in reconciling the "Degrees of Orison" described by St. Teresa  170 --Recollection, Quiet, Union, Ecstasy, Rapt, the "Pain of God," and the Spiritual Marriage of the soul--with the four forms of contemplation enumerated by Hugh of St. Victor, or the Sufi's "Seven Stages" of the soul's ascent to God, which begin in adoration and end in spiritual marriage.  171 Though each wayfarer may choose different landmarks, it is clear from their comparison that the road is one.”

- “As a corollary to these four rules, it is perhaps well to reiterate the statement already made, that True Mysticism is never self-seeking. It is not, as many think, the pursuit of supernatural joys; the satisfaction of a high ambition. The mystic does not enter on his quest because he desires the happiness of the Beatific Vision, the ecstasy of union with the Absolute, or any other personal reward. That noblest of all passions, the passion for perfection for Love's sake, far outweighs the desire for transcendental satisfaction.”

- “The mystics are emphatic in their statement that spiritual desires are useless unless they initiate this costly movement of the whole self towards the Real.” (Smith says it's not about the experience, but rather the 'religious life', religious dogmas, creeds, prayers, rituals, etc. are all finite expressions of our desire for the infinite, and can therefore never be anything more than simple idolatry. Every belief will be necessarily false. Non-literalism. This is Nihilism, this is Tillich and Vivekananda, there comes a time when I will just snap and go for it)

- “More than the apprehension of God, then, more than the passion for the Absolute, is needed to make a mystic. These must be combined with an appropriate psychological make-up, with a nature capable of extraordinary concentration, an exalted moral emotion, a nervous organization of the artistic type. All these are necessary to the successful development of the mystic life process.”

- “Like his type, the "devout lover" of romance, then, the mystic serves without hope of reward. By one of the many paradoxes of the spiritual life, he obtains satisfaction because he does not seek it; completes his personality because he gives it up. "Attainment," [p. 93] says Dionysius the Areopagite in words which are writ large on the annals of Christian ecstasy, "comes only by means of this sincere, spontaneous, and entire surrender of yourself and all things."  176 Only with the annihilation of selfhood comes the fulfilment of love. Were the mystic asked the cause of his often extraordinary behaviour, his austere and steadfast quest, it is unlikely that his reply would contain any reference to sublime illumination or unspeakable delights.”

- “Here, in this world of illusion, they say, we have no continuing city. This statement, to you a proposition, is to us the central fact of life. "Therefore, it is necessary to hasten our departure from hence, and detach ourselves in so far as we may from the body to which we are fettered, in order that with the whole of our selves, we may fold ourselves about Divinity, and have no part void of contact with Him." (everything is transitory, Vivekananda, finite, passing, Nihilism)

- “The view which regards the mystic as a spiritual anarchist receives little support from history; which shows us, again and again, [p. 96] the great mystics as faithful sons of the great religions. Almost any religious system which fosters unearthly love is potentially a nursery for mystics: and Christianity, Islam, Brahmanism, and Buddhism each receives its most sublime interpretation at their hands. Thus St. Teresa interprets her ecstatic apprehension of the Godhead in strictly Catholic terms, and St. John of the Cross contrives to harmonize his intense transcendentalism with incarnational and sacramental Christianity. Thus Boehme believed to the last that his explorations of eternity were consistent with the teaching of the Lutheran Church. The Sufis were good Mohammedans, Philo and the Kabalists were orthodox Jews. Plontinus even adapted--though with what difficulty--the relics of paganism to his doctrine of the Real.

Attempts, however, to limit mystical truth--the direct apprehension of the Divine Substance--by the formula of any one religion, are as futile as the attempt to identify a precious metal with the die which converts it into current coin.”

- “It is characteristic of his intellectual humility, however, that he is commonly willing to use the map of the community in which he finds himself, when it comes to showing other people the route which he has pursued...Time after time he puts his finger on some spot--some great hill of vision, some city of the soul--and says with conviction, "Here have I been." At other times the maps have embarrassed him, have refused to fit in with his description. Then he has tried, as Boehme did and after him Blake, to make new ones. Such maps are often wild in drawing, because good draughtsmanship does not necessarily go with a talent for exploration. Departing from the usual convention, they are hard--sometimes impossible--to understand. As a result, the orthodox have been forced to regard their makers as madmen or heretics: when they were really only practical men struggling to disclose great matters by imperfect means.”

- “Any attempt towards a definition of God which does not account for and acknowledge these three aspects is found in experience to be incomplete. They provide objectives for the heart, the intellect, and the will: for they offer to the Self material for its highest love, its deepest thought, its act of supreme volition.” (me- mystics always have the 'biggest' conceptions of the Divine)

- “Further, since He is One, and in all things, "to conceive one's self as separate from God is an error: yet only when one sees oneself as separate from God, can one reach out to God.”

- “Further, the Christian atmosphere is the one in which the individual mystic has most often been able to develop his genius in a sane and fruitful way; and an overwhelming majority of the great European contemplatives have been Christians of a strong impassioned and personal type. This alone would justify us in regarding it as embodying, at any rate in the West, the substance of the true tradition: providing the "path of least resistance" through which that tradition flows. The very heretics of Christianity have often owed their attraction almost wholly to the mystical element in their teachings.”

- “It is a disturbance of the equilibrium of the self, which results in the shifting of the field of consciousness from lower to higher levels, with a consequent removal of the centre of interest from the subject to an object now brought into view: the necessary beginning of any process of transcendence. It must not, however, be confused or identified with religious conversion as ordinarily understood: the sudden and emotional acceptance of theological beliefs which the self had previously either rejected or treated as conventions dwelling upon the margin of consciousness and having no meaning for her actual life.”

- “The Memorial of Pascal is a scrap of parchment on which, round a rough drawing of the Flaming Cross, there are written a few strange phrases, abrupt and broken words; all we know about one of the strangest ecstatic revelations chronicled in the history of the mystic type. After Pascal's death a servant found a copy of this little document, now lost, sewn up in his doublet. He seems always to have worn it upon his person: a perpetual memorial of the supernal experience, the initiation into Reality, which it describes. Though Bremand has shown that the opening [p. 189] of Pascal's spiritual eyes had begun, on his own declaration, eleven months earlier, "d'une manière douce et obligeante,"  369 the conversion thus prepared was only made actual by this abrupt illumination; ending a long period of spiritual stress, in which indifference to his ordinary interests was counterbalanced by an utter inability to feel the attractive force of that Divine Reality which his great mind discerned as the only adequate object of desire.”

- “This hard and wholly unnutritious shell, this one-sided secretion of the surface-consciousness, makes as it were a little cave of illusion for each separate soul. A literal and deliberate getting out of the cave must be for every mystic, as it was for Plato's prisoners, the first step in the individual hunt for reality.”

- “In the plain language of old-fashioned theology "man's sin is stamped upon man's universe." We see a sham world because we live a sham life. We do not know ourselves; hence do not know the true character of our senses and instincts; hence attribute wrong values to their suggestions and declarations concerning our relation to the external world.”

- “That which we call the "natural" self as it exists in the "natural" world--the "old Adam" of St. Paul--is wholly incapable of supersensual adventure.”

- “All its activities are grouped about a centre of consciousness whose correspondences are with the material world. In the moment of its awakening, it is abruptly made aware of this disability. It knows itself finite. It now aspires to the infinite.”

- “The lives of the mystics abound in instances of the "vehemence of this showing": of the deep-seated sense of necessity which urges the newly awakened self to a life of discomfort and conflict, often to intense poverty and pain, as the only way of replacing false experience by true.”

- “To the true lover of the Absolute, Purgation no less than Illumination is a privilege, a dreadful joy. It is an earnest of increasing life. "Let me suffer or die!" said St. Teresa: a strange alternative in the ears of common sense, but a forced option in the spiritual sphere.”

- “It is in this torment of contrition, this acute consciousness of unworthiness, that we have the first swing back of the oscillating self from the initial state of mystic pleasure to the complementary state of pain.”

- “"We must be filled with a burning fervour full of anguish." St. John of the Cross

- “The greatest of the contemplative saints, far from leaving purgation behind them in their progress, were increasingly aware of their own inadequateness, the nearer they approached to the unitive state: for the true lover of the Absolute, like every other lover, is alternately abased and exalted by his unworthiness and his good fortune. There are moments of high rapture when he knows only that the banner over him is Love: but there are others in which he remains bitterly conscious that in spite of his uttermost surrender there is within him an ineradicable residuum of selfhood, which "stains the white radiance of eternity." In this sense, then, purification is a perpetual process.”

- “Its business is the getting rid, first of self-love; and secondly of all those foolish interests in which the surface-consciousness is steeped.”

- “(1) The Negative aspect, the stripping or purging away of those superfluous, unreal, and harmful things which dissipate the precious energies of the self. This is the business of Poverty, or Detachment . (2) The Positive aspect: [p. 205] a raising to their highest term, their purest state, of all that remains--the permanent elements of character. This is brought about by Mortification, the gymnastic of the soul: a deliberate recourse to painful experiences and difficult tasks.”

- “Apart from the plain necessity of casting out imperfection and sin, what is the type of "good character" which will best serve the self in its journey towards union with the Absolute?

The mystics of all ages and all faiths agree in their answer...Three virtues...By Poverty the mystic means an utter self-stripping, the casting off of immaterial as well as material wealth, a complete detachment from all finite things. By Chastity he means an extreme and limpid purity of soul, cleansed from personal desire and virgin to all but God: by Obedience, that abnegation of selfhood, that mortification of the will, which results in a complete self-abandonment, a "holy indifference" to the accidents of life.”

- “What is Purity? It is that a man should have turned himself away from all creatures and have set his heart so entirely on the Pure Good that no creature is to him a comfort, that he has no desire for aught creaturely, save so far as he may apprehend therein the Pure Good, which is

God.”

- “"To it all creatures are pure to enjoy!" This is hardly the popular concept of the mystic; which credits him, in the teeth of such examples as St. Francis, St. Mechthild of Magdeburg, Rolle, Suso, and countless others, with a hearty dread of natural things. Too many examples of an exaggerated asceticism--such as the unfortunate story told of the holy Curé d'Ars, who refused to smell a rose for fear of sin--have supported in this respect the vulgar belief; for it is generally forgotten that though most mystics have practised asceticism as a means to an end, all ascetics are not mystics. Whatever may be the case with other deniers of the senses, it is true that the soul of the great mystic, dwelling on high levels of reality, his eyes set on the Transcendental World, is capable of combining with the perfection of detachment that intense and innocent joy in natural things, as veils and vessels of the divine, which results from seeing "all creatures in God and God in all creatures." (me- oh, yeah?)

“How then is this contradiction to be resolved: that the mystic who has declared the fundamental necessity of "leaving all creatures" yet finds them pure to enjoy? The answer to the riddle lies in the ancient paradox of Poverty: that we only enjoy true liberty in respect of such things as we neither possess nor desire. "That thou mayest have pleasure in everything, seek pleasure in nothing.”

- “Poverty, then, prepares man's spirit for that union with God to which it aspires. She strips off the clothing which he so often mistakes for himself, transvaluates all his values, and shows him things as they are.” (Nietzsche, the Absurd Perspective, Nihilism, the illusory nature of morality, etc.)

- “The true rule of poverty consists in giving up those things which enchain the spirit, divide its interests, and deflect it on its road to God--whether these things be riches, habits, religious observances, friends, interests, distastes, or desires--not in mere outward destitution for its own sake.”

- “It is impossible to predict what those things will be which a self must give up, in order that the transcendental consciousness may grow.”

- “Thus each adventurer must discover and extirpate all those interests which nourish selfhood, however innocent or even useful these interests may seem in the eyes of the world. The only rule is the ruthless abandonment of everything which is in the way.”

- “Here East and West are in agreement: "Their science," says Al Ghazzali of the Sufis, who practised, like the early Franciscans, a complete renunciation of worldly goods, "has for its object the uprooting from the soul of all violent passions, the extirpation from it of vicious desires and evil qualities; so that the heart may become detached from all that is not God, and give itself for its only occupation meditation upon the Divine Being." All those who have felt themselves urged towards the attainment of this transcendental vision, have found that possessions interrupt the view; that claims, desires, attachments become centres of conflicting interest in the mind. They assume a false air of importance, force themselves upon the attention, and complicate [p. 211] life. Hence, in the interest of self-simplification, they must be cleared away: a removal which involves for the real enthusiast little more sacrifice than the weekly visit of the dustman. "Having entirely surrendered my own free-will," says Al Ghazzali of his personal experience," my heart no longer felt any distress in renouncing fame, wealth, or the society of my children."

- “This may mean the prompt and utter self-stripping of St. Francis of Assisi, who cast off his actual clothing in his relentless determination to have nothing of his own:  428 the reluctant bit-by-bit renunciations which at last set his follower Angela of Foligno free, or the drastic proceedings of Antoinette Bourignan, who found that a penny was enough to keep her from God.”

- Angela of Foligno “From this time, the more she entered into herself the more she was inclined to abandon all. But she had not the courage necessary for the complete renunciation towards which her transcendental consciousness was pressing her. She struggled to adjust herself to the inner and the outer life, but without success.”

- Angela of Foligno “She disguised herself in a hermit's dress- she had no one to help or advise her--and "went out of her chamber about Four in the Morning, taking nothing but one Penny to buy Bread for that Day and it being said to her in the going out, Where is thy Faith? In a Penny? she threw it away. . . . Thus she went away wholly delivered from the heavy burthen of the Cares and Good Things of this World."

- “During the years of inward stress, of penance and growing knowledge of the Infinite, which she spent in the Convent of the Incarnation, and which accompanied this slow remaking of character, Teresa's only self-indulgence--as it seems, a sufficiently innocent one--was talking to the friends who came down from Avila to the convent-parlour, and spoke to her through the grille. Her confessors, unaccustomed to the education of mystical genius, saw nothing incompatible between this practice and the pursuit of a high contemplative life. But as her transcendental consciousness, her states of orison grew stronger, Teresa felt more and more the distracting influence of these glimpses of the outer world. They were a drain upon the energy which ought to be wholly given to that new, deep, more real life which she felt stirring within her, and which could only hope to achieve its mighty destiny by complete concentration upon the business in hand. No genius can afford to dissipate his energies: the mystic genius least of all. Teresa knew that so long as she retained these personal satisfactions, her life had more than one focus; she was not whole-hearted in her surrender to the Absolute. But though her inward voices, her deepest instincts, urged her to give them up, for years she felt herself incapable of such a sacrifice. It was round the question of their retention or surrender that the decisive battle of her life was fought.”

- “So that these two inclinations warred with each other in the breast of this blessed woman, and the authors who inspired them each did his utmost to inflame her most, and the oratory blotted out what the grating wrote, and at times the grating vanquished and diminished the good fruit produced by prayer, causing agony and grief which disquieted and perplexed her soul: for though she was resolved to belong entirely to God, she knew not how to shake herself free from the world: and at times she persuaded herself that she could enjoy both, which ended mostly, as she says, in complete enjoyment of neither.”

- “Teresa must give up her passionate delight in human friendship. Antoinette, never much tempted in that direction, must give up her last penny. What society was to Teresa's generous, energetic nature, prudence was to the temperamentally shrewd and narrow Antoinette: a distraction, a check on the development of the all-demanding transcendental genius, an unconquered relic of the "lower life."

- “Many a mystic, however, has found the perfection of detachment to be consistent with a far less drastic renunciation of external things than that which these women felt to be essential to their peace...Here we are reminded of Plato. "The true order of going is to use the beauties of Earth as steps along which one mounts upwards for the sake of that other Beauty."

- “the Blessed Angela of Foligno, who, though a true mystic, viewed with almost murderous satisfaction the deaths of relatives who were "impediments.” Quote of Angela of Foligno:"In that time and by God's will there died my mother, who was a great hindrance unto me in following the way of God: soon after my husband died likewise, and also all my children. And because I had commenced to follow the Aforesaid Way, and had prayed God that He would rid me of them, I had great consolation of their deaths.”

- St. Augustine- “Love, and do what you like.” (me- Ha! Is it this simple? Vivekananda says this too)

- “Since the greater and stronger the mystic, the stronger and more stubborn his character tends to be, this change of life and turning of energy from the old and easy channels to the new is often a stormy matter. It is a period of actual battle between the inharmonious elements of the self, its lower and higher springs of action: of toil, fatigue, bitter suffering, and many disappointments.”

- “The stronger the death the more powerful and thorough is the corresponding life; the more intimate the death, the more inward is the life.”

- “No more than detachment, then, is mortification an end in itself. It is a process, an education directed towards the production of a definite kind of efficiency, the adjustment of human nature to the demands of its new life.” (how do we explain someone like Cioran, if detachment and mortification is not an 'end' or a 'true' conception of God itself? 3/20- Update! Ha! I understand this now. After reading Cioran in the context of the saints/mystics, this previous question is misguided)

- “Severe, and to the outsider apparently unmeaning--like their physical parallels the exercises of the gymnasium--its disciplines, faithfully accepted, do release the self from the pull of the lower nature, establish it on new levels of freedom and power.”

- On Mortification- “All those self-regarding instincts--so ingrained that they have become automatic--which impel the self to choose the more comfortable part, are seen by the awakened intuition of the embryo mystic as gross infringements of the law of love.”

- “The senses have grown stronger than their masters, monopolized the field of perception, dominated an organism which was made for greater activities, and built up those barriers of individuality which must be done away if true personality is to be achieved, and with it some share in the boundless life of the One.”

- “"The soul is plunged in utter [p. 221] ignorance, when she supposes that she can attain to the high estate of union with God before she casts away the desire of all things, natural and supernatural, which she may possess," says St. John of the Cross, "because the distance between them and that which takes place in the state of pure transformation in God is infinite."

- “The mystics have a profound conviction that Creation, Becoming, Transcendence, is a painful process at the best. Those who are Christians point to the Passion of Christ as a proof that the cosmic journey to perfection, the path of the Eternal Wisdom, follows of necessity the Way of the Cross. That law of the inner life, which sounds so fantastic and yet is so bitterly true--"No progress without pain"--asserts itself. It declares that birth pangs must be endured in the spiritual as well as in the material world: that adequate training must always hurt the athlete.”

- “Pain, therefore, the mystics always welcome and often court: sometimes in the crudely physical form which Suso describes so vividly and horribly in the sixteenth chapter of his Life, more frequently in those refinements of torture which a sensitive spirit can extract from loneliness, injustice, misunderstanding--above all, from deliberate contact with the repulsive accidents of life.” (me- theync? Ha!)

- “"And while she worked such and so many mortifications of all her senses it was several times asked of her 'Why do you do this?' And she answered 'I do not know, but I feel myself drawn inwardly to do this . . . and I think it is God's will.'"

- “This established ascendancy of the "interior man," the transcendental consciousness, over "sensitive nature"--the self in its reactions to the ups and downs and manifold illusions of daily life--is the very object of Purgation. It is, then, almost impossible that any mystic, whatever his religion, character or race, should escape its battles: for none at the beginning of their growth are in a position to dispense with its good offices. Neoplatonists and Mahommedans, no less than the Christian ascetics, are acquainted with the Purgative Way.”

- “In this intermittent style, torn by these constant fluctuations between depression and delight, did Merswin, in whom the psychic instability of the artistic and mystic types is present in excess, pass through the purgative and illuminated states.  472 They appear to have coexisted in his consciousness, first one and then the other emerging and taking control. Hence he did not attain the peaceful condition which is characteristic of full illumination, and normally closes the "First Mystic Life"; but passed direct from these violent alternations of mystical pleasure and mystical pain to the state which he calls "the school of suffering love." This, as we shall see when we come to its consideration, is strictly analogous to that [p. 229] which other mystics have called the "Dark Night of the Soul," and opens the "Second Mystic Life" or Unitive Way.”

- “Though it is convenient for purposes of study to practise a certain dissection, and treat as separate states which are, in the living subject, closely intertwined, we should constantly remind ourselves that such a proceeding is artificial. The struggle of the self to disentangle itself from illusion and attain the Absolute is a life-struggle.”

- On William Blake “They thought him a madman for his pains.”

- On Illuminated Consciousness “This consciousness, in its various forms and degrees, is perhaps the most constant characteristic of Illumination; and makes it, for the mystic soul, a pleasure-state of the intensest kind. I do not mean by this that the subject passes months or years in a continuous ecstasy of communion with the Divine. Intermittent periods of spiritual fatigue or "aridity"--renewals of the temperamental conflicts experienced in purgation--the oncoming gloom of the Dark Night--all these may be, and often are, experienced [p. 242] at intervals during the Illuminated Life; as flashes of insight, indistinguishable from illumination, constantly break the monotony of the Purgative Way. But a deep certitude of the Personal Life omnipresent in the universe has been achieved; and this can never be forgotten, even though it be withdrawn.”

- “The mystics, however, who discriminate so much more delicately than their critics between true and false transcendental experience, never feel any doubt about its validity. Even when their experience seems inconsistent with their theology, they refuse to be disturbed.”

- “The real distinction between the Illuminative and the Unitive Life is that in Illumination the individuality of the subject--however profound his spiritual consciousness, however close his apparent communion with the Infinite--remains separate and intact. His heightened apprehension of reality lights up rather than obliterates the rest of his life: and may even increase his power of dealing adequately with the accidents of normal existence.”

- “The mind, concentrated upon a higher object of interest, is undistracted by its own anxieties, likes, or dislikes; and hence performs the more efficiently the work that is given it to do. Where it does not do so, then the normal make-up or imperfect discipline of the subject, rather than its mystical proclivities, must be blamed.” (me- Vivekananda)

- “The great contemplatives, those destined to attain the full stature of the mystic, emerge from this period of destitution, however long and drastic it may be, as from a new purification. It is for them the gateway to a higher state. But persons of a less heroic spirituality, if they enter the Night at all may succumb to its dangers and pains. This "great negation" is the sorting-house of the spiritual life. Here we part from the "nature mystics," the mystic poets, and all who shared in and were contented with the illuminated vision of reality. Those who go on are the great and strong spirits, who do not seek to know, but are driven to be.” (which will I turn out to be? Kierkegaard mentions the 'dangers' of this process of renunciation resulting in suicide)

- “The theory here advanced that the "Dark Night" is, on its psychic side, partly a condition of fatigue, partly a state of transition, is borne out by the mental and moral disorder which seems, in many subjects, to be its dominant character. When they are in it everything seems to "go wrong" with them. They are tormented by evil thoughts and abrupt temptations, lose grasp not only of their spiritual but also of their worldly affairs. Thus Lucie-Christine says: "Often during my great temptations to [p. 385] sadness I am plunged in such spiritual darkness that I think myself utterly lost in falsehood and illusion; deceiving both myself and others. This temptation is the most terrible of all."  790 The health of those passing through this phase often suffers, they become "odd" and their friends forsake them; their intellectual life is at a low ebb. In their own words "trials of every kind," "exterior and interior crosses," abound.”

- “"Everything depends," says Tauler, on "a fathomless sinking in a fathomless nothingness." He continues, "If a man were to say, 'Lord, who art Thou, that I must follow Thee through such deep, gloomy, miserable paths?' the Lord would reply, 'I am God and Man, and far more God.' If a man could answer then, really and consciously from the bottom of his heart. 'Then I am nothing and less than nothing'; all would be accomplished, for the Godhead has really no place to work in, but ground where all has been annihilated.” (selflessness, everything is one, the meaninglessness/Nihilism of the world and all the actions inside of it)

- “The state of "Quiet," we have said, entails suspension of the surface-consciousness: yet consciousness of the subject's personality remains. It follows, generally, on a period of deliberate and loving recollection, of a slow and steady withdrawal of the attention from the channels of sense. To one who is entering this state, the external world seems to get further and further away: till at last nothing but the paramount fact of his own existence remains. So startling, very often, is the deprivation of all his accustomed mental furniture, of the noise and flashing of the transmitting instruments of sense, that the negative aspect of his condition dominates consciousness; and he can but describe it as a nothingness, a pure passivity, an emptiness, a "naked" orison. He is there, as it were poised, resting, waiting, he does not know for what: only he is conscious that all, even in this utter emptiness, is well. Presently, however, he becomes aware that Something fills this emptiness; something omnipresent, intangible, like sunny air. Ceasing to attend to the messages from without, he begins to notice That which has always been within. His whole being is thrown open to its influence: it permeates his consciousness.” (me- great description of a psylocibin trip. Hence the connections between the mystics, the saints, and the psychedelics of Mckenna, etc. I feel this way on cannabis, but it's more of a remembrance of the actual experience. It is a vague picture inside my consciousness, and not the full blown experience that seemingly came from what felt like from outside myself, while still being wholly interior at the same time. Cioran pg 42, 61, )

- “"The soul," he says, "with all its powers, has divided and scattered itself in outward things, each according to its functions: the power of sight in the eye, the power of hearing in the ear, the power of taste in the tongue, and thus they are the less able to work inwardly, for every power which is divided is imperfect. So the soul, if she would work inwardly, must call home all her powers and collect them from all divided things to one inward work. . . . If a man will work an inward work, he must pour all his powers into himself as into a corner of the soul, and must hide himself from all images and forms, and then he can work. Then he must come into a forgetting and a not-knowing. He must be in a stillness and silence, where the Word may be heard. One cannot draw near to this Word better than by stillness and silence: then it is heard and understood in utter ignorance. When one knows nothing, it is opened and revealed. Then we shall become aware of the Divine Ignorance, and our ignorance will be ennobled and adorned with supernatural knowledge. And when we simply keep ourselves receptive, we are more perfect than when at work." (me- finite/infinite distinction)

- “"In this," says Eckhart finely, "the soul is of equal capacity with God. As God is boundless in giving, so the soul is boundless in receiving. And as God is almighty in His work, see the soul is an abyss of receptivity: and so she is formed anew with God and in God.” (me- Vivekananda)

- “There is this difference between the orison of quiet and that in which the whole soul is united to God; that in this last the soul has not to absorb the Divine Food. God deposits it with her, she knows not how. The orison of quiet, on the other hand, demands, it seems to me, a slight effort; but it is accompanied by so much sweetness that one hardly feels it."  670 "A slight effort," says St. Teresa. "A naked intent stretching," says the "Pystle of Private Counsel." These words mark the frontier between the true and healthy mystic state of "Quiet" and its morbid perversion in "Quietism": the difference between the tense stillness of the athlete and the limp passivity of the sluggard, who is really lazy, though he looks resigned. True "Quiet" is a means, not an end: is actively embraced, not passively endured. It is a phase in the self's growth in contemplation; a bridge which leads from its old and uncoordinated life of activity to its new unified life of deep action--the real "mystic life" of man.” (me- the distinction of 'quite' and 'quietism is only valid under a false/misunderstood description of 'quietism'. Cioran says mystics are 'conquerors, Tillich talks about 'participation', Vivekananda says we must strive after God with the same vigor as a man who is being held under water is dying for a gasp of air, the end is not 'laziness', it is an attempt at the impossible: an understanding of God, and I think that Molinos would agree with all of this)

- “Thus Molinos gives in the "Spiritual Guide" many unexceptional maxims upon Interior Silence: "By not speaking nor desiring, and not thinking," he says justly enough of the contemplative spirit, "she arrives at the true and perfect mystical silence wherein God speaks with the soul, communicates Himself to it, and in the abyss of its own depth teaches it the most7 perfect and exalted wisdom. He calls and guides it to this inward solitude and mystical silence, when He says that He will speak to it alone in the most secret and hidden part of the heart." Here Molinos speaks the language of all mystics, yet the total result of his teaching was to suggest to the ordinary mind that there was a peculiar virtue in doing nothing at all, and that all deliberate spiritual activities were bad.” (me- and, obviously, this is not what Molinos means. As a mystic, Molinos' Nothingness is one of plenitude. He is a conqueror, not a lazy person)

- “The true contemplative, coming to this plane of utter stillness, does not desire "extraordinary favours and visitations," but the privilege of breathing for a little while the atmosphere of Love. He is about that which St. Bernard called "the business of all businesses": goes, in perfect simplicity, to the encounter of Perfection, not to the development of himself. So, even at this apparently "passive" stage of his progress, the mystic's operations are found on analysis to have a dynamic and purposive character: his very repose is the result of stress. He is a pilgrim that still seeks his country.” (me- this is not about my “happiness” or “pleasure”, this is actually hard work! Ha!)

