

Nothingness

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Nothing proceeds from nothingness, as also nothing passes away into non-existence. ~ [Marcus Aurelius](#)

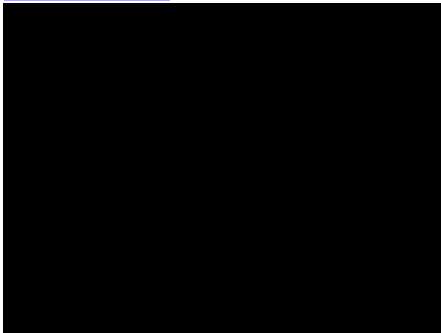
[Aurelius](#)

[Nothingness](#) denotes the nonexistence of something or of anything specifiable, the state of nothing, the property of having nothing, or of being no thing; in nontechnical uses, "nothing" denotes things lacking importance, interest, value, relevance, or significance.

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I was *in* that ultimate moment of [terror](#) that is the beginning of [life](#). It is nothing. Simple, hideous nothing. ~ [Paddy Chayefsky](#)



[Nihilists](#) are not [kind](#); They [believe](#) in nothing. ~ [Dude De Ching](#)

- What is most [needed](#) today is a fundamental theological thinking, one centered upon the [Godhead](#) itself, and centered upon that which is most challenging or most offensive in the Godhead, one which has truly been veiled in the modern [world](#), except by our most [revolutionary thinkers](#) and [visionaries](#).

If we allow [Blake](#) and [Nietzsche](#) to be paradigmatic of those revolutionaries, nowhere else does such a centering upon God or the Godhead occur, although a full parallel to this occurs in [Spinoza](#) and [Hegel](#); but the language of Hegel and Spinoza is not actually offensive, or not in its immediate impact, whereas the language of Nietzsche and Blake is the most purely offensive language which has ever been inscribed. Above all this is true of the theological language of Blake and Nietzsche, but here a theological language is a truly universal language, one occurring in every domain, and occurring as that [absolute No](#) which is the origin of every repression and every [darkness](#), and a darkness which is finally the darkness of God, or the darkness of that Godhead which is beyond "God." **Only Nietzsche and Blake know a wholly fallen Godhead, a Godhead which is an absolutely alien Nihil, but the full reversal of that Nihil is [apocalypse](#) itself, an apocalypse which is an absolute [joy](#), and Blake and Nietzsche are those very writers who have most evoked that joy.**

◦ [Thomas J. J. Altizer](#), *Godhead and the Nothing* (2003), Preface

- **When it comes to giving, some people stop at nothing.**

◦ Widely used [anonymous](#) saying, dating to at least *The Catholic Digest*, Vol. 27 (1963) where it is tenuously credited to Mary C. Dorsey, p. 141

- **Nothing proceeds from nothingness, as also nothing passes away into non-existence.**

◦ [Marcus Aurelius](#), *Meditations*, IV, 4

- **Nothing is wholly obvious without becoming enigmatic. [Reality](#) itself is too obvious to be [true](#).**

◦ [Jean Baudrillard](#), *The Perfect Crime* (1993), as translated by Ian Michel and William Sarah (1995)

- **Nothing is more [real](#) than nothing.**

◦ [Samuel Beckett](#), in [Malone meurt](#) (1951), translated by Beckett as *Malone Dies* (1956), p. 16

- **I was *in* that ultimate moment of [terror](#) that is the beginning of [life](#). It is nothing. Simple, hideous nothing.**

The final [truth](#) of [all](#) things is that there is no final Truth. Truth is what's transitory. It's [human](#) life that is [real](#).

◦ [Paddy Chayefsky](#), *Altered States* (1980)

- **Nihilists are not kind;**

They believe in nothing.

- [The Dude De Ching \(2010\)](#) · A [Dudeist Holy Book](#) inspired by the [Tao Te Ching](#) of [Lao Tzu](#) and [The Big Lebowski](#) of [Joel and Ethan Coen](#), Ch. 5 : Nihilists
- Even in the folly of youth we know that nothing lasts, but ... even in that folly we are afraid that maybe Nothing will last, that maybe Nothing will last forever, and anything is better than Nothing.... So now, as another poet sings, That Fancy passed me by And nothing will remain; which, praise the gods, is a damned lie, since, praise, O gods! Nothing cannot remain anywhere since nothing is vacuum and vacuum is paradox and unbearable and we will have none of it even if we would, the damned-fool poet's Nothing.
 - [William Faulkner](#), *The Mansion* (1957), Ch. 8; two lines of poetry quoted — not altogether accurately — from [A. E. Housman](#), *A Shropshire Lad* (1896), XVIII:

