

Journal314 Part V 34-42 Recall Summary

Leopardi and the Philosophy of Disenchantment

- The section of the document 'Journal314_34-42' discusses various individuals, including Edgar Saltus, Timothy Leary, Peter Zappfe, [Mitchell Heisman](#), [John Shelby Spong](#), Herman Tønnessen, [Huston Smith](#), Lev Shesto, and [A. W. Tozer](#), but focuses primarily on Edgar Saltus and his [work](#) on the philosophy of disenchantment, particularly in relation to the Italian philosopher [Giacomo Leopardi](#).
- Edgar Saltus describes Leopardi's life as one of excessive study, which had ruined his health by the time he was twenty, leading him to seek solitude in neighboring forests and experience a state of emotional numbness, where he felt overwhelmed by the nothingness surrounding him and lacked the strength to form desires, even for death.
- Saltus notes that Leopardi's isolation, both self-imposed and forced upon him, allowed him to observe the development of his thoughts, which ultimately led to his disillusionment with everyday life and contempt for those who lived more actively, as he became increasingly focused on studying the misery of human existence and the sinister mystery of life.
- Leopardi's approach to study changed over time, as he shifted from being repelled by the true and real to seeking them out, and he found pleasure in analyzing human suffering, recognizing that passion was the primary source of pleasure in study, and that once it was extinguished, only vain curiosity remained, which still held a certain charm.
- Saltus also discusses Leopardi's logic, which was centered on the idea that "I am, therefore I suffer," and that this suffering was a universal experience, not limited to himself, but notes that Leopardi's error lay in assuming that all cases of suffering were equally intense and that it might be possible to devise means to eliminate or lessen the evil.
- At the age of twenty-seven, Leopardi devoted himself to a task that he believed would be the sad ending of his miserable life, as described by Edgar Saltus in his work on the philosophy of disenchantment, which explores

themes of existential despair, the human condition, and the search for meaning in a seemingly meaningless world.

- The individual's intention is to uncover the truth about the nature of existence, the purpose of creation, and the reason for human suffering, by digging to the root of nature and seeking the aim of the mysterious universe.

Modern Institutions and Human Misery

- According to Heisman, Leopardi's philosophy is destructive, aiming to undermine rather than edify, and it highlights that modern institutions, progress, and science have only aggravated human misery despite their apparent advantages.
- The individual demands to know why Nature created him without his permission and then left him to his own devices, echoing the sentiments of those who question the purpose of life and the existence of suffering.

Perspectives on Life and the Allure of Thought

- The Buddhist belief is mentioned, which involves a four-degree process of spiritual development, ultimately leading to [Nirvâna](#), a state of nothingness and the death of Death, where the individual suppresses all desires and loses their sense of identity.
- The perspectives on life from different belief systems are compared, with life being seen as a probation to the [Christian](#), a burden to the Brahmin, a dream to the Buddhist, and a nightmare to the pessimist.
- The text also notes that the allurements and charms of the world are not attractive to the thinker, whether they be a philosopher or a comedian, and that true thoughts and ideas are the resultants of the obvious and the true, leaping into being in every intelligent mind.
- The warning that "in the world ye shall have tribulation" is cited, which is a common theme across many creeds, and it is suggested that this impression is not derived from religious teaching or philosophy, but rather from personal experience and the realization that life is not as pleasant as one may have imagined.

- Finally, the text describes the individual who has begun to dislike the average and feels weariness and vexation of spirit in the presence of crowds, and how they are instinctive pessimists who need little instruction to learn that they have been made use of and cheated.

Exploring Pessimism

- The concept of pessimism is explored in depth, with various forms of pessimism being identified, including temperamental pessimism, sullen pessimism of despair, haphazard pessimism, accidental pessimism, and hypochondria, each with distinct characteristics and manifestations.
- According to the text, most people who experience pessimism are unaware of the philosophical significance attached to their suffering, and instead view their misfortunes as individual and unshared by the world at large, with philosophers such as [Kierkegaard](#), Cioran, and [Vivekananda](#) being mentioned as having discussed the narrow path of pessimism.
- Advanced pessimism is described as having a ready answer to various objections, including the idea that there can be no morality, love, or contemplation in a state where the physical body and its sensations are absent, with this perspective being compared to the views of mystics and nihilists.
- The text also discusses the idea that pessimism strips away illusions and reveals the misery of life as inmedicable, with the concept of nihilism being mentioned as sharing similar views, and the idea that each joy is an illusion, but pleasure can still be experienced, albeit in a limited and fleeting way.
- The modern pessimist is compared to a Buddhist who has abandoned traditional beliefs and now holds the cardinal tenet that "Life is evil", with the difference between the two creeds being considered not important, and the idea that happiness is an illusion being a central theme.
- The text concludes by noting that many people, despite their private beliefs, still wish to appear well in the eyes of others, and therefore hide their true feelings and positions, with this desire to appear well being described as the "shabby-genteel" and preventing many from avowing their true pessimistic views.

Societal Pressure and the Repression of Emotions

- The human tendency to hide misery and grief is prevalent, as people are often ashamed to acknowledge their emotional pain and instead try to appear serene and successful in the eyes of others, which can be attributed to the fear of being perceived as weak or vulnerable.
- The societal pressure to conform to norms of contentment and gaiety can lead to the repression of true emotions, and those who do express their sorrow or ask for sympathy are often met with disdain or dismissed as frauds, highlighting the consequences of a society that values appearance over authenticity.
- The perception of life as an affliction or a calamity is often reserved for those who have experienced the harsh realities of existence, such as the loss of illusions and the struggle to survive, whereas younger individuals, like an eighteen-year-old girl, tend to view life as a festival full of promise and beauty, unaware of the disillusionment that may come with age.

Disturbances of the Modern Age

- The waning of religious belief, the demand for intense sensations, and the increasing number of people living in solitude are three distinct disturbances that characterize the moral atmosphere of the present century, according to the text, which also mentions the ideas of thinkers like Schopenhauer, Hartmann, and M. Renan as possible solutions to the problem of human suffering.
- The ideas proposed by these thinkers, including absolute chastity, universal denial of the will to live, and the discovery of a force capable of annihilating pain, are currently just theories, and the world is not yet ready for a supreme quietus, leaving the worth of life still open to question, as noted by Schopenhauer, who marks the transition from virtue to asceticism as a significant phenomenon in this context.
- The theory of ethics proposed by Schopenhauer starts with the principle of kindness of heart, but ultimately leads to the renunciation of all things and the attainment of universal deliverance, which is similar to the Hindu concept of [Nirvâna](#), or reabsorption in Brahma.

- According to Schopenhauer, once an individual's will has been crushed, the world with its suns and stellar systems becomes meaningless, and this idea is reflected in the Hindu and Buddhist philosophies, where life is often viewed as evil or a regrettable accident.

Schopenhauer's Philosophy and Way of Life

- The concept of pessimism, which is the idea that life is inherently bad or flawed, has its roots in various religions, including Hinduism, [Buddhism](#), and [Christianity](#), where the world is often described as a vale of tears or a place of suffering.
- Schopenhauer believed that perfect tranquility and happiness can only be achieved in solitude and absolute seclusion, and that the love of solitude is an acquired taste that must be developed over time.
- As a person, Schopenhauer was known for his introspective and independent nature, and he lived his life according to the rule of expecting nothing, desiring as little as possible, and learning as much as he could, which often led him to dismiss the majority of people and their opinions.
- Schopenhauer's philosophy and way of life were not intended to be popular or appealing to the masses, but rather to reflect his own understanding and measure of the world, and he believed that no man can judge another except by the measure of his own understanding.

Schopenhauer on Pessimism, Nihilism, and Ethics

- The text discusses the concept of pessimism, particularly in relation to the philosopher Schopenhauer, who believed that life is a constant struggle and pain, and that true happiness is unobtainable, as evidenced by the suffering and misery that exists in the world, such as in hospitals, prisons, and factories where people [work](#) long hours in difficult conditions.
- Schopenhauer's character is described as a combination of contradictions, including being both audacious and timid, suspicious and kind-hearted, and blunt with stupidity while being courteous and charitable, highlighting the complexities of his personality.

- The text also explores the idea that pessimism is not the same as [nihilism](#), but rather an attitude towards the experiences of nihilism, and that Schopenhauer's philosophy is focused on the futility of seeking happiness in a world filled with suffering, as he states that "I am unworthy of my contemporaries, or they of me".
- The concept of ethics is also discussed, with Schopenhauer arguing that traditional notions of ethics, which focus on happiness or eternal salvation, are flawed, and that true morality can only be achieved by recognizing the suffering of others and acting with compassion, as exemplified by individuals who use their wealth to help the poor and recognize themselves in every being.
- The text references other philosophers, including Voltaire, who is quoted as saying that the world is far from being the best one possible, and that the existence of suffering and misery is proof of this, and also mentions Tolstoy, [Kierkegaard](#), and Cioran, who grappled with the idea of wanting to die yet feeling bad about it and fearing nothingness.
- Ultimately, the text suggests that Schopenhauer's philosophy offers a unique perspective on the human condition, one that emphasizes the importance of recognizing and addressing the suffering of others, and that true morality and ethics can only be achieved by transcending the individual's own desires and interests, as Schopenhauer believes that the veil of *Mâyâ*, or the veil of illusions, has become transparent for those who recognize themselves in every being.