- “All activity was forbidden it, all choice was a negation of its surrender, all striving was unnecessary and wrong. It needed only to rest for evermore and "let God work and speak in the silence." This doctrine is so utterly at variance with all that we know of the laws of life and growth, that it hardly seems to stand in need of condemnation. Such a state of indifference--which the quietists strove in vain to identify with that state of Pure Love which "seeketh not its own" [p. 326] in spiritual things--cannot coexist with any of those "degrees of ardent charity" through which man's spirit must pass on its journey to the One: and this alone is enough to prove its non-mystical character.” (me- Cioran says the mystics are 'conquerors', the mystical state and the journey to it is anything but passive, Tillich says 'participation' is necessary, Vivekananda says we search after the Ideal and want God like a man whose head is being held down under water wants air. This description, a 'state of indifference, is not an accurate depiction of the Quietist position. The Quietist is just pointing out the limited perception of finite beings and as a consequence making a failure, necessarily, of all human conceptions of the Divine, i.e. symbolism. It's not a state of indifference but an unending 'spiritual crisis' that involves a conquering of an invisible world')

- Quoting St. Teresa “To me it seems to be nothing else than a death, as it were, to all the things of this world, and a fruition of God. I know of no other words whereby to describe it or explain it; neither does the soul then know what to do--for it knows not whether to speak or be silent, whether it should laugh or weep. It is a glorious folly, a heavenly madness wherein true wisdom is acquired; and to the soul a kind of fruition most full of delight. . . . The faculties of the soul now retain only the power of occupying themselves wholly with God...”

- “Thanks to the spatial imagery inseparable from human thinking and human expression, no direct description of spiritual experience is or can be possible to man. It must always be symbolic, allusive, oblique: always suggest, but never tell, the truth...” (me- Tillich and Vivekananda, symbolism)

- “The first is the craving which makes him a pilgrim and wanderer. It is the longing to go out from his normal world in search of a lost home, a "better country"; an Eldorado, a Sarras, a Heavenly [p. 127] Syon. The next is that craving of heart for heart, of the soul for its perfect mate, which makes him a lover. The third is the craving for inward purity and perfection, which makes him an ascetic, and in the last resort a saint.” (me- Plato, Vivekenanda)

- “These three cravings, I think, answer to three ways in which mystics of different temperaments attack the problem of the Absolute: three different formulae under which their transcendence of the sense-world can be described. In describing this transcendence, and the special adventures involved in it, they are describing a change from the state of ordinary men, in touch with the sense-world, responding to its rhythms, to the state of spiritual consciousness in which, as they say, they are "in union" with Divine Reality, with God. Whatever be the theological creed of the mystic, he never varies in declaring this close, definite, and actual intimacy to be the end of his quest. "Mark me like the tulip with Thine own streaks," says the Sufi.  258 "I would fain be to the Eternal Goodness what his own hand is to a man," says the German contemplative.  259 "My me is God, nor do I know my self-hood save in Him," says the Italian saint.”

- “But, since this Absolute God is for him substance, ground or underlying Reality of all that is : present yet absent, near yet far: He is already as truly immanent in the human soul as in the Universe. The seeker for the Real may therefore objectify his quest in two apparently contradictory, yet really mutually explanatory ways. First he may see it as an outgoing journey from the world of illusion to the real or transcendental world: a leaving of the visible for the invisible. Secondly, it may appear to him as an inward alteration, remaking or regeneration, by which his personality or character is so changed as to be able to enter into communion with that Fontal Being which he loves and desires; is united with and dominated by the indwelling God who is the fount of his spiritual life. In the first case, the objective idea "God" is the pivot of his symbolism: the Blazing Star, or Magnet of the Universe which he has seen far off, and seeing, has worshipped and desired. In the second case, the emphasis falls on the subjective idea "Sanctity," with its accompanying consciousness of a disharmony to be abolished. The Mystic Way will then be described, not as a journey, but as an alteration of personality, the transmuting of "earthly" into "heavenly" man. Plainly these two aspects are obverse and reverse of one whole. They represent that mighty pair of opposites, Infinite and Finite, God and Self, which it is the business of mysticism to carry up into a higher synthesis. [p. 128] Whether the process be considered as outward search or inward change, its object and its end are the same. Man enters into that Order of Reality for which he was made, and which is indeed the inciting cause of his pilgrimage and his purification: for however great the demand on the soul's own effort may be, the initiative always lies with the living Divine World itself. Man's small desire is evoked, met, and fulfilled by the Divine Desire, his "separated will" or life becomes one with the great Life of the All.” (me- Vivekananda, Jnana/Karma Yoga, Tillich “faith pg. 12-13, 53, 120”)

The Spiritual Life

- “Most of our conflicts and difficulties come from trying to deal with the spiritual and practical aspects of our life separately instead of realising them as parts of one whole. If our practical life is centred on our own interests, cluttered up by possessions, distracted by ambitions, passions, want— and worries, beset by a sense of our own rights and importance, or anxieties for our own future, or longings for our own success, we need not expect that our spiritual life will be a contrast to all this.”

- “is All. All takes place within Him. He alone matters, He alone is. Our spiritual life is His affair; because, whatever we may think to the contrary, it is really produced by His steady attraction, and our humble and self forgetful response to it. It consists in being drawn, at His pace and in His way, to the place where He wants us to be; not the place we fancied for ourselves.”

- “For the most part, of course, the presence and action of the great spiritual universe surrounding us is no more noticed by us than the pressure of air on our bodies, or the action of light. Our field of attention is not wide enough for that; our spiritual senses are not sufficiently alert. Most people work so hard developing their correspondence with the visible world, that their power of corresponding with the invisible is left in a rudimentary state.”

- “So, while we must avoid too much indefiniteness and abstraction on one hand, we must also avoid hard and fast definitions on the other hand. For no words in our human language are adequate or accurate when applied to spiritual realities; and it is the saints and not the sceptics who have most insisted on this. “No knowledge of God which we get in this life is true knowledge,” says St. John of the Cross. It is always confused, imperfect, oblique.” (Tillich, Vivekananda)

- “The old writers call these two activities Mortification and Prayer. These are formidable words, and modern man tends to recoil from them.” (Ha!)

- “Mortification means killing the very roots of self-love; pride and possessiveness, anger and violence, ambition and greed in all their disguises, however respectable those disguises may be, whatever uniforms they wear. In fact, it really means the entire transformation of our personal, professional and political life into something more consistent with our real situation as small dependent, fugitive creatures; all sharing the same limitations and inheriting the same half-animal past.”

- “Prayer means turning to Reality, taking our part, however humble, tentative and half-understood, in the continual conversation, the communion, of our spirits with the Eternal Spirit; the acknowledgment of our entire dependence, which is yet the partly free dependence of the child. For Prayer is really our whole life toward God: our longing for Him, our “incurable God-sickness,” as Barth calls it, our whole drive towards Him.”

- “Here we are, small half-real creatures of sense and spirit, haunted by the sense of a Perfection ever calling to us, and yet ourselves so fundamentally imperfect, so hopelessly involved in an imperfect world; with a passionate desire for beauty, and more mysteriously still, a knowledge of beauty, and yet unable here to realise perfect beauty; with a craving for truth and a deep reverence for truth, but only able to receive flashes of truth. Yet we know that perfect goodness, perfect beauty, and perfect truth exist within the Life of God; and that our hearts will never rest in less than these. This longing, this need of God, however dimly and vaguely we feel it, is the seed from which grows the strong, beautiful and fruitful plant of prayer.”

- “What a contrast this almost inarticulate act of measureless adoration is, to what Karl Barth calls the dreadful prattle of theology. Hallowed be thy Name: not described: or analysed be thy Name. Before that Name, let the most soaring intellects cover their eyes with their wings, and adore. Compared with this, even the coming of the Kingdom and the doing of the Will are side issues; particular demonstrations of the Majesty of the Infinite God, on whom all centres, and for whom all is done. People who are apt to say that adoration is difficult and it is so much easier to pray for practical things, might remember that in making this great act of adoration they are praying for extremely practical things: among others, that their own characters, homes, social contacts, work, conversation, amusements and politics may be cleansed from imperfection, sanctified.”

- “What really seems to you to matter most? The perfection of His mighty symphony, or your own remarkably clever performance of that difficult passage for the tenth violin?”

- “There is energy, drive, purpose in those words; an intensity of desire for the coming of perfection into life. Not the limp resignation that lies devoutly in the road and waits for the steam roller; but a total concentration on the total interests of God, which must be expressed in action. It is useless to utter fervent petitions for that Kingdom to be established and that Will be done, unless we are willing to do something about it ourselves. As we walk through London we know very well that we are not walking through the capital of the Kingdom of Heaven. Yet we might be, if the conviction and action of every Christian in London were set without any conditions or any reluctance towards this end; if there were perfect consistency, whatever it cost— and it is certain that the cost would not be small— between our spiritual ideals and our social and political acts.

- “The life of this planet, and especially its human life, is a life in which something has gone wrong, and badly wrong. Every time that we see an unhappy face, an unhealthy body, hear a bitter or despairing word, we are reminded of that. The occasional dazzling flashes of pure beauty, pure goodness, pure love which show us what God wants and what He is, only throw into more vivid relief the horror of cruelty, greed, oppression, hatred, ugliness; and also the mere muddle and stupidity which frustrate and bring suffering into life. Unless we put on blinkers, we can hardly avoid seeing all this; and unless we are warmly wrapped up in our own cozy ideas, and absorbed in our own interests, we surely cannot help feeling the sense of obligation, the shame of acquiescence, the call to do something about it.”

- “...the awakening of a human being to his true situation over against Reality, and the true object of his fugitive life. There are three stages in it. First, the sudden disclosure of the Divine Splendour; the mysterious and daunting beauty of Holiness, on which even the seraphs dare not look. The veil is lifted, and the Reality which is always there is revealed. And at once the young man sees, by contrast, his own dreadful imperfection. “Woe is me! for I am a man of unclean lips!” The vision of perfection, if it is genuine, always brings shame, penitence, and therefore purification. That is the second stage. What is the third? The faulty human creature, who yet possesses the amazing power of saying Yes or No to the Eternal God, is asked for his services, and instantly responds. “Who will go for us?” “Here am I! send me!” There the very essence of the spiritual life is gathered and presented in a point: first the vision of the Perfect, and the sense of imperfection and unworthiness over against the Perfect, and then because of the vision, and in spite of the imperfection, action in the interests of the Perfect— co-operation with God.”

- “The action may be almost anything; from the ceaseless self-offering of the enclosed nun to the creation of beauty, or the clearance of slums. “Here am I! send me!” means going anyhow, anywhere, at any time.

- “Great courage and initiative, the hardy endurance of privation and fatigue, the calm acceptance of unpopularity, misunderstanding and contempt, are at least as characteristic of them as any of the outward marks of piety. So too their inner life, which we are inclined to think of as a constant succession of spiritual delights, was often hard and painful. Willingly and perpetually, they prayed from within the Cross, shared the agony, darkness, loneliness of the Cross; and because of this, they shared in its saving power. The Church is in the world to save the world. It is a tool of God for that purpose; not a comfortable religious club established in fine historical premises.”

- “Fuss and feverishness, anxiety, intensity, intolerance, instability, pessimism and wobble, and every kind of hurry and worry— these, even on the highest levels, are signs of the self-made and self-acting soul; the spiritual parvenu. The saints are never like that. They share the quiet and noble qualities of the great family to which they belong: the family of the Sons of God.” (disagree with this, or have trouble making sense of the 'dark night', am skeptical about 'bliss' being anything other than another transitory possibility, the infinite/finite distinction makes the 'mystical' state 'lower' than the experience of Nihilism or meaninglessness, Tillich)

- “We see that plainly in the Saints; in the quiet steadiness of spirit with which they meet the vicissitudes and sufferings of their lives. They know that these small and changing lives, about which we are often so troubled, are part of a great mystery; the life that is related to God and known by God.”

- “St. Bernard and St. Francis discard all outward possessions, all the grace and beauty of life, and accept poverty and hardship; and through their renunciation a greater wealth and a more exquisite beauty is given the world.”

- “The action of those whose lives are given to the Spirit has in it something of the leisure of Eternity; and because of this, they achieve far more than those whose lives are enslaved by the rush and hurry, the unceasing tick-tick of the world. In the spiritual life it is very important to get our timing right. Otherwise we tend to forget that God, Who is greater than our heart, is greater than our job too.”

- “Even that mysterious communion with God in which we seek, and offer ourselves to, that which we love— in spite of the deep peace it brings— is not without the pain and tension which must be felt by imperfect human creatures, when they contemplate and stretch towards a beauty and perfection which they cannot reach.” (just mentioned this above, Tillich)

- “I think as I write this of Dürer’s wonderful drawing of the Knight, Death and the Devil: the Knight of the Spirit on his strong and well kept horse— human nature, treated as it ought to be, and used as it ought to be— riding up a dark rocky defile. Beside him travels Death, a horrible, doddering figure of decay, saying, “All things perish— time is passing— we are all getting older— is this effort really worth while?” On his flank is a yet more hideous fellow-pilgrim; the ugly, perverse, violent element of our mixed human nature, all our animal part, our evil impulses, nagging at him too. In one way or another, we all hear those two voices from time to time; with their discouragements and sneers, their unworthy invitations, their cynical comments and vile suggestions. “Don’t forget me, I am your future,” says Death. “Don’t forget me,” says animal man, “I am your undying past.” But the Knight of the Spirit does not look at them. He has had his hand-to-hand struggle farther back; and on his lance is impaled the horrid creature, his own special devil, which he has slain. Now he is absorbed in the contemplation of something beyond the picture, something far more real than the nightmarish landscape through which he must travel; and because of that, he rides steadily forth from that lower world and its phantasies to the Eternal World and its realities. He looks at that which he loves, not at that which he hates, and so he goes safely out of the defile into the open; where he will join the great army of God.”

## 47. Thomas Kempis

- “If thou knewest the whole Bible, and the sayings of all the philosophers, what should all this profit thee without the love and grace of God? Vanity of vanities, all is vanity, save to love God, and Him only to serve. That is the highest wisdom, to cast the world behind us, and to reach forward to the heavenly kingdom.”

- “There is naturally in every man a desire to know, but what profiteth knowledge without the fear of God? Better of a surety is a lowly peasant who serveth God, than a proud philosopher who watcheth the stars and neglecteth the knowledge of himself.” (me- entheogens, scientism)

- “Be not high-minded, but rather confess thine ignorance. Why desirest thou to lift thyself above another, when there are found many more learned and more skilled in the Scripture than thou? If thou wilt know and learn anything with profit, love to be thyself unknown and to be counted for nothing. That is the highest and most profitable lesson, when a man truly knoweth and judgeth lowly of himself. To account nothing of one's self, and to think always kindly and highly of others, this is great and perfect wisdom. Even shouldest thou see thy neighbor sin openly or grievously, yet thou oughtest not to reckon thyself better than he, for thou knowest not how long thou shalt keep thine integrity. All of us are weak and frail; hold thou no man more frail than thyself.” (me- Vivekananda)

- “Oh how quickly passeth the glory of the world away!”

- “He is truly great who deemeth himself small, and counteth all height of honour as nothing. He is the truly wise man, who counteth all earthly things as dung...”

- “We must not trust every word of others or feeling within ourselves, but cautiously and patiently try the matter, whether it be of God.” (always doubting every thing, a disconnect between all humans, e.g. 'a conversation between two people is like having to conflicting monologues going on at the same time')

- “Vain is the life of that man who putteth his trust in men or in any created Thing.” (there is no reason for disappointment from other people, because there is nothing else to expect except disappointing behavior. This also applies to oneself)

- “Be not lifted up because of thy strength or beauty of body, for with only a slight sickness it will fail and wither away.

- “We must love all men, but not make close companions of all.”

- “Avoid as far as thou canst the tumult of men; for talk concerning worldly things, though it be innocently undertaken, is a hindrance, so quickly are we led captive and defiled by vanity. Many a time I wish that I had held my peace, and had not gone amongst men.”

- “How came it to pass that many of the Saints were so perfect, so contemplative of Divine things? Because they steadfastly sought to mortify themselves from all worldly desires, and so were enabled to cling with their whole heart to God, and be free and at leisure for the thought of Him. We are too much occupied with our own affections, and too anxious about transitory things. Seldom, too, do we entirely conquer even a single fault, nor are we zealous for daily growth in grace. And so we remain lukewarm and unspiritual.”

- “If we look upon our progress in religion as a progress only in outward observances and forms, our devoutness will soon come to an end.”

- “If we look upon our progress in religion as a progress only in outward observances and forms, our devoutness will soon come to an end.” (The Kingdom within, Vivekananda, Symbolism, Tillich)

- “It is good that we sometimes endure contradictions, and are hardly and unfairly judged, when we do and mean what is good. For these things help us to be humble, and shield us from vain-glory.”

- “So long as we live in the world, we cannot be without trouble and trial.”

- “There is no position so sacred, no place so secret, that it is without temptations and adversities.” (Ha! Total skepticism, Vivekananda 'believe nothing and disbelieve everything, finite/infinite gap)

- “Look well unto thyself, and beware that thou judge not the doings of others. In judging others a man laboureth in vain; he often erreth, and easily falleth into sin; but in judging and examining himself he always laboureth to good purpose.”

- “Oh, he who hath but a spark of true charity, hath verily learned that all worldly things are full of vanity.” (me- Vivekananda)

- “Endeavour to be patient in bearing with other men's faults and infirmities whatsoever they be, for thou thyself also hast many things which have need to be borne with by others. If thou canst not make thine own self what thou desireth, how shalt thou be able to fashion another to thine own liking. We are ready to see others made perfect, and yet we do not amend our own shortcomings.” (this is an issue of mine)

- “We will that others be straitly corrected, but we will not be corrected ourselves. The freedom of others displeaseth us, but we are dissatisfied that our own wishes shall be denied us.”

- “But now hath God thus ordained, that we may learn to bear one another's burdens, because none is without defect, none without a burden, none sufficient of himself, none wise enough of himself; but it behoveth us to bear with one another, to comfort one another, to help, instruct, admonish one another. How much strength each man hath is best proved by occasions of adversity: for such occasions do not make a man frail, but show of what temper he is.”

- “O how many and grievous tribulations did the Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, Virgins, endure; and all others who would walk in the footsteps of Christ. For they hated their souls in this world that they might keep them unto life eternal. O how strict and retired a life was that of the holy fathers who dwelt in the desert! what long and grievous temptations they did suffer! how often were they assaulted by the enemy! what frequent and fervid prayers did they offer unto God! what strict fasts did they endure! what fervent zeal and desire after spiritual profit did they manifest! how bravely did they fight that their vices might not gain the mastery! how entirely and steadfastly did they reach after God! By day they laboured, and at night they gave themselves ofttimes unto prayer; yea, even when they were labouring they ceased not from mental prayer. 3. They spent their whole time profitably; every hour seemed short for retirement with God; and through the great sweetness of contemplation, even the need of bodily refreshment was forgotten. They renounced all riches, dignities, honours, friends, kinsmen; they desired nothing from the world; they ate the bare necessaries of life; they were unwilling to minister to the body even in necessity. Thus were they poor in earthly things, but rich above measure in grace and virtue. Though poor to the outer eye, within they were filled with grace and heavenly benedictions. 4. They were strangers to the world, but unto God they were as kinsmen and friends. They seemed unto themselves as of no reputation, and in the world's eyes contemptible; but in the sight of God they were precious and beloved.”

- “Be thou never without something to do; be reading, or writing, or praying, or meditating, or doing something that is useful to the community.” (Karma Yoga or the cobra at the door/air when head held under water, both?)

- “If thou withdraw thyself from trifling conversation and idle goings about, as well as from novelties and gossip, thou shalt find thy time sufficient and apt for good meditation. The greatest saints used to avoid as far as they could the company of men, and chose to live in secret with God. 2. One hath said, "As oft as I have gone among men, so oft have I returned less a man." This is what we often experience when we have been long time in conversation. For it is easier to be altogether silent than it is not to exceed in word. It is easier to remain hidden at home than to keep sufficient guard upon thyself out of doors. He, therefore, that seeketh to reach that which is hidden and spiritual, must go with Jesus "apart from the multitude." No man safely goeth abroad who loveth not to rest at home. No man safely talketh but he who loveth to hold his peace.”

- “O how good a conscience should that man keep, who never sought a joy that passeth away, who never became entangled with the world!”

- “It is better to be unknown and take heed to oneself than to neglect oneself and work wonders. It is praiseworthy for a religious man to go seldom abroad, to fly from being seen, to have no desire to see men.” (non-movement, selflessness, renouncement)

- “What canst thou see anywhere which can continue long under the sun? Thou believest perchance that thou shalt be satisfied, but thou wilt never be able to attain unto this. If thou shouldest see all things before thee at once, what would it be but a vain vision?”

- “When a man hath perfect compunction, then all the world is burdensome and bitter to him.”

- “There are many foolish and unstable men who say, "See what a prosperous life that man hath, how rich and how great he is, how powerful, how exalted." But lift up thine eyes to the good things of heaven, and thou shalt see that all these worldly things are nothing, they are utterly uncertain, yea, they are wearisome, because they are never possessed without care and fear. The happiness of man lieth not in the abundance of temporal things but a moderate portion sufficeth him. Our life upon the earth is verily wretchedness. The more a man desireth to be spiritual, the more bitter doth the present life become to him; because he the better understandeth and seeth the defects of human corruption. For to eat, to drink, to watch, to sleep, to rest, to labour, and to be subject to the other necessities of nature, is truly a great wretchedness and affliction to a devout man, who would fain be released and free from all sin. 3. For the inner man is heavily burdened with the necessities of the body in this world.”

- “Oh foolish and faithless of heart, who lie buried so deep in worldly things, that they relish nothing save the things of the flesh! Miserable ones! they will too sadly find out at the last, how vile and worthless was that which they loved. The saints of God and all loyal friends of Christ held as nothing the things which pleased the flesh, or those which flourished in this life, but their whole hope and affection aspired to the things which are above. Their whole desire was borne upwards to everlasting and invisible things, lest they should be drawn downwards by the love of things visible.”

- “Very quickly will there be an end of thee here; take heed therefore how it will be with thee in another world. To-day man is, and to-morrow he will be seen no more. And being removed out of sight, quickly also he is out of mind. O the dulness and hardness of man's heart, which thinketh only of the present, and looketh not forward to the future...If to-day thou art not ready, how shalt thou be ready to-morrow?”

- “If it is a fearful thing to die, it may be perchance a yet more fearful thing to live long. Happy is the man who hath the hour of his death always before his eyes, and daily prepareth himself to die. If thou hast ever seen one die, consider that thou also shalt pass away by the same road.”

- “Always be thou prepared, and so live that death may never find thee unprepared. Many die suddenly and unexpectedly.”

- “For a perfect contempt of the world, a fervent desire to excel in virtue, the love of discipline, the painfulness of repentance, readiness to obey, denial of self, submission to any adversity for love of Christ; these are the things which shall give great confidence of a happy death.”

- “Trust not thy friends and kinsfolk, nor put off the work of thy salvation to the future, for men will forget thee sooner than thou thinkest.”

- “If thou art not anxious for thyself now, who, thinkest thou, will be anxious for thee afterwards?”

- “Ah, foolish one! why thinkest thou that thou shalt live long, when thou art not sure of a single day? How many have been deceived, and suddenly have been snatched away from the body! How many times hast thou heard how one was slain by the sword, another was drowned, another falling from on high broke his neck, another died at the table, another whilst at play! One died by fire, another by the sword, another by the pestilence, another by the robber. Thus cometh death to all, and the life of men swiftly passeth away like a shadow. 8. Who will remember thee after thy death? And who will entreat for thee? Work, work now, oh dearly beloved, work all that thou canst. For thou knowest not when thou shalt die, nor what shall happen unto thee after death. While thou hast time, lay up for thyself undying riches. Think of nought but of thy salvation; care only for the things of God.” (Maya, Tolstoy, Vivekananda, Cobra, Head under water, Seraphim, Pascal)

Start of the Second Book of The Imitation of Christ

- “The kingdom of God is within you,(1) saith the Lord. Turn thee with all thine heart to the Lord and forsake this miserable world, and thou shalt find rest unto thy soul. Learn to despise outward things and to give thyself to things inward, and thou shalt see the kingdom of God come within thee.”

- “There is no great trust to be placed in a frail and mortal man, even though he be useful and dear to us, neither should much sorrow arise within us if sometimes he oppose and contradict us.”

- “In heaven ought thy habitation to be, and all earthly things should be looked upon as it were in the passing by. All things pass away and thou equally with them.”

- “Christ was willing to suffer and be despised, and darest thou complain of any?...If thou art unwilling to suffer any adversity, how shalt thou be the friend of Christ?”

- “...do many things displease thee and often trouble thee, that thou art not yet perfectly dead to thyself nor separated from all earthly things. Nothing so defileth and entangleth the heart of man as impure love towards created things. If thou rejectest outward comfort thou wilt be able to contemplate heavenly things and frequently to be joyful inwardly.”

- “...all our peace in this sad life lieth in humble suffering rather than in not feeling adversities.”

- “If thou reachest after and seekest, nothing but the will of God and the benefit of thy neighbour, thou wilt entirely enjoy inward liberty.” (me- selflessness, renounce, Karma Yoga, live as the birds: willing to give your life for anyone or anything)

- “...we blame little faults in others and pass over great faults in ourselves.”

- “Then thou shalt make great progress if thou keep thyself free from all temporal care. Thou shalt lamentably fall away if thou set a value upon any worldly thing. Let nothing be great, nothing high, nothing pleasing, nothing acceptable unto thee, save God Himself or the things of God. Reckon as altogether vain whatsoever consolation comes to thee from a creature. The soul that loveth God looketh not to anything that is beneath God. God alone is eternal and incomprehensible, filling all things, the solace of the soul, and the true joy of the heart.”

- “If thou considerest well what thou art inwardly, thou wilt not care what men will say to thee.”

- “The love of created things is deceiving and unstable, but the love of Jesus is faithful and lasting.”

- “If thou wouldst learn to put away from thee every created thing, Jesus would freely take up His abode with thee.”

- “For His sake and in Him let both enemies and friends be dear to thee...”

- “...a diligent seeker after virtue, falleth not back upon those comforts, nor seeketh such sweetness as may be tasted and handled, but desireth rather hard exercises, and to undertake severe labours...When, therefore, spiritual comfort is given by God, receive it with giving of thanks, and know that it is the gift of God, not thy desert. Be not lifted up, rejoice not overmuch nor foolishly presume, but rather be more humble for the gift, more wary and more careful in all thy doings; for that hour will pass away, and temptation will follow. When comfort is taken from thee, do not straightway despair, but wait for the heavenly visitation with humility and patience, for God is able to give thee back greater favour and consolation. This is not new nor strange to those who have made trial of the way of God, for with the great saints and the ancient prophets there was often this manner of change. (First part is Participation, the second is THE mindset to have with entheogens! Humility.)

- “I have never found any man so religious and godly, but that he felt sometimes a withdrawal of the divine favour, and lack of fervour. No saint was ever so filled with rapture, so enlightened, but that sooner or later he was tempted.”

- “I desire no consolation which taketh away from me compunction, I love no contemplation which leadeth to pride.”

- “Rarely is any one found so spiritual as to be stripped of all selfish thoughts, for who shall find a man truly poor in spirit and free of all created things? "His value is from afar, yea from the ends of the earth." A man may give away all his goods, yet that is nothing; and if he do many deeds of penitence, yet that is a small thing; and though he understand all knowledge, yet that is afar off; and if he have great virtue and zealous devotion, yet much is lacking unto him, yea, one thing which is the most necessary to him of all. What is it then? That having given up all things besides, he give up himself and go forth from himself utterly, and retain nothing of self-love; and having done all things which he knoweth to be his duty to do, that he feel that he hath done nothing.” (Vivekananda)

- “Why fearest thou then to take up the cross which leadeth to a kingdom?” (I need a stronger experience of Nihilism?)  
- “Behold everything dependeth upon the Cross, and everything lieth in dying; and there is none other way unto life and to true inward peace, except the way of the Holy Cross and of daily mortification.”

