

# *Madness, Nonexistence, and the Other (Edit)*

## **-Suicide of the Renouncer-**

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**\*\* #edits \*\***

[#Nihiltheism](#) , [#suicide](#)

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"Our ultimate concern can destroy us as it can heal us." Tillich

"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." Tønnessen

"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." Shestov

I believe that those who speculate that a full apprehension of man's condition would drive him insane are right, quite literally right." Becker

"Human cowardice, as Kierkegaard said more than once, cannot endure what madness and death have to tell us." Shestov

"A man who has become conscious of the absurd is forever bound to it." Camus

"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!" Herman Tonseman

"In life, man proposes, God disposes." Huxley (Kempus)

"Now more than ever, we should build monasteries...for those who believe in everything and for those

who believe in nothing. Where to escape? There no longer exists a single place where we can professionally execrate this world." Cioran

"Thus I, a healthy and a happy man, was brought to feel that I could live no longer, that an irresistible force was dragging me down into the grave." Tolstoy

"We have invented happiness." Nietzsche

"Men are so necessarily mad, that not to be mad would amount to another form of madness." Pascal

"...the ascetic ideal has meant so much to man, lies expressed the fundamental feature of man's will, his horror vacui \[horror of a vacuum\]: he needs a goal - and he will sooner will nothingness than not will at all. - Am I not understood? - Have I not been understood? - "Certainly not, sir?" - Well, let us begin at the beginning." Nietzsche

"Thinking of God and not religion, of ecstasy and not mysticism. The difference between the theoretician of faith and the believer is as great as between the psychiatrist and the psychotic." (my emphasis)

These words by Cioran lay out the mindset of this entire work. The rejection of the worldly is one that is necessary for these words to have any resonance, yet it is the most difficult position to comprehend; the experience of Nothing is so rare.

"...under the ascendancy of falling and publicness, 'real' anxiety is rare." Heidegger

"if no-thing originally becomes manifest only in dread, must we not then remain permanently suspended in this dread in order to be able to exist at all? Yet have we ourselves not already admitted that this original dread is rare?" Heidegger

"One problem: Human beings are rarely so sensitive to the woes of this world that they feel a pressing need to reject all cravings for the pleasures of this world, as Buddhism would have them do. And it seems that any amount of pleasure is pleasure enough to get us to keep the faith that being alive is all right for everyone, or almost everyone, and will certainly be all right for any children we cause to be delivered into this world." Ligotti

"Vanity.—How wonderful it is that a thing so evident as the vanity of the world is so little known, that it is a strange and surprising thing to say that it is foolish to seek greatness!" Pascal (Vivekananda speaks of the rarity of the Nihilistic belief, Kierkegaard, Ligotti, Cioran, Otto \['recently read'- about six years ago now- 10/11/23\], all state about the rare instances of this 'true' religious experience)

Nihilism must be properly distinguished from mental illness and, more specifically, from being represented in some form of worldliness. Although there is much more that needs to be said regarding this issue, the sentiment can at least be acknowledged in the words of Becker: "Full humanness means full fear and trembling, at least some of the waking day...When you get a person to look at the sun as it bakes down on the daily carnage taking place on earth, the ridiculous accidents, the utter fragility of life, the powerlessness of those he thought most powerful—what comfort can you give him from a psychotherapeutic point of view?"

Fr. Seraphim Rose expresses the distinction this way: "Nihilism is, most profoundly, a spiritual disorder, and it can be overcome only by spiritual means; and there has been no attempt whatever in the contemporary world to apply such means."

Mitchell Heisman also damns any attempt at relating psychology or 'religion' to Nihilism. Nihilism expresses the fundamental, 'incurable' ground of the human condition:

"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', psychologists fundamentally are 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."

How does madness and suicide relate to Nihilism? Are madness and suicide necessary consequences of Nihilism? If madness is related to Nihilism, is it to be welcomed, or even pursued? Is there a difference between a worldly suicide and a suicide resulting from Nihilism? Is there a difference of a particular 'irrational' neurosis and the terror that comes from the insights of an experience of Nihilism?

There is one well-documented case, of suicide due to Nihilism in the writing of Mitchell Heisman who lived out Nihilism to a end . seemingly, in its lack of Transcendence. Heisman asks: "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?" His suicide suggests the impossibility of such an existence; or rather the utter rationality of suicide in a non-rational world.

In his two-thousand page suicide note, Heisman expresses a propulsion towards a new language of Nihilism that though he may have been seeking after, he could not find. He describes his ambitions accordingly: "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." ('possibility' of rational self-destruction? Ha! Isn't that adorable?)