And now the fancy passes by
And nothing will remain.
- *Et redit in nihilum quod fuit ante nihil.*
 - It began of nothing and in nothing it ends.
 - [Cornelius Gallus](#), translated by [Robert Burton](#) in *Anatomy of a Melancholie* (1621).
- Why and Wherefore set out one day,
To hunt for a wild Negation.
They agreed to meet at a cool retreat
On the Point of Interrogation.
 - [Oliver Herford](#), *Metaphysics*, as quoted in *Hoyt's New Cyclopedia Of Practical Quotations* (1922), p. 561
- Nothing to do but work,

Nothing to eat but food,
Nothing to wear but clothes,
To keep one from going nude.

◦ [Benjamin Franklin King, Jr.](#), *The Pessimist* as quoted in *Hoyt's New Cyclopedia Of Practical Quotations* (1922), p. 561

• *Nil actum credens, dum quid superesset agendum.*

◦ Believing nothing done whilst there remained anything else to be done.

◦ [Marcus Annaeus Lucanus](#), *Pharsalia*, Book II. 657

◦ Variant: *Nil actum credens, cum quid superesset agendum.*

• *Nil igitur fieri de nilo posse putandum es*

Semine quando opus est rebus.

◦ We cannot conceive of matter being formed of nothing, since things require a seed to start from.

◦ [Lucretius](#), *De Rerum Natura*, Book I, line 206

• *Haud igitur redit ad Nihilum res ulla, sed omnes*

Discidio redeunt in corpora material.

◦ Therefore there is not anything which returns to nothing, but all things return dissolved into their elements.

◦ [Lucretius](#), *De Rerum Natura*, Book I. 250

• **"In the midst of [life](#) we are in death," said one; it is more true that in the midst of death we are in life. Life is the only [reality](#); what men call death is but a [shadow](#) — a [word](#) for that which cannot be — a negation, owing the very [idea](#) of itself to that which it would deny. But for life there could be no death. If God were not, there would not even be nothing. Not even nothingness preceded life. Nothingness owes its very idea to existence.**

◦ [George MacDonald](#), in "Life"

• **Nor is anything empty: For what is empty is nothing. What is nothing cannot be.**

Nor does it [move](#); for it has nowhere to betake itself to, but is full. For if there were aught empty, it would betake itself to

the empty. But, since there is naught empty, it has nowhere to betake itself to.

- [Melissus of Samos](#), as translated in *Fragments of Melissu* (1920) by John Burnet
- Nothing's new, and nothing's true, and nothing matters.
 - Attributed to [Lady Morgan](#), *Hoyt's New Cyclopedia Of Practical Quotations* (1922), p. 561
- All humans will, without exception, eventually die. After they die, the place they go is Mu (nothingness).
 - [Tsugumi Ohba](#), [Death Note](#), Vol. 12, p. 188
- If all the properties of the universe, such as charge and momentum, balanced out, as [Guth](#), who was a fan as well as a scholar of theories of nothing, pointed out to me, no laws of physics forbade the spontaneous appearance of the universe—or a [quantum](#) piece of one. ...Nothing, some physicist implied, might be the ultimate [symmetry](#), everywhere, everywhen the same... Mostly we knew what nothing was not. It was not anything. But it was the possibility of everything. And perhaps such beauty, nothing, was unstable. And the result was every once in an eternity it twitched. ...The first soul brave enough to suggest the universe was indeed nothing was [Ed Tryon](#)... [who] blurted it out during a seminar with [Sciama](#), "Suppose the universe is just a [quantum fluctuation](#)." Everybody laughed. ... Tryon eventually published these notions in *Nature* in 1975 and was mostly ignored. [Peebles](#) and [Dicke](#) had mentioned his work in their famous 1979 paper about enigmas and conundrums.
 - [Dennis Overbye](#), *Lonely Hearts of the Cosmos* (1992) Ref: Edward P. Tryon, "Is the Universe a Vacuum Fluctuation?" *Nature* (Dec 14, 1973); R. H. Dicke, P. J. E. Peebles, "The Big Bang Cosmology—Enigmas and Conundrums," *Nature* (1979) Also see [False vacuum](#).
- [Guth](#)... wanted to hear... [Alex Vilenkin](#)... describe a new theory of the origin of the universe, of how it could have emerged from nothing. Vilenkin's version of the infant universe... was a kind of metaphysical mole. ...a bubble of universe, space-time, had "[tunneled](#)" into a [Wheeleresque](#) superspace of possible space-times and then tunneled again into "real" space and time. ...But from where had the universe tunneled into this realm..? In Vilenkin's words, "from nothing." ...Vilenkin's tiny bubble... inflated and went through the standard expansion and evolution of the big bang. ...he, Guth, and [Sidney Coleman](#) sat and had a conversation that [Lewis Carroll](#) might have enjoyed, about nothing. ..."Nothing," answered