- “The whole life of Christ was a cross and martyrdom, and dost thou seek for thyself rest and joy? Thou art wrong, thou art wrong, if thou seekest aught but to suffer tribulations, for this whole mortal life is full of miseries, and set round with crosses. And the higher a man hath advanced in the spirit, the heavier crosses he will often find, because the sorrow of his banishment increaseth with the strength of his love.”

- “It is not in the nature of man to bear the cross, to love the cross, to keep under the body and to bring it into subjection, to fly from honours, to bear reproaches meekly, to despise self and desire to be despised, to bear all adversities and losses, and to desire no prosperity in this world.”

- “Know thou of a surety that thou oughtest to lead the life of a dying man. And the more a man dieth to himself, the more he beginneth to live towards God.”

- “For our worthiness and growth in grace lieth not in many delights and consolations, but rather in bearing many troubles and adversities.”

- “"Let, therefore, nothing which thou doest seem to thee great; let nothing be grand, nothing of value or beauty, nothing worthy of honour, nothing lofty, nothing praiseworthy or desirable, save what is eternal. Let the eternal truth please thee above all things, let thine own great vileness displease thee continually. Fear, denounce, flee nothing so much as thine own faults and sins, which ought to be more displeasing to thee than any loss whatsoever of goods. There are some who walk not sincerely before me, but being led by curiosity and pride, they desire to know my secret things and to understand the deep things of God, whilst they neglect themselves and their salvation.”

- - “If I am left to myself, behold I am nothing, I am all weakness; but if suddenly Thou look upon me, immediately I am made strong, and filled with new joy.”

- “For it is not given unto all to renounce this world and its affairs, and to take up a religious life.”

- “...contempt of all worldly things and in the avoidance of all worthless pleasures shall be thy blessing, and fulness of consolation shall be given thee. And the more thou withdrawest thyself from all solace of creatures, the more sweet and powerful consolations shalt thou find. But at the first thou shalt not attain to them, without some sorrow and hard striving.”

- “"Be zealous against thyself, nor suffer pride to live within thee, but so show thyself subject and of no reputation, that all may be able to walk over thee, and tread thee down as the clay in the streets. What hast thou, O foolish man, of which to complain? What, O vile sinner, canst thou answer those who speak against thee, seeing thou hast so often offended God, and many a time hast deserved hell?”\*

- “"Therefore, whatsoever seemeth to thee desirable, thou must always desire and seek after it with the fear of God and humility of heart, and most of all, must altogether resign thyself, and commit all unto Me and say, 'Lord, thou knowest what is best; let this or that be, according as Thou wilt.” (Vivekananda and Karma Yoga)

- “Grant that I may die to all worldly things, and for Thy sake love to be despised and unknown in this world.”

- “Let temporal things be in the use, eternal things in the desire. Thou canst not be satisfied with any temporal good, for thou wast not created for the enjoyment of these.” (the human psychological principle that pushes one to the Inifinite. The beginning of what Tillich refers to as the 'grasp')

- “"My Son! I came down from heaven for thy salvation; I took upon Me thy miseries not of necessity, but drawn by love that thou mightest learn patience and mightest bear temporal miseries without murmuring. For from the hour of My birth, until My death upon the Cross, I ceased not from bearing of sorrow; I had much lack of temporal things; I oftentimes heard many reproaches against Myself; I gently bore contradictions and hard words; I received ingratitude for benefits, blasphemies for My miracles, rebukes for My doctrine."”

- “It is often a small thing which casteth me down and maketh me sad. I resolve that I will act bravely, but when a little temptation cometh, immediately I am in a great strait.” (Vivekananda and the barking dog example)

- “...I remain in this most miserable life. Oh what a life is this, where tribulations and miseries cease not, where all things are full of snares and of enemies, for when one tribulation or temptation goeth, another cometh, yea, while the former conflict is yet raging others come more in number and unexpected.”

- “And how can the life of man be loved, seeing that it hath so many bitter things, that it is subjected to so many calamities and miseries. How can it be even called life, when it produces so many deaths and plagues? The world is often reproached because it is deceitful and vain, yet notwithstanding it is not easily given up, because the lusts of the flesh have too much rule over it. Some draw us to love, some to hate. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, these draw to love of the world; but the punishments and miseries which righteously follow these things, bring forth hatred of the world and weariness.”

- “Thee above every creature, above all health and beauty, above all glory and honour, above all power and dignity, above all knowledge and skilfulness, above all riches and arts, above all joy and exultation, above all fame and praise, above all sweetness and consolation, above all hope and promise, above all merit and desire, above all gifts and rewards which Thou canst give and pour forth, above all joy and jubilation which the mind is able to receive and feel...”

- “Thou hast no need to answer for others, but thou must give an answer for thyself. Why therefore dost thou entangle thyself?”

- “...preserve me from the cares of this life, lest I become too much entangled; from many necessities of the body, lest I be taken captive by pleasure; from all obstacles of the spirit, lest I be broken and cast down with cares.”

- “...the universal curse of mortality...”

- “It is no small prudence to keep silence in an evil time and to turn inwardly unto Me, and not to be troubled by human judgment.”

- “And except a man be lifted up in the spirit, and freed from all creatures, and altogether united to God, whatsoever he knoweth, whatsoever even he hath, it mattereth but little...For whatsoever is not God is nothing, and ought to be counted for nothing. Great is the difference between a godly man, illuminated with wisdom, and a scholar learned in knowledge and given to books.”

- “Many are found who desire contemplation, but they do not strive to practice those things which are required thereunto. It is also a great impediment, that much is made of symbols and external signs, and too little of thorough mortification. I know not how it is, and by what spirit we are led, and what we who would be deemed spiritual are aiming at, that we give so great labour and so eager solicitude for transitory and worthless things, and scarcely ever gather our senses together to think at all of our inward condition.”

- “As long as thou livest thou art subject to change, howsoever unwilling; so that thou art found now joyful, now sad; now at peace, now disquieted; now devout, now indevout; now studious, now careless; now sad, now cheerful. But the wise man, and he who is truly learned in spirit, standeth above these changeable things, attentive not to what he may feel in himself, or from what quarter the wind may blow, but that the whole intent of his mind may carry him on to the due and much-desired end. For thus will he be able to remain one and the same and unshaken, the single eye of his desire being steadfastly fixed, through the manifold changes of the world, upon Me.”

- “Behold, God is mine, and all things are mine!” (Vivekanandaish?)

- “...the wisdom of the world is found utter vanity, and to be carnally minded is death. But they who follow after Thee through contempt of worldly things, and mortification of the flesh, are found to be truly wise because they are carried from vanity to verity, from the flesh to the spirit. They taste that the Lord is good, and whatsoever good they find in creatures, they count it all unto the praise of the Creator.”

- “Many men have many opinions, and therefore little trust is to be placed in them. But moreover it is impossible to please all.”

- “"Who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die? To-day he is, and to-morrow his place is not found. Fear God and thou shalt not quail before the terrors of men. What can any man do against thee by words or deeds? He hurteth himself more than thee, nor shall he escape the judgment of God, whosoever he may be.” (Ha!)

- “The true progress of man lieth in self-denial...”

- “O Lord, we are in blindness, and are quickly seduced by vanity. If I look rightly within myself, never was injury done unto me by any creature, and therefore I have nought whereof to complain before Thee. But because I have many times and grievously sinned against Thee, all creatures do justly take arms against me.”

- “The deeper also he descendeth into himself, and the viler he appeareth in his own eyes, the higher he ascendeth towards God.”

- “O Lord, to what have we come? Behold a temporal loss is mourned over; for a trifling gain we labour and hurry; and spiritual loss passeth away into forgetfulness, and we rarely recover it. That which profiteth little or nothing is looked after, and that which is altogether necessary is negligently passed by; because the whole man slideth away to outward things, and unless he quickly recovereth himself in outward things he willingly lieth down.” (me- Kierkegaard)

- “And wherefore do such trivial matters go to thine heart, except that thou art yet carnal, and regardest men more than thou oughtest? For because thou fearest to be despised, thou art unwilling to be reproved for thy faults, and seekest paltry shelters of excuses.” (I am a coward)

- “For when thou fleest away from being abased and confounded for thy faults, it is plain that thou art neither truly humble nor truly dead to the world, and that the world is not crucified to thee.” (I feel mentally weak)

- “Count the whole world as nought; seek to be alone with God before all outward things. For thou canst not be alone with Me, and at the same time be delighted with transitory things. Thou oughtest to be separated from thy acquaintances and dear friends, and keep thy mind free from all worldly comfort.” (who today with agree with this? Is there one person out there?)

- “"Oh how great a confidence shall there be to the dying man whom no affection to anything detaineth in the world? But to have a heart so separated from all things, a sickly soul doth not yet comprehend, nor doth the carnal man know the liberty of the spiritual man. But if indeed he desire to be spiritually minded, he must renounce both those who are far off, and those who are near, and to beware of no man more than himself.”

- “Give all for all; demand nothing, ask nothing in return...”

## 48. Therese of Lisieux

Chapter Viii- Profession of Soeur Therese

- “The darkness was so bewildering that I understood but one thing—I had no religious vocation, and must return to the world. I cannot describe the agony I endured. What was I to do in such a difficulty? I chose the right course, deciding to tell my Novice Mistress of the temptation without delay. I sent for her to come out of choir, and though full of confusion, I confessed the state of my soul. Fortunately she saw more clearly than I did, and reassured me completely by laughing frankly at my story.”

- “And just as Solomon, turning to all the works which his hand had wrought, and to the labours

wherein he had laboured in vain, saw in all things vanity and vexation of mind,"[5] so experience showed me that the sole happiness of earth consists in lying hidden, and remaining in total ignorance of created things. I understood that without love even the most brilliant deeds count for nothing. These gifts, which Our Lord lavished upon me, far from doing me any harm,

drew me towards Him; I saw that He alone is unchangeable, He alone can fill the vast abyss of my desires.”

- “I have obtained many spiritual lights through the works of St. John of the Cross. When I was seventeen and eighteen they were my only food; but, later on, and even now, all spiritual authors leave me cold and dry. However beautiful and touching a book may be, my heart does not respond, and I read without understanding, or, if I understand, I cannot meditate. In my

helplessness the Holy Scriptures and the Imitation are of the greatest assistance; in them I find a hidden manna, genuine and pure. But it is from the Gospels that I find most help in the time of prayer; from them I draw all that I need for my poor soul. I am always discovering in them new lights and hidden mysterious meanings. I know and I have experienced that "the Kingdom of God is within us."[9] Our Lord has no need of books or teachers to instruct our souls.”

- “Yet all souls cannot be alike. It is necessary that they should differ from one another in order that each Divine Perfection may receive its special honor.”

Chapter IX- The Night of the Soul

- “But during the Paschal days, so full of light, our Lord made me understand that there really are in truth souls bereft of Faith and Hope, who, through abuse of grace, lose these precious

treasures, the only source of pure and lasting joy. He allowed my soul to be overwhelmed with darkness, and the thought of Heaven, which had consoled me from my earliest childhood, now became a subject of conflict and torture. This trial did not last merely for days or weeks; I have been suffering for months, and I still await deliverance. I wish I could express what I feel, but it is

beyond me. One must have passed through this dark tunnel to understand its blackness.” (Kierkegaard, Cioran, Ligotti, realization)

- “...the greatest is that He has shown me my littleness and how incapable I am of anything good.” (Vivekananda- build hospitals? Otto)

- “...there are no words really to explain these things. The words will always fall short of the reality.”

- “Let me suppose that I had been born in a land of thick fogs, and had never seen the beauties of nature, or a single ray of sunshine, although I had heard of these wonders from my early

youth, and knew that the country wherein I dwelt was not my real home--there was another land, unto which I should always look forward.”

- “...I felt that one day I should be set free from this land of darkness. I believed it, not only because I had been told so by others, but my heart's most secret and deepest longings assured me that there was in store for me another and more beautiful country--an abiding dwelling-place.

And suddenly the mists about me have penetrated my very soul and have enveloped me so completely that I cannot even picture to myself this promised country...all has faded away.

When my heart, weary of the surrounding darkness, tries to find some rest in the thought of a life to come, my anguish increases. It seems to me that out of the darkness I hear the mocking voice

of the unbeliever: "You dream of a land of light and fragrance, you dream that the Creator of these wonders will be yours for ever, you think one day to escape from these mists where you now

languish. Nay, rejoice in death, which will give you, not what you hope for, but a night darker still, the night of utter nothingness!"

- “No doubt, dear Mother, you will think I exaggerate somewhat \_the night of my soul.\_ If you judge by the poems I have composed this year, it must seem as though I have been flooded with

consolations, like a child for whom the veil of Faith is almost rent asunder. And yet it is not a veil--it is a wall which rises to the very heavens and shuts out the starry sky. When I sing of the happiness of Heaven and the eternal possession of God, I do not feel any joy therein, for I sing only of what I wish to believe. Sometimes, I confess, a little ray of sunshine illumines my dark night, and I enjoy peace for an instant, but later, the remembrance of this ray of light, instead of consoling me, makes the blackness thicker still.”

- “How can it be said that it is more perfect to separate oneself from home and friends? Has anyone ever reproached brothers who fight side by side, or together win the martyr's palm? It is true, no doubt, they encourage each other; but it is also true that the martyrdom of each is a martyrdom to them all. And so it is in the religious life; theologians call it a martyrdom. A heart given to God loses nothing of its natural affection--on the contrary, this affection grows stronger by becoming purer and more spiritual. It is with this love, dear Mother, that I love you and my sisters.”

- “My heart is naturally sensitive, and because this is a cause of much suffering.”

- “Here, I am loved by you and all the Sisters, and this love is very sweet to me, and I dream of

a convent where I should be unknown, where I should taste the bitterness of exile. I know only too well how useless I am...”

- “And I should not suffer any disappointment, for when we expect nothing but suffering, then the least joy is a surprise; and later on suffering itself becomes the greatest of all joys, when we seek

it as a precious treasure.” -I set myself to find out how He had loved His Apostles; and I saw that it was not for their natural qualities, for they were ignorant men, full of earthly ideas. And yet He calls them His Friends, His Brethren; He desires to see them near Him in the Kingdom of His Father, and in order to admit them to this Kingdom He wills to die on the Cross, saying: "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." As I meditated on these Divine words, I saw how imperfect was the love I bore my Sisters in religion. I understood that I did not love them as Our Lord loves them. I know now that true charity consists in bearing all our neighbors' defects--not being surprised at their weakness, but edified at their smallest virtues.” - “If we are asked pleasantly, it is easy to give; but if we are asked discourteously, then, unless we are perfect in charity, there is an inward rebellion, and we find no end of excuses for refusing.” (Ha!)

-“Yes, I know when I show charity to others, it is simply Jesus acting in me, and the more closely I am united to Him, the more dearly I love my Sisters. If I wish to increase this love in my heart, and the devil tries to bring before me the defects of a Sister, I hasten to look for her virtues, her good motives; I call to mind that though I may have seen her fall once, no doubt she has gained many victories over herself, which in her humility she conceals. It is even possible that what seems to me a fault, may very likely, on account of her good intention, be an act of virtue. I have no difficulty in persuading myself of this, because I have had the same experience. One day, during recreation, the portress came to ask for a Sister to help her. I had a childish longing to do this work, and it happened the choice fell upon me. I therefore began to fold up our needlework, but so slowly that my neighbour, who I knew would like to take my place, was ready before me. The Sister who had asked for help, seeing how deliberate I was, said laughingly: "I thought you would not add this pearl to your crown, you are so extremely slow," and all the Community thought I had yielded to natural reluctance. I cannot tell you what profit I derived from this incident, and it made me indulgent towards others. It still checks any feelings of vanity, when I am praised, for I reflect that since my small acts of virtue can be mistaken for imperfections, why should not my imperfections be mistaken for virtue?” - “There are, of course, no enemies in the Carmel; but, after all, we have our natural likes and dislikes. We may feel drawn towards one Sister, and may be tempted to go a long way round to avoid meeting another. Well, Our Lord tells me that this is the Sister to love and pray for, even though her behaviour may make me imagine she does not care for me. "If you love them that love you, what thanks are to you? For sinners also love those that love them." And it is not enough to love, we must prove our love; naturally on likes to please a friend, but that is not charity, for sinners do the same.” - “I am then like the poor who hold out their hands for the necessaries of life, and, if refused, are not surprised, since no one owes them anything.” - “It is therefore not enough for me to give to whoever asks--I ought to anticipate the wish, and show myself glad to be of service; but if anything of mine be taken away, I should show myself glad to be rid of it. I cannot always carry out to the letter the words of the Gospel, for there are occasions when I am compelled to refuse some request…The Divine precepts run contrary to our natural inclinations, and without the help of grace it would be impossible to understand them, far less to put them in practice.” - “A holy nun of our community annoyed me in all that she did; the devil must have had something to do with it, and he it was undoubtedly who made me see in her so many disagreeable points. I did not want to yield to my natural antipathy, for I remembered that charity ought to betray itself in deeds, and not exist merely in the feelings, so I set myself to do for this sister all I should do for the one I loved most...I did not rest satisfied with praying for this Sister, who gave me such occasions for self-mastery, I tried to render her as many services as I could, and when tempted to answer her sharply, I made haste to smile and change the subject, for the \_Imitation\_ says: "It is more profitable to leave everyone to his way of thinking than to give way to contentious discourses." And sometimes when the temptation was very severe, I would run like a deserter from the battlefield if I could do so without letting the Sister guess my inward struggle. One day she said to me with a beaming face: "My dear Soeur Therese, tell me what attraction you find in me, for whenever we meet, you greet me with such a sweet smile." Ah! What attracted me was Jesus hidden in the depths of her soul--Jesus who maketh sweet even that which is most bitter.” (Vivekananda- see God in everything) - “One morning, in my duty as sacristan, I came to put back the keys of the Communion-grating. This was my work, and I was very pleased to have an opportunity of seeing you, though I took good care not to show it. One of the Sisters, full of solicitude, feared I should awake you, and tried to take the keys from me. I told her as politely as I could, that I was quite as anxious as she was there should be no noise, and added that it was my right to return them. I see now that it would have been more perfect simply to yield, but I did not see it then, and so I followed her into the room. Very soon what she feared came to pass: the noise did awaken you. All the blame fell upon me; the Sister I had argued with began a long discourse, of which the point was: Soeur Therese made all the noise. I was burning to defend myself, but a happy inspiration of grace came to me. I thought that if I began to justify myself I should certainly lose my peace of mind, and as I had too little virtue to let myself be unjustly accused without answering, my last chance of safety lay in flight. No sooner thought than done. I hurried away, but my heart beat so violently, I could not go far, and I was obliged to sit down on the stairs to enjoy in quiet the fruit of my victory. This is an odd kind of courage, undoubtedly, but I think it is best not to expose oneself in the face of certain defeat.” - “When I recall these days of my noviciate I understand how far I was from perfection, and the memory of certain things makes me laugh...It may be that some day my present state will appear to me full of defects, but nothing now surprises me, and I do not even distress myself because I am so weak. On the contrary I glory therein, and expect each day to find fresh imperfections. Nay, I must confess, these lights on my own nothingness are of more good to my soul than lights on matters of Faith.” - “...I knew well that in curbing my natural affection I should have much to suffer.” - “This thought has helped me to soar above all created things.” (her thought doesn't matter, find your thought) - “From afar it seems so easy to do good to souls, to teach them to love God more, and to model them according to one's own ideas. But, when we draw nearer, we quickly feel that without God's help this is quite as impossible as to bring back the sun when once it has set. We must forget ourselves, and put aside our tastes and ideas, and guide souls not by our own way, but along the path which Our Lord points out.” (Vivekananda, symbolism, infinite/finite gap) -“Marie, though you are nothing, do not forget that Jesus is All. You have only to lose your own nothingness in that Infinite All, and thenceforth to think only of that All who alone is worthy of your love.” (Cioran) -“Seeing one of our Sisters very much fatigued, I said to Soeur Therese: "It grieves me to see people suffer, especially those who are holy." She instantly replied: "I do not feel as you do. Saints who suffer never excite my pity. I know they have strength to bear their sufferings, and that through them they are giving great glory to God. But I compassionate greatly those who are not Saints, and who do not know how to profit by suffering. They indeed awake my pity. I would strain every nerve to help and comfort them." -“"One Sunday," Therese relates, "I was going toward the chestnut avenue, full of rejoicing, for it was spring-time, and I wanted to enjoy nature's beauties. What a bitter disappointment! My dear chestnuts had been pruned, and the branches, already covered with buds, now lay on the ground. On seeing this havoc, and thinking that three years must elapse before it could be repaired, my heart felt very sore. But the grief did not last long. 'If I were in another convent,' I reflected, 'what would it matter to me if the chestnut-trees of the Carmel at Lisieux were entirely cut down?' I will not worry about things that pass. God shall be my all.” -“If your desire be to draw great profit, do not go with the idea of procuring relaxation, but rather with the intention of entertaining others and practising complete detachment from self. Thus, for instance, if you are telling one of the Sisters something you think entertaining, and she should interrupt to tell you something else, show yourself interested, even though in reality her story may not interest you in the least. Be careful, also, not to try to resume what you were saying. In this way you will leave recreation filled with a great interior peace and endowed with fresh strength for the practice of virtue, because you have not sought to please yourself, but others. If only we could realise what we gain by self-denial in all things!"-“Believe me, the writing of pious books, the composing of the sublimest poetry, all that does not equal the smallest act of self-denial...” -“Remaining little' means--to recognise one's nothingness, to await everything from the Goodness of God, to avoid being too much troubled at our faults; finally, not to worry over amassing spiritual riches, not to be solicitous about anything. Even amongst the poor, while a child is still small, he is given what is necessary; but, once he is grown up, his father will no longer feed him, and tells him to seek work and support himself. Well, it was to avoid hearing this, that I have never wished to grow up, for I feel incapable of earning my livelihood, which is Life Eternal!"

## 49. Ernest Becker

The Denial of Death

- “This narcissism is what keeps men marching into point-blank fire in wars: at heart one

doesn’t feel that he will die, he only feels sorry for the man next to him.” (Vivekananda- 'everyday people are dying around us, and yet men think they will never die', Maya, the path is narrow, Tolstoy and the farce of the 'individual life', i.e. as nothing)

- “We disguise our struggle by piling up figures in a bank book to reflect privately our sense of heroic worth. Or by having only a little better home in the neighborhood, a bigger car, brighter children. But underneath throbs the ache of cosmic specialness, no matter how we mask it in

concerns of smaller scope.”

- “It doesn’t matter whether the cultural hero-system is frankly magical, religious, and primitive or secular, scientific, and civilized. It is still a mythical hero-system in which people serve in order to earn a feeling of primary value, of cosmic specialness, of ultimate usefulness to creation, of unshakable meaning. They earn this feeling by carving out a place in nature, by building an edifice that reflects human value: a temple, a cathedral, a totem pole, a skyscraper, a family that spans three generations. The hope and belief is that the things that man creates in society are of lasting worth and meaning, that they outlive or outshine death and decay, that man and his products count.”

- “In this sense everything that man does is religious and heroic, and yet in danger of being fictitious and fallible.” (Tillich)

- “Everything painful and sobering in what psychoanalytic genius and religious genius have discovered about man revolves around the terror of admitting what one is doing to earn his self-esteem. This is why human heroics is a blind drivenness that burns people up; in passionate people, a screaming for glory as uncritical and reflexive as the howling of a dog.”

- “And the crisis of society is, of course, the crisis of organized religion too: religion is no longer valid as a hero system, and so the youth scorn it.” (the attraction to the New Atheists)

- “As Montaigne said, the peasant has a profound indifference and a patience toward death

and the sinister side of life; and if we say that this is because of his stupidity, then “let’s all learn from stupidity.”2\* Today, when we know more than Montaigne, we would say “let’s all learn from repression”—but the moral would have just as much weight: repression takes care of the complex symbol of death for most people.”

- “What we will see is that man cuts out for himself a manageable world: he throws himself into action uncritically, unthinkingly.”

- “This is why people have psychotic breaks when repression no longer works, when the forward momentum of activity is no longer possible.”

- “as the Eastern sages also knew, man is a worm and food for worms. This is the paradox: he is out of nature and hopelessly in it; he is dual, up in the stars and yet housed in a heart-pumping, breath-gasping body that once belonged to a fish and still carries the gill-marks to prove it. His body is a material fleshy casing that is alien to him in many ways—the strangest and most repugnant way being that it aches and bleeds and will decay and die. Man is literally split in two: he has an awareness of his own splendid uniqueness in that he sticks out of nature with a towering majesty, and yet he goes back into the ground a few feet in order blindly and dumbly to rot and disappear forever. It is a terrifying dilemma to be in and to have to live with.” (the Divided-Self, Double-mindedness)

- “The knowledge of death is reflective and conceptual, and animals are spared it. They live and they disappear with the same thoughtlessness: a few minutes of fear, a few seconds of anguish,

and it is over. But to live a whole lifetime with the fate of death haunting one’s dreams and even the most sun-filled days—that’s something else.”

- “It is only if you let the full weight of this paradox sink down on your mind and feelings that you can realize what an impossible situation it is for an animal to be in. I believe that those who

speculate that a full apprehension of man’s condition would drive him insane are right, quite literally right.”

- “Babies are occasionally born with gills and tails, but this is not publicized—instead it is

hushed up. Who wants to face up fully to the creatures we are, clawing and gasping for breath in a universe beyond our ken? I think such events illustrate the meaning of Pascal’s chilling reflection: “Men are so necessarily mad that not to be mad would amount to another form of madness.” Necessarily because the existential dualism makes an impossible situation, an excruciating dilemma. Mad because, as we shall see, everything that man does in his symbolic world is an attempt to deny and overcome his grotesque fate. He literally drives himself into a blind obliviousness with social games, psychological tricks, personal preoccupations so far removed from the reality of his situation that they are forms of madness—agreed madness, shared madness, disguised and dignified madness, but madness all the same.”

- “...wondered why most people did not become insane in the face of the existential contradiction between a symbolic self, that seems to give man infinite worth in a timeless scheme of things, and a body that is worth about 98 cents. How to reconcile the two?” (Huxley)

- “...the coolest repression, the most convincing equanimity, or the warmest self-satisfaction were accomplished lies both toward the world and to oneself.”

- “...the costs of pretending not to be mad. If we had to offer the briefest explanation of all the evil that men have wreaked upon themselves and upon their world since the beginnings of time right

up until tomorrow, it would be not in terms of mans animal heredity, his instincts and his evolution: it would be simply in the toll that his pretense of sanity takes, as he tries to deny his true condition.” (Vivekananda- finite/infinite gap, everyone is an idol worshiper and they argue over their idols)

- “Otto talked about the terror of the world, the feeling of overwhelming awe, wonder, and fear in the face of creation—the miracle of it, the mysterium tremendum et fascinosum of each single

thing, of the fact that there are things at all.”

- “The great boon of repression is that it makes it possible to live decisively in an overwhelmingly miraculous and incomprehensible world, a world so full of beauty, majesty, and terror that if animals perceived it all they would be paralyzed to act.”

- “But look at man, the impossible creature!...He not only lives in this moment, but expands his inner self to yesterday, his curiosity to centuries ago, his fears to five billion years from now when the sun will cool, his hopes to an eternity from now. He lives not only on a tiny territory, nor even on an entire planet, but in a galaxy, in a universe, and in dimensions beyond visible universes. It is appalling, the burden that man bears, the experiential burden.”

- “Mans body is a problem to him that has to be explained. Not only his body is strange, but also its inner landscape, the memories and dreams. Mans very insides—his self—are foreign to him. He doesn't know who he is, why he was born, what he is doing on the planet, what he is supposed to do, what he can expect. His own existence is incomprehensible to him, a miracle just like the rest of creation, closer to him, right near his pounding heart, but for that reason all the more strange. Each thing is a problem, and man can shut out nothing.”

- “This is one aspect of the basic human predicament, that we are simultaneously worms

and gods.” There it is again: gods with anuses.”