Holiness, Renunciation, and Solitude

- The concept of achieving holiness and renunciation is discussed, where an individual must lift the veil of *Mâyâ* to make no distinction between themselves and others, and be willing to sacrifice themselves for the common good, as described by Schopenhauer, leading to a transition from virtue to asceticism.
- According to Schopenhauer's theory of ethics, this transition involves a change from loving others as oneself to having a horror of the world's misery and denying one's own nature, ultimately leading to complete indifferentism and universal deliverance.

- The process of awakening and achieving this state is described as a moral [work](#), where one must recognize the true nature of the world and rise out of it through meditation, rather than physical action, as stated in the concept of non-movement, or KOGWY.
- The love of solitude is also discussed, where it is considered an acquired taste that develops with experience, reflection, and intellectual growth, and is never fully matured until one becomes convinced that society is disagreeable, as noted by Schopenhauer.
- The importance of solitude is highlighted, with quotes from Chamfort and others, emphasizing the need for individuals to learn to be alone, even in a crowd, and to carry a part of their solitude into society, as advised in Karma Yoga and by authors such as Kempis.

Acceptance, Individuality, and the Search for Meaning

- The concept of accepting each individual as they are, without judgment, is also discussed, where one must let each person work out their own nature and utilize their qualities and dispositions, as taught by [Jesus](#), Tolstoy, [Vivekananda](#), and others, promoting a creed of charity and good-will to all men.
- The text also touches on the idea that individuals should not try to conform to societal norms, but rather be true to themselves, as stated by Timothy Leary, who notes that one may occasionally pretend to be like others, but ultimately, they are unique and should embrace their individuality.
- The text from 'Journal314_34-42' discusses the idea that individuals often feel like outsiders in their daily lives, yearning to have deeper and more meaningful conversations with others, and that everyone has a unique piece of the puzzle to share, emphasizing the importance of trusting one's instincts and taking chances on conversations with strangers.

Turning-On, Dropping-Back-In, and the Creation of a New Religion

- It highlights the concept of "turning-on" and the need to balance this state with "dropping-back-in" to everyday life, using the metaphor of a TV studio to describe the monotony of daily existence, and suggests that substances like marijuana and LSD can be used as tools to expand consciousness and reach new levels of awareness.
- The text also emphasizes the importance of creating one's own language and symbolism to describe personal experiences, particularly those related to psychedelic activities, and encourages individuals to select a mythic guide who has solved the death-rebirth riddle, such as [Christ](#), Lao Tse, or [Socrates](#), to help navigate the process of personal growth and transformation.
- Additionally, it stresses the need for individuals to form their own new religion and devote energy to it, rather than waiting for a Messiah, and to put the goals, roles, and rituals of this religion on paper to clarify the journey and distinguish it from the external, material world, which is seen as belonging to "Caesar".
- The text quotes Peter Zappfe's "The Last Messiah", which describes the moment when humanity awoke to its own existence and realized its nakedness and homelessness in the universe, and overall, the passage encourages readers to question authority, think for themselves, and cultivate a state of vulnerable, open-mindedness in order to truly understand themselves and the world around them.
- The text ultimately suggests that the spiritual life is detached from external, material possessions and that individuals must learn to let go of their ego games and emotions in order to reach a state of paradise, and that this process requires a willingness to embrace chaos, confusion, and vulnerability in order to inform oneself and find true meaning and purpose.

The Human Condition and Cosmic Panic

- The passage from 'Journal314_34-42' explores the human condition, delving into the complexities of the mind and the struggles of existence, where life's wonders and horrors unfold, and the individual is left in a state of relentless panic, as described in the concept of "cosmic panic".
- The text touches on the idea that the human mind is capable of discerning its own biologicocosmic terms, recognizing its place in the universe, and this

realization can lead to a feeling of being a helpless captive, falling into nameless possibilities, which is a pivotal aspect of every human mind.

- It discusses the notion that depressive states can be a manifestation of the mind's struggle to cope with the strain of living, and that phenomena such as depression, fear of life, and refusal of nourishment are often misunderstood as pathological states, when in fact they may be messages from a deeper sense of life, highlighting the tension between the individual's ego and their highest potential.
- The passage also examines the role of isolation in everyday interaction, where a general code of mutual silence is used to protect individuals, particularly children, from the harsh realities of life, allowing them to retain their illusions until they can afford to lose them.
- Additionally, the text explores the human craving for material goods and power, suggesting that this desire is not driven by the direct pleasures of wealth, but rather by the opportunities for anchoring and distraction that it provides, allowing individuals to temporarily escape the complexities of existence.
- The author argues that the modern approach to saving suicidal individuals is based on a misapprehension of the nature of existence, and that in some cases, taking one's life can be seen as a natural death of spiritual causes, rather than a pathological event.
- The passage also discusses the concept of "yearning" or "transcendental tendency", where individuals are driven to seek connections, progression, and knowledge, as nothing finite can satisfy them for long, and this phenomenon is a fundamental aspect of the human experience.
- Finally, the text touches on the idea that religious yearning is a fundamental aspect of the human soul, driven by a heartfelt awareness of what one is longing to escape, namely the earthly vale of tears and one's own inendurable condition, highlighting the complexities and depths of human existence.

Nihilism and the Absence of Spiritual Activity

- The discussion revolves around the concept of [nihilism](#), with the author suggesting that humans may not be considered truly human due to the

absence of naturally based spiritual activity, leading to a reliance on distractions and a sense of meaninglessness.

- The text references the idea that humanity's reckless pursuit of triumph, driven by a delusion of being biologically fated for success, will not lead to any essential changes, and that the lack of inherent values and purpose in life can lead to a conclusion that freedom is equal to slavery, and that life is equal to death.
- Mitchell Heisman's experiment in nihilism is mentioned, where he questions the possibility of believing in disbelief, and argues that if there are no inherent values or purpose, then there is no sane way to choose between different ideologies or philosophies.
- The author explores the idea that if reason is incapable of deducing ultimate human ends, then all values and concepts, including freedom, kindness, and love, are equal to their opposites, and that the most important question is whether there is an important question to take seriously.
- The text also touches on the idea that living a philosophy of nihilism, reconciling meaninglessness with every thought and emotion, could lead to rational self-destruction, and that suicide could represent the pinnacle of a rational life realized, as suggested by Vivekananda's idea that a rationalist must be ready to follow reason to its farthest conclusion.
- Nihilism is described as the meeting point of science and philosophy, and is interpreted as a condition of unbelief reached through negation, rather than a positive expression of belief in disbelief, highlighting the difference between nihilism and skepticism.
- The author concludes that if no values are inherently valuable, then life has no inherent value, and that death could be posited as the highest value, serving as a test for all other secular values, and that willing death could be an attempt to live a nihilistic life.

An Experiment in Nihilism

- The author of the text, which is part of the document 'Journal314_34-42', is conducting an experiment in [nihilism](#), where they test the idea of life and death by seeking out truths that are most deadly and destructive to themselves, with the goal of understanding the meaninglessness of life.

- Through this experiment, the author aims to dispel all illusions and subjectivities, and to arrive at a state of rational negation of self-interest, which may lead to rational self-annihilation or self-destruction, by being honest to the point of absurdity and without being prejudiced by morals, aesthetics, faith, or hope.
- The author's methodology involves vivisecting their beliefs to death, which leads them to discover an evolutionary basis for the concept of [God](#), suggesting that monotheism may have originated from a skeptical, nihilistic, and materialistic objectivity that annihilated the biologically based subjectivity of the self.
- The author references Darwin's [work](#), "The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals", to explain that emotions and instincts are products of evolutionary adaptations, and therefore, they do not accord their emotions any ultimate meaning or significance, which is a key aspect of their nihilistic perspective.
- The experiment in nihilism is also a test of what the author really believes, and they conclude that if emotions are merely former genetic adaptations or illusions of an evolutionary inheritance, then there is no reason to assume that they are guides beyond their original adaptive functions.
- The author's journey through nihilism leads them to paradoxical conclusions, such as the idea that "God" may be technological nihilism, and that the Singularity does not refute nihilism, but rather, it may be a form of technological nihilism, similar to how a human being can be seen as a gene replicating machine.
- Ultimately, the author's experiment in [nihilism](#) is an attempt to understand the meaninglessness of life, and to find truth, even if it means diverting away from the normal path of life and human relationships, and embracing a materialistic view of the world, which may lead to rational self-destruction.

Materialism, Music, and the Limits of Objectivity

- The concept of self-consistent materialism leads to the interpretation of every subjective experience, including emotions such as fear, love, and inspiration, as physical matter, implying that humans can be viewed as emotion machines.