Underhill, a hundred-years earlier, describes the seemingly necessary nature of an undertaking such that Heisman pursued: "But the true intellectualist, who concedes nothing to instinct or emotion, is obliged in the end to adopt some form of sceptical philosophy. The horrors of nihilism, in fact, can only be escaped by the exercise of faith..." All the same, Heisman lacked such a applicable language of 'faith'. Is there anything behind this thought that drives two thinkers, as seemingly as diverse as Heisman and Underhill, that has been forgotten amongst the busyness of the world, which suggests something fundamental about the human condition?

Moreover, there is the issue of whether 'something' is missing in Heisman's interpretation of Nihilism or whether Underhill is 'guilty' of falling pray to the fear of an uncompromising Nihilism. One is driven to 'faith' ('faith' here is used in relation to the Nothing of the world, 'beyond good and evil', beyond a human morality. One of the most accurate definitions of 'faith' in relation to Nothingness comes from Kierkegaard: "...the opposite of sin is not virtue but faith." 'Faith' is the experience of something 'beyond' the Nothingness of the world) and the other to suicide. Does one of them one of have a fuller conception of Nihilism? Is one of them 'right'?

Throughout Heisman's expansive suicide note one finds it replete with many other sentiments that have been put forth by both 'saints' and other 'religiously' minded people, although stated in a wholly naturalistic interpretation of a Nihilism that lacks any notion of Transcendence. Heisman speaks of

denying the self, the wretchedness of human life, the contradictory nature of human emotions, the nothing of the world, a possible transcendental aspect of human consciousness (which he found in the music of Bach), yet the saints lived out their lives under an umbrella of a religious language (regardless of how porous the umbrella), while Heisman was drowned in the naturalistic language of the 21st century. Nihilism is all-powerful in its experience, regardless of the human limitations of interpretation.

And even though he expresses, at least in part, some desire to move past a strictly naturalist viewpoint, he was unable to do so. The following quote from Heisman shows at least a hint for the possibility of a language that moves Nihilism past a wholly-naturalistic view, while not entirely escaping its grasp. Worth mentioning is that we shouldn't take what Heisman has to say here in its simplest form, which is tempting to do with the words that he has chosen (reducing his 'discovery' down to an 'evolutionary basis'), i.e. the common criticism of 'God' as arising from some pragmatic function which stems from a place of 'desperation', as a need for an 'escape' from the human condition. This would be to miss the deeper interpretation of grounding 'God' within and essentially as Nihilism, rather than as an answer derived for comfort or as some sort of 'conclusion to the problem'.

"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'."

Now, this is not to say that Heisman was necessarily 'wrong' in his action of suicide, that he should have been saved, or that even a Nihilistic language that I am envisioning could have stopped his suicide. The question is: is suicide the answer? Would a language that encompassed and embraced the kindred words of Heisman and the saints allow for Heisman to live as a saint? (Does one even want to live as a saint?) Conversely, would a Nihilistic language/symbolism/method/etc. entail suicide?

The Suicide is not one to be judged in any particular manner. There is a question of how to think about the suicide of the businessman who just lost his job or the person who has just been broken up with by the 'love of their life' and the Nihilist engulfed in Nothingness. Is there such a thing as an authentic suicide? Is the suicide of the one who has lost a (all) 'worldly' distraction(s) that they relate their 'entire' selves to the same as a Heisman who has already discovered the Nothing of the world? The person who is a slave to the world seemingly has a slight 'opening up' of Nihilism with the destruction of what they hold as meaningful, with the loss of a job or a relationship, for instance, yet they seem to flee into suicide as a

relief. (I don't like this last sentence)

But what about the one who has experienced Nihilism and knows that the material positions, even the 'person to person' connections/interactions are inevitably the iquevalent to the walking dead? These worldly groundings have already died for the Nihilist. Do we stop the worldly suicide and not the Nihilistic suicide? If one has not experienced the death of the world, then can that person be dragged back into the world, talked off of the ledge? Conversely, if the world has died for a person, and everything within the world is insignificant (Heidegger, obviously), then what is there to drag such a person back to? Is the development of a Nihilistic language of transcendence even 'worth' the effort?

Is the Nihilistic suicide not the 'optimal' set of movements? Is the Nihilistic suicide authentic in the sense that it is not a 'fleeing' or escaping from the world, but rather a movement that is the inevitable decision to release oneself into the Divine? The strange aversion to one following the 'logic of suicide' is almost as universal as the unquestioned following of the 'logic of life'.