- “Life can suck one up, sap his energies, submerge him, take away his self-control, give so much

new experience so quickly that he will burst; make him stick out among others, emerge onto dangerous ground, load him up with new responsibilities which need great strength to bear, expose him to new contingencies, new chances. Above all there is the danger of a slip-up, an accident, a chance disease, and of course of death, the final sucking up, the total submergence and negation.” (It feels as thought my self-induced seclusion and use of cannabis has become too overwhelming for me)

- “This despair he avoids by building defenses; and these defenses allow him to feel a basic sense of self-worth, of meaningfulness, of power. They allow him to feel that he controls his life and his death, that he really does live and act as a willful and free individual, that he has a unique and self-fashioned identity, that he is somebody not just a trembling accident germinated on a hothouse planet that Carlyle for all time called a 'hall of doom.'” (Ligotti? Ha! Sounds identical)

- “the power of an all-absorbing activity, a passion, a dedication to a game, a way of life, that like a comfortable web keeps a person buoyed up and ignorant of himself, of the fact that he does not rest on his own center. All of us are driven to be supported in a self-forgetful way, ignorant

of what energies we really draw on, of the kind of lie we have fashioned in order to live securely and serenely. Augustine was a master analyst of this, as were Kierkegaard, Scheler, and Tillich in

our day. They saw that man could strut and boast all he wanted, but that he really drew his “courage to be” from a god, a string of sexual conquests, a Big Brother, a flag, the proletariat, and the fetish of money and the size of a bank balance.”

- “The defenses that form a persons character support a grand illusion, and when we grasp this we can understand the full drivenness of man. He is driven away from himself, from self-knowledge, self-reflection.”

- “It is fateful and ironic how the lie we need in order to live dooms us to a life that is never really ours.”

- “...we could understand something the poets and religious geniuses have long known: that the armor of character was so vital to us that to shed it meant to risk death and madness. It is not hard to reason out: If character is a neurotic defense against despair and you shed that defense, you admit the full flood of despair, the full realization of the true human condition, what men are really afraid of, what they struggle against, and are driven toward and away from.”

- “Neurosis is another word for describing a complicated technique for avoiding misery, but reality

is the misery.” (Tillich says neurosis is avoiding nonbeing by avoiding being)

- “What does it mean “to be born again” for man? It means for the first time to be subjected

to the terrifying paradox of the human condition, since one must be born not as a god, but as a

man, or as a god-worm, or a god who shits.” (Ha!)

- “It was Rank who very early admitted that anxiety could not all be overcome therapeutically, and this is what he meant: that it is impossible to stand up to the terror of one's condition without

anxiety.” (Tillich, Kierkegaard, but not Vivekananda. Well, Vivekananda says this is some parts, while in others makes it seem as if there is a 'mysticism' that rises 'above' anxiety. I think Vivekananda does not believe this, since you cannot live in a 'nightmare' without anxiety. It's an ideal, but not a reality for humans: an anxiety free existence, Vivekanada's 'bliss' is an ideal as Kierkegaard's Knight of Faith is, i.e. an impossibility inside of the human condition)

- “It is simply this: what sense does it make to talk about “enjoying ones full humanness”—as Maslow urges along with so many others—if “full humanness” means the primary

mis-adjustment to the world? If you get rid of the four- layered neurotic shield, the armor that covers the characterological lie about life, how can you talk about “enjoying” this Pyrrhic

victory? The person gives up something restricting and illusory, it is true, but only to come face to face with something even more awful: genuine despair. Full humanness means full fear and trembling, at least some of the waking day. When you get a person to emerge into life, away from his dependencies, his automatic safety in the cloak of someone else's power, what joy can you promise him with the burden of his aloneness? When you get a person to look at the sun as it bakes down on the daily carnage taking place on earth, the ridiculous accidents, the utter fragility of life, the powerlessness of those he thought most powerful—what comfort can you

give him from a psychotherapeutic point of view?”

- “What would the average man do with a full consciousness of absurdity? He has fashioned his character for the precise purpose of putting it between himself and the facts of life; it is his special

tour-de-force that allows him to ignore incongruities, to nourish himself on impossibilities, to thrive on blindness. He accomplishes thereby a peculiarly human victory: the ability to be smug about

terror. Sartre has called man a “useless passion” because he is so hopelessly bungled, so deluded about his true condition” (Ha! Kierkegaard)

- (the next two quotes are concerning unprepared people facing 'enlightenment' or the Nihilistic experience) “This is a serious game, the defense of one’s existence^how take it away from people and leave them joyous?” (I used to refer to my ideas as 'poison' and therefore didn't want to express them to my family, in order to 'protect' them. That was premature of me)

- “It can’t be overstressed, one final time, that to see the world as it really is is devastating and terrifying...It makes thoughtless living in the world of men an impossibility. It places a trembling animal at the mercy of the entire cosmos and the problem of the meaning of it.”

- “Rank understood that in the face of the overwhelmingness of the world the child could not out of himself muster the stamina and the authority necessary to live in full expansiveness with limitless horizons of perception an experience.” (Ligotti talks about how most people do not have the 'stamina' to do what Buddha did, to renounce everything. This is why it is so difficult to face reality and it's worthlessness 'head on' or have the Nihilism be exposed to you)

- “The tragedy of life that Searles is referring to is the one we have been discussing: mans finitude, his dread of death and of the overwhelmingness of life. The schizophrenic feels these more than anyone else because he has not been able to build the confident defenses that a person normally uses to deny them. The schizophrenic's misfortune is that he has been burdened with extra anxieties, extra guilt, extra helplessness, an even more unpredictable and unsupportive environment.”

- “We see again confirmed the point of view that a persons character is a defense against despair, an attempt to avoid insanity because of the real nature of the world. Searles looks at schizophrenia precisely as the result of the inability to shut out terror, as a desperate style of living with terror. Frankly I don’t know anything more cogent that needs to be said about this syndrome: it is a

failure in humanization, which means a failure to confidently deny mans real situation on this planet.” (Ha! And I am “crazy”?)

- “The creativity of people on the schizophrenic end of the human continuum is a creativity that springs from the inability to accept the standardized cultural denials of the real nature of experience. And the price of this kind of almost “extra human” creativity is to live on the brink of madness, as men have long known. The schizophrenic is supremely creative in an almost extra-human sense because he is furthest from the animal: he lacks the secure instinctive programming of lower organisms; and he lacks the secure cultural programming of average men. No wonder he appears to average men as “crazy'': he is not in anything’s world. (Ha!)

- “The irony of mans condition is that the deepest need is to be free of the anxiety of death and annihilation; but it is life itself which awakens it, and so we must shrink from being fully alive.”

- “What exactly would it mean on this earth to be wholly unrepressed, to live in full bodily and psychic expansiveness? It can only mean to be reborn into madness.”

- “For now, it is enough to invoke Marcia Lee Anderson’s complete scientific formula: “Stripped of subtle complications [i.e., of all the character defenses—repression, denial, misperception of reality], who could regard the sun except with fear?”

- “...the best existential analysis of the human condition leads directly into the problems of God and faith...”

- (on the Myth/Fall of Adam and Eve) “Man emerged from the instinctive thoughtless action of the lower animals and came to reflect on his condition. He was given a consciousness of his individuality and his part-divinity in creation, the beauty and uniqueness of his face and his name. At the same time he was given the consciousness of the terror of the world and of his own death and decay.”

- “...the final terror of self-consciousness is the knowledge of one’s own death, which is the peculiar sentence on man alone in the animal kingdom. This is the meaning of the Garden of Eden myth and the rediscovery of modem psychology: that death is man s peculiar and

greatest anxiety.”

- “For Kierkegaard “philistinism” was triviality, man lulled by the daily routines of his society, content with the satisfactions that it offers him: in today’s world the car, the shopping center, the two-week summer vacation.” (Ha!)

- “Man is protected by the secure and limited alternatives his society offers him, and if he does not look up from his path he can live out his life with a certain dull security...Why does man accept to live a trivial life? Because of the danger of a full horizon of experience, of course.”

- “The depressed person is so afraid of being himself, so fearful of exerting his own individuality, of insisting on what might be his own meanings, his own conditions for living, that he

seems literally stupid. He cannot seem to understand the situation he is in, cannot see beyond his own fears, cannot grasp why he has bogged down.” (how does this relate to me? Is this too egotistical a question?)

- “This is precisely the condition of depression, that one can hardly breathe or move. One of the unconscious tactics that the depressed person resorts to, to try to make sense out of his situation, is to see himself as immensely worthless and guilty.”

- “...the depressed person avoids the possibility of independence and more life precisely because these are what threaten him with destruction and death. He holds on to the people who have enslaved him in a network of crushing obligations, belittling interaction, precisely because these people are his shelter, his strength, his protection against the world. Like most everyone else the depressed person will not stand alone on his own center, who cannot draw from within himself the necessary strength to face up to life. So he embeds himself in others; he is sheltered by the necessary and willingly accepts it. But now his tragedy is plain to see: his necessity has become trivial, and so his slavish, dependent, depersonalized life has lost its meaning. It is frightening to be in such a bind. One chooses slavery because it is safe and meaningful; then one loses the meaning of it. but fears to move out of it. One has literally died to life but must remain physically in this world.”

- “...the torture of depressive psychosis: to remain steeped in one's failure and yet to justify it, to continue to draw a sense of worthwhileness out of it.” (Ha! Kill yourself)

- “...philistinism is what we would call “normal neurosis.” Most men figure out how to live safely within the probabilities of a given set of social rules. The Philistine trusts that by keeping himself at a low level of personal intensity he can avoid being pulled off balance by experience; philistinism works, as Kierkegaard said, by “tranquilizing itself with the trivial.”

- “There is the type of man who has great contempt for “immediacy,” who tries to cultivate his inferiority, base his pride on something deeper and inner, create a distance between himself and

the average man. Kierkegaard calls this type of man the “introvert.” He is a little more concerned with what it means to be a person, with individuality and uniqueness. He enjoys solitude and withdraws periodically to reflect, perhaps to nurse ideas about his secret self, what it might be. This, after all is said and done, isjbhe only real problem of life, the only worthwhile preoccupation of man: What is ones true talent, his secret gift, his authentic vocation? In what way is one truly unique, and how can he express his uniqueness, give it form, dedicate it to something beyond himself? How can the person take his private inner being, the great mystery that he feels at the heart of himself, his emotions, his yearnings and use them to live more distinctively, to enrich both himself and man kind with the peculiar quality of his talent?”

- “But usually life sucks us up into standardized activities...And instead of working our inner secret we gradually cover it over and forget it, while we become purely external men, playing successfully the standardized hero-game into which we happen to fall by accident, by family connection, by reflex patriotism, or by the simple need to eat and the urge to procreate.” (Ha! So good)

- “I am not saying that Kierkegaard's “introvert” keeps this inner quest fully alive or conscious, only that it represents somewhat more of a dimly aware problem than it does with the swallowed-up immediate man. Kierkegaard’s introvert feels that he is something different from the world, has something in himself that the world cannot reflect, cannot in its immediacy and shallowness appreciate; and so he holds himself somewhat apart from that world. But not too much, not completely. It would be so nice to be the self he wants to be, to realize his vocation, his authentic talent, but it is dangerous, it might upset his world completely. Fie is after all, basically weak, in a position of compromise: not an immediate man, but not a real man either, even though he gives the appearance of it.” (I completely feel like this, although the description Kierkegaard sounds less like me and more like 'normal' people)

- the consequences of attempting to live as an 'introvert'- “And so he lives in a kind of “incognito,” content to toy—in his periodic solitudes—with the idea of who he might really be; content to insist on a “little difference,” to pride himself on a vaguely-felt superiority. But this is not an easy position to maintain with equanimity. It is rare, says Kierkegaard, to continue on in it. Once you pose the problem of what it means to be a person, even dumbly, weakly, or with a veneer of pride about your imagined difference from others, you may be in trouble. Introversion is impotence, but an impotence already self-conscious to a degree, and it can become troublesome. It may lead to a chafing at ones dependency on his family and his job, an ulcerous gnawing as a reaction to ones embeddedness, a feeling of slavery in ones safety. For a strong person it may become intolerable, and he may try to break out of it, sometimes by suicide, sometimes by drowning himself desperately in the world and in the rush nf experience.” (get some courage, you bitch. Renounce!)

- “The ugly side of this Promethianism is that it, too, is thoughtless, an empty-headed immersion in the delights of technics with no thought to goals or meaning; so man performs on the moon by hitting golf balls that do not swerve in the lack of atmosphere.” (Ha!)

- “To be a “normal cultural man” is, for Kierkegaard, to be sick— whether one knows it or not...”

- “In order to transcend himself he must break down that which he needs in order to live. Like Lear he must throw off all his “cultural lendings” and stand naked in the storm of life.”

- “In the prison of one’s character one can pretend and feel that he is somebody, that the world is manageable, that there is a reason for one’s life, a ready justification for one’s action.”

- “Kierkegaard's torment was the direct result of seeing the world as it really is in relation to his situation as a creature. The prison of one’s character is painstakingly built; to deny one thing and one thing alone: one’s creatureliness. The creatureliness is the terror. Once admit that you are a defecating creature and you invite the primeval ocean of creature anxiety to flood over you. But it is more than creature anxiety, it is also man’s anxiety, the anxiety that results from the human paradox that man is an animal who is conscious of his animal limitation. Anxiety is the result of the perception of the truth of one’s condition. What does it mean to be a self-conscious animal? The idea is ludicrous, if it is not monstrous. It means to know that one is food for worms. This is the terror: to have emerged from nothing, to have a name, consciousness of self, deep inner feelings, an excruciating inner yearning for life and self-expression—and with all this yet to die. It seems like a hoax, which is why one type of cultural man rebels openly against the idea of God. What kind of deity would create such complex and fancy worm food?” (this is a lot)

- “The flood of anxiety is not the end for man. It is, rather, a “school” that provides man with the ultimate education, the final maturity. It is a better teacher than reality, says Kierkegaard, because reality can be lied about, twisted, and tamed by the tricks of cultural perception and repression. But anxiety cannot be lied about\*. Once you 'face up to it, it reveals the truth of your situation; and only by seeing that truth can you open a new possibility for yourself.'”

- “No mistake about it: the curriculum in the “school” of anxiety is. the unlearning of repression, of everything that the child taught himself to deny so that he could move about with a minimal animal equanimity.”

- “Education for man means facing up to his natural impotence and death. As Luther urged us: “I say die, i.e., taste death as though it were present.” It is only if you “taste” death with the lips of your living body that you can know emotionally that you are a creature who will die.

What Kierkegaard is saying, in other words, is that the school of anxiety leads to possibility

only by destroying the vital lie of character. It seems like the ultimate self-defeat, the one thing that one should not do, because then one will have truly nothing left. But rest assured, says Kierkegaard, “the direction is quite normal...the self must be broken in order to become a self.”

- “...by the destruction of the self through facing up to the anxiety of the terror of existence. The self must be destroyed, brought down to nothing, in order for self-transcendence to begin. Then the self can begin to relate itself to powers beyond itself. It has to thrash around in its finitude, it has to “die” in order to question that finitude, in order to see beyond it. To what? Kierkegaard answers: to infinitude, to absolute transcendence, to the Ultimate Power of Creation which made finite creatures.” (indeed this is what the renunciation, the terror, the nightmare of existence seems to bring forth)

- “One goes through it all to arrive at faith, the faith that one s very creatureliness has some meaning to a Creator; that despite one’s true insignificance, weakness, death, one’s existence has meaning in some ultimate sense because it exists within an eternal and infinite scheme of things brought about and maintained to some kind of design by some creative force.”

- “We can understand why anxiety “is the possibility of freedom,” because anxiety demolishes “all finite aims,” and so the “man who is educated by possibility is educated in accordance with his infinity.”46 Possibility leads nowhere if it does not lead to faith.” (yes, this is what Kierkegaard says, renounce everything finite, Nihilism, Nothingness)

- “He links his secret inner self, his authentic talent, his deepest feelings of uniqueness, his inner yearning for absolute significance, to the very ground of creation. Out of the ruins of the broken cultural self there remains the mystery of the private, invisible, inner self which yearned for ultimate significance, or cosmic heroism. This invisible mystery at the heart of every creature now attains cosmic significance by affirming its connection with the invisible mystery at the heart of creation. This is the meaning of faith.” (Nihilism is the breakdown of everything Worldly)

- “He is absolutely alone and trembling on the brink of oblivion—which is at the same time the

brink of infinity.”

- On Freud- “Despite all his leanings toward the idea of death, the hopeless situation of the child, the real terror of the external world, and the like, Freud did not need to give them a central place in his thought. He did not need to rework his vision of man from that of primarily a pleasure-seeker of sex to that of the terrified, death-avoiding animal.”

- “Sometimes just to admit an idea to consciousness is to experience that idea vitally. At other times to admit even a deep anxiety may not mean the actual experience of that anxiety, at

least not the deep experience of it, as something else may be troubling the person. Psychoanalysts talk about anxiety without affect. Can one admit the terror of death and still not experience it

on deeper levels? Are images of dying and farewell as deep as the real feeling that one has absolutely no power to oppose death? To what extent can there be a partial rationalization of even the deepest anxiety?”

- “What, after all, is more “mysterious” than hypnosis, the sight of adults falling into instant stupors and obeying like automatons the commands of a stranger?” (Tolstoy)

- “If you don’t have a God in heaven, an invisible dimension that justifies the visible one, then you take what is nearest at hand and work out your problems on that.” (Ha!)

- “He brought sexual taboos into being because he needed to triumph over the body, and he sacrificed the pleasures of the body to the highest pleasure of all: self-perpetuation as a spiritual being through all eternity.” (renouncing even sex: is this necessary? Why? Is it not a form of love? Isn't 'love' god? Or so they cram down our throats)

- “We saw that the child stands right at the crossroads of the human dualism. He discovers that he has a fallible body, and he is learning that there is a whole cultural world-view that will permit him to triumph over it. The questions about sex that the child asks are thus not— at a fundamental level—about sex at all. They are about the meaning of the body, the terror of living with a body. When the parents give a straightforward biological answer to sexual questions, they do not answer the child’s question at all. He wants to know why he has a body, where it came from, and what it means for a self-conscious creature to be limited by it. He is asking about the ultimate mystery of life, not about the mechanics of sex.”

- “In other words the sexual partner does not and cannot represent a complete and lasting

solution to the human dilemma. The partner represents a kind of fulfillment in freedom from self-consciousness and guilt; but at the same time he represents the negation of one’s distinctive personality.”

- “It is impossible to get blood from a stone, to get spirituality from a physical being, and so one feels “Inferior” that his life has somehow not succeeded, that he has not realized his true gifts, and so on.”

- “We feel diminished by their human shortcomings. Our interiors feel empty or anguished, our lives valueless, when we see the inevitable pettinesses of the world expressed through the human beings in it.” (which is why I cannot simply 'ignore' people around me)

- When^you narrow your meanings down to this world, you are still looking for the absolute, for the supreme self-transcending power, mystery, and majesty. Only now you must find it in the things of this world.” (Tillich, Vivekananda, Ha- good luck)

- “The great lesson of Rank’s depreciation of sexuality was not that he played down physical love and sensuality, but that he saw—like Augustine and Kierkegaard, that man cannot fashion an absolute from within his condition, that cosmic heroism must transcend human relationships. What is at stake in all this is. of course, the question of freedom, the quality of one’s life and one's individuality.”

- “...people need a “beyond,” but they reach first for the nearest one; this gives them the fulfillment they need but at the same time limits and enslaves them. You can look at the whole problem of a human life in this way. You can ask the question: What kind of beyond does this person try to expand in; and how much individuation does he achieve in it? Most people play it safe: they choose the beyond of standard transference objects like parents, the boss, or the leader; they accept the cultural definition of heroism and try to be a “good provider” or a “solid” citizen. In this way they earn their species immortality as an agent of procreation, or a collective or cultural immortality as part of a social group of some kind.”

- “We should not be surprised that Rank was brought to exactly the same conclusion as Kierkegaard: that the only way out of human conflict is full renunciation, to give one’s life as a gift to the highest powers. Absolution has to come from the absolute beyond. As Kierkegaard, Rank showed that this rule applied to the strongest, most heroic types—not to trembling and

empty, weaklings. To renounce the world and oneself, to lay the meaning of it to the powers of creation is the hardest thing for man to achieve—and so it's fitting that this task should fall to the

strongest personality type, the one with the largest ego. The great scientific world-shaker Newton was the same man who always carried the Bible under his arm.” (this is a lot)

- “We know that he was a genius, and we can now see the real problem that genius has: how to develop a creative work with the full force of one’s passion, a work that saves one’s soul, and at the same time to renounce that very work because it cannot by itself give salvation.” (Ha!)

- “Rank said: “...he himself could so easily confess his agnosticism while he had created for himself a private religion.”

- “Here Rank joins Kierkegaard in the belief that one should not stop and circumscribe his life with beyonds that are near at hand, or a bit further out, or created by oneself. One should reach for the highest beyond of religion: man-should cultivate the passivity of renunciation to the highest powers no matter how difficult it is. Anything less is less than full development, even if it seems weakness and compromise to the best thinkers.”

- “Do Freud and others imagine that surrender to God is masochistic, that to empty oneself is demeaning? Well, answers Rank, it represents on the contrary the furthest reach of the self, the highest idealization man can achieve. It represents the fulfillment of the Agape love-expansion, the achievement of the truly creative type. Only in this way, says Rank, only by surrendering to the bigness of nature on the highest, least-fetishized level, can man conquer death. In other words, the true heroic validation of one’s life lies beyond sex, beyond the other, beyond the private religion—all these are makeshifts that pull man down or that hem him in, leaving him torn with ambiguity.” (this is a common criticism from the New Atheists, of God as a 'dictator', which is silly)

- “Man is a “theological being,” concludes Rank, and not a biological one. In all this it is as though Tillich were speaking and, behind him, Kierkegaard and Augustine; but what makes it uncanny in the present world of science is that these are the conclusions of the life-work of a psychoanalyst, not a theologian. The net effect of it is overwhelming, and to someone trained narrowly in a field of science the whole thing seems confused.” (people spanning many lifetimes, cultures, backrounds, etc. coming to the same conclusions)

- “At this point the “tough-minded” scientist (as he likes to call himself) slams shut the covers of the book by Rank and turns away with a shudder. “What a shame that Freuds closest collaborator should turn so soft in the head, should deliver over to the easy consolations of religion the hard-won knowledge of psychoanalysis. So he would think—and he would be wrong. Rank made complete closure of psychoanalysis., on Kierkegaard but he did not do it out of weakness or wishfulness. He did it out of the logic of the historical-pychoanlytic understanding of man.” (this is the exact experience I receive when I think of the scientism/new atheist movement. One is perceived as 'cognitively deficient', what a strange idea, since the purely materialistic world is a nightmare beyond even beyond the Nihilistic horror, here even the scientist agrees with the 'theological' conclusion)

- “Neurosis has three interdependent aspects. In the first place it refers to people who are having trouble living with the truth of existence; it is universal in this sense because everyone has some trouble living with the truth of life and pays some vital ransom to that truth. In the second place, neurosis is private because each person fashions his own peculiar stylistic reaction to life. Finally, beyond both of these is perhaps the unique gift of Rank’s work: that neurosis is also historical to a large extent, because all the traditional ideologies that disguised and absorbed it have

fallen away and modern ideologies are just too thin to contain it.” (agreed, which is why I have the delusion of “Nihiltheism” being some sort of 'answer', 'suggestion', 'help', or 'support' to or for the dying/dead theologies/philosophies)

- “When we say neurosis represents the truth of life we again mean that life is an overwhelming problem for an animal free of instinct.”

- “We cannot repeat too often the great lesson of Freudian 'psychology: that repression is normal self-protection and creative self-restriction—in a real sense, mans natural substitute for instinct.” (diversion, distractions)

- “Gods can take in the whole of creation because they alone can make sense of it, know what it is all about and for. But as soon as a man lifts his nose from the ground and starts sniffing at eternal problems like life and death, the meaning of a rose or a star cluster—then he is in trouble. Most men spare themselves this trouble by keeping their minds on the small problems of their lives

just as their society maps these problems out for them. These are what Kierkegaard called the immediate” men and the “Philistines.” They “tranquilize themselves with the trivial”—and so they can lead normal lives.”

- “We can say that the essence of normality is the refusal of reality.”

- “This is neurosis in a nutshell: the miscarriage of clumsy lies about reality.”

- “Neurosis is, then, something we all share; it is universal. Or, putting it another way, nonfiaTi^is neurosis, and vice versa. We call a man “neurotic” when his lie begins to show damaging effects on him or on people around him and he seeks clinical help for it—or others seek it for him. Otherwise, we call the refusal of reality “normal” because it doesn’t occasion any visible problems. It is really as simple as that. After all, if someone who lives alone wants to get out of bed a half-dozen times to see if the door is reallylocked, or another washes and dries his hands exactly three times every time or uses a half-roll of toilet tissue each time he relieves himself—there is really no human problem involved. These people are earning their safety in the face of the reality of creatureliness in relatively innocuous and untroublesome ways.” (Ha! The existential problem is everyone's problem, people ignore this- Kierkegaard's 'immediate/philistine')

- “It is one thing to ritually wash one’s hands three times; it is another to wash them until the hands bleed and one is in the bathroom most of the day. Here we see in pure culture, as it were, what is at stake in all human repression: the fear of life and death. Safety in the face of the real

terror of creature existence is becoming a real problem for the person. He feels vulnerable—which is the truth!”

- “You work out your need for perfection (bigness, invulnerability) in the symptom—say, hand-washing or the avoidance of sex in marriage. We might say that the symptom itself represents the locus of the performance of heroism. No wonder that one cannot jjive it uj): that would release all by itself the whole flood of terror that one is trying to deny and overcome.” (repression from the fear of life/death? The overwhelming nature of conscious existence? Anything less than this would not be a sufficient answer, the nightmare of existence is the only adequate answer that subsumes every other phobia, habit, pattern, repression, etc.)

- “We immediately recognize this as the same creative dynamic that the person uses in transference, when he fuses all the terror and majesty of creation in the transference-object. This is what Rank meant when he said that neurosis represents creative power gone astray and confused. The person doesn’t really know what the problem is, but he. hits on an ingenious way to keep moving past it.”

- “There is a type of person who has difficulty fetishizing and narrowing-down; he has a vivid imagination, takes in too much experience, too large a chunk of the world —and this too must be called neurotic...We saw that these people feel their isolation, their individuality. They stick out, are less built-into normal society, less securely programmed for automatic cultural action. To have difficulty partializing experience is to have difficulty living.”

- his description of schizophrenia- “There are those who shrink back from experience out of greater life-and-death anxieties. They grow up not giving themselves freely to the cultural roles available to them. They can’t lose themselves thoughtlessly in the games that others play. One reason is that they have trouble relating to others; they haven’t been able to develop the necessary interpersonal skills. Playing the game of society with automatic ease means playing with others without anxiety. If you are not involved in what others take for granted as the nourishment of their lives, then your own life becomes a total problem. At its extreme this describes the schizoid type par excellence.”

- “We can see that neurosis is par excellence the danger of a symbolic animal whose body is a problem to him. Instead of living biologically, then, he lives symbolically. Instead of living in the partway that nature provided for he lives in the total way made possible by symbols. One substitutes the magical, all-inclusive world of the self for the real, fragmentary world of experience. Again, in this sense, everyone is neurotic, as everyone holds back from life in some ways and lets his symbolic world-view arrange things: this is what cultural morality is for. In this sense, too, the artist is the most neurotic because he too takes the world as a totality and makes a

largely symbolic problem out of it.”

- when to get 'help'- “the symptom or a bogging down in guilt and futility because of an unlived life.”

- “We might say that both the artist and the neurotic bite off more than they can chew, but the artist spews it back out again and chews it over in an objectified way, as an external, active, work project. The neurotic can’t marshal this creative response embodied in a specific work, and so he chokes on his introversions.”