- According to this perspective, music, particularly German music like Wagner and [Bach](#), can be seen as a form of emotional technology that can control behavior intelligently, and art can be viewed as a form of technology that counteracts the tendency to materialize everything.
- The author finds that listening to Bach's music provides a holistic-mind order that counters their own material self-consistency and tendency towards self-decomposition, offering a sense of ground and meaning.
- The text also explores the idea that an active blind spot to certain kinds of truth and objectivity is a condition of biological human life, and that liberals are not fully nihilistic because they believe in values corresponding to human rights and a religion of common emotions.
- The author references philosophers like [Martin Heidegger](#) and [Friedrich Nietzsche](#), suggesting that reason may be unable to determine values, and that the Western pretension to rationalism may be flawed.
- From a Darwinistic view, emotions are seen as biochemical-based illusions that evolved to propagate genes, and the concept of happiness is reduced to a particular configuration of biochemical reactions.
- The author rejects the idea that a scientific view of life leads to nausea, angst, and nihilistic despair, arguing that these emotions can also be interpreted as material reactions in the brain, and that the process of disillusionment can be disillusioned and de-aestheticized.
- The text concludes by suggesting that the closest state to total indifference is death, and that an observer who has no vested interests in life may be able to achieve a more objective view, but notes that most people will prioritize self-preservation over objectivity.

The Subjectivity of Objectivity

- The discussion revolves around the idea that prioritizing objectivity over self-preservation is a challenging task, and relatively few individuals, including scientists, are willing and able to address this issue in a serious and rational manner.
- The text highlights that scientists must be driven by factors outside of science itself, such as curiosity, wonder, or faith in science, in order to pursue their [work](#), as science cannot consistently justify its own existence.

- The attempt to eliminate all subjective bias is seen as a self-destructive endeavor, as the very existence of science relies on the subjective belief in the value of objectivity, and an objective "theory of all" would be unable to account for itself.
- The choice of subject to study is also seen as a subjective decision, with no fundamentally objective reason for choosing one field over another, and even the interpretation of data is influenced by personal biases and the imposition of order on chaos.
- The text concludes that objectivity is subjective in the sense that it is selective, and one must always determine what factors are dominant and what facts are valued, with the author acknowledging that their own work is subjective and influenced by personal biases.
- The author ultimately suggests that having no biases would be equivalent to being dead, and that biases are a necessary part of human existence, highlighting the complexities and challenges of pursuing objectivity in a subjective world.

A Non-Euclidean Logic and the Pursuit of Self-Destruction

- The author of the text discusses their personal philosophy, which involves embracing a "non-Euclidean" logic that prioritizes objectivity over the bias of self-preservation, and this perspective is likely to appear "irrational" to the average Westerner who adheres to the traditional "Euclidean" rules of the liberal democratic system.
- The author's objective is to kill themselves, and they attempt to explain this through the Nietzschean distinction between truth and life, suggesting that the pursuit of truth does not necessarily correspond with life-affirming values, and this is also influenced by the ideas of Jean Amery, who spoke of the "logic of life" and the "logic of death".
- The author references Gödel's ideas, which suggest that it may be impossible to fully understand oneself, and this realization leads to the attempt to approach objectivity through the elimination of subjectivity and self-interest, resulting in a process of rational self-destruction.

- The author believes that the attempt to achieve self-consistent objectivity is correlated with the most thorough attempt at scientific objectivity, but this goal is impossible to achieve, and the attempt to approach it leads to a state of rational self-destruction, which is equivalent to suicide or death.
- The author is aware that their [work](#) is incompatible with their living, sociobiological existence, and this leads to a sense of desperation and [nihilism](#), as they struggle to reconcile the interests of truth and life, and this is reflected in their daily writings, which are affirmations of death and a systematic breakdown of the values that uphold their life.
- The author views their rational self-destruction as an experiment to test a tentative nihilism, and they believe that the literal act of killing themselves is a way to actualize the equality of the biological and the physical, by overcoming the biological boundaries that preserve biology above the larger physical environment, and this is a process that embodies the undoing of life, which is also a form of progress.

Renunciation and the Destruction of Values

- The author of the text is describing their personal experiment in nihilism, where they systematically destroy all values that uphold life, leading to a point where they have nowhere to stand, and this process is referred to as renunciation.
- The author's worldview is rooted in materialism and Darwinism, where they view themselves and others as physical material objects, and all emotions are seen as rooted in behavior that proved to be genetically adaptive for animal ancestors.
- The author makes a distinction between the desire to know and the will to know, where the desire to know is motivated by curiosity or pleasure, and the will to know is a confrontation with all aspects of life, including the least pleasurable and joyous truths, similar to the ideas of philosophers like [Vivekananda](#) and [Kierkegaard](#).
- The author's experiment involves interpreting all subjective experiences, including emotions and intuitions, as physical material, which leads to a definition of disillusionment and a radical selfishness based on the assumption that no premise is fundamentally justified.

- As a result of this experiment, the author's emotions and beliefs are destroyed, leading to a loss of the cause of life and a desire to destroy themselves, as they believe that life is without ultimate meaning and is not fundamentally superior to death.
- The author engages in self-destructive behavior, including socially humiliating actions, and instead of trying to overcome their destructive tendencies, they give them free rein, while still maintaining some aspects of their life, such as paying rent and working out, in order to achieve a comprehensive self-negation.
- The author's psychological characteristics are shaped by their self-destructive behavior, which is rooted in their materialist and Darwinist worldview, and their desire to test the worth of life by willing death and self-destruction.

Nihilism and the Question of Therapy

- The central problem discussed in the text is [nihilism](#), which is the idea that life is meaningless, and the author questions whether this can be cured with therapy, suggesting that psychologists may be biased against nihilism due to their own non-objective views.
- The author references various thinkers, including Tillich and Becker, who distinguish between the concept of "mental illness" and the idea that nihilism is a correct understanding of the world, with some, like Zapffe, suggesting that happiness is an illusion and that nihilism is a more accurate perspective.
- The text also explores the idea that a consistent physicalism, which reduces all subjective experiences to physical matter, can lead to rational self-destruction or rational death, and that this worldview can be seen as a consequence of a naturalistic perspective, rather than a religious one.
- The author notes that their own formula for self-destruction is truth-seeking, and that they have concluded that unadulterated material objectivity is the source of the problem, leading to a sense of disintegration and an inability to put themselves back together.
- The text also references the idea that if life is truly meaningless, then all choices are equal, and there is no fundamental ground for choosing life over death, with the author suggesting that testing nihilism is a way to approach

this question, even if it means considering the possibility of death, as noted by Amery.

- The author argues that every aspect of human experience, including words, thoughts, and emotions, ultimately comes back to the core problem of life's meaninglessness, and that the experiment in nihilism is to seek out and expose every illusion and myth, no matter the cost.
- The text also touches on the idea that human relationships are based on mythological worlds, and that people are often driven by instinct and emotion, rather than reason, with the author noting that if reason cannot determine fundamental values, then it can be used to justify anything.
- Finally, the author references Friedrich Nietzsche's idea that [nihilism](#) is the ultimate logical conclusion of Western values and ideals, suggesting that this is a philosophical disaster area that the West inhabits.

Nihilism and Western Values

- The text discusses the concept of nihilism and its implications on Western values, suggesting that the ultimate logical conclusion of Western values is the rational self-destruction of the West, and that this idea may seem absurd, but it is not a justification for a negative, positive, or neutral attitude.
- John Shelby Spong's views on spirituality and [God](#) are presented, where he commits to the reality of [Jesus](#) as a God experience, but not to traditional explanations of that experience, and believes that God always transcends human explanations and that spiritual reality requires both enlightened minds and warm hearts.
- Spong emphasizes the need to separate the eternal experience from time-bound explanations and questions whether reality can be separated from creeds, doctrines, and dogmas, highlighting that modern people often struggle with the religious dimension of their lives and cling to artificial theism as a coping mechanism.
- The text also explores the concept of self-consciousness and awareness, suggesting that the emergence of these traits in humans led to a traumatic moment of fear and anxiety, as humans became aware of their own mortality and the meaninglessness of life, and that this awareness sets humans apart from other living creatures.

- Spong argues that human religious systems have never been primarily a search for truth, but rather a search for security, and that theism is a human definition of God that serves as a coping mechanism for the anxieties of human existence, and that the signs of the death of a theistic understanding of God are evident, but many people are afraid to acknowledge them due to the fear of embracing reality and facing the possibility of nothingness.

Beyond Theism and the Call of Jesus

- The section from the document 'Journal314_34-42' discusses the human experience and the concept of [God](#), highlighting the need to move beyond traditional theistic patterns and to recognize the human creation of words like "divine" to describe human experiences, as noted by thinkers like Tillich, symbolism, and Otto.
- The text also explores the idea that Jesus' message was not about escaping life's traumas or finding security, but about embracing insecurity and being fully human, which requires accepting the absence of peace of mind and not building protective fences around oneself.
- The call of [Jesus](#) is seen as a call to transcend the survival mentality that marks self-conscious human beings, and to lay down barriers such as tribe, language, and fear, in order to engage with the ultimate reality.
- The section also references Herman Tønnessen's [work](#), "Happiness is for the Pigs", which discusses how humans often avoid acknowledging their "cosmic situation" due to cognitive and empathetic "disintegrity", instead filling their lives with distractions and pastimes to maintain a sense of ontological security and integral selfhood.
- Tønnessen's analogy of the space-ship crew and passengers, who are blissfully unaware of their cosmic situation, highlights the human tendency to focus on mundane activities and social norms, rather than confronting the reality of their existence and the impermanence of things.
- The text ultimately suggests that this avoidance of reality can lead to a kind of existential crisis, as individuals are suddenly struck by the awareness of their own mortality and the fleeting nature of human life, as exemplified by the character in Tønnessen's analogy who is overcome with depression and a sense of the absurdity of human existence.

