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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 unaccompanied, 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."
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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."*
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36. Peter Zapffe

The Last Messiah

- "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)
- "the 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

Suicide Note

- “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 mean 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 worshipping 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 than 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 irreconcilable, 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 as 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!"
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38. John Shelby Spong

Jesus for the Non-Religious

- "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 respirationed 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."
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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, Psychedelics, Nietzsche's lack of this direct or big experience, e.g. psilocybin 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 too 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, noisiness, 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 psychopathological 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 on 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."
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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."
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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 misologist. 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 Kierkegaard's Knight of Faith being a great myth, story, ideal, that is not possible to reach)

- "Whence came all these "I cannots" and "impossibles"? 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 consolations 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 slightly 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."*