“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.”  
Zapffe

The issue is way more complex than this black and white illustration. The 'jumping' suicides of 9/11 are one such example of the complexity of 'suicide'; there is a possibility that these are not even 'suicides' in any 'real' sense. With that said, there does seem to be something missing from the common suicide that is not lacking in Heisman's. This 'something' seems to be that the common suicide is worldly and concerned with the ego, rather than the transcendent-self (although one could forcefully argue that Heisman was driven by his ego). This distinction of suicides, and the mindsets and motivations, can be interpreted in a similar way via Kierkegaard:

“It is almost as though the Christian must be puffed up because of this proud elevation above everything men commonly call misfortune, above that which men commonly call the greatest evil. But then in turn Christianity has discovered an evil which man as such does not know of; this misery is the sickness unto death. What the natural man considers horrible -- when he has in this wise enumerated everything and knows nothing more he can mention, this for the Christian is like a jest.

Such is the relation between the natural man and the Christian; it is like the relation between a child and a man: what the child shudders at, the man regards as nothing. The child does not know what the dreadful is; this the man knows, and he shudders at it. The child's imperfection consists, first of all, in not knowing what the dreadful is; and then again, as an implication of this, in shuddering at that which is not dreadful. And so it is also with the natural man, he is ignorant of what the dreadful truly is, yet he is not thereby exempted from shuddering; no, he shudders at that which is not the dreadful: he does not know the true God, but this is not the whole of it, he worships an idol as God.”

The one who 'sees' the Nothing of the world can no longer find any interest in it. This or that activity is received as a distraction from this Other, this sensation of a constantly being picked at; in naturalistic terms one would refer to it as the incessant nagging from one's conscience.

When one experiences the meaninglessness of the world, one becomes intoxicated by it, becoming the All that one wishes to surround themselves with. And for a short moment, one does not yet fully grasp that the Nothingness of existence is no longer voluntary for one to pursue or not. There just is Nothing left, it's all been shattered by the experience. Although I dislike Camus and his pathetic excuse for a "solution" or "answer" to the unsolvable, and I'm not convinced he didn't simply settle on such a cliché response to Nihilism, as to not get recognition and fame. Regardless, he did say one thing that was true: Once one is aware of the Absurd, there's no going back. It's here, it's now, it's everything, and everyone, every word, every sound, the bizarre, just absolute ridiculousness of whatever this is... @ The patchwork is no longer a working option, as it is for the almost entirety of the human species. Most people are trying, carrying their buckets of water from the river to the campground, and Some people's buckets only have a sliver hairline crack running down the side, or maybe the tiniest of hole starting to develop, but then there's another who has some more damage, a few cracks and leaks, but they can still work with the bucket, it's not out of commission, by any stretch of the imagination. However, meanwhile, there are those whose buckets are completely dilapidated. The one with the fewest points of leakage is able to hold onto their water, to follow through with their life, and do so quite easily, as their 'bucket' has barely a dent. This is how most people seem to get through life, utterly blind of their condition, of the chasm of death whose opening awaits every step, thought, and breath.

The person who has a few more holes in his bucket is grasping to hold on, trying ever so hard to get at least some of the water back to the campground, yet he may not make it. And if he does make it back to the campground, before he can rejoice, he looks down to see not even a mouthful left in bucket. This person was so frantic and panicked about getting at least some of the water back, that they lost any perception of the water in the bucket, the main purpose of everything: the journey, the hurrying, the panic, and yet they got so caught up with a distraction that if they hadn't been in a state of being where existence was being veiled, by this or that thing, they would have noticed, much, much sooner before making it back to the campground, that their bucket was empty, their attempt, futile. The one in this state of being seems to stand hardly a chance.

{{{Is there an authenticity in the final person 'giving up'? (I don't know if I like this, I'll have to reread).}}}

There are people who are existing within this awareness, struggling to keep themselves distracted, yet knowing that something is wrong, that the water is leaking, that the bucket is drying up. The attempts to maintain a sense of meaning, value and purpose, within the finite, and through the necessarily nonsensical nature of objects that it's comprised of, such as their work, wealth, family, hobbies, passions, hates, etc. They feel a sense of dissatisfaction, yet they keep plugging along in what they halfway recognize, yet refuse to accept, as a necessary failure.

*All the water, from all the buckets, will eventually be lost.*

Then there are those with buckets so dilapidated that they run with fervor back to the campground with a beyond obvious empty bucket, they may even brag or make comments about how much water they are able to transport, and how they will be revered as such a great help, miracle-worker, savior, or simply a trustworthy, reliable companion. These people are schizophrenics, the mentally handicapped, the deterministic material objects that make no sense as to anything but to demand the pity from others, for no other reason than for existing, for simply 'being here'. The task of feeding oneself becomes the apex of human accomplishment, rather than the waste of time that it so obviously is. The fallacious sense of 'purpose' that this deterministic existence gives to the caregiver can be both a burden, and yet also the distraction of hope that one could not live without. The assumptions of 'doing good', of 'never giving up', and so forth are more cliché catchphrases that if honestly looked at, could not possibly stand on the definitions that people give them in order to mask the Nothingness of existence. These people cannot be held up by any of life's distractions anymore. Everything has slipped through their fingers. All meaning has left the temporal realm.