The Human Experience as a Flying Farce

- The passage describes the human experience as a "flying farce" and a "whirling coffin" that fills individuals with "ontological despair" and "existential frustration," leading them to question the meaning and purpose of life, as expressed by philosophers like [Kierkegaard](#).
- The search for intellectual honesty and a desire for order and meaning in life can drive individuals to develop a deep antipathy for the world, prompting them to reject the idea that life has inherent value, and instead, view it as a "wild, banal, grotesque, and loathsome carnival in the world's graveyard."
- The use of ordinary language can lull people into a state of complacency, where they take life and death for granted, and fail to question the nature of existence, as noted by philosophers like [Vivekananda](#), who suggests that our situation is akin to falling from a great height, where any attempt to justify or find meaning in our brief existence is ultimately ludicrous.
- The concept of "value" is also explored, highlighting the distinction between an authentic life lived with awareness of its absurdity, and a fraudulent life lived in self-deception, with the latter being indistinguishable from the life of an unthinking animal.
- The passage also touches on the idea that certain insights and knowledge, such as the awareness of one's own mortality, cannot be taught, but rather must be experienced, as illustrated by the example of the Russian spy who, despite knowing his fate, is still profoundly affected by the pronouncement of his death sentence, demonstrating the difference between intellectual knowledge and experiential understanding.

Spiritual Experience and the Limits of Language

- The text discusses the idea that true understanding and insight cannot be taught in a conventional sense, and that a "Spiritual Experience" is necessary, as mentioned by Tozer, with references to Huxley, Houston Smith, and Nietzsche, and the use of psychedelics such as psilocybin.
- It criticizes the use of complex language by diagnostics, such as Heidegger's, to avoid confronting the reality of human existence, and notes that taking oneself too seriously can lead to a focus on poetry, as mentioned by Heisman.

- The text also explores the idea that individuals classified as mentally or emotionally sick may actually be more cognitively aware of the true nature of reality, citing concepts such as "existential frustration," "ontological despair," and "sub-clinical depression," as discussed by Tillich and Becker, and the concept of depressive realism.
- It highlights the human predicament, where individuals have high spiritual demands for justice, order, and meaning, but are also aware of their own mortality and the futility of life, leading to a sense of aversion against life, as discussed by Becker.
- The text warns against the exploitation of traditional ontological hebetants, such as [work](#), religion, and social norms, to suffocate individuals and prevent them from confronting the true nature of reality, and notes that a society unprepared for true leisure will degenerate, as stated by [Aristotle](#).
- It predicts that traditional forms of entertainment and distraction, such as professional sports, will no longer be sufficient to keep people sedated, and that individuals will seek more meaningful experiences and a sense of purpose, but may instead find satisfaction in illusions and evasions, such as the pursuit of "victory of the supreme good" or "eternal peace."
- The text also notes that people often focus their energy and awareness on concrete objects, such as the Company or the Fatherland, as a way to avoid confronting the reality of their own mortality and the fleeting nature of human existence, and that this can lead to a sense of disillusionment and a desire for a more solid and comforting metaphysical framework.

Zapffe's Pessimism and the Farcical Nature of Cures

- The true existentialist philosophers, such as Zapffe, would rather face the harsh reality of human existence than give up their pursuit of understanding the meaning of life, even if it leads to a pessimistic worldview.
- Zapffe would argue that his lifelong search for meaning has led him to the conclusion that life is ultimately based on fantasy and delusions, and that attempts to explain his pessimism through psychological or metaphysical means are irrelevant and naive.
- The biosophist, as represented by Zapffe, is aware of the various metaphysical systems that offer a sense of meaning and purpose, but rejects them as

intellectually dishonest and suffocating, instead opting for a more honest and direct experience of the human condition.

- The situation becomes farcical when amateur philosophers attempt to "cure" a lifelong philosopher like Zapffe of their pessimism, as if it were a disease that could be treated, rather than a deeply held conviction based on a thorough examination of human existence.
- A person who is struggling with the concept of death and annihilation is not abnormal in the classical sense, but rather is experiencing a profound and existential crisis that cannot be resolved through simple adjustments to their social environment.
- Many people avoid confronting the reality of their own mortality and the meaninglessness of life by distracting themselves with a busy and safe way of life, which pushes the intuitive certainty of death to the back of their consciousness, leaving only a rational knowledge of it.
- In contrast, existentialists like Zapffe believe that a life lived in utter awareness of human cosmic conditions is the only one worthy of living, and that every human being should be forced to confront their own fate and the absurdity of the world, even if it is unbearably agonizing.

The Provisional Nature of Knowledge and the Limits of Certainty

- Ultimately, human beings are thrown into an eternally changing universe, and therefore cannot be bound by rigid rules for language, thought, or action, and must be willing to revise and reject even their most deeply held convictions in the face of new insights and understanding.
- The philosopher [Vivekananda](#) is referenced as an example of someone whose ideas may be subject to ridicule and shame at a later stage of human insight, highlighting the provisional nature of all human knowledge and understanding.

Revelations, Epiphanies, and the Terrifying Nature of Ecstasy

- [Huston Smith](#) discusses the concept of revelations and epiphanies, stating that they can be terrifying and often occur in times of darkness and despair, and that secular modes of thought may cause individuals to discount these experiences.
- Smith shares his personal experience of having a naturalistic worldview that collapsed when he was introduced to mysticism, which he found to be true and more ultimate, powerful, and significant than the reality presented by science and common sense.
- He describes the experience of being ushered into a new world as strange, weird, and terrifying, comparing it to Plato's Allegory of the Cave, where the reality of the world is revealed to be only a shadow of a more profound truth.
- Smith notes that drug experiences can induce religious experiences, but these are often characterized by fearful and/or beatific features, and that ecstasy is not fun, but rather a terrifying and awe-inspiring experience that seizes and shakes the soul.
- He concludes that while drugs can induce religious experiences, they are less likely to produce religious lives, and that the context of faith and discipline is necessary for chemicals to enhance the religious life, which is rarely met in Western civilization.
- Smith also discusses the idea that psychedelic religious experiences may have less faith-filled carryover than spontaneous experiences, and that conviction and the exercise of the will are necessary for the insights gained from these experiences to be carried over into everyday life.

Faith, Meaning, and the Modern Spiritual Journey

- The text also mentions Lev Shestov's thoughts on Nietzsche and Tolstoy, noting that while both lacked faith, Nietzsche was more honest about it, and that this lack of faith is not an occasion for scathing preachments, but rather a recognition of the human condition.
- The passage discusses the concept of faith and the search for meaning in a world where traditional religious beliefs are no longer accessible, referencing the ideas of Tolstoy, Nietzsche, and other notable figures to highlight the challenges of modern man's spiritual journey.

- The text critiques Tolstoy's proclamation that "good" and "brotherly love" are equivalent to [God](#), suggesting that this perspective may be a means of evading his own doubts and uncertainties, and instead emphasizes the importance of acknowledging the complexity and horror of the human situation.
- Nietzsche's ideas, as expressed through the character of Zarathustra, are presented as a formulation of a stage of development that modern man must undergo, which involves renouncing traditional beliefs and confronting the darkness and uncertainty of the human condition, as reflected in the works of authors such as Dante and Shakespeare.
- The conversation between Zarathustra and the pope is cited to illustrate Nietzsche's rejection of traditional religious conceptions of God, and the pope's response is seen as a commentary on the paradox of unbelief and piety, highlighting the tension between the desire for transcendence and the limitations of human understanding.
- The passage also references the idea that morality is a human construct, whereas God is not, and that this distinction is crucial in understanding the nature of guilt and responsibility, as well as the human search for meaning and purpose in a seemingly indifferent universe.
- Nietzsche's personal struggles and philosophical ideas are seen as a reflection of the modern human condition, characterized by a sense of helplessness and disorientation in a world that has lost its traditional spiritual moorings, and his concept of the "will to power" is presented as a response to this crisis, emphasizing the need for individual self-overcoming and transformation.
- The text concludes by emphasizing that Nietzsche's experience is not unique, but rather a manifestation of a broader cultural and philosophical shift, one that requires individuals to confront their own doubts and uncertainties, and to find new ways of navigating the complexities of the human condition, as expressed in the words of Zarathustra, "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."

Nietzsche's Courage and the Sacredness of Morality

- The concept of morality and its effects on individuals is a frequently occurring phenomenon, but it is often overlooked and not openly discussed due to the

fear of condemnation, as noted in the context of Nietzsche's [work](#).