- “The neurotic exhausts himself not only in self-preoccupations like hypochondriacal fears and all sorts of fantasies, but also in others: those around him on whom he is dependent become his therapeutic work project; he takes out his subjective problems on them. But people are not clay to be molded; they have needs and counter-wills of their own. The neurotic’s frustration as a failed artist can’t be remedied by anything but an objective creative work of his own.” (just put a book together?)

- “Either you eat up yourself and others around you, trying for perfection; or you objectify that imperfection in a work, on which you then unleash your creative powers. In this sense, some kind of objective creativity is the only answer man has to the problem of life.”

- “He takes in the world, makes a total problem out of it, and then gives out a fashioned, human answer to that problem. This, as Goethe saw in Faust, is the highest that man can achieve.”

- “From this point of view the difference between the artist and the neurotic seems to boil down largely to a question of talent. It is like the difference between an illiterate schizophrenic and a

Strindberg: one ends up on the backwards and the other becomes a culture hero—but both experience the world in similar ways and only the quality and the power of the reaction differ. If the neurotic feels vulnerable in the face of the world he takes in, he reacts by criticizing himself to excess. He can’t endure himself or the isolation that his individuality plunges him into. On the other hand, he still needs to be a hero, still needs to earn immortality on the basis of his unique qualities, which means that he still must glorify himself in some ways. But he can glorify himself only in fantasy, as he cannot fashion a creative work that speaks on his behalf by virtue of

its objective perfection. He is caught in a vicious circle because he experiences the unreality of fantasied self-glorification. There is really no conviction possible for man unless it comes from others or from outside himself in some way—at least not for long. One simply cannot justify his own heroism in his own inner symbolic fantasy, which is what leads the neurotic to feel more unworthy and inferior.” (this is a lot)

- “There is no doubt that creative work is itself done under a compulsion often indistinguishable from a purely clinical obsession. In this sense, what we call a creative gift is merely the social license to be obsessed. And what we call “cultural routine” is a similar license: the proletariat demands the obsession of work in order to keep from going crazy. I used to wonder how people could stand the really demonic activity of working behind those hellish ranges in hotel kitchens, the frantic whirl of waiting on a dozen tables at one time, the madness of the travel agent’s office at the height of the tourist season, or the torture of working with a jack-hammer all day on a hot summer street. The answer is so simple that it eludes us: the craziness of these activities is exactly that of the human condition. They are “right” for us because the alternative is natural desperation. The daily madness of these jobs is a repeated vaccination: against the madness of the asylum. Look at the joy and eagerness with which workers return from vacation to their compulsive routines. They plunge into their work with equanimity and lightheartedness because it drowns out something more ominous. Men have to be protected from reality.” (at least I am past this obliviousness)

- “But it is very risky to try to be hard and fast about types of personality; there are all kinds of blends and combinations that defy precise compartmentalization. After all, one of the reasons we narrow down too much is that we must sense on some level of awareness that life is too big

and threatening a problem. And if we say that the average man narrows down “just about right,” we have to ask who this average man is. He may avoid the psychiatric clinic, but somebody around has to pay for it. We are reminded of those Roman portrait-busts that stuff our museums: to live in this tight-lipped style as an average good citizen must have created some daily hell. Of course we are not talking only about daily pettinesses and the small sadisms that are practised on family and friends. Even if the average man lives in a kind of obliviousness of anxiety, it is because he has erected a massive wall of repressions to hide the problem of life and death. His anality may protect him, but all through history it is the “normal, average men” who, like locusts, have laid waste to the world in order to forget themselves.” (Ligotti- a nihilistic, pessimistic, depressive person doesn't start wars, protest or make a big deal of anything, non-movement, etc. Pascal- if only men could learn to sit in their rooms)

- “We have seen that what we call the human character is actually a lie about the nature of reality. The causa-sui project is a pretense that one is invulnerable because protected by the power of others and of culture, that one is important in nature and can do something about the world. But in back of the causa-sui project whispers the voice of possible truth: that human life may not be more than a meaningless interlude in a vicious drama of flesh and bones that we call evolution; that the Creator may not care any more for the destiny of man or the self-perpetuation of individual men than He seems to have cared for the dinosaurs or the Tasmanians. The whisper is the same one that slips incongruously out of the Bible in the voice of Ecclesiastes: that all is vanity, vanity of vanities.”

- “Some people are more sensitive to the lie of cultural life, to the illusions of the

causa-sui project that others are so thoughtlessly and trustingly caught up in. The neurotic is having trouble with the balance of cultural illusion and natural reality; the possible horrible

truth about himself and the world is seeping into his consciousness. The average man is at least secure that the cultural game is the truth, the unshakable, durable truth. He can earn his immortality in and under the dominant immortality ideology, period.”

- the neurotic- “He] perceives himself as unreal and reality as unbearable, because with him the mechanisms of illusion are known and destroyed by self consciousness. He can no longer deceive himself about himself and disillusions even his own ideal of personality. He perceives himself as bad, guilt laden, inferior, as a small, weak, helpless creature, which is the truth about mankind, as Oedipus also discovered in the crash of his heroic fate. All other is illusion, deception, but necessary deception in order to be able to bear one’s self and thereby life.”

- “In other words, the neurotic isolates himself from others, cannot engage freely in their partialization of the world, and so cannot live by their deceptions about the human condition. He lifts himself out of the “natural therapy” of everyday life, the active, self-forgetful engagement in it; and so the illusions that others share seem unreal to him. This is forced. Neither can he, like the artist, create new illusions. As Anais Nin put it graphically: “The caricature aspect of life appears whenever the drunkenness of illusion wears off.” And don’t some people drink to head off the despair of reality as they sense it truly is? Man must always imagine and believe in a “second” reality or a better world than the one that is given him by nature. In this sense, the neurotic symptom is a communication about truth: that the illusion that one is invulnerable is a lie.”

- quoting Otto Rank- “With the truth, one cannot live. To be able to live one needs illusions,

not only outer illusions such as art, religion, philosophy, science and love afford, but inner illusions which first condition the outer.”

- “Rank calls this a paradoxical but deep insight into the essence of neurosis, and he sums it up in the words we have used as an epigraph to this chapter. In fact, it is this and more: it absolutely

shakes the foundations of our conceptualization of normality and health. It makes them entirely a relative value problem. The neurotic opts out of life because he is having trouble maintaining his

illusions about it, which proves nothing less than, that life is possible only with illusions.” (Ha!)

- “We must remind ourselves that when we talk about the need for illusion we are not being cynical. True, there is a great deal of falseness and self-deception in the cultural causa-sui project, but there is also the necessity of this project. Man needs a “second” world, a world of humanly created meaning, a new reality that he can live, dramatize, nourish himself in. “Illusion” means creative play at its highest level. Cultural illusion is a necessary ideology of self-justification, a heroic dimension that is life itself to the symbolic animal. To lose the security of heroic cultural illusion is to die—that is what “deculturation” of primitives means and what it does. It kills them or reduces them to the animal level of chronic fighting and fornication. Life becomes possible only in a continual alcoholic stupor.”

- “If history is a succession of immortality ideologies, then the problems of men can be read directly against those ideologies—how embracing they are, how convincing, how easy they make it for men to be confident and secure in their personal heroism. What characterizes modern life is the failure of all traditional immortality ideologies to absorb and quicken mans hunger for self-perpetuation and heroism. Neurosis is today a widespread problem because of the disappearance of convincing dramas of heroic apotheosis of man. The subject is summed up succinctly in Pinel’s famous observation on how the Salpetriere mental hospital got cleared out at the time

of the French Revolution. All the neurotics found a ready-made drama of self-transcending action and heroic identity. It was as simple as that.”

- “It begins to look as though modern man cannot find his heroism in everyday life any more, as men did in traditional societies just by doing their daily duty of raising children, working, and worshipping.” (people are all too complacent with nihilism since they have been brought up in it)

- “That is the price modern man pays for the eclipse of the sacred dimension. When he dethroned the ideas of soul and God he was thrown back hopelessly on his own resources, on himself and those few around him. Ever! lovers and families trap and disillusion us because they are not substitutes for absolute transcendence. We might say that they are poor illusions in the sense that we have been discussing.”

- “Modern man became psychological because he became isolated from protective collective ideologies. He had to justify himself from within himself. But he also became psychological because modern thought itself evolved that way when it developed out of religion. The inner life of man

had always been portrayed traditionally as the area of the soul. But in the 19th century scientists wanted to reclaim this last domain of superstition from the Church. They wanted to make the inner life of man an area free of mystery and subject to the laws of causality. They gradually abandoned the word “soul” and began to talk about the “self” and to study how it develops in the child’s early relationship with his mother. The great miracles of language, thought, and morality could now be studied as social products and not divine interventions. It was a great breakthrough in science that culminated only with the work of Freud; but it was Rank who saw that this scientific victory raised more problems than it solved. Science thought that it had gotten rid forever of the problems of the soul by making the inner world the subject of scientific analysis.

But few wanted to admit that this work still left the soul perfectly intact as a word to explain the inner energy of organisms, the mystery of the creation and sustenance of living matter. It really

doesn’t matter if we discover that man’s inner precepts about himself and his world, his very self-consciousness in language, art, laughter, and tears, are all socially built into him. We still haven’t explained the inner forces of evolution that have led to the development of an animal capable of self-consciousness, which is what we still must mean by “soul”—the mystery of the meaning of organismic awareness, of the inner dynamism and pulsations of nature. From this point of view the hysterical reaction of 19th-century believers against Darwin only shows the thinness and unimaginativeness of their faith. They were not open to plain and ordinary awe and wonder; they took life too much for granted: and when Darwin stripped them of their sense of “special wondrousness they felt as good as dead.” (the failure of positivism/scientism, Swinburne's teleological argument- biology explain in a Darwinian way does not answer the question of the 'force' that creates self-conscious creatures, 'why these laws?')

- This is why I never wanted to see a psychologist- “Psychology narrows the cause for personal unhappiness down to the person himself, and then he is stuck with himself. But we know

that the universal and general cause for personal badness, guilt, and inferiority is the natural world and the persons relationship to it as a symbolic animal who must find a secure place in it. All the

analysis in the world doesn't allow the person to find out who he is and why he is here on earth, why he has to die, and how he can make his life a triumph. It is when psychology pretends to do this,

when it offers itself as a full explanation of human unhappiness, that it becomes a fraud that makes the situation of modern man an impasse from which he cannot escape. Or, put another way,

psychology has limited its understanding of human unhappiness to the personal life-history of the individual and has not understood how much individual unhappiness is itself a historical problem in

the larger sense, a problem of the eclipse of secure communal ideologies of redemption.” (the nightmare of existence does not get solved, Zapffe- 'sure you may be in a 'better' psychological state than me, but I am the better philosopher. Man's Search for Meaning sucks, since it denies the truth of the nightmare of existence and attempts to put forth a knowingly subjective, worthless illusion as 'truth' or 'worth living for')

- “We can conclude with Rank that religion is “just as good a psychology” as the psychology that pretended to replace it. “

- “Modern man needs a “thou” to whom to turn for spiritual and moral dependence, and as God was in eclipse, the therapist has had to replace Him—just as the lover and the parents did.”

- “By now it should be clear that this blurring of Rank and Kierkegaard is not a weak surrender to ideology but an actual scientific working-through of the problem of human character. Both men reached the same conclusion after the most exhaustive psychological quest: that at the very furthest reaches of scientific description, psychology has to give way to “theology”— that is, to a world-view\*tBaf“aBsorBs the individual conflicts and guilt and offers him the possibility for some kind of heroic apotheosis. Man cannot endure his own littleness unless he can translate

it into meaningfulness on the largest possible level.”

- I don't think this describes me, but who knows- “Here Rank and Kierkegaard meet in one of those astonishing historical mergers of thought: that sin and neurosis are two ways of talking about the same thing—the complete isolation of the individual, his disharmony with the rest of nature, his hyperindividualism, his attempt to create his own world from within himself. Both sin and neurosis represent the individual blowing himself up to larger than his true size, his refusal to recognize his cosmic dependence. Neurosis, like sin, is an attempt to force nature, to pretend that the causa-sui project really suffices. In sin and neurosis man fetishizes himself on something narrow at hand and pretends that the whole meaning and miraculousness of creation is limited to that, that he can get his beatification.” I don't feel that my 'confrontation' with what I take to be the 'nightmare of existence' to be a fetish, but maybe I am putting too much meaning on to 'nihilism'?)

- “But we know that this attempt is doomed to failure because man simply cannot justify his own heroism; he cannot fit himself into his own cosmic plan and make it believable. He must live with agonizing doubts if he remains in touch at all with the larger reality. Only when he loses this touch do the doubts vanish—and that is the definition of psychosis: a wholly unreal belief- in the self-justification of cosmic heroism. 'I am Christ.'” (is this why the experience of Meaninglessness is stronger/more important the the Mystical experience, with Tillich, Vivekananda, Cioran, and myself?)

- this entire chapter is important, due to sections like this-

“Sin and neurosis have another side: not only their unreal self-inflation in the refusal to admit creatureliness but also a penalty for intensified self-consciousness: the failure to be consoled by

shared illusions. The result is that the sinner (neurotic) is hyperconscious of the very thing he tries to deny: his creatureliness, his miserableness and unworthiness.41 The neurotic is thrown back on

his true perceptions of the human condition, which caused his isolation and individuation in the first place. He tried to build a glorified private inner world because of his deeper anxieties, but life takes its revenge. The more he separates and inflates himself, the more anxious he becomes. The more he artificially idealizes himself, the more exaggeratedly he criticizes himself. He alternates between the extremes of “I am everything” and “I am nothing.” But it is clear that if one is going to be part of something else. There is no way to avoid paying the debt of dependency and yielding to the larger meaning of the rest of nature, to the toll of suffering and the death that it demands; and there is no way to justify this payment from within oneself, no matter how mightily one tries.” (this sounds just like me, this should ease the guilt, see God in everything, the human condition is just that, human and universal)

- “But now we see the historical difference between the classical sinner and the modem neurotic: both of them experience the naturalness of human insufficiency, only today the neurotic is stripped

of the symbolic world-view, the God-ideology that would make sense out of his unworthiness and would translate it into heroism. Traditional religion turned the consciousness of sin into a condition

for salvation but the tortured sense of nothingness of the neurotic qualifies him now only for miserable extinction. For merciful release -"“In lonely death. It is all right to be nothing

vis-a-vis God, who alone can make it right in His unknown ways; it is another thing to be nothing to oneself, who is nothing.”

- “Thus the plight of modem man: a sinner with no word for it or, worse, who looks for the word for it in a dictionary of psychology and thus only aggravates the problem of his separateness and hyperconsciousness.”

- “This is Rank’s devastating Kierkegaardian conclusion: if neurosis is sin, and not disease, then the only thing which can “cure” world-view, some kind of affirmative collective ideology in which

the person can perform the living drama of his acceptance as a creature.” (symbolism of God is the only cure)

- “All reflection and no plunging drives us man; all plunging and no reflection, and we are brutes.”

- “The customs and myths of traditional society provided a whole interpretation of the meaning of life, ready-made for the individual; all he had to do was to accept living it as true. The modern neurotic must do just this if he is to be “cured”: he must welcome a living illusion.”

- “It is one thing to imagine this “cure,” but it is quite another thing to “prescribe” it to modern man. How hollow it must ring in his ears. For one thing, he can’t get living myth-ritual complexes, the deep-going inherited social traditions that have so far sustained men, on a prescription form from the comer pharmacy. He can’t even get them in mental hospitals or therapeutic communities. The modem neurotic cannot magically find the kind of world he needs, which is one reason, he tries to create his own. In this very crucial sense neurosis is the modern tragedy of man; historically he is an orphan.” (this sounds just like me)

- “A second reason for the hollowness of our prescription for neurosis follows. If there are no ready-made traditional world-views into which to fit oneself with dependency and trust, religion becomes a very personal matter—so personal that faith itself seems neurotic, like a private fantasy and an action taken out of weakness. The one thing modern man cannot do is what Kierkegaard prescribed: the lonely leap into faith, the naive personal trust in some kind of transcendental support for ones life. This support is now independent of living external rituals and customs: the church and the community do not exist, or do not carry much conviction. This situation is what helps make faith fantastic. In order for something to seem true to man, it has to be visibly supported in some way— lived, external, compelling. Men need pageants, crowds, panoplies, special days marked off on calendars—an objective focus for obsession, something to give form and body to internal fantasy, something external to yield oneself to. Otherwise the neurotic is brought back to the point of his departure: how is he to believe in his lonely, inner sense of specialness?” (this is the issue of the divided-self, the double-mindedness. How does the neurotic take himself seriously? It's impossible to do so. this brings on a mental and physical paralysis; although, one can grow within the mental differentiation of the paralysis, while the physical paralysis is seen as something that needs to be 'treated' or diseased)

- The characteristic of the modem mind is the banishment of mystery, of naive belief, of simple-minded hope. We put the accent on the visible, the clear, the cause-and-effect relation, the logical—always the logical.” (I can't remember, but someone said the modern man has been stripped of his metaphysical thinking, still can't remember, Ha!)

- “What typifies the neurotic is that he “knows” his situation vis-a-vis reality. He has no doubts; there is nothing you can say to sway him, to give him hope or trust. He is a miserable animal whose body decays, who will die, who will pass into dust and oblivion, disappear forever not only in this world but in all the possible dimensions of the universe, whose life serves no conceivable purpose, who may as well not have been born, and so on and so forth. He knows Truth and Reality, the motives of the entire universe.” (well, this is me, Ha!)

- “It was G. K. Chesterton who kept alive the spirit of Kierkegaard and naive Christianity in modern thought, as when he showed with such style that the characteristics the modern mind prides itself on are precisely those of madness. There is no one more logical than the lunatic, more concerned with the minutiae of cause and effect. Madmen are the greatest reasoners we know, and that trait is one of the accompaniments of their undoing. All their vital processes are

shrunken into the mind. What is the one thing they lack that sane men possess? The ability to be careless, to disregard appearances, to relax and laugh at the world. They cant unbend, can’t gamble their whole existence, as did Pascal, on a fanciful wager. They can't do what religion has always asked: to believe in a justification for their lives that seems absurd. The neurotic knows better: he is the absurd, but nothing else is absurd; it is ‘ only too true.” But faith asks that man expand himself trustingly into the nonlogical, into the truly fantastic. This spiritual expansion is the one thing that modern man finds most difficult, precisely because he is constricted into

himself and has nothing to lean on, no collective drama that makes fantasy seem real because it is lived and shared.”

- “We said earlier that the question of human life is: on what level of illusion does one live? This question poses an absolutely new question for the science of mental health, namely: What is the ‘‘best” illusion under which to live? Or, what is the most legitimate foolishness? If you are going to talk about life-enhancing illusion, then you can truly try to answer the question of which is “best.” You will have to define “best” in terms that are directly meaningful to man, related to his basic condition and his need.”

- “Religion answers directly to the problem of transference by expanding awe and terror to the

cosmos where they belong. It also takes the problem of self-justification and removes it from the objects near at hand. We no longer have to please those around us, but the very source of creation— the powers that created us, not those into whose lives we accidentally fell. Our life ceases to be a reflexive dialogue with the standards of our wives, husbands, friends, and leaders and becomes

instead measured by standards of the highest heroism, ideals truly fit to lead us on and beyond ourselves. In this way we fill ourselves with independent values, can make free decisions, and, most importantly, can lean on powers that really support us and do not oppose us. The personality can truly begin to emerge in religion because God, as an abstraction, does not oppose the individual as others do, but instead provides the individual with all the powers necessary for independent self-justification. What greater security than to lean confidently on God. on the Fount of creation, the most terrifying power of all?” (the only illusion worth pursuing- Cioran)

- “Finally, religion alone gives hope, because it holds open the dimension of the unknown and the unknowable, the fantastic mystery of creation that the human mind cannot even begin to approach, the possibility of a multidimensionality of spheres of existence, of heavens and possible embodiments that make a mockery of earthly logic—and in doing so, it relieves the absurdity of earthly life, all the impossible limitations and frustrations of living matter. In religious terms, to “see God” is to die, because the creature is too small and finite to be able to bear the higher meanings of creation. Religion takes ones very creatureliness, one’s insignificance, and makes it a condition of hope. Full transcendence of the human condition means limitless possibility unimaginable to us.”

- “Adler should have stressed more the sheer terror of individuation of difference, of being alone,

of losing support and delegated power. He revealed to us the “life-lie” that people use in

order to live, but we tended to overlook how necessary this lie is in some form or other for most men; how men simply do not have their own powers to rely on. When we remind ourselves again how giants like Freud and Jung shrink and faint while buying simple travel tickets, perhaps we can get some correct feeling for the magnitude of the task of poor Mr. Average Man just daily trying to negotiate a semblance of tranquil heroism by embedding himself in the powers of others. When these tactics fail and he is threatened with the exposure of his life-lie, how logical it is that he give way to his own version of fainting by bogging down in a depressive withdrawal.”

- “When the average person can no longer convincingly perform his safe heroics or cannot hide his failure to be his own hero, then he bogs down in the failure of depression and its terrible guilt.”

- “Boss says that the terrible guilt feelings of the depressed person are existential, that is, they represent the failure to live one’s own life, to fulfill one’s own potential because of the twisting and turning to be “good” in the eyes of the other. The other calls the tune to one’s eligibility for immortality, and so the other takes up one’s unlived life. Relationship is thus always slavery of a kind, which leaves a residue of guilt.” (a limiting of freedom as necessary with relationships)

- “To judge by his own self-accusations of worthlessness, the patient feels an immense burden of guilt.”

- “The depressed person exaggerates his guilt because it unblocks his dilemma in the safest and easiest way. He also, as Adler pointed out, gets the people around him to respond to him, to pity him, and to value him and take care of him. He controls them and heightens his own personality by his very self-pity and self-hatred.” (how does he not do this if a person conscious of the human condition would 'most definitely go mad'?)

- on the schizophrenic- “There is a type of person for whom life is a more insurmountable problem than for others, for whom the burden of anxiety and fear is almost as constant as his daily breath. Rank used the term “neurotic” for one type of person who was without illusion, who saw things as they were, who was overwhelmed by the fragility of the human enterprise; and in this sense the term describes perfectly the schizophrenic type. He is the “realist” that William James talked about when he said that the right reaction to the horrors of organismic life on this planet is the psychotic one.”

- “Adler very early showed how the schizophrenic was crippled by the fear of life and its demands, by a low self-evaluation in the face of them. He mistrusts not only himself but also the knowledge

and ability of others; nothing seems to him to be able to overcome the inevitable horrors of life and death—except perhaps the fantastic ideational system that he fabricates for his own salvation.” (Ha! That sounds just like me and haas)

- “I mean the fact that human experience is split into two modes—the symbolic self and the physical body—and that these two modes of experience can be quite distinct. In some people they are so distinct as to be unintegrated, and these are the people we call schizophrenic. The hypersensitive individual reacts to his body as something strange to himself, something utterly untrustworthy, something not under his secure control. Right away we can see that the schizophrenic is burdened, like all of us, with an “alien” animal body.” (this took a while to understand? This sounds like 'science fiction' to others? Ha!)

- “By pushing the problem of man to its limits, schizophrenia also reveals the nature of creativity. If you are physically unprogrammed in the cultural causa-sui project, then you have to invent your own: you don’t vibrate to anyone else’s tune. You see that the fabrications of those around you are a lie, a denial of truth—a truth that usually takes the form of showing the terror of the human condition more fully than most men experience it. The creative person becomes, then, in art, literature, and religion the mediator of natural terror and the indicator of a new way to triumph over it. He reveals the darkness and the dread of the human condition and fabricates a

new symbolic transcendence over it. This has been the function of the creative deviant from the shamans through Shakespeare.”

- “But if the neurotic is the “artiste manque,” what is the schizophrenic who has no talent, who is not creative? He must be a completely inverted and pathetic failure, as the wards in our mental

hospitals attest. An impoverished and powerless person—even when he is a perceiver of truth—has no gift to offer to his fellows or to himself. The uncreative psychotic is simply totally crippled by life-and-death fears.” (I always wanted to be more creative. This would make the earthly world easier; and who says that an 'easier' existence is to be pursued? To avoid pain and fear? Ha! Weak and pathetic us human creatures are! Avoid because I don't like feeling a particular way. Just an arbitrary sensation? Naturalism)

- “The schizophrenic is not programmed neurally into automatic response to social meanings, but he cannot marshal an ego response, a directive control of his experiences. His own erupting meanings cannot be given any creative form. We might say that because of his exaggerated helplessness he uses his symbolic inner experiences alone as an experiential anchor, as something to lean on. He exists reflexively toward them, comes to be controlled by them instead of reshaping and using them. The genius too is not programmed in automatic cultural meanings; but he has

the resources of a strong ego, or at least a sufficient one, to give his own personal meanings a creative form.”

- “In schizophrenia, like depression, we see the problem of heroics in its stark nudity. How does one become a hero from a position in which he has hardly any resources at all?—a position from which he sees more clearly than anyone else the menacing dangers of life and death and yet has no solid feeling of inner glory to oppose to them? He has to fabricate such a feeling in the best way he can, which will be a clumsy, crippled, and inverted way. No wonder that psychotic transferences are so total, so intense, so all-absorbing, so frightening (when they are not pathetic).”

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- “All perversions, then, can truly be seen as 'private religions,' as attempts to heroically transcend the human condition and to achieve some kind of satisfaction in that condition. That is why perverts are forever saying how superior and life-enhancing their particular approach is, how they cannot understand why anyone would not prefer it. It is the same sentiment that animates all true believers, the trumpeting of who is the true hero and what is the only genuine

path to eternal glory.” (I agree. Tillich on the importance and necessity of doubt in faith, on the importance of not idolizing the 'concrete' symbols of faith)

- “The religious geniuses of history have argued that to be really submissive means to be submissive to the highest power, the true infinity and absolute—and not to any human substitutes, lovers, leaders, nationstates.” (Vivekananda, Tolstoy, Tillich, Cioran)

- “From this point of view the problem of mental illness is one of not knowing what kind of heroics one is practising or not being able—once one does know—to broaden ones heroics from their crippling narrowness. Paradoxical as it may sound, mental illness is thus a matter of weakness and stupidity.” (Ha!)

- “All living organisms are condemned to perversity, to the narrowness of being mere fragments of a larger totality that overwhelms them, which they cannot understand or truly cope with—yet must still live and struggle in. We still must ask, then, in the spirit of the wise old Epictetus, what kind of perversity is fitting for man.”

Start of Chapter 11-

- “When we are young we are often puzzled by the fact that each person we admire seems to have a different version of what life ought to be, what a good man is, how to live, and so on. If we are

especially sensitive it seems more than puzzling, it is disheartening.” (this is the absurd perspective, the problem of relativism/nihilism that is not seen by every one because they have been raised within the relativistic/nihilistic framework, nothing weird about everyone having a different opinion/not being able to find out who's right, if anyone is, and yet not figuring out that all your moral/important demands and judgments are just as nonsensical as the person that you oppose, since there is no way to find out who is right, how come everyone doesn't find this weird?)

- Freud's quote- “I have found little that is "good” about human beings on the whole. In my experience most of them are trash, no matter whether they publicly subscribe to this or that ethical doctrine or none at all...If we are to talk of ethics, I subscribe to a high ideal from which most of the human beings I have come across depart most lamentably.”

- on Freud, but relevant to almost all people today- “He could not yield emotionally to superordinate power or conceptually to the transcendental dimension. He lived still wholly in the dimension of the visible world and was limited by what was possible in that dimension only; therefore, all his meanings had to come from that dimension.”