"When death is the greatest danger, one hopes for life; but when one becomes acquainted with an even more dreadful danger, one hopes for death. So when the danger is so great that death has become one's hope, despair is the disconsolateness of not being able to die." Kierkegaard

"i want to die but I am sorry that I want to die. this is the feeling experienced by those who abandon themselves to nothingness." Cioran

"He points to those who 'do not want to live and do not know how to die.'" Tillich quoting Seneca

There is a dichotomy between the logic of life and the logic of suicide. One will always speak past the other. There is no communicating the logic of suicide to one who has not even questioned, never mind experienced the Nothing of existence; the experience of Nothingness is not within their frame of reference. The vast majority of the human species follows the logic of life. They feel at home here in the world; there is nothing to worry about here. The one who has been brought to Nothingness has no way of 'arguing' away the 'meaning' put onto the lives of those within the world.

"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." Zapffe

Is there even any point to ask why others are so uncomfortable with thinking?! Reason leads you to skepticism. Skepticism brings you to despair. Despair drives you to Nihilism. Nihilism opens up the Other. The Other is terrifyingly strange. My misery seems unbearable at best. What is this feeling of meaninglessness, if not Divine? What could possibly cause this experience? The fear of madness is one



hindrance along the path to the Other; how demanding 'thinking' can be. Wouldn't to be stolen by madness be the realization of an ideal? Or why not the 'never-ending' adventure into madness?

"Humanly speaking, he is mad and cannot make himself understandable to anyone. And yet 'to be mad' is the mildest expression. If he is not viewed in this way, then he is a hypocrite, and the higher he ascends this path, the more appalling a hypocrite he is." Kierkegaard

"He stands outside human concerns and draws close to the divine; ordinary people think he is disturbed and rebuke him for this, unaware that he is possessed by god...he would like to fly away, but he cannot; he is like a bird fluttering and looking upward and careless of the world below; and he is therefore thought to be mad." Plato

St. Francis de Sales warns of the consequences that come from the world when one takes on a 'journey' such as Heisman's: "DIRECTLY that your worldly friends perceive that you aim at leading a devout life, they will let loose endless shafts of mockery and misrepresentation upon you; the more malicious will attribute your change to hypocrisy, designing, or bigotry; they will affirm that the world having looked coldly upon you, failing its favour you turn to God; while your friends will make a series of what, from their point of view, are prudent and charitable remonstrances. They will tell you that you are growing morbid; that you will lose your worldly credit, and will make yourself unacceptable to the world; they will prognosticate your premature old age, the ruin of your material prosperity; they will tell you that in the world you must live as the world does; that you can be saved without all this fuss; and much more of the like nature."

And then, as if to mock them back, St. Francis calls out what he sees as their superficiality or unthinking:

"We have all seen men, and women too, pass the whole night, even several in succession, playing at chess or cards; and what can be a more dismal, unwholesome thing than that? But the world has not a word to say against it, and their friends are nowise troubled. But give up an hour to meditation, or get up rather earlier than usual to prepare for Holy Communion, and they will send for the doctor to cure you of hypochondria or jaundice!"

Elsewhere, he puts the disaster of an unthinking life that ought to resonate with anyone who considers themselves 'human':

"Again, while you were dancing, many a soul has passed away amid sharp sufferings; thousands and tens of thousands were lying all the while on beds of anguish, some perhaps untended, unconsolated, in fevers, and all manner of painful diseases. Will you not rouse yourself to a sense of pity for them? At all events, remember that a day will come when you in your turn will lie on your bed of sickness, while others dance and make merry."

"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." Saltus

Suicide need not be necessary even when it is not taken as an abomination. The indefinite, 'constructive' nature of the content that is found within Nihilism is something that is easily 'confused' due to its unknowability. One may be brought to suicide, yet it may bring another to a 'Some-thing'.

"...how do you fill out an empty life? With women, books, or worldly ambitions? No matter what you do, the starting point is boredom, and the end self-destruction." Cioran

"To find that everything lacks reality and not to put an end to it all, this inconsistency is not an inconsistency at all: taken to extremes, the perception of the void coincides with the perception of the whole, with the entrance into the All." Cioran

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#### # Extra Notes and Quotes

Vivekananda- "The true lovers of God want to become mad, inebriated with the love of God, to become 'God-intoxicated men'."