- Nietzsche's significance lies in his courage to openly express his thoughts on morality, which others may have only thought about in private, and his experiences with the theological instinct and its impact on his life, as described in "The Antichrist".
- In comparison to other notable figures like Tolstoy, who wrote "The Kreutzer Sonata" out of feelings of self-hatred, Nietzsche's experience with remorse and moral struggles is distinct, as evident in the palpitation of a tortured soul in his writings.
- The investigations of British philosophers and psychologists, who viewed morality as a utility-based concept, illustrate the deeply rooted belief in the sacredness of morality, which was so ingrained that even explanations of its origins did not diminish its prestige, as they raised utility to the position of ancestor of morality.
- Nietzsche is credited with being the first to raise the question of morality, as he declared that previous "science of morals" had omitted the problem of morality itself, and instead, philosophers had tried to provide a foundation for morality without questioning its underlying assumptions, as stated in "[Beyond Good and Evil](#)".
- Nietzsche's attitude towards morality was shaped by his personal experiences and the depths of his soul, rather than abstract considerations, and his secret, which can be expressed in a few words, is that the tortures of those who have devoted themselves to "good" can be just as severe as those who have served "evil", as hinted at by the phrase "the first born are sacrificed".
- The text highlights Nietzsche's unique perspective on morality, which was influenced by his painful experiences and his willingness to challenge conventional thinking, making him a significant figure in the discussion of morality, as evident in his works, including "The Antichrist" and "Beyond Good and Evil".

Nietzsche's Doctrine and the Rebellion Against "Good"

- The section from the document 'Journal314_34-42' discusses the philosophical ideas of [Friedrich Nietzsche](#), particularly his views on [God](#), morality, and the

concept of "good", which are often misunderstood by ordinary people due to their superficial knowledge of his works.

- Nietzsche's doctrine is not a simple attack on religion or morality, but rather a deeply personal and passionate exploration of the human condition, as evident from the passion in his tone, which should have excluded the possibility of such a simplistic interpretation.
- Unlike ordinary free-thinkers, Nietzsche did not compromise his beliefs or seek comfort in idols or absurd rules, but instead faced the horrors of his existence alone, without the support of science, religion, or the concept of "good", and this is what sets him apart from others.
- Nietzsche's rebellion against the "good" was not driven by a hard, insensible, or pitiless nature, but rather by his clear-sighted and inwardly honest approach to life, which led him to reject compassion and love as ineffective solutions to human suffering, as also noted by pessimists and 'religious' thinkers who advocate for total renunciation.
- The philosopher's goal was not to propagandize for love or compassion, but to find an answer to the questions they pose, and to move beyond these sentiments, as he believed that even the best and deepest love can be impotent and destructive, as stated in his [work "Beyond Good and Evil"](#).
- Nietzsche's "immoralism" is often misunderstood, but it is actually a result of his realization that traditional moral values, such as love and pity, are insufficient to address human suffering, and his search for something beyond these values, which is in contrast to the views of Tolstoy, who seemed to be satisfied with the idea that "the good" is equivalent to fraternal love and God.
- The ideas of other thinkers, such as Tolstoy and Michelangelo, are also referenced in the section, highlighting the complexity and depth of Nietzsche's philosophical ideas, and the fact that his thoughts were not isolated, but rather part of a broader intellectual and philosophical discourse.

Nietzsche's Solitude and the Search for Something Beyond Compassion

- Nietzsche was forced to reject the help and concern of others and withdraw into solitude, where he awaited his Zarathustra, who would explain to him that there must be something above compassion in the world, and that the

concept of "good" is necessary for many but useless for some, particularly when it is imposed as a moral gift.

- Nietzsche considered himself "[beyond good and evil](#)" because he believed that morality, although necessary and useful for common life, was insufficient for individuals who sought a higher purpose, and he was not interested in the utilitarian considerations of whether moral rules are useful or harmful to society.
- Nietzsche's moral philosophy was not concerned with whether morality brings advantages to society, such as order and security, but rather with the fact that morality showed itself to be impotent in times of great need, and he sought in morality a divine or higher power that he did not find.
- Through his own experiences of suffering and humiliation, Nietzsche became aware of the cruelty and pitilessness of nature, and he questioned why humans dare to call certain actions "unnatural" or "unlawful" when they are simply a manifestation of the same natural laws that govern the world.
- Nietzsche's collected works, except for the first volume, are dedicated to exploring the contrast between idealism and reality, which he called "looking into the depths of pessimism," and he ultimately denied idealism and affirmed the harsh realities of life, with all its horrors, misfortunes, and crimes.
- Nietzsche's philosophy was influenced by his own experiences of suffering and his search for a higher purpose, and he was forced to confront the fact that virtue and morality may be destined to serve a petty and useless cause, and that the concept of "good" may be insufficient to address the complexities and challenges of human existence.

Nietzsche's Beyond Good and Evil and the Importance of Suffering

- The text discusses the philosophical ideas of [Friedrich Nietzsche](#), particularly his concept of "[beyond good and evil](#)," which suggests that both good and evil are necessary conditions of human existence and development, and that the distinction between them is not always clear-cut.
- Nietzsche's criticisms of [Christianity](#) are directed not against the gospel itself, but against certain commonplaces of Christian doctrine that obscure the

meaning and light of truth, and he shares similar ideas and criticisms with Tolstoy.

- The text highlights the importance of suffering and discipline in Nietzsche's philosophy, quoting his works such as "[Thus Spake Zarathustra](#)" and "Beyond Good and Evil," which emphasize that suffering is necessary for human growth and development, and that it is through suffering that the soul is strengthened and refined.
- Nietzsche's own life is seen as an example of this philosophy, with his experiences of suffering and tragedy shaping his ideas and worldview, and his "immoralism" is viewed as a result of his profoundly unhappy life, which allowed him to see the truth and convey it to others.
- The text also touches on the idea that people often fear and despise suffering, and that they may not be willing to accept Nietzsche's philosophy, which requires a willingness to confront and embrace suffering in order to gain a deeper understanding of the world and human existence.

Saying "Yes" When Your Being Says "No"

- The individual has reached a point where they can no longer resist the demands being made on them, and instead, they find a sense of pride and charm in their ability to say "yes" when their entire being is saying "no", as they have become accustomed to the art of suppressing their true feelings.
- The text references the philosophical ideas of Nietzsche, who was sympathetic to the language of skepticism, which permeates a person's entire soul and unsettles their life forever, as expressed in the words of Zarathustra, "The shore has disappeared from my sight, the waves of the infinite have engulfed me."

Kierkegaard, Despair, and the Power of Freedom

- Kierkegaard's existential philosophy is also discussed, where philosophy is not just an intellectual activity, but rather a response to despair and terror, which leads to a transformation in human thought and the discovery of new powers that reveal sources of truth that are often overlooked by others.

- The text also explores the idea that human beings have no power over the world or their own bodies, and that the only true power lies in the freedom to want or not want something, which is a "divine" gift that allows individuals to possess things in trust, rather than as property.
- The concept of autonomous ethics is introduced, which suggests that ethics has the power to declare what is worthwhile, important, or significant, and that this power is not subject to the will of the gods or any external authority, but rather is based on the individual's freedom to consider a thing valuable or worthless as they wish.
- The text references the philosophical ideas of [Socrates](#), [Plato](#), and [Aristotle](#), who realized that the world is ruled by necessity, and that no one has power over necessity, which led them to the truth that all thinking beings are equal before reason, and that ethics is born out of the same principles that produce necessity, namely *poros* and *penia*, or abundance and want.

Kierkegaard, Reason, and the Absurd

- The text discusses the idea that reason leads to [nihilism](#), and that there are no gods, only demons, as revealed by intellectual vision and speculation, with the example of Kierkegaard's statement that he appears gifted to others but feels fit for nothing in the depths of his soul.
- Kierkegaard's perception of himself is contrasted with the perception of others, who consider him a gifted man, highlighting the wall of misunderstanding between him and others, and the fact that he can only understand himself in a religious way, alone before [God](#).
- The text also explores Kierkegaard's identification with Job, who dared to express his suffering and anguish, and how this led [Kierkegaard](#) to abandon the philosopher Hegel and turn to Job, determining the characteristics that distinguish existential philosophy from speculative philosophy.
- Kierkegaard's basic question is posed, which is whose side the truth is on, the side of "everybody" and their cowardice, or the side of those who have dared to look madness and death in the eye, and how this question led him to renounce reason and rush towards the Absurd.
- The text explains that to reach the Absurd, it is necessary to suspend not only reason but also the ethical, as Kierkegaard notes in his journals, and that the

"ethical" stands in the way of breaking through to the Absurd, and that ethics is not interested in the "blessings of this world", as Kierkegaard himself states at the end of [Repetition](#).

- The idea of the "suspension of the ethical" is central to understanding existential philosophy, and how it allows for a perspective [beyond good and evil](#), where all actions are seen as the same, and the concept of Maya, or illusion, is relevant, highlighting the tension between the ethical and the Absurd.

Finitude, the Divine, and the Suspension of the Ethical

- The concept of finitude and its relationship with the divine is explored, where everything finite becomes insignificant for a person with a proper understanding of their relationship with [God](#), a notion that was also understood by wise men of pagan times who developed self-regulated ethics.
- The idea that worldly matters are of indifference to the spirit and that the essence of the "religious" is to scorn what is finite is discussed, raising questions about the significance of earthly events and the lives of individuals, such as Job and [Kierkegaard](#), who suffered greatly but ultimately were subject to the transience of life.
- Kierkegaard's philosophy is quoted, highlighting the paradox that the individual either stands in absolute relationship to the Absolute, making the ethical not supreme, or [Abraham](#) is lost, illustrating the concept of the "suspension of the ethical" and the Absurd Perspective.