- on the knight of faith- “He accepts whatever happens in this visible dimension without complaint, lives his life as a duty, faces his death without a qualm. No pettiness is so petty that it threatens his meanings; no task is too frightening to be beyond his courage. He is fully in the world on its terms and wholly beyond the world in his trust in the invisible dimension. It is very much the old Pietistic ideal that was lived by Kants parents. The great strength of such an ideal is that it allows one to be open, generous, courageous, to touch others' lives and enrich them and open them in turn. As the knight of faith has no fear-of-life-and- death trip to lay onto others, he does not cause them to shrink back upon themselves, he does not coerce or manipulate them. The knight of faith, then, represents what we might call an ideal of mental health, the Continuing openness of life out of the 'death throes of dread'.” (jesus, no wonder Kierkegaard said he could never become the knight of faith. This faith is Vivekananda's mystical experience through meditation, or the optimistic way in which Vivekananda sometimes talks, it is not something that Tillich, Kierkegaard, or Vivekananda (in half or more of his moods/writings think is sustianable, i.e. the experience of Meaninglessness/Nihilism is the stronger, more true, experience, which did not allow for Kierkegaard to obtain this 'ideal of mental health', anxiety never leaves the creaturely human, no matter how 'holy' he thinks he has become. i.e. the finite/infinite gap)

- the selflessness of Vivekananda, the knight of faith for Kierkegaard are not possible, the experience of meaninglessness trumps these ideals, or the attitudes/psychological states that are needed to be obtain by a particular human, which make the ideals impossible- “Put in these abstract terms the ideal of the knight of faith is surely one of the most beautiful and challenging ideals ever put forth by man. It is contained in most religions in one form or another although no one, I think, has described it at length with such talent at Kierkegaard. Like all ideals it is a creative illusion, meant to lead men on, and leading men on is not the easiest tiling. As Kierkegaard said, faith is the hardest thing; he placed himself between belief and faith, unable to make the jump. The jump doesn't depend on man after all—-there's the rub: faith is a matter of grace. As Tillich later put it: religion is first an open hand to receive gifts (grace) and then a closed hand to give them.”

- “For every shortcoming that we can point to in Freud, we can find a corresponding one in Kierkegaard. If Freud can be said to have erred on the side of the visible, then Kierkegaard can surely be said to have equally erred on the side of the invisible. He turned away from life partly from his fear of life, he embraced death more easily because he had failed in life; his own life was not a voluntary sacrifice undertaken in free will, but a pathetically driven sacrifice. He did not live in the categories in which he thought.” (my mother asked me if I put people into 'categories', this makes me think of how I do that. I see how self-aware a person is. That says a lot, since the more self-aware, the 'further along' a person is)

- “I am talking matter-of-factly about some of the surest giants in the history of humanity only to say that in the game of life and death no one stands taller than any other, unless it be a true saint,

and only to conclude that sainthood itself is a matter of grace and not of human effort. My point is that for man not everything is possible. What is there to choose between religious creatureliness

and scientific creatureliness? The most one can achieve is a certain relaxedness, an openness to experience that makes him less of a driven burden on others. And a lot of this depends on how much talent he has, how much of a daimonis driving him; it is easier to lay down light burdens than heavy ones. How does a man create from all his living energies a system of thought, as Freud did, a system directed wholly to the problems of this world, and then just give it up to the invisible one? How, in other words, can one be a saint and still organize scientific movements of world-historical importance? How does one lean on God and give over everything to Him and still stand on his own feet as a passionate human being? These are not rhetorical questions, they are real ones that go right to the heard of the problem of 'how to be a man'- a problem that no one can satisfactorily advise anyone else on, as the wise William James knew. The whole thing is loaded with ambiguity impossible to resolve.” (this is the issue of non-movement. What does a person do with this knowledge? Create something, e.g. art, science, etc.? And is that enough? It cannot be. Robin Williams. That keeps a person alive, it gives them a temporarily satisfactory illusion of meaning in thir pathetic earthly lives. The person who has no creative outlet, or the person who loses interest/sees through the transitory illusion of meaning of ones 'interest', i.e. the arbitrary nature of pursuing one thing over the other, enjoying one thing over another, the idea of wanting this over that, the issue of deciding for this and therefore against that, and so on. Choose. Choose, go ahead. And, now: Why? Why that? Why not this? Or that over there? “Because you wanted to”, you say? “Because you felt like it”?)

- “...led Tillich to argue so penetratingly that Eastern mysticism is not for Western man. It is an evasion of the courage to be; it prevents the absorption of maximum meaninglessness into oneself. Tillich s point is that mystical experience seems to be near to perfect faith but is not. Mysticism lacks precisely the element of skepticism, and skepticism is a more radical experience, a more manly confrontation of potential meaninglessness. Even more, we must not forget that much of the time, mysticism as popularly practised is fused with a sense of magical omnipotence: it is actually a manic defense and a denial of creatureliness.” (Tillich pg. 178)

- “James, again, knew how difficult it was to live astride both worlds, the visible and the invisible. One tended to pull you away from the other.” (the divided-self, double-mindedness)

- “And then the real tragedy, as Andre Malraux wrote in The Human Condition: that it takes sixty years of incredible suffering and effort to make such an individual and then he is good only for dying. This painful paradox is not lost on the person himself least of all himself. He feels agonizingly unique, and yet he knows that this doesn’t make any difference as far as ultimates are concerned. He has to go the way of the grasshopper, even though it takes longer.” (Ha!)

- “Finally, with these questions we saw that we could call into doubt the pretensions of the whole therapeutic enterprise. What joy and comfort can it give to fully awakened people? Once you

accept the truly desperate situation that man is in, you come to see not only that neurosis is normal, but that even psychotic failure represents only a little additional push in the routine stumbling

along life’s way. If repression makes an untenable life liveable, self-knowledge can entirely destroy it for some people.”

- Not everyone is as honest as Freud was when he said that he cured the miseries of the neurotic only to open him up to the normal misery of life.” (Ha!)

- “I have never seen or heard them communicate the dangers of the total liberation that they

claim to offer; say, to put up a small sign next to the one advertising joy, carrying some inscription like “Danger: real probability of the awakening of terror and dread, from which there is no turning back.” It would be honest and would also relieve them of some of the guilt of the occasional suicide that takes place in therapy.” (Camus: 'a man who is conscious of the absurd is forever bound to it', listen to a ton of Mckenna before a psychedelic trip, Huxley)

- “As in any religion, the adept “swears by” it because he has lived it; the therapy is “true” because it is a lived experience explained by concepts that seem perfectly to fit it, that give form to what the patient actually is undergoing.” (is this what I am doing here?)

- “It is no wonder that when therapies strip man down to his naked aloneness, to the real nature of experience and the problem of life, they slip into some kind of metaphysic of power and justification

from beyond. How can the person be left there trembling and alone? Offer him the possibility of mystical contact with the void of creation, the power of “It,” his likeness to God, or at the very

least the support of a guru who will vouch for these things in his own overpowering and harmonious-appearing person. Man must reach out for support to a dream, a metaphysic of hope that sustains him and makes his life worthwhile.”

- “To talk about hope is to give the right focus to the problem. It helps us understand why even the thinkers of great stature who got at the heart of human problems could not rest content with the view of the tragical nature of man’s lot that this knowledge gives,. It is today well known how

Wilhelm Reich continued the Enlightenment in the direction of a fusion of Freud with Marxistzs social criticism, only to reach finally for Orgone, the primal cosmic energy. Or how Jung wrote an intellectual apologia for the text of ancient Chinese magic, the I Ching. In this, as Rieff has so bitingly argued, these men are of lesser stature than their master the great Stoic Freud.” (why people 'ignore' or 'talk around' the consequences of Nihilism, Skepticism, etc. this is a true sense of awe or, more so, terror. It's 'too much' even for these' strong men', Ha! The knight of faith, Tillich's 'Courage' is all a sham)

- “How can a self-conscious creature change the dilemma of his existence? There is simply

no way to transcend the limits of the human condition or to change the psychological structural conditions that make humanity possible. What can it mean for something new to emerge from such an animal and to triumph over his nature? Even though men have repeated such a notion since the most ancient times and in the most subtle and weightiest ways, even though whole movements of social action as well as thought have been inspired by such ideas, still they are mere fancy...”

- “Consider Paul Tillich: he too had his metaphysic of New Being, the belief in the emergence of a new type of person who would be more in harmony with nature, less driven, more perceptive, more in touch with his own creative energies, and who might go on to form genuine communities to replace the collectivities of our time, communities of truer persons in place of the objective creatures created by our materialistic culture. But Tillich had fewer illusions about this New Being than most of the psychotherapeutic religionists. He saw that the idea was actually a myth, an ideal that might be worked toward and so partly realized.”(the knight of faith myth, the selflessness myth, getting 'beyond' the terror of existence, if rightfully understood, is not possible, only with repressions, distractions, diversions, can humans cope with living this existence)

- “If you are going to have a myth of New Being, then, like Tillich, you have to use this myth as a call to the highest and most difficult effort—and not to simple joy. A creative myth is not simply a relapse into comfortable illusion; it has to be as bold as possible in order to be truly generative.” (Vivekananda, this is why Nihilism is God, reality cannot be what brings us pleasure, what a silly earthly ideal, pathetic)

- “What singles out Tillich’s cogitations about the New Being is that there is no nonsense here. Tillich means that man has to have the “courage to be” himself, to stand on his own feet, to face up to the eternal contradictions of the real world. The bold goal of this kind of courage is to absorb into ones own being the maximum amount of nonbeing. As a being, as an extension of all of Being, man has an organismic impulsion: to take into his own organization the maximum amount of the problematic of life. His daily life, then, becomes truly a duty of cosmic proportions, and his courage to face the anxiety of meaninglessness becomes a true cosmic heroism.” (Kierkegaard, Vivekananda)

- “The problem of meaninglessness is the form in which nonbeing poses itself in our time...”

- “Again, we are talking about the highest ideal things, which always seem most unreal—but how can we settle for less? We need the boldest creative myths, not only to urge men on but also and

perhaps especially to help men see the reality of their condition. We have to be as hard-headed as possible about reality and possibility.” (Tillich's symbolism, Vivekananda's praise of having many sects of religion, etc.)

- “As Tillich warned us, New Being, under the conditions and limitations of existence, will only bring into play new and sharper paradoxes, new tensions, and more painful disharmonies—a “more intense demonism.” Reality is remorseless because gods do not walk upon the earth; and if men could become noble repositories of great gulfs of nonbeing, they would have even less peace than we oblivious and driven madmen have today.”

- “It is this therapeutic megalomania that must quickly been seen through if we are not to be perfect fools. The empirical facts of the world will not fade away because one has analyzed his

Oedipus complex, as Freud so well knew, or because one can make love with tenderness, as so many now believe. Forget it. In this sense again it is Freuds somber pessimism, especially of his later writings such as Civilization and Its Discontents, that keeps him so contemporary. Men are doomed to live in an overwhelmingly tragic and demonic world.” (Zapffe and 'Happiness is for the pigs')

- “I think that taking life seriously means something such as this: that whatever man does on

this planet has to be done in the lived truth of the terror of creation, of the grotesque, of the rumble of panic underneath everything. Otherwise it is false.” (Tillich, which is why 'mysticism' is not the 'stopping point', it is a guide, but it does not overpower the experience of Meaninglessness, Nihilism)

## 50. Paul Tillich

Dynamics of Faith

- “Faith is the state of being ultimately concerned.”

- speaking of in the Old Testament- “They state unambiguously the character of genuine faith, the demand of total surrender to the subject of ultimate concern.” (this seems important, since is this an 'ideal' like Kierkegaard's Knight of Faith or Vivekananda's complete selflessness? Is it something that cannot seemingly be reached, but must still be thrived towards? Is this what martrys are doing? Suicides too? It seems that they are ultimately surrendering. What about Muslim 'terrorists'? Of course they would be celebrated under other value structures that begin with Islam being the ultimate concern. I know that's too vague to say that all 'islam' would resort to this, but 'terrorism' does seem justified as an ultimate concern)

- “...the ultimate concern with 'success' and the social standing and economic power. It is the god of many people in the highly competitive western culture...even if the price is sacrifice of genuine human relations, personal conviction, and creative eros...misplaced faith is...When fulfilled, the promise of this faith proves to be empty.”

- “Faith is not an act of any of his rational functions, as it is not an act of the unconscious, but it is an act in which both the rational and the nonrational elements of his being are transcended...It transcends them, but it does not destroy them. (Otto)

- “'Ecstasy' means standing 'outside of oneself'- without ceasing to be oneself. (One of the Nihilist speaks of the objectivity one gets from Nihilism, I say this in my journals, I just need to find the entry date, also that quote from 'solitude' is exactly this experience. Although all alone, you have a sense of something bigger that is connected with yourself and everyone else, Shrooms, cannabis, entheogens)

- “The reality of man's ultimate concern reveals something about his being, namely, that he is able to transcend the flux of relative and transitory experiences of his ordinary life.”

- “Man's experiences feelings, thoughts are conditioned and finite. They not only come and go, but their content is of finite and conditional concern...”

- “Man is driven towards faith by his awareness of the infinite.” (Zapffe and his term 'transcendental yearning', Vivekananda saying nothing will make us ultimately content in this world of Maya)

- Faith- “...is the passion for the infinite.”

- Ultimate Concern- “...the ultimate is concern about what is experienced as ultimate.”

- In reference to 'idols' which Tillich claims everything under the sun has been use as the 'ultimate' in religious history- “...a critical principle was and is at work in man's religious consciousness, namely, that which is really ultimate over against what claims to be ultimate but is only preliminary, transitory, finite.” (symbolism, the ultimate concern is supposed to 'unite' the subjective, human world, with the objective, infinite realm of Divinity, according to Tillich)

- “There is no faith without a content toward which it is directed.”

- “All speaking about divine matters which is not done in the state of ultimate concern is meaningless.” (if there is speak about the worldly, then it is meaningless with regards to the divine, which is why I find philosophy/abstractness to be a decently accurate symbol for speaking or thinking about God)

- “In true faith the ultimate concern is a concern about the truly ultimate; while in idolatrous faith preliminary, finite realities are elevated to the rank of ultimacy. The inescapable consequence of idolatrous faith is 'existential disappointment,' a disappointment which penetrates into the very existence of man!” (anything worldly must not be given any more value than a symbol, as a pretending to bridge the gap of the finite and the infinite. The disconnect, the doubt, the meaningless is always here, it is never overcome. The ones who have 'overcome' are the ones who have mistakenly, whether out of fear or just ignorance, elevated the finite to the level of the infinite. They are idolatrous. Augustine makes this finite/infinite distinction very clearly. As does Kierkegaard and the mystics who hold that even the humans who don't recognize it, are stuck in the nightmare of existence, the human condition is universal)

- “...even an idolatrous faith can hide this consequence only for a certain time. But finally it breaks into the open.” (Nihilism, meaninglessness, will come through, eventually, hopefully. A man only comes to religion when the patchwork does not hold anymore. When everything comes crashing.

- “The awareness of the holy is awareness of the presence of the divine, namely of the content of our ultimate concern.”

- “It is a presence that remains mysterious in spite of its appearance, and it exercises both an attractive and a repulsive function of those who encounter it.”

- “The human heart seeks the infinite because that is where the finite wants to rest. In the infinite it sees its own fulfillment.”

- “...the infinite distance of the finite from the infinite and, consequently, the negative judgment over any finite attempts to reach the infinite. The feeling of being consumed in the presence of the divine is a profound expression of man's relation to the holy.” (this is experienced in the mushroom trip. This experience of utter separation from the Divine, yet when on psylocibin, having a true sense of Humility in the face of something truly Other. This whole of love takes you from everything, even yourself, yet even though 'you' disintegrates, you are still 'there' somehow. All does become One. Such a counter experience from anything 'rational', anything our 'normal', boring, obnoxiously vain produces. This is not a philosophical argument, it's a call for experience. This cannot be logic chopped. The experience happened. The experience was real to me. TO ME, it's real. Now what do I do with that? Ha!)

- “'Holy' has become identified with moral perfection...Originally, the holy has meant what is apart from the ordinary realm of things and experiences.

- “Entering the sanctuary means encountering the holy.:

- “...the holy has been called the 'entirely other'...”

- “The holy transcends this realm; this is its mystery and its unapproachable character.”

- “...there is no way of reaching the infinite.” (necessarily its symbolism)

- “The holy can appear as creative and as destructive.”

- “...the terrifying and consuming element can be destructive and creative.”

- “...the concept of the holy was changed. Holiness becomes justice and truth. It is creative and not destructive. The true sacrafice is obedience to the law. This is the line of thought which finally led to the identification of holiness with moral perfection. But when this point is reached, holiness loses its meaning as the 'sperated', the 'transcending', the 'fascinating and terrifying', the 'entirely other'. All this is gone, and the holy has become the morally good and the logically true. It has ceased to be the holy in the genuine sense of the word.”

- “...one could say that the holy originally lies below the alternative of the good and evil; that it is both divine and demonic...” (Nietzsche would say 'Beyond', and Tillich would have to have known this when writing 'below')

- “The holy which is demonic, or ultimately destructive, is indentical wit hthe content of idolatrous faith. Idolatrous faith is still faith. The holy which is demonic is still holy.”

- “...the danger of faith is idolatry...”

- “Our ultimate concern can destroy us as it can heal us.” (indeed, Heisman)

- “An act of faith is an act of a finite being who is grasped by and turned to the infinite.”

- “Faith is certain in so far as it is an experience of the holy. But faith is uncertain in so far as the infinite to which it is related is received by the finite being. This element of uncertainty in faith cannot be removed, it must be accepted. And the element in faith which accepts this is courage. Faith includes an element of immediate awareness which gives certainty and an element of uncertainty. To accept this is courage.”

- “Courage as an element of faith is the daring self-affirmation of one's own being in spite of the power of 'nonbeing' which are the heritage of everything finite.” (acting in the face of death; in spite of how death takes away the meaning, purpose, value of all actions. 'We all end up the same', 'if we all die, if there is no ultimate justice, then all is permitted', etc.)

- “The is a risk if what was considered as a matter of ultimate concern proves to be a matter or preliminary and transitory concern- as, for example, the nation. The risk to faith in one's ultimate concern is indeed the greatest risk a man can run. For if it proves to be a failure, the meaning of one's life breaks down; one surrenders oneself, including truth and justice, to something which is not worth it.” (this is the sick joke that is life, it seems that everyone, no matter what is doing this. Ha! That's a maddening thought. Everything around me, including myself, is part of something insane, absurd, Nihilistic)

- “The reaction of despair in people who have experienced the breakdown of their national claims is an irrefutable proof of the idolatrous character of their national concern. In the long run this is the inescapable result of an ultimate concern, the subject matter of which is not ultimate.”

- on how all concrete elements of religion must be symbolic due to the finite/infinite distinction- “A god disappears; divinity remains.”

- “If faith is understood as belief that something is true, doubt is incompatible with the act of faith. If faith is understood as being ultimately concerned, doubt is a necessary element in it.” (finite/infinite distinction, the concrete symbols will never 'receive' the Other, the Holy 'in full')

- “The skeptical doubt is an attitude towards all beliefs of man, from sense experiences to religious creeds. It is more an attitude than an assertion. For as an assertion it would conflict with itself. Even the assertion that there is no possible truth for man would be judged by the skeptical principle and could not stand as an assertion.” (self-refuting nature, which means that the 'negative' to be coherent, must accept that they are taking something seriously, and therefore embrace that there is something behind this 'despair over meaninglessness, loss of truth, etc.' CTB pg. 176- 'The act of accepting meaninglessness is a meaningful act. It is an act of faith', a criticism that seemingly refutes Camus)

- on the self-refuting nature of 'skepticism'- “Genuine skeptical doubt does not use the form of an assertion. It is an attitude of actually rejecting any certainty. There, it cannot be refuted logically. It does not transform its attitude into a proposition. Such an attitude necessarily leads to either despair or cynicism, or to both alternately. And often, if this alternative becomes intolerable, it leads to indifference and the attempt to develop an attitude of complete unconcern...such an escape finally breaks down. This is the dynamics of skeptical doubt. It has an awakening and liberating function...”

- “The despair about truth by the skeptic shows that truth is still his infinite passion.” (Courage to be pg. 176, this is why suffering teaches you something, i.e. how could these sorts of experiences be generated from a mindless process with no ultimate purpose and only pragmatically?)

- “The cynical superiority over every concrete truth shows that truth is still taken seriously and that the impact of the question of an ultimate concern is strongly felt.” (Again, CTB, pg. 176, exactly: how is one from of concrete worship 'less' than another? How do we criticize if we no longer have an ultimate concern for truth? Self-refuting)

- faith and doubt- “...the doubt of him who is ultimately concerned about a concrete content. One could call it existential doubt, in contrast to the methodological and the skeptical doubt. It does not question whether a special proposition is true or false. It does not reject every concrete truth, but it is aware of the element of insecurity in every existential truth.”

- “The description of anxiety as the awareness of one's finitude is sometimes criticized as untrue from the point of view of the ordinary state of mind. Anxiety, one says, appears under special conditions but is not an ever-present implication of man's finitude.”

- “But the underlying structure of finite life is the universal condition which makes the appearance of anxiety under special conditions possible. In the same what doubt is not a permanent experience with the act of faith. But it is always present as an element in the structure of faith.”

- “Many Christians, as well as other religious groups, feel anxiety, guilt and despair about what they call 'loss of faith.' But serious doubt is confirmation of faith. It indicates the seriousness of the concern, its unconditional character.” (again, CTB pg. 176, the seriousness in which one still takes a 'negation' turns it into a 'positive', unless sit wants to be self-refuting)

- “How can a faith which has doubt as an element within itself be united with creedal statements of the community of faith? The answer can only be that creedal expressions of the ultimate concern of the community must include their own criticism. It must become obvious to them- be they liturgical, doctrinal or ethical expressions of the faith of the community- that they are not ultimate. Rather, their function is to point to the ultimate which is beyond all of them. This is what I call the 'Protestant principle.'” (Vivekananda has the same view, since he also experiences the Divine in a 'entirely other' sort of view, rather than finite, transitory, worldly. The finite/infinite gap is unbridgeable. Hence, symbolism, i.e. everyone is an idolater)

- on chapter two of what 'faith is not'- Tillich wants to make sure that 'faith' is not a 'low degree of knowledge', it is when all finite things do not satisfy, when there is a pull towards the infinite, where we directly experience a sense of the infinite that we feel we may be able to be part of. We create symbols to reinact, interact, etc. with this experience, but they are only symbols; the finite/infinite distinction is unbridgeable. Therefore, the ultimate concern is not with the scientific, it is not with anything finite, it is not in 'conflict' with any empirical or transitory issues. Even when rallying against the 'ultimate concern', e.g. atheists, they are affirming a sense of 'rightness' and 'truth' that is showing some form of concern or ultimacy, and needs to recognize the symbolism of faith, and know that we are all striving towards the same infinite. Tillich speaks of being grasped, I would say by the feeling of Nihilism, i.e. the absurd perspective, and therefore in the face of death/meaninglessness, in order to even despair over the human situation, must take that meaninglessness as ultimate, hence the absurd perspective. The Human is forced to make moral judgments, it cannot escape it, but this is absolutely insane in a Nihilistic world, so there must be a 'truth' out there, and infinite something.)

- on chapter three about 'symbolism'-

- “Religiously speaking, God transcends his own name. This is why the use of his name easily becomes an abuse or blasphemy. Whatever we say about that which concerns us ultimately, whether or not we call it God, has a symbolic meaning.”

- “In any case, he who denies God as a matter of ultimate concern affirms God, because he affirms ultimacy in his concern. God is the fundamental symbol for what concern us ultimately.” (CTB pg. 176)

- “Here again it would be meaningless to ask whether one or another of the figures in which an ultimate concern is symbolized does 'exist.' If 'existence' refers to something which can be foiund withing the whole of reality, no divine being exists. The question is not this, but: which of the numerable symbols of faith is most adequate to the meaning of faith? In other words, which symbol of faith ultimately expresses the ultimate without idolatrous elements?”

- “All the qualities we attribute to him, power, love, justice, are taken from finite experiences and applied symbolically to that which is beyond finitude and infinity.”

- “Holy things are not holy in themselves, but they point, beyond themselves to the source of all holiness, that which is of ultimate concern.”

- “Those who live in an unbroken mythological world feel safe and certain. They resist, often fanatically, any attempt to introduce an element of uncertainty by 'breaking the myth,' namely, by making conscious its symbolic character.”

- “The resistance against demythologization expresses itself in literalism...The character of the symbol to point beyond itself to something else is disregarded...The fall of Adam is localized on a special geographical point and attributed to a human individual. The virgin birth of the Messiah is understood in biological terms, ressurection and ascension as physical events...The presupposition of such literalism is that God is a being, acting in time and space, dwelling in a special place...”

“Literalism deprives God of his ultimacy and, religiously speaking, of his majesty. It draws him down to the level of that which is not ultimate, the finite and conditional.”

- “Faith, if it takes its symbolism literally, becomes idolatrous! It calls something ultimate that is less than ultimate. Faith, conscious of the symbolic character of its symbols, gives God the honor which is due to him.”

- “It grasps the mind with terrifying and fascinating power. It breaks into the ordinary reality, shakes it and drives it beyond itself in an ecstatic way.” (entheogens)

- “Man's faith is inadequate if his whole existence is determined by something that is less than ultimate.”

- “...to face ones's own relativity one the greatness and danger...” (courage in the face of knowing that you cannot bridge the finite/infinite gap and are therefore left with Nihilism, relativism, uncertainty, doubt, being 'wrong')

- faith- “...the infinite tension between the absoluteness of its claim and the relativity of its life.” (Divided-self, double-mindedness, doubt, the courage that is needed to handle this sort of uncertainty/relativity)

- “This jar of water, this piece of bread, this cup of wine, this tree, this movement of the hands, of the knees, this building, this river, this color, this word, this book, this person is a bearer of the holy. In them faith experiences the content of its ultimate concern.”

- sacraments- “They produce awe, fascination, adoration, idolatrous distortion, criticism, replacement by other bearers of the holy.”

- “It is the state of being grasped by the holy through a special medium.” (entheogens, Bach)

- “As a theoretical judgement claiming general validity, it is a meaningless combination of words. But in the correlation between the subject and the author of faith, it has meaning and truth. The outside observer can only state that there is a correlation of faith between the one who has faith and the sacramental object of his faith. But he cannot deny or affirm the validity of this correlation of faith.” (Vivekananda, finite/infinite gap, James and the 'only self-justifying' nature of religious experience)

- “There is no criterion by which faith can be judged from outside the correlation of faith.”

- HOWEVER- “The faithful can ask himself or be asked by someone else whether the medium through which he experiences ultimate concern expresses real ultimacy.”

- “...the inadequacy of the finite...The human mind, however, forgets this inadequacy and identifies the sacred object with the ultimate itself. The sacramental object is taken as holy in itself. Its character as the bearer of the holy, pointing beyond itself, disappears in the act of faith. The act of faith is no longer directed toward the ultimate self, but toward that which represents the ultimate- the tree, the book, the building, the person.” (symbolism, Vivekananda)

- Mystics- “They indentified the ultimate with the ground or substance of everything- the one, the ineffable, the being above being.” The interest in mystical faith is not to reject concrete, sacramental ways of faith, but to go beyond them.”

- “Mysticism is not irrational.”

- “But they realized that the true content of faith in an ultimate concern can neither be identified with a piece of reality, as sacramental faith desires, nor be expressed in terms of a rational system. It is a matter of ecstatic experience, and one can only speak of the ultimate in a language which at the same times denies the possibility of speaking about it.” (negative theology, finite/infinite gap)

- “How is such an experience possible if the ultimate is that which transcends all possible experience?” (Indeed! Great question! Entheogens, suffering, etc.)

- “In order to go into it, man must empty himself of all the finite contents of his ordinary life; he must surrender all preliminary concerns for the sake of the ultimate concern. He must transcend the division of existence...The ultimate is beyond this division, and he who wants to reach the ultimate must overcome this division in himself by meditation, contemplation and ecstasy.” (Vivekananda, renunciation! Entheogens, psylocibin, cannabis)

- “The mystic is aware of the infinite distance between the infinite and the finite, and accepts a life of preliminary stages of union with the infinite, interrupted only rarely, and perhaps never, in this life by the final ecstasy.”

- “History has shown this weakness and final emptiness of all merely secular cultures.”

- “The question of faith is not Moses or Jesus or Mohammed; the question is: Who expresses most adequately one's ultimate concern? The conflict between religions is not a conflict between forms of belief, but it is a conflict between expressions of our ultimate concern.” (Vivekananda)

- “The ultimate shall always be present and remembered even in the smallest activities of the ordinary life.”