If I had only to learn how an apple falls to the ground, or how an electric current shakes my nerves, I would commit suicide. I want to understand the heart of things, the very kernel itself...I want the why of everything, I leave the how to children."

Swami Vivekananda. Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda (Kindle Locations 11429-11430). Kindle Edition.

Plato/Socrates- "I 230 am still unable, as the Delphic inscription orders, to know myself; and it really seems to me ridiculous to look into other things before I have understood that. This is why I do not concern myself with them. \[ accept what is generally believed, and, as I was just saying, I look not into them but into my own self."

"For a madman is also a man whom society did not want to hear and whom it wanted to prevent from uttering certain intolerable truths." Antonin Artaud

Grey and Koestler- "Both felt that solitude enhanced their appreciation of, and sympathy with, their fellow man. Both had intense experiences of feeling that some kind of higher order of reality existed with which solitude put them in touch. Both felt that trying to put this experience into words tended to trivialize it,

because words could not really express it. Although neither man subscribed to any orthodox religious belief, both agreed that they had felt the abstract existence of something which was indefinable or which could only be expressed in symbols...he had also become more aware of horrors lurking under the surface...'feeling of inner freedom, of being alone and confronted with ultimate realities instead of with your bank statement. Your bank statement and other trivialities are again a kind of confinement. Not in space but in spiritual space...So you have got a dialogue with existence. A dialogue with life, a dialogue with death.' ...a courageous few discover that, when in hell, they are granted a glimpse of heaven."

Anthony Storr- Solitude

## Cioran-

"i see a form of madness, not of knowledge, in the ecstasy of life's ultimate origins. You cannot experience it except in solitude, when you feel as if you were floating above the world. solitude is the proper milieu for madness. it is noteworthy that even the skeptic can experience this kind of ecstasy. does not the madness of ecstasy reveal itself through this odd combination of certitude and essence with doubt and despair?"

"the truly awful thing in madness is that we sense a total and irrevocable loss of life while we are still living."

"If you believe in God, you are mad without having gone mad."

"As long as you are busy with him you have an excuse for sadness and solitude. God? An official madness."

## End Cioran Quotes

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

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

by itself, a stupendous farce, and that this meaningless existence will end in a stupid death." \*\*Tolstoy\*\*  
(here Tolstoy seems to be saying nothing different from Heisman when one demythologizes 'Jesus' as an abstract ideal or experience, rather than some literal, miracle-working man in history)

"the revelation of death's immanence in life occurs during illnesses and long depressive states.

there are, of course, other ways, but they are accidental and individual, and do not have the same potential for revelation as illness or depression." \*\*Cioran\*\*

"All my reasoning could not induce me to act in accordance with my convictions i.e., to kill myself. I should not speak the truth, if I said that my reason alone brought me to the position in which I was. Reason had been at work, no doubt, but something else had worked too, something which I can only call an instinctive consciousness of life." \*\*Tolstoy\*\*

"To put briefly the facts against its being real: the ascetic ideal springs from the prophylactic and self-preservative instincts which mark a decadent life, which seeks by every means in its power to maintain its position and fight for its existence; it points to a partial physiological depression and exhaustion, against which the most profound and intact life-instincts fight ceaselessly with new weapons and discoveries. The ascetic ideal is such a weapon: its position is consequently exactly the reverse of that which the worshippers of the ideal imagine - life struggles in it and through it with death and against death; the ascetic ideal is a dodge for the preservation of life." \*\*Nietzsche\*\*

"Away with this "perverse world"! Away with this shameful soddenness of sentiment! Preventing the sick making the healthy sick - for that is what such a soddenness comes to - this ought to be our supreme object in the world - but for this it is above all essential that the healthy should remain separated from the sick, that they should even guard themselves from the look of the sick, that they should not even associate with the sick." Nietzsche

"...how do you fill out an empty life? With women, books, or worldly ambitions? No matter what you do, the starting point is boredom, and the end self-destruction." Cioran

"The real question is not whether humanity is at the mercy of a pitiless world, but rather how we embody grace amid our own vacuity. When we heal our hearts by letting go of worldly concerns, we inevitably find our own void has been filled. Like ascetics who forsake the flesh in search of the spirit, we find our own salvation in the intrinsic flight from the mundane towards the sacred. This happens not on the outside, among the ruins of space and time, but hidden in the depths of the spirit where the external

ceases to influence, an inversion into the profound abyss. There lies the bridge of transcendence; the end-object=nothingness." Nietzsche