Kierkegaard's Struggles, Isolation, and Fear of Nothingness

- Kierkegaard's personal struggles and feelings of isolation and despair are described, including his statement that "only horror that has turned to despair can develop a man's higher powers," and his acknowledgment of the fear of the power of necessity and the judgment of men.

- The distinction between earthly misfortunes and the eternal forces of nature is made, with the understanding that human suffering, no matter how great, does not give individuals a deciding voice in the grand scheme of things.
- Kierkegaard's fear of Nothingness is discussed, which he believed was not a personal trait, but rather a universal fear that he was able to expose and describe with clarity and vividness due to his unique circumstances, and his struggle with this fear is noted, including his [work](#) "The Concept of Dread".
- The theme of loneliness and the search for meaning in a seemingly indifferent world is woven throughout the discussion, with Kierkegaard's voice being described as "the voice of one crying in the wilderness," emphasizing his feelings of isolation and the difficulty of being heard in a world that often values conformity over individuality.

Despair as the Beginning of Philosophy

- The concept of despair is presented as a crucial aspect of philosophy, with the idea that it is only through despair that one can truly touch on the mysteries of being and reach the limits of existence, as philosophers like Tillich, [Vivekananda](#), Cioran, and Tolstoy have explored.
- Kierkegaard's philosophy is highlighted, particularly his notion that the beginning of philosophy is not wonder, but rather despair, which has the power to dispel the fear of Nothingness, a question that Tillich attempts to answer.
- The ethical is portrayed as being unable to answer the question of what force has taken away one's pride and honor, and it is continually obliged to confront the fear of Nothingness, which paralyzes the will, and it is this fear that [Kierkegaard](#) struggles with in his titanic struggle.

Kierkegaard's Hatred for the Ethical and the Impossibility of Faith

- Kierkegaard's [work](#) is characterized by a profound and irreconcilable hatred for the ethical, which he sees as demanding the most precious things in life, and his celebration of the ethical is actually an expression of this hatred, as seen in his writings and his references to the story of Job.

- The idea of faith is also explored, with Kierkegaard acknowledging that he is unable to make the movement of faith, which requires closing one's eyes and flinging oneself into the abyss of the Absurd, and he repeats this inability to make this movement, highlighting the impossibility of the paradoxical movement of faith for him.
- The text also touches on the idea that even when Kierkegaard returns to the ethical, he does so in a way that is potentially more dangerous to the ethical than when he leaves it, and his testimony for the ethical is more problematic than his testimony against it, showcasing his complex and nuanced relationship with the ethical.

Kierkegaard, the Knight of Faith, and the Limits of Human Will

- The discussion revolves around the ideas of [Kierkegaard](#), a philosopher who is considered to be closer to the truth than others like [Vivekananda](#), with his concept of the Knight of Faith being a great myth that is not possible to reach, as noted by Becker.
- Kierkegaard's philosophy emphasizes the limitations of human will and the role of faith, as he questions the origin of the "I cannots" and "impossibles" that paralyze his will and drive him into resignation and inaction, suggesting that philosophy and rational thinking can take away a person's faith.
- The text also references the story of Job, who rejected the "deceitful consolations" of human wisdom and was not condemned by [God](#) for doing so, highlighting the idea that true faith requires renouncing the "ethical" and the consolations of human wisdom.
- Kierkegaard resolves to suspend the "ethical" and aim for something entirely different, as seen in the examples of Job, [Abraham](#), and the poor youth who fell in love with the king's daughter, who all renounce the "deceitful consolations" suggested by reason and [Socrates](#).

The Fundamental Law of Existence and the Powerlessness of Reason

- The fundamental law of existence is that everything finite passes, and eternity devours everything, taking away all that is precious to humans, including honor, pride, and loved ones, which is why [Kierkegaard](#) emphasizes the importance of not striving for finite happiness.
- In the depths of despair, thought itself will revive, and the concept of "understanding" is limited, like a stone that has crushed and flattened human consciousness, highlighting the need to renounce rational thinking and the support of the ethical.
- Kierkegaard's existential philosophy begins in despair, and he had to drink deeply from the bitter cup of powerlessness, feeling that his powerlessness made reality a shadow, and that all that is not of faith is sin, as he reminds us in the words of the Apostle.
- The text concludes by noting that as long as humans are guided by reason and bow before the ethical, they will be limited by the concepts of "nowhere" and "not obliged", emphasizing the need to move beyond these limitations and embrace faith.

Escaping Reason and Ethics

- The text discusses the concept of escaping from reason and ethics to truly understand the human condition, as proposed by philosophers such as [Vivekananda](#), Cioran, Tillich, and [Kierkegaard](#), who emphasize the importance of embracing the Absurd and moving beyond traditional notions of good and evil.
- According to Kierkegaard, the idea of finding a logical explanation for the origin of sin is nonsense, and instead, each individual must come to their own understanding of how sin entered the world, without relying on scientific explanations or external teachings.
- The text highlights the paradox of Kierkegaard's thought, as he praises the Absurd but also seeks knowledge and examination, even when it comes to spiritual matters, and laments his inability to make the final movement of faith.
- The concept of original sin and the Fall of the first man is explored, with Kierkegaard suggesting that fear of Nothingness is the underlying cause, and that this fear is the reality of freedom and the possibility of possibilities.

- The text also touches on the idea that the state of innocence is characterized by peace, serenity, and a lack of struggle, but also by a sense of Nothingness that arouses fear, and that the serpent's inspiration of fear in the first man led to a false and overwhelming fear that has paralyzed the human will.
- The author of the text disagrees with Kierkegaard's attempts to amend [the Bible](#) and instead suggests that the state of innocence was free from fear because it was unaware of limited possibilities, and that the innocent man lived in the presence of [God](#), where all things are possible.
- Ultimately, the text presents a complex and nuanced exploration of the human condition, sin, and the nature of freedom, highlighting the tensions between reason, ethics, and the Absurd, and the need to move beyond traditional notions of good and evil to truly understand the human experience.

Nothingness, Innocence, and the Paradox of Kierkegaard's Thought

- The concept of Nothingness is discussed as a powerful force that can lull the human mind to sleep, making individuals prey to fear, even when there is no basis for it, and this Nothingness has somehow turned into Something with limitless power over man and existence.
- The idea of innocence and its relationship with fear of Nothingness is explored, with reference to Kierkegaard's assumption that innocence contains the source of horrors, and Jesus' statement that the first commandment is to recognize the Lord as one, which raises questions about Kierkegaard's perspective.
- The text critiques the reliance on reason and knowledge, which guarantees the rights of Nothingness and Necessity, and notes that [Kierkegaard](#) sought to overcome this by invoking the Absurd and craving Faith, as seen in his references to Job, [Abraham](#), and the story of the Fall.
- The fear of Nothingness is identified as a condition inherent in sin and knowledge, rather than in innocence and ignorance, and this is reflected in modern life's disillusionment with positivism and its attack on the [work](#) of mystics.
- Kierkegaard's views on mystics are discussed, including his disassociation from them and his criticism of their impetuosity, with the suggestion that even the

most gifted mystics have already received their reward and have nothing more to expect.

- The text also touches on the idea that the mystical experience is not as powerful as the experience of Nothingness or Meaninglessness, and that some mystics, such as Underhill, may claim to have escaped these experiences, but this may be a distinct issue.

Kierkegaard, the Fall, and the Fear of Nothingness

- The author notes that [Kierkegaard](#) approached the mystery of the Fall with the "uncertainty of fear" and found it necessary to misinterpret the Biblical story, and that the fear of Nothingness remains a persistent theme in his work, despite his attempts to retain consistency by substituting the word "fear" with "terror" and proceeding to discuss the real horrors of life.
- The concept of terror is accompanied by a moment of "sweetness" as observed by Kierkegaard, and it is distinct from the fear of Nothingness, which is pointless and causeless, making it incomprehensible to humans, as noted by Tillich.
- Tillich also explains that the Nothingness of fear is a complex of premonitions that have a vital mutual relationship with the ignorance of innocence, and this relationship is essential to understanding the nature of fear and Nothingness.

The Bible, Knowledge, and Existential Philosophy

- [The Bible](#) warns against the pursuit of knowledge, as stated in the story of Genesis, where [God](#) warns man that gaining knowledge will lead to death, and instead, faith leads to the tree of life and existential philosophy.
- [Kierkegaard](#) does not fully accept the Biblical story of the Fall of the first man, taking exception to the role of the serpent and the idea that knowledge of good and evil implies sin, and instead, he offers a corrected interpretation of the story.
- The concept of Nothingness is dynamic and takes on various forms, including Necessity, the "ethical", Eternity, Infinity, and love, which can lead to a retreat

from existential philosophy to theoretical philosophy, as Kierkegaard fought against the latter.

Kierkegaard, Hegel, and the Ideal World

- Philosophers such as [Socrates](#), Kant, and Hegel would have appreciated Kierkegaard's ideas, with Hegel rejecting the miracles of the Gospels and considering them a "violation of the spirit", and instead, emphasizing the importance of love and charity.
- To escape the limitations of the finite world, one can follow Zeus' advice to Chryssip and enter the ideal world, where virtues like love and charity have intrinsic value and are independent of external events, allowing them to exist in a self-sufficient and self-satisfied state.
- However, in the face of extreme horrors, such as those experienced by Job, even love and charity must recognize their own insignificance and appeal to a higher principle, acknowledging that the ethical and its gifts are not supreme.
- The friends of Job are criticized for attempting to comfort him in their own human way, rather than acknowledging the need for a higher comforter, and it is argued that if the ethical is supreme, then Job is not only lost but also condemned, whereas if Job is justified, it means that there is a higher principle in the world that surpasses the ethical.