- “It is this humanist faith of the moral type (moral demands, rather than rituals or ascetic practices, as with the mystical type of faith) which was taken over by the revolutionary movement of the proletarian masses in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Its dynamic is visible everyday in our present period. As for every faith, the utopian form of the humanist faith is a state of ultimate concern. This gives tremendous power to good and evil. (the opposite of any mystical type of faith, e.g. Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Tolstoy, Vivekananda, Cioran, any Nihilist, mystic, other/worldly distinction, finite/infinite gap)

- “Faith, in the New Testament, is the state of being grasped by the divine Spirit.” (being grasped, as Kierkegaard felt, others did as well, that this was something that was 'objectively' getting thrown onto them, it felt out of their control. The experience of Nihilism is something that is ultimately terrifying and overwhelming, i.e. grasps you)

- “A faith which destroys reason destroys itself and the humanity of man. For only a being who has the structure of reason is able to be ultimately concerned, to distinguish ultimate and preliminary concerns, to understand the unconditional commands of the ethical imperative, and to be aware of the presence of the holy.” (faith and reason are not in conflict, science and religion are not in conflict. If they are, it's only superficially and due to naive misunderstandings or conceptions of existence/the human condition/the Divine)

- “Man's reason is finite; it moves within finite relations when dealing with the universe and with man himself. All cultural activities in which he shapes his world have this character of finitude. Therefore, they are not matters of ultimate concern.”

- “Man experiences a belonging to the infinite, which, however, is neither a part of himself nor something in his power. It must grasp him, and if it does, it is a matter of infinite concern. Man is finite, man's reason lives in preliminary concerns; but man is also aware of his potential infinity, and this awareness appears as his ultimate concern.”

- “Reason can be fulfilled only if it is driven beyond the limits of its finitude, and experiences the presence of the ultimate, the holy. Without such an experience, reason exhausts itself and its finite content. Finally, it becomes filled with irrational or demonic contents and is destroyed by them.” (is this me? I agree with this, with Mckenna, that it is about experience. I need to do mushrooms again. Another experiment is in order, Heisman is a testament to this)

- “First, it must be acknowledged that man is in a state of estrangement from his true nature.”

- “The criterion of the truth of faith, therefore, is that it implies an element of self-negation. That symbol is most adequate which expresses not only the ultimate but also it own lack of ultimacy.”

- “The criterion contains a Yes- it does not reject any truth of faith in whatever form it may appear in the history of faith- and it contains a No- it does not accept any truth of faith as ultimate except the one that no man posses it.” (Vivekananda- more sects of religion, the better, they all point beyond themselves, if they are not idolatrous, Karma Yoga, believe nothing/disbelieve everything. I could use cannabis, while others may not, I cannot criticize others for their 'brand' of faith, as long as they are only using these symbols as a 'latter' to God, to the Ultimate)

- on being 'grasped'- “Without some participation in the object of one's ultimate concern, it is not possible to be concerned about it. In this sense ebvery act of faith presupposes participation in that toward which it is directed. Without a preceding experience of the ultimate no faith in the ultimate can exist. The mystical type of faith has emphasized this the most strongly."

- "Without hte manifestation of God in man the question of God and faith in God are not possible. There is no faith without participation!" (participation! Turning inward, contemplation, meditation, solitude)

- "He who has faith is seperated from the object of his faith. Otherwise he would possess it...But the human situation, its finitude and estrangement, prevents man's participation in the ultimate without both the seperation and the promis of faith. Here the limist of mysticism becomes visible;

it neglects the human predicament and the separation of man from the ultimate. There is no faith without separation.” (the entire thought of Tillich rests on this finite/infinite distinction that is unbridgeable, CTB pg. 178- 'the experience of meaninglessness is more radical thatn mysticism. Therefore it transcends the mystical experience'- whether meaninglessness is 'more radical' or not is one question; what is not disputed is that meaninglessness is more prominent than the mystical experience, doubt shows how important we take our concern)

- “Out of the element of participation follows the certainty of faith; out of the element of separation follows the doubt in faith.”

- “Sometimes doubt conquers faith, but it still contains faith. Otherwise it would be indifference.”

- “Since the life of faith is life in the state of ultimate concern and no human being can exist completely without such a concern, we can say: Neither faith nor doubt can be eliminated from man as man.”

- “The danger of this method, of course, is that the faith, meditated in education, will remain a traditional attitude and never break through to a state of living faith. However, if this causes people to become hesitant about communicating any of the given symbols and to wait until independent questions about the meaning of life have arisen, it can lead to a powerful life of faith, but it also can lead to emptiness, to cynicism and, in reaction to it, to idolatrous forms of ultimate concern.” (Vivekananda, direct experience, psylocibin, cannabis, academic philosophy is a joke)

- “It is experienced in passion, anxiety, despair, ecstasy.”

- “In the mystical literature the 'vision of God is...In the complete reunion with the divine ground of being, the element of distance is overcome and with it uncertainty, doubt, courage and risk. The finite is taken into the infinite; it is not extinguished, but it is not separated either. This is not the ordinary human condition. To the state of separated finitude belong faith and the courage to risk. The risk of faith is the concrete content of one's ultimate concern.” (psylocibin is the mystical experience that does remove doubt, faith, courage, etc. The Nihilism of everyday experience is more 'prevalent' as Tillich mentions in both Faith and Courage pg. 178)

- “We are never able to bridge the infinite distance between the infinite and the finite from the side of the finite. This alone makes the courage of faith possible. The risk of failure, of error and of idolatrous distortion can be taken, because the failure cannot separate us from what is our ultimate concern.” (sickness unto death, the doubt, the despair does not end, does not cease, it is omnipresent in the finite world)

- “The ultimate concern gives depth, direction and unity to all other concerns and, with them, to the whole personality.”

- “Ultimate concern is passionate concern; it is a matter of infinite passion.” (Vivekananda speaks of the thief left in the room with gold, the boy who has his head held under water, going 'mad' for God as Plato and Cioran testify to, Vivekananda also mentions that the religious believers around us are ot infinitely passionate about God, as Kierkegaard, Tolstoy, Nietzsche all felt as well)

- “The body can participate both in vital ecstasy and in asceticism leading to spiritual ecstasy.”

- “The objects of modern secular idolatry, such as nation and success, have shown healing power, not only by the magic fascination of a leader, a slogan or a promise but also by the fulfillment of otherwise unfulfilled strivings for a meaningful life. But the basis for integration is too narrow.”

- Idolatrous faith- “Spiritual creativity shows an increasingly shallow and empty character, because no infinite meaning gives depth to it. The passion of faith is transformed into the suffering of unconquered doubt and despair, and in many cases into an escape to neurosis and psychosis.” (the poison of naturalism)

- “One is ultimately concerned only about something to which one essentially belongs and from which one is existentially separated.”

- “Mystical love unites by negation of the self. Ethical love transforms by affirmation of the self. The sphere of activities following from mystical love is predominantly ascetic. The sphere of activities following from ethical love is predominantly formative” (is this the difference between jnana and bhakti/karm yoga?)

- “That which is based on an ultimate concern is not exposed to destruction by preliminary concerns and the lack of their fulfillment.”

- “Without symbols in which the holy is experienced as present, the experience of the holy vanishes.”

- “If the myth is understood literally, philosophy must reject it as absurd. It must demythologize the sacred stories, transform the myth into a philosophy of religion and finally into a philosophy without religion.” (Vivekananda- The Necessity of Religion, particularly the last two pages, an 'infinite religion')

- “...no one is completely without an ultimate concern.” (in order to negate the claim of not having an ultimate concern, you'd have to ironically revolt against ultimate concerns, therefore putting a positive notion onto the lack of having an ultimate concern, i.e. showing ultimate concern, i.e. the self-contradictory nature of nihilism)

- “Faith is a concept- and a reality- which is difficult to grasp and to describe.”

The Courage To Be

- Pg. 175 “The answer must accept, as its precondition, the state of meaninglessness. It is not an answer if it demands the removal of this state; for that is just what cannot be done. He who is in the grip of doubt and meaninglessness cannot liberate himself from this grip...if one does not try to escape the question...In this situation the meaning of life is reduced to despair about the meaning of life.” (this is the thesis/conclusion(?) of the entire book)

## 51. Swami Vivekananda

2.3 Hints of Practical Spirituality

- “We are always making the mistake of judging others; we are always inclined to think that our little mental universe is all that is; our ethics, our morality, our sense of duty, our sense of utility are the only things that are worth having.”

- “I begin to understand the marvelous saying of Christ: 'Judge not that ye not be judged.' The more we learn, the more we find out how ignorant we are, how multiform and multi-sided is this mind of man.”

- “But I must ask you to bear in mind that, as there is religious superstition, so also there is a superstition in the matter of science. There are priests who take up religious work as their speciality; so also there are priests of physical law, scientists. As soon as a great scientist's name, like Darwin or Huxley, is cited, we follow blindly. It is the fashion of the day...True science asks us to be cautious. Just as we should be careful with the priests, so we should be with the scientists. Begin with disbelief. Analyse, test, prove everything, and then take it.”

- “You will be astonished to hear that they have no churches, no Common Prayers, or anything of the kind; but they, every day, still practice the breathings and try to concentrate the mind; and that is the chief part of their devotion.” (all Truth should be available to everyone at 'anytime, if one puts in the effort/participation, Sam Harris said this in a recent talk, and it seems true if our consciousness has within itself the Divine, or whatever one wants to define as the 'divine')

- “The second is the fear of persecution. A man, for instance, would not like to practice breathing publicly in this country, because he would be thought so queer; it is not the fashion here. On the other hand, in India. if a man prayed, "Give us this day our daily bread", people would laugh at him. Nothing could be more foolish to the Hindu mind than to say, "Our Father which art in Heaven." The Hindu, when he worships, thinks that God is within himself.”

- “The reality of everything is the same infinite. This is not idealism; it is not that the world does not exist. It has a relative existence, and fulfils all its requirements But it has no independent existence. It exists because of the Absolute Reality beyond time, space, and causation.”

- “Everyone without exception, everyone of us, can attain to this culmination of Yoga. But it is a terrible task. If a person wants to attain to this truth, he will have to do something more than to listen to lectures and take a few breathing exercises. Everything lies in the preparation. How long does it take to strike a light? Only a second; but how long it takes to make the candle! How long does it take to eat a dinner? Perhaps half an hour. But hours to prepare the food! We want to strike the light in a second, but we forget that the making of the candle is the chief thing.” (participation- mine seems to be in the form of contemplation)

- “"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and everything shall be added unto you." This is the one great duty, this is renunciation. Live for an ideal, and leave no place in the mind for anything else. Let us put forth all our energies to acquire that, which never fails — our spiritual perfection. If we have true yearning for realisation, we must struggle, and through struggle growth will come. We shall make mistakes, but they may be angels unawares. The greatest help to spiritual life is meditation (Dhyâna). In meditation we divest ourselves of all material conditions and feel our divine nature. We do not depend upon any external help in meditation.”

- “For it is the body that drags us down. It is attachment, identification, which makes us miserable. That is the secret: To think that I am the spirit and not the body, and that the whole of this universe with all its relations, with all its good and all its evil, is but as a series of paintings — scenes on a canvas — of which I am the witness.” (stop identifying with Naturalism, with the 'mindless' evolutionary tale of all life. The reduction of humans to mechanisms as such. Let this Heisman view disappear. Embrace the entheogens. Attempt to stop despairing over the material, the body, the physical)

2.4 Bhakti or Devotion

- “In various religions this love and devotion is manifested in various degrees, at different stages. The lowest stage is that of ritualism, when abstract ideas are almost impossible, and are dragged down to the lowest plane, and made concrete. Forms come into play, and, along with them, various symbols. Throughout the history of the world, we find that man is trying to grasp the abstract through thought-forms, or symbols. All the external manifestations of religion — bells, music, rituals, books, and images — come under that head. Anything that appeals to the senses, anything that helps man to form a concrete image of the abstract, is taken hold of, and worshipped.” (Tillich?)

- “From time to time, there have been reformers in every religion who have stood against all symbols and rituals. But vain has been their opposition, for so long as man will remain as he is, the vast majority will always want something concrete to hold on to, something around which, as it were, to place their ideas, something which will be the centre of all the thought-forms in their minds.”

- “It is vain to preach against the use of symbols, and why should we preach against them? There is no reason why man should not use symbols. They have them in order to represent the ideas signified behind them. This universe is a symbol, in and through which we are trying to grasp the thing signified, which is beyond and behind. The spirit is the goal, and not matter. Forms, images, bells, candles, books, churches, temples, and all holy symbols are very good, very helpful to the growing plant of spirituality, but thus far and no farther. In the test majority of cases, we find that the plant does not grow. It is very good to be born in a church, but it is very bad to die in a church. It is very good to be born within the limits of certain forms that help the little plant of spirituality, but if a man dies within the bounds of these forms, it shows that he has not grown, that there has been no development of the soul. If, therefore, any one says that symbols, rituals, and forms are to be kept for ever, he is wrong; but if he says, that these symbols and rituals are a help to the growth of the soul, in its low and undeveloped state, he is right. But, you must not mistake this development of the soul as meaning anything intellectual. A man can be of gigantic intellect, yet spiritually he may be a baby. You can verify it this moment. All of you have been taught to believe in an Omnipresent God. Try to think of it. How few of you can have any idea of what omnipresence means! If you struggle hard, you will get something like the idea of the ocean, or of the sky, or of a vast stretch of green earth, or of a desert. All these are material images, and so long as you cannot conceive of the abstract as abstract, of the ideal as the ideal, you will have to resort to these forms, these material images. It does not make much difference whether these images are inside or outside the mind. We are all born idolaters, and idolatry is good, because it is in the nature of man. Who can get beyond it? Only the perfect man, the God-man. The rest are all idolaters. So long as we see this universe before us, with its forms and shapes, we are all idolaters. This is a gigantic symbol we are worshipping. He who says he is the body is a born idolater. We are spirit, spirit that has no form or shape, spirit that is infinite, and not matter. Therefore, anyone who cannot grasp the abstract, who cannot think of himself as he is, except in and through matter, as the body, is an idolater. And yet how people fight among themselves, calling one another idolaters! In other words, each says, his idol is right, and the others' are wrong. Therefore, we should get rid of these childish notions. We should get beyond the prattle of men who think that religion is merely a mass of frothy words, that it is only a system of doctrines; to whom religion is only a little intellectual assent or dissent; to whom religion is believing in certain words which their own priests tell them; to whom religion is something which their forefathers believed; to whom religion is a certain form of ideas and superstitions to which they cling because they are their national superstitions. We should get beyond all these and look at humanity as one vast organism, slowly coming towards light — a wonderful plant, slowly unfolding itself to that wonderful truth which is called God — and the first gyrations, the first motions, towards this are always through matter and through ritual.”

- “In modern times, Christian clergymen have become a little kinder, and they allow that in the older religions, the different forms of worship were foreshadowings of Christianity, which of course, they consider, is the only true form. God tested Himself in older times, tested His powers by getting these things into shape which culminated in Christianity. This, at least, is a great advance. Fifty years ago they would not have said even that; nothing was true except their own religion. This idea is not limited to any religion, nation, or class of persons; people are always thinking that the only right thing to be done by others is what they themselves are doing. And it is here that the study of different religions helps us. It shows us that the same thoughts that we have been calling ours, and ours alone, were present hundreds of years ago in others, and sometimes even in a better form of expression than our own. These are the external forms of devotion, through which man has to pass; but if he is sincere, if he really wants to reach the truth, he goes higher than these, to a plane where forms are as nothing. Temples or churches, books or forms, are simply the kindergarten of religion, to make the spiritual child strong enough to take higher steps...”

- “Who is longing? That is the question. Religion is not in doctrines, in dogmas, nor in intellectual argumentation; it is being and becoming, it is realisation. We hear so many talking about God and the soul, and all the mysteries of the universe, but if you take them one by one, and ask them, "Have you realised God? Have you seen your Soul?" — how many can say they have? And yet they are all fighting with one another! At one time, in India, representatives of different sects met together and began to dispute. One said that the only God was Shiva; another said, the only God was Vishnu, and so on; and there was no end to their discussion. A sage was passing that way, and was invited by the disputants to decide the matter. He first asked the man who was claiming Shiva as the greatest God, "Have you seen Shiva? Are you acquainted with Him? If not, how do you know He is the greatest God?" Then turning to the worshipper of Vishnu, he asked, "Have you seen Vishnu?" And after asking this question to all of them, he found out that not one of them knew anything of God. That was why they were disputing so much, for had they really known, they would not have argued. When a jar is being filled with water, it makes a noise, but when it is full, there is no noise. So, the very fact of these disputations and fighting among sects shows that they do not know anything about religion. Religion to them is a mere mass of frothy words, to be written in books. Each one hurries to write a big book, to make it as massive as possible, stealing his materials from every book he can lay his hands upon, and never acknowledging his indebtedness. Then he launches this book upon the world, adding to the disturbance that is already existing there.” (symbolism, direct experience, ultimate concern, not an intellectual, at least not purely or not irrational, nonrational is a better term, not about security which breads fundamentalism, but a search for Truth which breads questioning everything, believe nothing and disbelieve everything)

- “The vast majority of men are atheists. I am glad that, in modern times, another class of atheists has come into existence in the Western world — I mean the materialists. They are sincere atheists. They are better than the religious atheists, who are insincere, who fight and talk about religion, and yet do not want it, never try to realise it, never try to understand it.” (the materialists may be sincere in their logical conclusions of Naturalism, but that does not me that they realize the Nihilism that stems from materialism anymore than the 'religious atheist', as Vivekananda defines him, that does not realize the truths of religion)

- “Who wants God? That is the question. Do you think that all this mass of people in the world want God, and cannot have him? That cannot be.”

- “This desire for perfection, for reaching the goal and getting beyond nature, how can it be there, until something has created it and drilled it into the soul of man, and makes it live there? He, therefore, in whom this desire is awakened, will reach the goal. We want everything but God. This is not religion that you see all around you. My lady has furniture in her parlour, from all over the world, and now it is the fashion to have something Japanese; so she buys a vase and puts it in her room. Such is religion with the vast majority; they have all sorts of things for enjoyment, and unless they add a little flavour of religion, life is not all right, because society would criticise them.”

- “A disciple went to his master and said to him, "Sir, I want religion." The master looked at the young man, and did not speak, but only smiled. The young man came every day, and insisted that he wanted religion. But the old man knew better than the young man. One day, when it was very hot, he asked the young man to go to the river with him and take a plunge. The young man plunged in, and the old man followed him and held the young man down under the water by force. After the young man had struggled for a while, he let him go and asked him what he wanted most while he was under the water. "A breath of air", the disciple answered. "Do you want God in that way? If you do, you will get Him in a moment," said the master. Until you have that thirst, that desire, you cannot get religion, however you may struggle with your intellect, or your books, or your forms. Until that thirst is awakened in you, you are no better than any atheist; only the atheist is sincere, and you are not. A great sage used to say, "Suppose there is a thief in a room, and somehow he comes to know that there is a vast mass of gold in the next room, and that there is only a thin partition between the two rooms What would be the condition of that thief? He would be sleepless, he would not be able to eat or do anything. His whole mind would be on getting that gold. Do you mean to say that, if all these people really believed that the Mine of Happiness, of Blessedness, of Glory were here, they would act as they do in the world, without trying to get God?" As soon as a man begins to believe there is a God, he becomes mad with longing to get to Him. Others may go their way, but as soon as a man is sure that there is a much higher life than that which he is leading here, as soon as he feels sure that the senses are not all, that this limited, material body is as nothing compared with the immortal, eternal, undying bliss of the Self, he becomes mad until he finds out this bliss for himself. And this madness, this thirst, this mania, is what is called the "awakening" to religion, and when that has come, a man is beginning to be religious. But it takes a long time. All these forms and ceremonies, these prayers and pilgrimages, these books, bells, candles, and priests, are the preparations; they take off the impurities from the soul. And when the soul has become pure, it naturally wants to get to the mine of all purity, God Himself.”

- “Yet all these forms and symbols are simply the beginning, bot the true love of God.” (Tillich says the same thing, the god above God)

- “The first test of love is that it knows no bargaining. So long as you see a man love another only to get something from him, you know that that is not love; it is shopkeeping. Wherever there is any question of buying and selling, it is not love.” (selflessness, Kierkegaard mentions the egotistical motivations of faith)

- “'Lord give me more wealth, more children, more territory…' This is not the language of love.”

- “Where do you ever see love in fear? It is always a sham. With love never comes the idea of fear. Think of a young mother in the street: if a dog barks at her, she flees into the nearest house. The next day she is in the street with her child, and suppose a lion rushes upon the child, where will be her position? Just at the mouth of the lion, protecting her child. Love conquered all her fear. So also in the love of God. Who cares whether God is a rewarder or a punisher? That is not the thought of a lover. Think of a judge when he comes home, what does his wife see in him? Not a judge, or a rewarder or punisher, but her husband, her love. What do his children see in him? Their loving father, not the punisher or rewarder. So the children of God never see in Him a punisher or a rewarder. It is only people who have never tasted of love that fear and quake. Cast off all fear — though these horrible ideas of God as a punisher or rewarder may have their use in savage minds. Some men, even the most intellectual, are spiritual savages, and these ideas may help them. But to men who are spiritual, men who are approaching religion, in whom spiritual insight is awakened, such ideas are simply childish, simply foolish. Such men reject all ideas of fear.”

- “The perfect man sees nothing but God. So we always worship our highest ideal, and when we have reached the point, when we love the ideal as the ideal, all arguments and doubts vanish for ever. Who cares whether God can be demonstrated or not? The ideal can never go, because it is a part of my own nature. I shall only question the ideal when I question my own existence, and as I cannot question the one, I cannot question the other. Who cares whether God can be almighty and all-merciful at the same time or not ? Who cares whether He is the rewarder of mankind, whether He looks at us with the eyes of a tyrant or with the eyes of a beneficent monarch? The lover has passed beyond all these things, beyond rewards and punishments, beyond fears and doubts, beyond scientific or any other demonstration.” (great description of the 'Knight of Faith')

- “Thus we come to what is called supreme Bhakti, supreme devotion, in which forms and symbols fall off. One who has reached that cannot belong to any sect, for all sects are in him. To what shall he belong? For all churches and temples are in him. Where is the church big enough for him? Such a man cannot bind himself down to certain limited forms.”

- “The true lovers of God want to become mad, inebriated with the love of God, to become 'God-intoxicated men.'”

**4.2.17 The Practice of Religion**

52. Martin Heidegger

(21-22) seems like an important part about being in itself and the 'structures' that the world, in the form of culture, throws itself onto a form, or disguise of being, which allows for the discovery of Existence to never take place, since the role of explaining existence has been taken up in the role within a particular cultures/set of values, etc.

(251-254) is talk about the ignoring of death, similar to Vivekananda's Maya where people just 'put off' their own deaths, e.g. it happens to 'them', 'her' or 'him', but not to me.  People live in this deluded state to ward off the anxiety of death, of nonbeing.

“...being towards death has turned out to be an evasion in the face of death- an evasion which conceals.”  Hiedegger-

\*\*52.\*\* Everyday being towards the end…

(261-262) the distinction between brooding over how or when we will die, and that we will die.  One seems obsessive and neurotic, while the other seems philosophical.  And this is exactly what he seems to say in 262-263, where he labels the awareness of death as an 'anticipation' rather than an 'actualizing' of death.”

“In the anticipation of this possibility it becomes 'greater and greater;' that is to say, the possibility reveals itself to be such that it knows no measure at all, no more or less, but signifies the possibility of the measureless impossibility of existence.”  (Me: Ha!  Pretty good) 263-263- our death is what separates us from others, it puts everything into our perspective, it ought to take away the influence of the 'others' who throw their nonsense onto you.  Death ought to eliminate this pressure from others.  The anticipation of my own death out to break me free to live in what Heidegger would could an authentic way.

“What anxiety is about is being in the world itself.”  (Me: universal in nature, Kierkegaard for sure)

“The moment of vision, however, brings existence into the Situation and discloses the authentic 'there'."

(Me: This seems to be in the context of finitude, man's 'normal' situation of ignoring/repressing his finitude, but the 'moment of vision' the anxiety in the face of Nothingness, of nonbeing, brings forth the 'now' instead of constantly thinking about the past or future.  The future is the 'falling' into death, the transitory/fleeting nature of Being)

“Curiosity is 'activated' not by the endless immensity of what we have not yet seen, but rather by the falling kind of temporalizing which belongs to the present as it leaps away.  Even if one has seen everything, this is precisely when the 'curiosity' fabricates something new.”  (Me: Transcendental yearning. It's not the distractions of the finite that leads us on, it's the desire for the Infinite.  The transitory, 'leaping away', of the finite cannot satisfy our craving for the Infinite)

“Having been thrown into Being-towards-death, Dasein flees- proximally and for the most part- in the face of this throwness, which has been more or less explicitly revealed.”

“Dasein gets dragged along into throwness: that is to say, as something that has been thrown into the world, it loses itself in the world in its factical submission to that with which it is to concern itself.” 68 C(the need for renunciation, contemplation, meditation, inwardness, a separation from the worldly)

“To designate the authentic terminologically we have reserved the expression 'anticipation'.  This indicates that Dasein, existing authentically, lets itself come towards itself as its ownmost potentiality-for-being- that the future itself must win itself, not from a Present, but from the inauthentic future.” (Me- anticipating death allows us to see our existence for what it is, passing, falling, transitory.  In order to exist authentically, we must reject the world, its cultures, its morals, its ideas, the arbitrary, unthinking influence of outsiders/others. We must be our own individuals of renunciation)

### \_# \*\*pg. 393:\*\* 68 B is huge\_

# \*\*\_pg. 196 of 294,\_\*\*

# \*\*\_side-note- 343\_\*\*

“In this, Dasein is taken back all the way to its naked uncanniness, and becomes fascinated by it. This fascination, however, not only takes Dasein back from its 'worldly' possibilities, but at the same time gives it the possibility of an authentic potentiality-for-being.” (Me- this is so legit.  This is the experience of Solitude, the idea of losing all subjectivity within subjectivity, which seems to allow for the 'objective' viewpoint, i.e. the renunciation of the worldly realm and the introduction, the experience of the Nothingness, the Nihilism, the Other, the Infinite)

“In particular, that in the face of which one has anxiety is not encountered as something definite with which one can concern onself; 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. Environmental entities no longer have any involvement.  \_The world in which I exist has sunk into insignificance\_ (my emphasis); and the world which is thus disclosed is one in which entities can be freed only in the character of having no involvement.  \_Anxiety is anxious in the face of the nothing of the world\_ (my italics); but this does not mean that in anxiety we experience something like the absence of what is present-at-hand with-the-world. The present-at-hand must be encountered in just such a way that it does not have any involvement whatsoever, but can show itself in an empty mercilessness.  This implies, however, that our concernful awaiting finds nothing in terms of which it might be able to understand itself; it clutches at the 'nothing' of the world; but when our understanding has come up against the world, it is brought to Being-in-the-world as such through anxiety.  Being-in-the-world, however, is both what anxiety is anxious in-the-face-of which one has anxiety is indeed already 'there'- namely, Dasein  itself.” (Tillich CTB pg.39- the great digsust, a human cannot stand in stark naked anxiety for too long without going mad, one must renounce to the point of mercilessness anxiety overwhelming you in order to discover your authentic self, the world itself is not the concern, the worldly affairs drop away, and there is only concern with what Tillich would refer to as the 'ultimate concern', or for Heidegger the Authentic-se that is not repressed by thr worldly, material self, as with Kierkegaard, Tillich, Cioran, this anxiety is Universal to all humans, the human condition, it is part of Dasein or Being)

“Anxiety discloses an insignificance of the world; and this insignificance reveals the nullity of that with which one can concern oneself- or, in other words, the impossibility of projecting oneself upon a potentiality-for-Being be lit up.  What is the temporal meaning of this revealing?  Anxiety is anxious about naked Dasein as something that has been thrown into uncanniness.”