Vilenkin... "is no time, no space." ... "There is an epoch without time," [Coleman] said finally as the shadows lengthened. "It is an eternity. So we make a quantum leap from eternity into time." Then, as good physicists did, they repaired to a Chinese restaurant.

- [Dennis Overbye](#), *Lonely Hearts of the Cosmos* (1992)

- *Gigni*

De nihilo nihil, in nihilum nil posse reverti.

- **Nothing can be born of nothing, nothing can be resolved into nothing.**

- [Persius](#), *Satires*, I, 111. 83

- *Gratis anhelans, multa agendo nihil agens.*

Sibi molesta, et aliis odiosissima.

- Out of breath to no purpose, in doing much doing nothing. A race (of busybodies) hurtful to itself and most hateful to all others.

- [Phædrus](#), *Fables*, Book II. 5. 3

- **Rust Cohle:** In eternity, where there is no time, nothing can grow. Nothing can become. Nothing changes. So death created time to grow the things that it would kill... and you are reborn but into the same life that you've always been born into. I mean, how many times have we had this conversation, detectives? Well, who knows? When you can't remember your lives, you can't change your lives, and that is the terrible and the secret fate of all life. You're trapped... like a nightmare you keep waking up into.

- [Nic Pizzolatto](#), [True Detective](#) (2014), Season 1 Episode 5: "The Secret Fate of All Life"

- We are nothing, let us be [all](#).

- [Eugène Edine Pottier](#), [The Internationale](#) (1864)

- The non-existent was not; the existent was not at that time. The atmosphere was not nor the heavens which are beyond. What was concealed? Where? In whose protection? Was it water? An unfathomable abyss?

There was neither death nor immortality then. There was not distinction of day or night. That alone breathed windless by its own power. Other than that there was not anything else.

Darkness was hidden by darkness in the beginning. All this was an indistinguishable sea. That which becomes, that which was enveloped by the void, that alone was born through the power of heat.

Upon that desire arose in the beginning. This was the first discharge of thought. Sages discovered this link of the existent to the nonexistent, having searched in the heart with wisdom.

Their line [of vision] was extended across; what was below, what was above? There were impregnators, there were powers: inherent power below, impulses above.

Who knows truly? Who here will declare whence it arose, whence this creation? The gods are subsequent to the creation of this. Who, then, knows whence it has come into being?

Whence this creation has come into being; whether it was made or not; he in the highest heaven is its surveyor. Surely he knows, or perhaps he knows not.

- Passage from the Creation Hymn in the [Rig Veda](#) (exact date of writing debated; around 3100-1500 BC)
- It is, no doubt, an immense advantage to have done nothing, but one should not abuse it.
 - [Antoine de Rivarol](#), *Preface to Petit Almanach de nos Grands Hommes*
- **I am not [all](#) that is. I am [Life](#) fighting Nothingness.**
 - [Romain Rolland](#), *Jean-Christophe: Journey's End: The New Dawn* (1912)
- *Operose nihil agunt.*
 - **They laboriously do nothing.**
 - [Seneca the Younger](#), *De Brev, Vitæ*, Book I. 13
- Where every something, being blent together
Turns to a wild of nothing.
 - [William Shakespeare](#), [The Merchant of Venice](#) (late 1590s), Act III, scene 2

- A life of nothing's nothing worth,
From that first nothing ere his birth,
To that last nothing under [earth](#).
 - [Alfred Tennyson](#), *Two Voices*
- There is no God, no universe, no human race, no earthly life, no heaven, no hell. It is all a Dream, a grotesque and foolish dream. Nothing exists but you. And You are but a Thought — a vagrant Thought, a useless Thought, a homeless Thought, wandering forlorn among the empty eternities.
 - [Mark Twain](#), in [The Mysterious Stranger](#)
- Nothing, thou elder brother e'en to shade.
 - [John Wilmot, 2nd Earl of Rochester](#), *Poem on Nothing*

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