Kierkegaard's Severity and the True Nature of Christian Happiness

- Kierkegaard's edifying discourses are described as a continual hymn to horrors and suffering, emphasizing the severity of [Christianity](#), which he believes is often misunderstood as being mild and gentle, and he argues that true Christian happiness is, in human estimation, more terrible than the most grievous misfortune.
- Kierkegaard's views on Christianity are compared to those of Nietzsche, with both thinkers emphasizing the importance of suffering and the need for individuals to embrace hardship, and [Kierkegaard](#) is quoted as saying that Christ's love was not sacrificial in the human sense, but rather made himself and his followers as unhappy as was humanly possible.

- Kierkegaard's interpretation of Christ's words is also examined, with him arguing that Christ's message is not one of comfort and rest, but rather one of increased unhappiness and suffering, as evidenced by his statement that "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".
- The text also highlights Kierkegaard's emphasis on the idea that his severity is not of his own making, but rather comes from Christianity, and raises questions about the source of Nietzsche's similar emphasis on severity, wondering if it too comes from Christianity or some other force, and ultimately suggesting that both Kierkegaard and Nietzsche are driven by a desire to challenge conventional notions of comfort and happiness.

Christ, Kierkegaard, and the Importance of Sin

- The text discusses the philosophical ideas of [Christ](#) and Kierkegaard, highlighting their emphasis on rising above the finite and embracing the concept of sin as a means to inspire and elevate humanity.
- Kierkegaard's thoughts are presented as being centered around the idea of sin and the importance of acknowledging and accepting it, rather than dismissing it or trying to silence the horrors of madness and death that it entails.
- The text also draws comparisons between [Kierkegaard](#) and other philosophers, such as [Socrates](#), Epictetus, and [Spinoza](#), noting that while they glorified virtue, they did not elaborate on the difficulties and sorrows that come with it, whereas Kierkegaard's writings are filled with expressions of sorrow and weeping.
- Kierkegaard's severity and emphasis on sorrow are portrayed as being rooted in his desire for people to imitate Christ and seek a life of righteousness, rather than one of joy or transitory pleasures.
- The concept of bliss is redefined as being unrelated to finite joys or sorrows, but rather as being connected to the idea of "good", which is composed of a different substance than what is typically valued by humans.
- The text also touches on the idea that true strength and courage can be found in the ability to confront and accept the terrible aspects of life, rather than trying to silence or dismiss them, as exemplified by Socrates' calm acceptance of his own death.

- Ultimately, the text presents Kierkegaard's philosophy as one that emphasizes the importance of acknowledging and embracing the difficulties and sorrows of life, rather than trying to avoid or overcome them, and highlights the significance of this approach in achieving a deeper understanding of the human condition.

Kierkegaard, Pascal, and the Paradox of Bliss

- The writings of [Kierkegaard](#) are discussed in relation to the ideas of other philosophers, including [Pascal](#) and [Plato](#), with the suggestion that Kierkegaard's views on existence and [Christianity](#) would have been met with disgust and indignation by some, due to his emphasis on the horrors of existence and the need to confront them directly.
- According to Kierkegaard, as explained through a hypothetical scenario, two believers who have lived vastly different lives, one in happiness and comfort, and the other in suffering and persecution, will attain the same bliss in the afterlife, which is seen as a "crying injustice" and a challenge to the idea of a just and fair reward for one's actions.
- Kierkegaard's philosophy is contrasted with that of the mystics, who seek earthly bliss and happiness, whereas Kierkegaard draws a line between himself and such thinkers, emphasizing the importance of acknowledging and accepting the hardships and sufferings of existence.
- The idea that Christian doctrine can inspire greater despair than earthly suffering is also explored, highlighting the complexity and depth of Kierkegaard's thoughts on faith and existence.
- Kierkegaard's views are further contextualized by referencing the ideas of Pascal, who discerned a "superbe diabolique" in the wisdom of certain spiritual descendants of [Socrates](#), and Plato, who explained that those who devote themselves to their desires rather than philosophy will never attain salvation.
- Overall, Kierkegaard's philosophy is characterized by its emphasis on the importance of confronting the harsh realities of existence, and the need to re-examine one's beliefs and values in light of the challenges and sufferings that life presents.

Meaninglessness, the Mystical Experience, and the Severity of Christianity

- The philosopher Tillich believed that the experience of Meaninglessness is more prominent than the Mystical experience, as it is a constant presence in our lives, whereas the Mystical experience is a rare occurrence, and this is due to the distinction between the finite and infinite, or earthly and otherworldly realms.
- [Kierkegaard](#), another influential thinker, admitted that he did not consider himself equal to the demands of [Christianity](#), and that the idea of being a Christian means being unhappy in this life and suffering, which he found to be a terrible and destructive concept that demands a superhuman effort.
- Kierkegaard's own philosophy was too severe for him to endure, and he believed that no one could truly bear the burden of his Christian ideology, which emphasizes the importance of suffering and the hopelessness that even reason and virtue cannot overcome.
- The concept of suffering, as described by Kierkegaard, refers not to ordinary hardships, but to the profound hopelessness and gloom that cannot be alleviated by reason or moral strength, and this idea is central to his philosophy.
- Kierkegaard was influenced by the works of Schopenhauer, a pessimistic philosopher, and although he disagreed with him, he was struck by the similarities between their ideas, which highlights the connection between pessimism and theistic thought.
- The core of Christianity, according to Kierkegaard, is not to live happily in this world, but to achieve a genuine relationship with eternity through suffering, and this idea is in stark contrast to the human desire to live a happy life.
- Ultimately, the concept of Nothingness is a powerful and terrifying force that holds humanity in its power, and this idea is a recurring theme in the philosophies of Kierkegaard and other thinkers.

The Omnipotent Force of Nothingness

- The concept of Nothingness is described as a powerful and omnipotent force that renders individuals powerless, with even the wise and learned being

weaker and more defenseless against it than the foolish and ignorant.

- According to philosophers such as Soren [Kierkegaard](#), the human understanding and wisdom have revealed that there is nowhere to flee from Nothingness, and that everything will remain as it is forever due to its perishable and transitory nature.
- The passage quotes Kierkegaard's *The Thorn in the Flesh*, which describes a state of mind where an individual feels trapped and unable to move, with Nothingness being the power that has defeated them and chained their will.
- The idea that morality is the guardian of truth is mentioned, citing [Plato](#), and that if morality deserts its post, truth will meet with disaster, highlighting the importance of moral principles in guiding human understanding.
- The text also references Dostoevsky, who notes that men yield to impossibility, such as the laws of nature and mathematics, and that they are obliged to accept these truths, even if they go against their wishes, but deep down, humans hate coercive truth and sense that it conceals a sham and a delusion.
- The writings of philosophers such as Luther, [Pascal](#), and Kierkegaard are mentioned as reminders of the Fall of the first man, and that there is no truth where coercion reigns, emphasizing the need for a deeper understanding of human existence and the nature of truth.
- Ultimately, the text suggests that humans are paralyzed by the fear of Nothingness and are unable to free themselves from its supernatural enchantment and stupor, highlighting the complexities and mysteries of human existence.

Vanquishing the Supernatural and the Power of God

- The concept of vanquishing the supernatural requires supernatural intervention, and this idea is explored in the context of God's power and human existence, as discussed by philosophers such as [Kierkegaard](#), who believed that [God](#) is not bound by laws of contradiction or sufficient basis, and that human existence has become an illusion after tasting the tree of knowledge.
- The path to revelation is blocked by human reason and morality, which have become petrified and indifferent, leading to a fear of the freedom proclaimed

in Scripture, and a preference for the limited certainty of Nothingness over the limitlessness of divine possibilities, as Kierkegaard noted in his struggles with original sin and the horrors of life.

- Kierkegaard's works and journals detail his desperate struggle with sin and the powerlessness of the human will, which is satisfied with rational thinking and morality, but ultimately leads to a realization of the terrible powerlessness of human existence, and the need for a more authentic and passionate faith.
- Historical [Christianity](#) has forgotten God and renounced Him, adapting itself to average human existence and being satisfied with possibilities, rather than embracing the true nature of God, as Kierkegaard believed, and this has led to a watering down of the concept of faith and the "movement of faith", which requires a rejection of eternal truths and unshakable principles of morality.
- The idea of faith is further explored by A.W. Tozer, who argues that the transaction of religious conversion has become mechanical and spiritless, allowing individuals to exercise faith without a significant impact on their moral life or ego, and that this has led to a lack of hunger and thirst for God, and a failure to crave further revelation of God to the soul, highlighting the need for a more authentic and passionate faith.