“Anxiety liberates him from possibilities which 'count for nothing', and lets him become free for those which are authentic.” (The authentic is to live as a Self, to discover what the Self is. It is not distractions of earthly, finite, transitory life. Authenticity is the realization of the Self as something 'more' than material)

read pg. 394/side note 344 concerning the universality and inescapability of anxiety and how it is the 'mood' or a foundation for a 'moment of vision' which allows for a 'resolution'.  The resolution is God, the anxiety is Nihilism, Nihilism is God.  The 'worldly' possibilities cannot distract one anymore, in anxiety the world crumbles, everything is emptied, Nihilism shows the Nothingness of the world)

To say 'I know nothing about nothing' is to say, in the opposite, the same self-refuting nature of if Nihilism is true, then Nihilism cannot be true.  Socrates' proposition was simply Nihilism in reverse. I know that I know nothing.

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*Hope*- is not said to be a hope for a 'future event', but rather it has the deeper significance of discovering your true Self.  Heidegger is religious as fuck.  “indifference' is not the same as embracing death and existence. end of pg. 395-396-

'As the Present leaps away…' even if one has experienced everything, curiosity fabricates something new. There is a transcendental yearning when faced with the Nothingness of the world.  There is a constant moving forward.  Is this a tale of survival?  Or is there a deeper, 'religious' meaning behind this psychological human fact?

pg. 399, side-note 348- Curiosity.

“When Dasein is resolute, it takes over authentically in its existence the fact that it is the null basis of its own nullity.  We have conceived death existentially as what we have characterized as the possibility of the impossibility  of existence- that is to say, as the utter nullity of Dasein.  Death is not 'added on' to Dasein at its 'end' but Dasein, as care, is the thrown (that is, null) basis for death.  The nullity by which Dasein's Being is dominated primordially through and through, is revealed to Dasein itself in authentic Being-towards-death. Only on the basis of Dasein's whole Being does anticipation make Being-guilty manifest. Care harbours itself in both death and guilt equiprimordially.  Only anticipatory resoluteness understands the potentiality-for-Being-guilty authentically and wholly- that is to say, primordially. When the call of conscience is understood, lostness in the 'they' is revealed.  Resoluteness brings Dasein back to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being-its-self.  When one has an understanding Being-towards-death- towards death as one's ownmost possibility- one's potentiality-for-Being becomes authentic and wholly transparent. The call of conscience passes over in its appeal all Dasein's 'worldly' prestige and potentialities.”  (yes, of course the world becomes 'null', all possibilities become 'null', the question at the end of section 53 asks the question of how an existence in that is 'authentic', i.e. that lives fully in the face of the anxiety of the nothingness of the world, is possible)

pg. 354, side-note 304, 177 of 294-

“...authentic resoluteness which resolves to keep repeating itself.” (it does not 'forget' or attempt to 'cover up' the anxiety of existence, i.e. it does not fall into the nothingness of the world and it's null possibilities)

Heidegger says that his sense of 'resoluteness' as the anticipation of Being-towards-death is 'unintelligible' to the common sense manner in which 'they' understand Dasein, or Being, to be.  The path is narrow, Ha!

pg. 357, side-note 310, 178 of 294-

pg. 396, 198 of 294, side-note 346- Heidegger makes a distinction between the worldly hope that allows one to distract oneself with worldly pleasure/issues, i.e. a sort of band-aid, worldly 'help' and an 'ecstatico-temporal relation to the thrown ground of itself', i.e. this sounds like a mystical, entheogenic experience.

162 0f 294, 56. and, especially, 57. need to be re-read.  Heidegger keeps speaking of the 'nothing of the world'.  He also speaks of conscience as a negative that the 'nothing...signifies something positive.” This is a great description of the Nihilistic Experience that sees the nothing of the world as a positive. Heidegger also dismisses the 'biological' dismissal of conscience being merely 'worldy' or not a Beyond that calls us, which in fact is actually still us.  The 'caller' that breaks us away from the 'they' is indefinite, unknown, etc., and this call is brought on, or 'heard', from uncanniness.  Ligotti mentions the uncanniness of the world, something is 'not right here', we are' not at home'.

People that have spoken of Heidegger and about Heidegger by putting his biography forth, or the particular 'clashes' or how he distances himself from a Descartes, or some other philosopher, but these commentators never speak as much, if at all, of his dismissal of both the 'biological' and 'religious' explanations of this experience of the Nothing.  Heidegger refers to this sort of experience, instead, as 'existential'.  Maybe that's a good word.

Read about 'Being with Others”- I think that's the title of the section.  Maybe he speaks in some sort of 'value' terms.  Although, in 58., Heidegger states that the concept of 'Guilty!' must 'drop' the attatchment to 'law-breaking' or an 'ought' or 'concerful being with others', i.e. guilt needs to be ridded of the 'false' morality, i.e. it seems that Heidegger understands the Nothing of this world shows the nullity of all human/worldly morality.

37. *Ambiguity*- “Idle talk and curiosity take care in their ambiguity to ensure that what is genuinely and newly created is out of date as soon as it emerges before the public.”  (Ha!)

37. *Ambiguity*- “Dasein is always 'there'- that is to say, in that public disclosedness of Being-with-one-another where the loudest idle talk and the most ingenious curiosity keep 'things moving', where, in an everyday manner, everything (and at bottom nothing) is happening.”  (Ha!)

37. \*\*\_Ambiguity\_\*\*\- paraphrase- the people keep things 'exciting' with illusions of existing in an inauthentic way, i.e. the others simply distract themselves with this or that thing that is all the rage, yet falls out of fashion almost as quickly as it appeared.  Everyday interaction seems to be a 'tug-of-war' in figuring out the others illusions, to make sure they do not fully contradict or are too corrosive to our 'everyday' veils that we label as 'living'.  “Under the mask of 'for-one-another', an 'against-one-another' is at play”

37.  \*\*\_Ambiguity\_\*\*\- paraphrase- The phenomenon of the 'false', 'worthless' mouth-noises of human interaction, i.e. two people attempting to communicate is like having two conflicting monologues going on at the same time.  Heidegger states that this is not a 'conscious' act of the 'they', i.e. this is not a conscious act of confusion or 'disguise'.  'They' don't even realize the nullity of the possibilities of existence.  That is to say, since everyone is 'thrown' into existence and all possibilities are nothing, all starting points for values or ways of being are ultimately false, and this is what 'ambiguity' seems to be. Moreover, it seems to be part of Dasein, something that needs to be 'worked through', i.e. Mckenna says that 'culture is an 'intelligent test', and if you mesh into a culture, then you have failed.  ''They' won't agree to this interpretation since they do not experience their beliefs, their way of life, as an illusion; their lives still have significance.  They, seemingly, only -semi-consciously 'flee' from the illusions that comfort them from their own deaths.  This sentiment is found in 50. and claimed as a 'proof' that since this is not 'generally understood' by the masses, it shows that Dasein contains a sense of 'fleeing' from death.  “It would be a misunderstanding if we were to seek to have the explication of these phenomena confirmed by looking to the 'they' for agreement.”

57. has not only an amazing description of the Nihilistic experience, but also a great explanation for why the atheists and theists of today 'misinterpret' this experience; mainly due to no one wanting to be Authentic, i.e. not wanting any conflict with anxiety, never mind a true attempt at embracing/confronting anxiety; put in stronger terms: a chasing after the anxiety, i.e. a participation with the Other, with the Nothingness of this world.

Heidegger says that the 'call' does not 'report events' and that it 'keeps quite', that it is 'indefinite', indefinable, finite/infinite distinction, it is a call of oneself by oneself (Vivekananda and eastern/mystical conceptions of 'unity' or 'all is one'.  'Uncanniness' is 'covered up' within the world, everyday events and 'goings ons'.  The others will not understand this because they repress their true Self.  The 'call' which 'says nothing' is yet, say Heidegger, still a 'positive'.  I couldn't agree more, the Nihilism is God, but not the religious/moral law giver as understood by the masses.

### Guilt

“Uncanniness brings this entity face to face with its undisguised nullity, which belongs to the possibility of its ownmost potentiality-for-Being.”

“...this thrownness as a null basis which it has to take up into existence.”

“This calling-back in which conscience calls forth, gives Dasein to understand that Dasein itself- the null basis for its null projection, standing in the possibility of its Being- is to bring itself back to itself from its lostness in the 'they'; and this means that it is guilty.” Guilt is therefore not a worldly guilt of 'failing' to not do what others expect, or a 'breaching of a moral requirement', etc.  It is understanding that Guilt is fundamentally Dasein since there is no grounding or basis for existing in any way.  All actions are absurd, the natural self cannot possibly Transcend its worldly self in order to 'reach' the Authentic Self.  The Guilt is because of the finite/infinite gap; the world drags us down, no matter how hard we try, we cannot do this ourselves. Is this the concept of 'Salvation through Grace only”?   Is 'Guilt' the finite/infinite distinction?  Seems to be.

This clash, battle, unbridgable gap of the finite/infinite allows for a Heidegger to live most of his life away from people in a cabin, to write Being and Time, live in a secluded cabin most of his life, and yet also join the Nazi party.  A person cannot be Authentic!  Heidegger's 'Authentic' man is an ideal in itself; it is something to pursue, rather than achieve.

“Thus Being-a-basis means never to have power over one's ownmost Being from the ground up.”

“Care itself, in its very essence, is permeated with nullity through and trough.   Thus 'care'- Dasein's Being- means, as thrown projection, Being-the-basis of a nullity (and this being-the-basis is itself null). This means that Dasein as such is guilty, if our formally existential definition of 'guilt' as 'Being-the-basis of a nullity' is indeed correct.”  (finite/infinite gap, estrangement)

59\. “Conscience is the call of care from the uncanniness of Being-in-the-world- the call which summons Dasein to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being-guilty.”

After speaking of 'the call' and the wonderful description of the Nihilistic experience, Heidegger goes on to push the 'theological' interpretation of his concepts even further with this quote: “It is easy to see that the conscience which used to be an 'effluence of the divine power' now becomes a slave of Pharisaism.”

59.  “We miss a 'positive' content in that which is called, because we expect to be told something currently useful about assured possibilities of 'taking action' which are available and calculable.  This expectation has its basis within the horizon of that way of interpreting which forces Dasein's existence to be subsumed under the idea of a business procedure that can be regulated...The call of conscience fails to give any such 'practical' injunctions, solely becayse it summons Dasein to existence, to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being-its-Self.  With the maxims which one might be led to expect- maxims which could be reckoned up unequivovally- the conscience would deny existence nothing less than the very possibility of taking action.”  (this is indeed correct, hence quietism, solitude, non-movement, etc. However, Heidegger then mentions one of his seemingly few 'optimistic' spins on his conceptions that are, to me, wholly Other and world renouncing; as he does with suicide.  He seems to try to 'push forward' with action in a similar, yet equally unsubstantial way, as he 'rids' suicide as being an option for Dasien.  I am not sure if he himself believes this, or if this is a 'malfunction' on his part, or maybe even an inauthenticity in order to not seem utterly 'psychotic' to the 'they',

Pg. 323, 57., 161 of 294- “And yet, if the caller- who is 'nobody', when seen after the manner of the world- is interpreted as a power, this seems to be a dispassionate (a pushing off of responsibility to embrace the Self, to participate, to rush towards the Nothingness) recognition of something that one can 'come across Objectively'.  When seen correctly, however, this interpretation is only a fleeing in the face of the conscience- a way for Dasein to escape by slinking away from that thin wall by which the 'they' is separated, as it were, from the uncanniness of its Being.  This interpretation of the conscience passes itself off as recognizing the call in the sense of a voice which is 'universally binding, and which speaks in a way that is 'not just subjective'.  Furthermore, the 'universal' conscience becomes exalted to a 'world-conscience', which still has the phenomenal character of an 'it' and 'nobody', yet which speaks- there in the individual 'subject'- as this indefinite something.” (Just WOW, make sure to remember that 'This' interpretation is his interpretation that is being contrasted with the everyday conception of 'conscience', I wanted to italicize this entire section because it is so substantial, not to confuse it with Heidegger's own italics.  This is a great 'middle ground' between the Naturalistic and Theistic interpretations of the 'conscience' being either entirely material or having the misconception of a 'God-like character with human qualities/a immaterial soul that has human qualities)

57. “A free-floating call from which 'nothing ensues' is an impossible fiction when seen existentially.  With regard to Dasein, 'that nothing ensues' signifies something positive.”  (non-movement, for one.  The nothing of the world, 'wakes one up' to the Nothingness that is the ground of being)

59.  “We miss a 'positive' content in that which is called, because we expect to be told something currently useful about assured possibilities of 'taking action' which are available and calculable.” ((Ha!  There is no 'concern' for this world, only in a rushing after/participation with the Other as a necessarily limited finite being)

27. “As the 'they-self, the particular Dasein has been dispersed into the 'they', and must first find itself.”

27.  Proximally Dasein is 'they', and for the most part remains so (the path is narrow).  If Dasein discovers the world in its own way and brings it close, if it discloses to itself its own authentic Being, then this discovery of the 'world' and this disclosure of Dasein are always accomplished as a clearing-away of concealments and obscurities, as a breaking up of the disguises with which Dasein bars its own way. (through idle talk, curiosity, and ambiguity. A disolvement of boundaries is what is needed, a participation/embracing/a rushing towards the Nothingness which is brought up with the help of anxiety)

pg. 173, 86 of 294, 29. “Both the undisturbed equanimity and the inhibited ill-humour of our everyday concern, the way we slip over from one to the other, or slip off into bad moods, are by no means nothing ontologically, even if these phenomena are left unheeded as supposedly the most indifferent and fleeting in Dasein.”  (Vivekananda- the most impressive things about human beings is that they see and live around death at all times, yet never think that they will die themselves, i.e. maya)

pg. 173, 86 of 294, 29, “The pallid, evenly balanced lack of mood, which is often persistent and which is not to be mistaken for a bad mood, is far from nothing at all.  Rather it is in this that Dasein becomes satiated with itself. Being has become manifest as burden (my italics).  Why that should be, one does not know.  And Dasein cannot know anything of the sort...”  (this seems to be the concept of 'doubt' within 'faith'.  The exact grounding or flowing from with which the world becomes insignificant, or a burden, cannot be known to us, but that it is still 'far from nothing'.  I think this is either leaves the door open for Heidegger to not get caught in the trap of a simple theology or the 'they', yet it does explicitly state its significance as 'something'.

29.  “Furthermore, a mood of elation can alleviate the manifest burden of Being; that such a mood is possible also discloses the burdensome character of Dasein, even while it alleviates the burden.”

29. “'To be disclosed' does not mean 'to be known as this sort of thing'.  And even in the most indifferent and inoffensive everydayness the Being of Dasein can burst forth as a naked 'that it is and has to be. The pure 'that it is' shows itself, but the 'whence' and the 'whither' remain in darkness.” (again, this sounds like the necessary condition of doubt due to the finite/infinite gap; in other words, human beings estrangement, 'not at home', uncanniness within this world)

29.  “In an ontico-existentiell sense, Dasein for the most part evades the Being which discloses the mood.” (The fleeing, the distractions, diversions, the covering up, always-have-to-be happy attitudes)

29. “The expression 'throwness' is meant to suggest the facticity of its being delivered over.”  (the given fact that human beings just 'show up on the scene', arbitrarily here instead of there, in this place instead of that, from these parents instead of those, etc.)

29.  On the 'they' character's expression/reaction to their 'throwness'-

“As an entity which has been delivered over to its Being, it remains also delivered over to the fact that it must always have found itself- but found itself in a way of finding which arises not so much from a direct seeking as rather from a fleeing.  The way in which the mood discloses is not one in which we at throwness, but one in which we turn towards or turn away.  For the most part the mood does not turn towards the burdensome character of Dasein which is manifest in it, and least of all does it do so in the mood of elation when this burden has been alleviated.  It is always by way of a state-of-mind that this turning away is what it is.” (my italics)

29. “Existentially, a state-of-mind implies a disclosive submission to the world, out of which we can encounter something that matters to us.” (Ha!  We 'submit' the to world, its null possibilities, we flee, run, distract from the true Self, we get caught up in the 'they' and lose our true Self)

## What is Metaphysics?

\- “As surely as we never get a sure grasp of the generality of be-ing in itself, just assurely do we all the same find ourselves somehow placed in the midst of the generality of bare be-ing. In the end, there continues to be \[besteht\]an essential difference between getting a grasp of the whole of be-ing in itself and finding oneself in the midst of be-ing as a whole.  The former is impossible in principle. The latter happens all the time in our existence. Of course, it looks just as though in our everyday comings and goings we were holding fast to only just this or that \[kind of\] be-ing, as though we were lost in this or that realm of be-ing. But no matter how fragmented the daily round may seem, it always maintains be-ing in the unity of a "whole," although only in the shadows.  Even then and precisely just then, when we are not especially busy with things, this "as a whole" overcomes us; for example, in genuine boredom.  This is a long way off far off when this or that book or play, job or leisure activity, is boring. It breaks out when "it's boring." \_Profound boredom, like a silent fog insinuating itself in the depths of existence, pulls things, others and oneself into it altogether with remarkable indifference. Such boredom reveals be-ing as a whole.\_”

- “Does such being attuned in which no-thing itself is brought before us happen in human existence?” (oh, indeed it does!)

- “This event is possible and happens, though only rarely and only for an instant, in the fundamental mood of dread \[Angst\]. In this sense, dread does not refer to the regularly occurring anxiety that has its source in the fearfulness that so easily appears in us. Dread is fundamentally different from fear. We are afraid of this or that determinate \[kind of\] be-ing which threatens us in this or that regard. Fear of . . . is also in every case being afraid of something determinate. Since fear has about it the limitation of an "of what" and "about what," the frightening and frightful become bound by that in which one finds himself. In striving to save himself from it, from this determinate \[something\], one becomes unsure of himself with regard to everything else, that is, "in a panic" about everything.  Dread does not give rise to such confusion. On the contrary, an odd calm pervades it. Dread is indeed always dread of . . ., but not of this or that. Dread of. . .is always dread about. . ., but not about this or that. The indeterminacy of and about what we are in dread is not some sort of failure of determinacy, but rather the essential impossibility of determinacy. This is illustrated by the following familiar explanation.  In dread, as we say, "something is uncanny." What do we mean by "something" and "is"? We cannot say what the uncanny something is about. There is something like this about the "as a whole”: all things and we ourselves sink into indifference.  Not in the sense of merely disappearing, but rather, in its very moving away, it turns to us. This moving away of be-ing as a whole that closes in on us in dread pressures us.  There's nothing to get a hold on.  All that remains and comes over us in the slipping away of be-ing is this "no-thing. "Dread reveals no-thing.” (every thing becomes Nothing, all actions become the same, the Absurd Perspective, all finitudes become Nothing)

- “We are "suspended" in dread.  More clearly, dread leaves us hanging because it brings on the slipping away of be-ing. So it is that we actual human beings slip away from ourselves in the midst of be-ing. For at bottom this is not uncanny to you or me, but rather "it" is like that. In the shuddering of this suspense, where one can hold on to nothing, only really being there \[Da-sein\] remains.”

- “Dread strikes us dumb.  Because be-ing as a whole slips away and straight away no-thing rushes in, every saying "Is" about it is silent in the face of it. That in the uncanniness of dread we even often attempt to break the empty stillness with random chatter is only proof of \[the\] present \[of\] no-thing. That dread discloses no-thing is then immediately confirmed when dread has eased off. In light of what we had just seen while it was still fresh in our memory, we are forced to say that that about and of which we were in dread was "really" nothing at all. Indeed, no-thing itself, as such, was there.”  (Ha! Almost an exact quote from Being and Time

- “This demands that we transform our human being into its openness (dread effects this transformation in us) so that we can grasp the nothing that shows up in dread exactly as it shows up. It also demands that we expressly avoid all characterizations of the nothing that do not come from a corresponding experience of the nothing.”  (this is so important.  He states, multiple times, in Being and Time that one cannot rush to the extremes of God or Naturalism, but needs to focus on the human experience of Nothingness)

- “In dread, being as a whole becomes untenable.”

- “In dread there is found a giving way to..., which is admittedly not so much a fleeing as a spellbound calm.”  (something that is 'overwhelming', that overwhelms)

- “In the clear night of dread's no-thing, the original openness of being as such arises for the first time in such a way that it is \[a kind of\] being and not no-thing.” (In Being and Time, 56. 57. 58. 59, even thought the 'call' does not give any 'practical information' or specifics in which in can communicate to another, there is a 'positive' content to the seeming 'empty' experience, I would call this 'God' or at least some aspect of something Other, rather than just a naturalistic explanation, i.e. 'the call seems like its coming from me, and beyond me'- found in 57.)

\- “Being there means beholdenness to no-thing.”

\- “Beholden to no-thing, existence is already beyond being as a whole. We call this being above and beyond being transcendence.”

- “If existence were not of essence fundamentally transcending, which now means, were it not already beholden to no-thing, then it could not relate itself to being and so not even to itself. Without \[the\] original manifestness of no-thing, no selfhood and no freedom.”  (Nothing brings one to God.  Maybe a better way to put it, is that the Nothing breaks open the mysterious abyss of the Other)

- “But now, finally, we must put into words a reservation we have so far withheld. If existence only relates itself to being by being aimed in advance at no-thing in order to be able to exist, and if no-thing originally becomes manifest only in dread, must we not then remain permanently suspended in this dread in order to be able to exist at all? Yet have we ourselves not already admitted that this original dread is rare? But above all, all of us exist and relate ourselves to being which we ourselves are not and which we ourselves are—without such dread. Is this not an arbitrary finding and the no-thing attributed to it an exaggeration? (Being and Time- 53. at the very end Heidegger admits that this 'being-towards-death' seems 'fantastical' and further asks if this 'position' of anxiety is something that reason even demands of us)

- “Now what does it mean that this original dread happens only in rare instances?  Nothing other than this: no-thing is at first and for the most part disguised in its originality. But how? By our getting lost in being in certain ways. The more we turn to being in our dealings, the less we let being as such slip away, the more we turn away from no-thing. Thus all the more certainly are we forced into the public superficialities of existence.” (as to whether this position of anxiety is something that can be held to at all times, is patently not possible.  This is due to 'always falling' into everydayness, 74.)

-  “That existence is pervaded by nihilating behavior attests to the permanent and indeed obscured manifestness of no-thing that dread originally discloses. But this means original dread is suppressed for the most part in existence. Dread is there. It's only napping. Its breath permanently trembles in existence, only slightly in the apprehensive, and inaudibly in the "Uh húh!" and "Húh uh!" of those who are busy; best of all in the reserved, surest of all at the heart of existence that is daring. But this happens only in those for whom it expends itself in order to preserve the ultimate greatness of existence.”

- “For the daring, dread is not an opponent of joy or even of the comfortable pleasures of quiet busyness. It shares a secret bond with the cheerfulness and mildness of creative yearning.”

- “Original dread can awaken in existence at any moment. It does not need wakening by an unaccustomed eventuality for that. The depth of its sway corresponds to the scarcity of its possible occasioning.  It is permanently on the verge and yet only seldom comes into play to hold us in suspense.  The beholdenness of existence to no-thing on the basis of hidden dread makes man the placeholder of no-thing. We are so finite that we are not even able to bring ourselves face to face with no-thing by our own will and resolve. So deeply is mortality buried in our existence that it denies our freedom its very own and deepest finiteness.”  (very poetic expression of the 'rarity' of the Nihilistic experience)

- “The beholdenness of existence to no-thing on the basis of hidden dread is the surmounting of being as a whole, transcendence.”

- “Pure being and pure no-thing is the same." This proposition of Hegel's (Science of Logic) is correct.  Being and no-thing belong together, not because both of them agree in their indeterminacy and immediacy,  but rather because being itself is in essence finite and revealed only in the transcendence of existence enduring no-thing.”  (this sounds like a good expression of 56. 57. 58. 59., the 'positive' content of Nothing)

- “Being as a whole first comes to itself in accordance with its very own possibility, that is, only in the no-thing of existence.” (the 'nothing of the world', 68. b)

- why science needs to be grounded in this interpretation of metaphysics, i.e. 'take on' the Nothing through facing the uncanniness and anxiety of existence- “Only because no-thing is manifest at the heart of existence can the full strangeness of being come over us. Only if the strangeness of being impresses us does it waken us and open us up to wonder. Only on the basis of wonder, that is, the manifestness of no-thing, does the "Why?" come up.” (this seems to be the reason why most scientists do not understand the consequences of their theories, let alone world-views.  They are not motivated by the terror of existence, but rather are totally content, i.e. they are unaware of the assumptions they are making or the consequences of their ideas, or both, philosophy/science must be motivated not simply by 'wonder' by through despair, this allows one too look 'deeper' and ask the 'why' questions that seek the ground of a thing, subject, etc.)

- “Human existence can relate to being only if it is itself beholden to no-thing.  Going above and beyond be-ing is of the essence of existence.” (this is the 'participation' of transcendence)

- “Philosophy can never be measured by the yardstick of the idea of science.” (Ha!)

- “Philosophy comes about only through our own life's undergoing a curious engagement with the fundamental possibilities of existence as a whole. Decisive for this engagement is, first of all, making room for be-ing as a whole; next, letting oneself come to no-thing, that is, becoming free of the idols which everyone has and among \[which\] weare in the habit of losing our way; finally, letting this suspense range out into what it permanently swings round to in the basic question of metaphysics which no-thing itself forces on us: Why be-ing, after all, and not rather no-thing?”

### My Insights

Tonight, read starting at 156 of 294, 54. pg, 312-  Heidegger seems to be explaining the reason why there is a 'disconnect' between the 'instinct' and this something Other that he refers to as “conscience'. This seems to relate directly to Becker's interpretation of why humans can idealize and not act, or the constant guilt of not being able to be the 'Knight of Faith', the 'Uberman', which is a result of the 'divided-self', 'double-mindedness', etc.  There seems to be a 'calling' that does not seem to be me, but almost must be me.  It seems to go against what my 'natural-self' desires, but it seems to be the 'more-real' of the two phenomena.  This would explain why Heidegger could join the Nazi party.  This is why people 'slip up' or always seem to disappoint.  The most 'famous' man will be accused of something horrid, e.g. the priests, the CEO, the teacher, the writer, the philosopher, etc.  I need to explicitly make this connection between Heidegger and Becker; it was brought into my mind with such clarity before. It seems to be extremely hazy right now, but I am sure it will come back with a reading of Heidegger tonight.

Re-read 29., filled with great stuff.

Last paragraph on pg. 177, 88 of 294, 29.- Heidegger has a similar sentiment as Nietzsche with regards to science, Nietzsche used music as an example- even if science describes a symphony, mathematically, this says nothing about the lived experienced of hearing the music.  Heidegger mentions how science, looking at the world theoretically, has 'dimmed it down' and that 'moods', as with music and Nietzsche, still play a role in science; he further makes the point that this does not reduce science to pure 'feeling'.

12/5

After reading/listening to The Death of Ivan Illych, the illusion of everyone's actions around you is so transparent that it becomes an agony, i.e. 'hell is other people'.  It's impossible not to see through the actions of all, once they are seen once.

46-53 are very important on the 'everydayness' of the evasion of death.  Also important on the crucial aspect of anxiety which draws one away from the world, it's preconceived notions of culture, of 'they', and allows one to see one's true self: a nothingness.  The world is a nothing.  Yet, Heidegger asks if this anxiety-ridden existence is even possible, e.g. Nietzsche's breakdown says no, Kierkegaard's 'knight of faith' seems impossible/idealistic, Vivekananda's totally 'selfless' being also seems impossible, Becker agrees that these are not seemingly possible, even thought correct interpretations of the human condition and what is needed.  Anxiety opens discloses the Nothingness of all possibilities of everydayness and turns existence into an impossibility, i.e. Nihilism.  Where do we go from here?

Section 54., pg. 247, side-note 268 'begins' to answer this question. (133 of 253 on the pdf file)

Uncanniness = 'a nothing of the world', a 'not at home' feeling'.  The "Call of Conscious" = a voice both from with and yet seemingly from beyond ('alien voice') that tries to pull us away from the 'they' and back to our authentic/true Self, this 'voice' says nothing pragmatically, this voice in it's 'negation' is a 'positive', i.e. a path/revelation to our true selves, it is both 'us' and 'beyond us', i.e. Vivekananda's Oneness/Psychedelics.  Heidegger- 57.