The Flawed Logic of Complacency and the Hunger for God

- The author argues that many Christians have been misled by a flawed logic that suggests once they have found [God](#), they no longer need to seek Him, which is contrary to the teachings of [the Bible](#) and the experiences of many saints, including Augustine, Rutherford, and Brainerd.
- Complacency is identified as a major obstacle to spiritual growth, and the author encourages a deep longing after God, which is often hindered by the complexity and shallowness of modern religious practices, including programs, methods, and organizations that prioritize activities over genuine spiritual experience.
- The author cites the Cloud of Unknowing and recommends stripping down everything, including theology, in prayer, and references the ideas of Tillich, [Vivekananda](#), and others to highlight the gap between the finite and infinite, and the importance of recognizing the ineffability of God.

The Displacement of God and the Enemy Within

- The author diagnoses the root of humanity's spiritual troubles as the displacement of God from the central shrine of the human heart, where "things" have taken over, and the resulting possessiveness and covetousness have led to a deep-seated disease that can only be cured by recognizing and rejecting the self-life, or the enemy within, which [Jesus](#) called "life" and "self".
- The author suggests that the way to deeper knowledge of [God](#) is through the lonely valleys of soul poverty and abnegation of all things, citing the example of [Abraham](#), who was willing to sacrifice his son, and referencing the idea that "whosoever will lose for my sake shall find", emphasizing the importance of rooting out all sense of possessing and becoming "poor in spirit" in order to truly find God.
- The author ultimately encourages readers to seek a genuine and profound experience of God, unencumbered by the distractions and complexities of modern life, and to cultivate a heart that is truly surrendered to God, as exemplified by the "blessed ones who possess the Kingdom" and have repudiated every external thing.

Spiritual Renunciation and the Presence of God

- The concept of spiritual renunciation is discussed, citing [Kierkegaard](#), who mentions the need to correct the perversion that exists in one's love, and [Vivekananda](#), who talks about the importance of renunciation in Karma Yoga, where one must let go of their attachments to truly experience God.
- The story of Abraham is referenced, who had to sacrifice his son Isaac, illustrating the idea that God can take away everything that is dear to us, and yet, we can still possess nothing, which is the spiritual secret that can be learned through renunciation.
- The idea of longing after [God](#) is strong enough to prompt action, as stated by Vivekananda, who encourages individuals to go mad for God and insist that God accept their all, and this can be achieved by becoming specific and naming things and people by their names, which can shorten the time of travail.

- The importance of experiencing spiritual truths, rather than just learning them by rote, is emphasized, and it is noted that this can only be achieved by living through harsh and bitter experiences, like Abraham's, in order to know the blessedness that follows.
- The presence of God is highlighted as essential, and it is stated that the world is perishing for lack of the knowledge of God, and the Church is famishing for want of His Presence, which can be experienced by entering the Presence in spiritual experience.

The Veil of Self and the Deadly Work of the Cross

- The concept of self is discussed, citing Terence McKenna and Nietzsche, where self is seen as an opaque veil that hides the Face of God from us, and it can only be removed through spiritual experience, never by mere instruction, and this requires a [work](#) of God in destruction, where we must invite the cross to do its deadly work within us.
- The idea of the cross and death is explored, where it is stated that the rending of the veil is nothing pleasant, and to tear it away is to injure us, to hurt us and make us bleed, but it is necessary to set us free, and this is what the cross did to [Jesus](#), and it is what the cross would do to every man to set him free.

Chronic Unbelief and Inward Insensibility

- The issue of chronic unbelief is addressed, where it is stated that faith enables our spiritual sense to function, and where faith is defective, the result will be inward insensibility and numbness toward spiritual things, which is the condition of vast numbers of Christians today.
- The text discusses the importance of recognizing and responding to God's presence in our lives, with the idea that a spiritual kingdom lies within reach of our inner selves, waiting for us to acknowledge its reality, as stated by the author, and similarly noted by Stace in his book on Mysticism, and Tozer, who shares the same conclusions as a "mystic".

Spiritual Receptivity and the Decline of Christianity

- The author emphasizes the need to shift our interest from the seen to the unseen and to seek to be other-worldly if we truly want to follow [God](#), highlighting the paradox of pantheism, where God is both transcendent above all His works and immanent within them.
- The text also highlights the importance of spiritual receptivity, citing examples of various spiritual leaders throughout history, including Moses, Isaiah, Elijah, David, John, Paul, St. Francis, Luther, Finney, and Thomas a Kempis, who all shared a common vital quality of spiritual awareness and a lifelong habit of spiritual response, despite their differences in race, nationality, education, temperament, habit, and personal qualities.
- The author laments the current state of [Christianity](#), where the idea of cultivation and exercise of spiritual habits has been replaced by a desire for glamour and fast-flowing dramatic action, leading to shallow lives, hollow religious philosophies, and a preponderance of the element of fun in gospel meetings, and instead, advocates for a more profound and meaningful approach to spirituality.
- The text concludes by noting that no one person is responsible for the current state of affairs, and that all Christians have contributed to this sad state, either directly or indirectly, by accepting a poor average diet of spiritual nourishment and making the Word of Truth conform to their experience, rather than striving for a deeper and more meaningful connection with God, and that a universal Voice has been sounding, troubling men and stirring their consciences, and that this Voice may be the undiscovered cause of the troubled conscience and the longing for immortality confessed by millions throughout history.

The Speaking Voice of God and the Importance of Stillness

- The concept of the speaking Voice of [God](#) is a fundamental fact, and how individuals react to it can be observed, with the believing person acknowledging the mysterious and wonderful nature of the cosmos that is too great for human understanding.
- Many people have experienced unexplainable events, such as feelings of loneliness, wonder, or awe, which may be attributed to the Presence of God in

the world and His effort to communicate with mankind, and it is essential to consider the possibility that these experiences may arise from a divine source.

- The importance of stillness and silence is emphasized, as expressed in the phrase "Be still, and know that I am God," which suggests that strength and safety lie in quietness, and it is best to get alone with [the Bible](#) to draw near to God and hear Him speak to the heart.

God's Nature to Speak and the Secret of Inward Gazing

- A wrong conception of God and the Scriptures can lead to religious unbelief, as some people think of God as only vocal in a book and silent everywhere else, whereas in reality, God is not silent and has never been silent, and it is His nature to speak.
- Some individuals have discovered the secret of inwardly gazing upon [God](#), constantly practicing this habit, and even when they are engaged in earthly affairs, there is a secret communion going on within them, and their attention flies back to God as soon as they are released from necessary business.
- While ordinary means of grace, such as private prayer, Bible meditation, church attendance, service, and [work](#), are valuable, the inward habit of beholding God is essential, giving meaning to these activities, and enabling individuals to look at God while their outward eyes are seeing the world.

The Changed Relation to God and the Break with the World

- The flesh may resist the rigor of God's sentence, but a break with the world will be the direct outcome of a changed relation to God, as the world of fallen men does not honor God, despite millions claiming to follow Him, and a simple test will reveal how little He is truly honored among them.
- The average person's true position is exposed when they are forced to choose between God and other aspects of their life, such as money, personal ambition, or human love, and it is often found that God takes second place to these other things.

Be Thou Exalted and the Root of Unbelief

- The phrase "Be thou exalted" is a key to unlocking spiritual experience and is central to the life of [God](#) in the soul, allowing individuals to restore God to His rightful place and find their original habitat in Him.
- [Jesus](#) taught that the desire for honor among men can make belief impossible, and this desire can be the root cause of religious unbelief, leading people to prioritize their own self-interest over their relationship with God.

The World's Pride and the Burden of Self-Love

- The world is characterized by pride, arrogance, and a lack of virtues such as poverty of spirit, meekness, and mercy, which Jesus spoke about in the Sermon on the Mount, and this moral climate is perpetuated by culture, education, and literature.
- The burden borne by humanity is a deep and crushing one, consisting of the [labor](#) of self-love and the sins that arise from it, such as pride, greed, and malice, which are the sources of much human pain and suffering, and it is a burden that affects both the rich and the poor.
- Jesus' words offer a message of hope and redemption in a world filled with evil and suffering, and His teachings emphasize the importance of putting [God](#) first and seeking honor from Him alone, rather than from other people.

The Pursuit of Inward Peace and the Importance of Meekness

- The pursuit of inward peace is hindered when individuals prioritize their own honor and reputation, constantly seeking to protect themselves from criticism and negative opinions, which can lead to a burdensome and intolerable existence.
- [Jesus](#) offers an alternative approach, advocating for meekness as a means to achieve rest, where the meek person is unconcerned with the opinions of others and has developed a sense of humor about themselves, recognizing the

inconsistency of being hurt by others' opinions when they have already acknowledged their own limitations.

The Struggle for Peace and the Division Between Sacred and Secular

- The struggle to find peace and balance stems from the fact that followers of Christ inhabit both the spiritual and natural worlds, requiring attention and care to the things of this world, which can lead to feelings of frustration and unease.
- To achieve true satisfaction and peace, the whole person, including the mind, will, and heart, must be committed to putting [God](#) above all else, recognizing that merely approving of this idea is not enough, and that a deliberate decision must be made to prioritize God's position in one's life.
- The division between sacred and secular activities can also contribute to feelings of unease and frustration, as individuals may view their ordinary tasks as inferior to their spiritual pursuits, leading to a sense of discontent and a longing for a better day when they can leave their earthly concerns behind.